

### **Proposed Lincolnshire County Council position in relation to required outcomes from the area review of post 16 education in Greater Lincolnshire (16 – 18 year olds)**

#### **Individuals:**

Lincolnshire County Council supports the aims of the review, i.e. that it will deliver sector that is strong, resilient and well placed to meet changing and potentially challenging requirements in the future. Any proposed changes to General Further Education and Sixth Form College structures should result in provision that secures improved outcomes for all young people and particularly those who underperform in comparison to the overall cohort i.e. care leavers; those who are or who have previously been eligible for free school meals; those with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND); teenage parents etc. The review should therefore deliver:

- A broad curriculum offer that is accessible to all young people within a reasonable travel to learn distance from where they live
- Provision that is able to meet the specific needs of all young people with Special Educational Needs, including young people with Autism, behavioural difficulties and mental health issues, and that is accessible within reasonable travel time as set out in Department for Education Statutory Guidance i.e. 45 minutes each way for primary school age and 75 minutes each way for secondary age pupils. Therefore all GFE colleges should deliver the full SEND offer.
- Education provision for young people with Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) that prepares them for a good and timely transition to adult life. This includes preparation for independence and a range of programmes leading to employment that includes supported internships, vocational study programmes, traineeships and apprenticeships.
- Skills funding agency funded programmes including traineeships that are available and accessible to young people age 19 – 24 who have SEND but who are not eligible for an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Curriculum that better matches the skills and economic growth requirements for Greater Lincolnshire recognising that young people require effective careers guidance to enable them to make appropriate career decisions
- Study programmes that effectively prepare young people for employment. These should include high quality external work experience to address the 'lack of employability skills' that employers complain young people do not have
- Improved technical and professional education routes that enable young people to progress to higher and degree level qualifications, particularly through apprenticeships
- Programmes that reduce the gap in attainment between FSM students and their peers
- Apprenticeship offer that is responsive to local employers' requirements, including a wider range of occupations and levels and which provides progression routes for individuals through from level 2 to degree level and beyond

## Education providers

- Lincolnshire County Council's preference (and a model it has sought to encourage) would be collaboration between all providers (including school sixth forms and independent and specialist providers) in an area to provide a single coherent and comprehensive curriculum offer that builds on institutions' strengths and reduces competition. It is recognised that it is unlikely that such collaboration will be achieved through structural change particularly given that school sixth forms and other providers are not included in the review. However, there is scope for providers i.e. schools, academies and colleges to work together in partnership to: reduce or eliminate duplication of curriculum; reduce the number of small class sizes; make more efficient use of funding; permit staff savings; and reduce the pressure for partiality in careers guidance (therefore reducing the drop out at the end of year 12). As school sixth forms and other post 16 providers are not fully included, it is unlikely that the review will address the issues of oversupply of education provision for 16 – 18 year olds.
- A presumption that there will be no increase in the overall volume of provision for 16 – 18 year olds in the short and medium term (until there is demographic growth in the size of the cohort c.2022), as this will increase competition for learners even further, creating additional viability challenges for some schools and colleges. If and where a need for new or specialist provision is identified, consideration should be given to reconfiguring existing provision.
- A coherent Apprenticeship offer for Lincolnshire which could be in the form of a shared company jointly owned by some or all of the GFE colleges. Boston and Grantham Colleges together with New College Stamford have already taken steps to establish a joint company concentrating initially on apprenticeships in the logistics sector. There may be scope for this to be extended further. Economies of scale would mean that frameworks and standards could be made available in occupations previously not offered due to lack of a viable cohort of apprentices. It would also enable apprenticeships at higher and degree level to be delivered, therefore providing a real alternative to the traditional university higher education route and the associated costs in terms of student debt. This would broaden and extend the offer to young people, adults requiring retraining and make apprenticeship programmes more responsive to employers' requirements.
- Any proposals for specialist provision, for example Institutes of Technology, need to take into account the rural nature of Lincolnshire to ensure they are accessible to all young and adults in the county. These would need to take into account specialist provision already in place but that is outside the scope of the review
- Explore the potential to develop technological solutions which could :
  - Improve accessibility in a rural area, e.g. through distance and blended learning facilitated through the use of technology and perhaps supported by alternative face to face delivery patterns, for example block release and/or 'summer schools'
  - Improve provision for SEND (in particular the use of assistive technology to increase independence and employability) and reduce reliance on one to one support unlikely to be available to individuals once they leave education

- Increase collaboration e.g. where there are small numbers of students in different institutions undertaking specialist programmes
- Support the emerging partnership proposals and collaborative plans between Boston, Grantham and New College Stamford.

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