

Potteries Educational Trust Strategic Plan 2019 – 2022

Annex 1: Background and National and Local Context Briefing Document

Background – The Origins of the PET

The City of Stoke on Trent Sixth Form College was the first purpose built Sixth Form College in England. Since relocating to the new building at the heart of the University Quarter, the core purpose of the College remains the same, to meet the needs of young people from across the City and North Staffordshire.

Following the nationally instituted area review process for sixth form and further education colleges, the recommended outcome for this sixth form college in July 2016, was two-fold:

- *That the City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College pursue achievement of academy status through the establishment of a Multi Academy Trust. Under the proposal, the existing Corporation of the City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College will dissolve and transfer its property, rights and liabilities to the newly established Multi Academy Trust, namely the Potteries Educational Trust.*
- *In addition to this, a second recommendation involves the development of a series of ‘Hub and Spokes’ partnerships across the region to support development of teaching and learning, and play our part in the City’s progress towards improved outcomes for all our children and young people.*

Following the above recommendations, the college applied to achieve academy status and to join the newly formed Potteries Educational Trust (PET), inviting a number of other institutions to join together in creating a new and vibrant learning community whose primary purpose is the development of an outstanding educational experience for every young person and child in the trust. In the first year of its operation the Trust was created with a sole occupant – the City of Stoke on Trent Sixth Form College from 1/9/2017– but with one associate member school, Biddulph High School, in order to carry out a ‘try before you buy’ exercise. Biddulph High School took a full part in the life of the trust during this period, paying towards its activities on an individual activity basis and actively engaging in its development, without being ultimately subject to its governance arrangements. This was for a time-limited period of up to a maximum of 18 months. Following a successful associate membership period, the trustees at the High School and also of the PET, unanimously voted to proceed with Biddulph High School fully joining the PET from September 1st 2019, subject to a formal due diligence exercise.

In addition to the above, three new schools have taken the decision to join the PET as Associate Members, from summer term 2019, which is the desired route for membership in the first instance as agreed at Trust Board level. It is expected that other schools may follow suit shortly.

The Scope and Structure of the Strategic Plan

The scope of the Strategic Plan is to embrace the activity of both the Sixth Form College and schools within the PET, over a three year time period, giving an over-arching strategic direction for all within the Trust, interpreted for each institution's individual context.

In the above context, the Strategic Plan is a development of the new kind of strategic document for the college created in 2017, incorporating both the strategy for the 16-19 academy, Biddulph High School, other new Associate Members and the PET as a whole. In this continuing transition phase for the MAT, whilst schools are joining us, there will be a single integrated document for simplicity's sake, but as more join each organisation will have a separate plan that links in with the over-arching version. This will typically be an academy development plan or similar with a lifespan of one academic year that is updated annually. It may also include further strategic documents relating to specific issues within that academy.

It is also worthwhile stating that the Strategic Plan has been developed in a time of considerable turbulence for the entire public sector and in particular education. Constant curriculum change, at times chaotic in nature, combined with radically falling real terms finances (once rising costs have been factored in), place large burdens on every school and college. The revised school funding formula appears set to hurt some of the most vulnerable children in society, despite some government relief in 2017-18 and again in 2018-19, and is thus a core concern for the PET in meeting this challenge. Nevertheless, as a Trust we remain optimistic and proactive in achieving our aims despite these challenges – but we must be ever more creative and persistent in our approach and in not compromising our cherished core values.

As previously stated, the Strategic Plan sets the direction of travel for the PET and the institutions within it over the next 3 years. It describes the opportunities for the college, schools and the Trust to continue to play a leading role in supporting young people to develop the skills and attributes required to meet regional and national needs. It also seeks to describe our mission as a still young Trust, with particular reference to the uniqueness regionally of the PET with the sixth form college and Biddulph High School as founder members. All within the PET have a continuing focus in developing a holistic education, a sense of aspiration and ambition for our own students and more widely across the region, and to be a catalyst for positive educational change. Each institution added over time will have their own unique set of priorities that nevertheless seeks to achieve the same broad aims outlined above.

What is the Strategic Plan?

The Strategic Plan sets the direction of travel for the PET and its institutions, describing a culture of innovative change and a range of new opportunities covering the next three years. It is a statement of our priorities and ambition, but it is neither a prescriptive nor exhaustive list, as it must be responsive to national and local change. It should be regarded as a description of the main terms of a renewed contract between the PET, the College, each school within the Trust, and all of its stakeholders.

The Strategic Plan sets out our intentions and allows them to be measured and checked so we can assess our progress against the targets we agree. The Plan will be reviewed and changed as events unfold and new challenges and opportunities emerge. It is therefore both a statement of intent and a key management tool; moreover it is the blueprint for leading and managing change.

