

# Principles for a Commissioning-Based Post-16 Funding Mechanism for Mainstream Secondary Phase Schools

Document for consultation

(Dates 22<sup>nd</sup> November to 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022)

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## 1. Background

- 1.1. Strategic Aim 2 of the Strategy for Transforming Education 2020-2030 states: “We will improve learner entitlement and experience for post-16 learners” which aims to ensure that post-16 learners (and 14–16 year-old learners) are able to access a broad range of subjects within Powys, with a blended offer of academic and vocational provision and to ensure that the post-16 sector in Powys is sustainable. Initially this focus on enhanced collaboration between schools to ensure a high-quality post-16 curriculum that is accessible to all learners, and is affordable within the funding received from the Welsh Government. This will include more digital learning opportunities where learners are taught via video-conferencing across more than one school.
- 1.2. The “Post-16 Workstream” was established in 2020 to develop proposals for the future of post-16 provision in Powys that would meet Strategic Aim 2. One of the first developments was the Learner Entitlement (Appendix A) key extracts of which are set out below:

### Extracts from the Learner Entitlement

- Inclusive and flexible academic and vocational provision for all learners
- Learners can access a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum offer through medium of Welsh and English
- Well-planned enrichment activities... bespoke wellbeing, academic, vocational and career support and guidance
- Provision will be sustainable and deliver value for money... state of the art facilities... meet the needs of the local economy
- Innovative use of digital learning opportunities... ensure quality and breadth of provision is sustained
- Provision of highest standard... Delivered by passionate, specialist and reflective practitioners... proven track record of excellence

- 1.3. On 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021, Powys County Council Cabinet agreed ([Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 18th May, 2021, 10.30 am Cyngor Sir Powys County Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)) to the establishment of a new structure for the strategic management of Powys post-16 provision consisting of a Strategic Management Board (SMB) supported by two Operational Management Boards (OMBs). The primary function of the SMB is to commission providers (Powys post-16 centres, colleges and other providers) to deliver post-16 provision (including academic, vocational, pastoral, enrichment, careers advice and guidance activities).
- 1.4. The overall level of post-16 grant funding for 6<sup>th</sup> form provision in mainstream schools in 2022-23 is £4,997,659, an increase of £306,025 on the amount received in 2021-22.

## 2. Aims and scope

- 2.1. Moving to a commissioning-based model of post-16 provision in mainstream secondary phase schools means that the way in which post-16 funding is allocated to those schools needs to change.
- 2.2. Currently, the post-16 grant provided to Powys CC by Welsh Government is distributed to all mainstream secondary phase schools as part of their delegated funding. Each school’s allocation is determined through the application of a formula which is based

on a combination of course provision and learner numbers, weighted by factors related to sparsity, deprivation and Welsh medium provision.

### **3. Process**

- 3.1. The post-16 workstream and a sub-group, the post-16 finance working group, which includes a range of stakeholders, have been meeting with Council officers since December 2021 to review how the post-16 funding mechanism would best support the new commissioning-based model of post-16 provision. There are two concurrent phases of work required:

Phase 1: a) Change the post-16 grant funding from the existing formula-led mechanism and allow the SMB to determine how 97% or more (as determined by the Council) is distributed  
b) Agree principles within which to develop a commissioning-based post-16 funding mechanism

Phase 2: Develop detailed new mechanism for distributing post-16 funding grant funding which supports the commissioning-based model of post-16 delivery now in place.

- 3.2. This consultation relates to Phase 1 of the work, the proposal to change the post-16 grant funding from the existing formula-led funding mechanism to a commissioning based mechanism and the principles within which the commissioning based post-16 funding mechanism will operate.

### **4. Changing Post-16 grant funding distribution from the current formula-led distribution to a commissioning based distribution**

- 4.1. Under the new model for post-16 provision, the OMBs develop proposals for the post-16 curriculum and course delivery for the SMB to consider. The SMB then commission the agreed courses from the post-16 providers. In order to ensure that mainstream secondary phase schools are appropriately funded for the courses and post-16 provision that they are commissioned to deliver, the SMB needs to be able to determine how 97% or more (as determined by the Council) of the post-16 grant funding is distributed between schools.
- 4.2. It is proposed that the post-16 grant funding is no longer distributed to schools based on a pre-determined formula but rather on the basis of the provision commissioned by the SMB.

