

<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Managing Director</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Tony McGovern</b>
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<b>Portfolio Leader:</b>	<b>Leader of the Council</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Report Track:</b>	<b>Cabinet: 12/07/18</b>

**CABINET**  
**12 JULY 2018**  
**CANNOCK CHASE SKILLS AND INNOVATION HUB –**  
**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To set out key issues relating to the establishment of skills and further education opportunities in the District.
- 1.2 To approve a Memorandum of Understanding with South Staffordshire College.
- 1.3 To note the development of a Retail Skills Academy and the development of proposals for an Engineering Academy in the District for consideration by Cabinet and Council at a future date.

**2 Recommendations**

Cabinet is asked to:

- 2.1 Note the recent development of skills and further education opportunities in the District.
- 2.2 Approve the Memorandum of Understanding with South Staffordshire College relating to the development of a Skills and Innovation Hub in the District.
- 2.3 Note the development of a Retail Skills Academy locally in the District by Walsall College linked to the planned McArthur Glen Outlet Village in Cannock
- 2.4 Receive proposals for the establishment of an Engineering Academy in the District in 2019 at a future meeting.
- 2.5 Approve the re-allocation of the £10k grant to Support Staffordshire to support the work to develop the Skills and Innovation Hub and the proposal to establish an Engineering Academy.

**3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 Cannock Chase is the only District / Borough Council that does not currently have any further education (FE) delivered locally in the District. Students travel to Walsall, Stafford and further afield to access FE. The District has lower than average skills and qualification levels when compared to all other areas in Staffordshire excluding Stoke on Trent.
- 3.2 Opportunities have recently arisen for the District Council to work in partnership with both Walsall and South Staffordshire Colleges to establish locally provided FE in the District. This report sets out the detail of these opportunities and asks Cabinet to approve a Memorandum of Understanding with South Staffordshire College. It is critical that the District Council plays a pro-active and constructive role in improving skill levels and employment in the District as these are key to future economic and social prosperity.

**4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 The Council's new Corporate Plan approved in 2018 has 'Improving Prosperity as one of the two corporate priorities. The establishment of locally based further education opportunities is a key development to increase skill levels in the District especially for those groups who struggle to access FE.

**5 Report Detail**

- 5.1 Opportunities have recently arisen for the District Council to work in partnership with both Walsall and South Staffordshire Colleges to establish locally provided FE in the District.
- 5.2 The first opportunity is linked to the development of the McArthur Glen Outlet Village due to open in 2020 and which creates an estimated 1,200 new retail jobs. The S106 planning obligations require the developer to fund a Retail Skills Academy in order to maximise local employment opportunities. Walsall College has been selected as the provider of the Retail Skills Academy and will be establishing a local base in Cannock to fulfil their obligations. The Council and McArthur Glen are working closely with Walsall College to bring this to fruition.
- 5.3 The second opportunity is that Cannock Chase Council and South Staffordshire College have been in dialogue over the future of FE provision and the future use of the vacant college building adjacent to the bus station in Cannock. This was on the market for sale. Agreement has been reached between South Staffordshire College and the District Council to establish a Cannock Chase Skills and Innovation Hub at the college building and a set of principles have been agreed which are set out in the Memorandum of Understanding attached as Appendix 1.
- 5.4 The aims of the Cannock Chase Skills & Innovation Hub are

- (a) Raising the skills and qualifications levels in the District and
- (b) Meeting the needs of local and regional businesses for specific skills in high demand / growth sectors.

Branding for the hub has been agreed and it is important to the parties that it is not bias to any one organisation and is reflective of the hub being a new entity with a very different skills and learning 'offer' than existed before.

- 5.5 The College intend to provide specific FE opportunities from September 2018 and further opportunities may be developed in future years. The District Council has committed to working together with the College to ensure the sustainability of the Skills and Innovation Hub. This will involve securing tenants for other parts of the building such as business start-ups and other public sector bodies. It will also involve making bids for grant funding to support the delivery of these opportunities. It is intended that there are a critical mass of learning opportunities delivered locally to improve skill levels and that there will be wide involvement from local and regional businesses to shape the offer so that it increases the likelihood that employment would be secured at the end of these courses.
- 5.7 The third opportunity is that the Council has set aside £500,000 to establish an Engineering Academy in the District as one way of improving skill levels and to address the shortage of appropriately qualified individuals. Proposals will be developed with the aim that this could commence in 2019. A further report will be submitted to Cabinet and Council on this issue.
- 5.8 Although the District Council is not an education authority or a commissioner of FE, it still needs to play an active and collaborative role in re-establishing local learning and skills opportunities as these are critical to the future economic and social prosperity of the District. There are groups of individuals who are not in education, employment or training and / or are low income earners and who are not able to travel outside the District to access skills and training opportunities. The Cannock North ward has been selected by West Midlands Combined Authority for additional employment support resources of £211,000 over three years and the contract has been awarded to Walsall College for delivery of this provision.
- 5.9 The District Council has for many years supported the Cannock CVS with a grant of £10,000 per annum. Cannock CVS was subsumed into a countywide organisation called Support Staffordshire and the grant was rolled over. There is also a separate contract between Support Staffordshire and Staffordshire County Council for certain activities in Cannock Chase District. Whilst Support Staffordshire do engage in worthwhile activities in the District, these are considered lower priority than progressing the Skills and Innovation Hub and developing the proposal for an Engineering Academy as well as supporting those who are not in education, training or employment to access these new learning opportunities.
- 5.10 In summary, this is a critical issue of significant importance to the longer term prosperity of the District and Cabinet is asked to support the recommendations contained in the report.

## 6 Implications

### 6.1 Financial

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

### 6.2 Legal

The Memorandum of Understanding is not a legally binding agreement.

### 6.3 Human Resources

There are no HR implications.

### 6.4 Section 17 (Crime Prevention)

None

### 6.5 Human Rights Act

None

### 6.6 Data Protection

None

### 6.7 Risk Management

The District Council is operating outside of its traditional boundaries and statutory responsibilities in developing partnerships that deliver further education locally. The Council is very conscious of financial sustainability of the hub and will be undertaking due diligence on the supporting business plan produced in due course for the Hub.

### 6.8 Equality & Diversity

None

### 6.9 Best Value

None.

## 7 Appendices to the Report

Appendix 1 Memorandum of Understanding.

### Previous Consideration

None

### Background Papers

None

**FINAL**  
**Memorandum of Understanding**

**CANNOCK CHASE SKILLS & INNOVATION HUB**

Cannock Chase District Council and South Staffordshire College

## **1. Introduction**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a set of principles underpinning the intentions of the partners to deliver a new Skills and Innovation Hub facility for Cannock Chase District from 2018 based in Cannock Town Centre. The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2015) ranked Cannock Chase as the most deprived District in Staffordshire for education, skills and training; and amongst the 50 most deprived areas in England. The development of a Skills and Innovation Hub is aimed at

- (a) Raising the skills and qualifications levels in the District and
- (b) Meeting the needs of local and regional businesses for specific skills in high demand / growth sectors.

This MOU is not a legal agreement so has no legally binding force and effect; however, it is a formal demonstration of the Partners commitment to work together and with other partners to meet the two aims set out above.

## **2. The Partners:**

- Cannock Chase District Council
- South Staffordshire College

### **Objective:**

To work in partnership to establish a new 'Cannock Chase Skills and Innovation Hub' based in Cannock Town Centre (former college building) based upon the following principles:

- To create a District Hub with a new identity with multiple training providers working in a collaborative non-competitive way to raise the quality and diversity of training and skills provision in the District.

- To provide modern, locally based learning opportunities up to Higher Education Level in key growth sectors for the District which as a minimum will include:
  - Engineering / Advanced Manufacturing
  - Electrical Installation and Electrical Engineering
  - Energy
  - Construction
  - Digital
  - Health and Social Care and Early Years
  - Maths, English and Employability
  - Apprenticeship Hub
- Meet the needs of local and regional businesses by increasing the skills and qualifications accessible to residents across the District, including pre-employment skills.
- Work together to achieve a sustainable financial model linked to the development of short term, medium term and longer term sustainable learning opportunities.
- Enter into new governance arrangements if considered feasible to do so in order to operate the Hub independently and equitably e.g. Charitable Body or if not feasible, to ensure suitable leadership and management of the facilities, infrastructure and provision through establishing a management board.
- Creating opportunities for new ways of working with schools in Cannock Chase in order to deliver an enhanced offer to students and raise aspirations.
- Ensure that there is progression into employment and / or higher level qualifications for students.

We will do this by:

- Working in a collaborative fashion to deliver a financially sustainable model that supports a sustainable programme of long term learning and skills opportunities.
- Working with local companies to establish delivery of an Engineering Skills Academy for access by Cannock Chase local employers.
- Working together to establish appropriate programmes in Construction, Health and Social Care, Digital and Energy;
- Working with local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce to identify and address training and skills needs.
- Developing appropriate pre-employment skills programmes particularly for those who are long term unemployed or in a vulnerable group.

- Agreeing on a brand identity and communications strategy for the Hub.
- Working jointly to secure tenants on long term leases for parts of the building.
- Working jointly and collaboratively with Heads of High Schools in the District.
- Work jointly to secure capital funding to fit out the accommodation for occupiers by bidding to partnership organisations e.g. Local Enterprise Partnerships and West Midlands Combined Authority
- Identifying common areas of service delivery and exploring how we can be more efficient and effective by working together.
- Making implementation decisions based on robust business cases which are supported by evidence.
- Ensuring that decisions are taken jointly with appropriate consultation and information sharing.
- Acknowledging that the Hub will consist of multiple training and skills providers acting collaboratively and not competitively within clearly defined remits.
- Ensuring that the Hub is managed in an open and transparent manner.
- Measure outcomes from the Hub to determine its effectiveness in achieving the two key aims above and report this to the Hub management board at regular intervals.
- Agreeing a common message for all Hub related PR before it is issued.
- To ensure sound protocols are in place that provide business continuity and stability of the Hub in the event of a partner leaving this partnership.

Signed by:

..... Date.....  
On behalf of Cannock Chase District Council

Signed by:

..... Date.....  
On behalf of South Staffordshire College