**Question 1: Do you agree that the Post-16 grant funding is no longer allocated based on a pre-determined formula?**

**Question 2: What other comments would you like to make in relation to changing the distribution of the post-16 grant from a formula distribution to a commissioning based distribution?**

## **5. Principles for a Commissioning-based Post-16 funding mechanism**

5.1. Under the new arrangements, there are three broad areas of post-16 provision:

- a) Home school provision: 6<sup>th</sup> form premises; 6<sup>th</sup> form tutor; wellbeing; enrichment; career support and guidance; exam entries, invigilation and administration.

**It is proposed that funding for the home school provision is allocated on a per learner basis.**

- b) Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ): based on provision at the home school.

**It is proposed that funding for the WBQ is allocated to the home school on a per learner basis, and is dependent on provision.**

- c) Post-16 courses: as commissioned by the SMB based on the curriculum plans proposed by the OMBs

**It is proposed that funding for commissioned post-16 courses be allocated on a per course basis and that the funding per course be the same, whether the course is delivered through Welsh or English medium and whether they are delivered in person or through e-sgol.**

**It is proposed that the funding for commissioned courses for year 12 is committed to continuing those courses in the second year for year 13, assuming that learner numbers warrant this.**

5.2. The exact methodology for determining the grant funding to be allocated on a per learner or per course basis will be developed in collaboration with representatives of secondary phase schools and will be the subject of further consultation with the schools affected.

**Question 3: Do you agree that funding for home school provision is allocated on a per learner basis?**

**Question 4: Do you agree that funding for the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification is allocated to the home school on a per learner basis, dependent on provision?**

**Question 5: Do you agree that funding for post-16 courses be allocated on a per course basis to the school commissioned to deliver the course?**

**Question 6: Do you agree that funding for year 12 post-16 courses should also be committed for the following year's course, should learner numbers warrant it?**

**Question 7: Do you agree that the funding per course should be the same whether the course is delivered through Welsh or English, in person or through e-sgol?**

**Question 8: What other comments would you like to make in relation to the proposed principles for a commissioning-based post-16 funding mechanism?**

### Appendix A: Post 16 Learner Entitlement Definition

In Powys we believe that all learners, regardless of their location, background, language, or ability should flourish and grow without any barriers into capable, healthy, confident, and ethically informed citizens. Every learner will be effectively prepared to contribute fully as ambitious, enterprising, and independent individuals for the ever-changing local, national, and global social and economic demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Powys post 16 provision will provide an inclusive and flexible academic and vocational provision for all learners, regardless of their language or ability, so that all learners can access a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum offer through the medium of Welsh and English.

Learners will be effectively supported to thrive through well-planned enrichment activities and through bespoke wellbeing, academic, vocational and career support and guidance. Strong partnerships will be forged between other higher education partners and employers to ensure that all learners can be appropriately advised on their next steps. Purposeful opportunities will be developed to positively respond to pupil and key stakeholder voice.

Provision will be sustainable and deliver value for money through excellent, state of the art, outstanding and modern facilities that will support all learners throughout their lives and meet the needs of the local economy.

Innovative use of digital learning opportunities will support and supplement the offer available to ensure the quality and breadth of provision is sustained.

The leadership and governance will ensure that all provision is of the highest standard and delivered by passionate specialist, and reflective practitioners with a proven track record of excellence, where all staff and learners are highly valued as part of the learning organisation. Outstanding academic, vocational, and extra-curricular outcomes of the highest level will ensure that all Powys learners will have access to their appropriate, meaningful and aspirational pathway.

Powys post 16 provision will foster and develop close links with all Powys schools and learners to develop a strong sense of belonging through effective transitional arrangements and unified pupil centred advice and guidance. Support will be available to ensure all learners make well considered and informed choices, with valuable communications and links formed with all parents and carers.