The plan itself will be monitored in a variety of ways through:

- Annual Development Plans of the college and each school, including quality improvement plans for teaching and learning. The Annual Development Plans have been developed in order to deliver the Strategic Ambitions of each institution within the PET, mapped to the aims of the Trust, by focusing on the actions that need to be taken in-year to achieve the targets over time. Similar plans will be commissioned as each new school joins the PET – in the main these will utilise existing development plans mapped to PET strategic aims.
- PET governance structure of local governing body and associated sub-groups, Trust sub-committee and trustee oversight.
- Individual senior leadership teams and the heads/principals group

An important part of the success of the Strategic Plan is its flexibility and responsiveness to changing circumstances – the aim is to have a living document that is clear in the both the PET's and schools' and college's aims, proactive in anticipating national and local changes of circumstances and succinct enough to be deliverable and owned by all.

The annual development plans for each academy are mapped against the Trust Strategic Ambitions and aim to work towards the Trust's aims in-year. Whilst the overarching Strategic Plan is a 3 year document, the annual development plans set out short term actions to achieve the 2020 vision. As the plan overall relates to the time period 2019-2022, in some cases these vision statements have been adjusted where relevant beyond 2020.

Listening to Students, Staff and Stakeholders

It is important to note that whilst at this stage the primary consultation regarding the plan has been with college stakeholders as well as Biddulph High School, this will evolve over time to include all within the Trust. Thus, as schools join the PET, staff, students and governors as well as parents and the local communities they serve, will all be consulted about the over-arching Strategic Plan and have the opportunity to make an important contribution to its creation and ongoing development.

A particularly important part of this process is the annual strategy away day for all within the PET to focus on key aspects of the plan, adjusting as needed and setting a clear direction for senior leaders and the CEO.

During 2018-19 there has been and will continue to be extensive consultation with Biddulph High School and with schools that joining the PET as Associate Members regarding the elements of the plan and adjustments to proposed actions and sub-tasks and themes. Staff and students have also been consulted, enabling a full reflection in the plan of the opinions of our learning community.

Key external stakeholders have been consulted through small group and one to one meetings. The PET will continue to raise its profile within the local community through a wide network of Hub and Spokes partnership working. At the same time, the PET will ensure that each institution and the Trust as a whole, consults with stakeholders relevant to each organisation. Thus for example a primary school needs to carefully take into account the views of any nursery that might feed into the school.

This Strategic Plan expresses the sense of commitment that continues to be strongly articulated in thinking through each school and college's role and our ambition for the children and young people of the area as we enter a new phase within the PET which we have established and now look to join.

A copy of the final Strategic Plan will be made available on school and college web sites, and also that of the PET.

Background – The Education Sector

The development of this new Strategic Plan has taken place at a time of considerable change within the education sector (this phrase has been relevant in each of the past 5 plans!). A major new Ofsted framework is due to begin on September 1st 2019, taking inspection in a new and probably largely positive direction, with a key focus on the curriculum – its intent, implementation and impact.

Curriculum change continues to bed down with the last wave of revised GCSE and A level qualifications being examined under the new specification this summer, as well as the new BTEC qualifications having their second round of examinations. The revised primary curriculum also continues to bed down with its higher difficulty levels in relation to national testing. As indicated below, the ongoing financial strangling of the education sector combined with the challenge of new curriculum implementation, staffing shortages and navigation through the choppy waters of the world of MAT membership for schools all present stresses on the system.

Despite the changes within the sector and the challenges presented below, the vision of the Trust and its partners will continue to support the direction of education in the area. As a group of organisations, the Trust, and Hub and Spokes partners wish to positively influence the future of education in the City and surrounding area.

Current national government and regional schools commissioner thinking regarding MATs, is that they are the key drivers for quality improvement in a self-improving system. This places a very important role on these structures and the addition now of sixth form colleges to the dynamic (one third of all SFCs are academising and setting up Trusts) gives much needed increase in capacity to deliver improvements according to government ministers, Lord Agnew in particular. At the same time, the Regional Schools Commissioners are looking towards amalgamation of the multiplicity of small MATs which currently exist, over a period of the next 2 or 3 years.

This above RSC thinking creates a challenge for the PET in positioning ourselves and choosing future partners. If we remain too small there will be considerable pressure to expand/join with other trusts, and so we must take our destiny in our own hands now and plan for sensible growth as indicated elsewhere in the strategic plan. We need also to develop close working relationships with the other local Trusts in order to help further realise some of the RSC's ambitions, but in a collegiate rather than formal governance relationship. Thus the now developed three year plan between the PET and United Endeavour Trust is an important milestone that enables close cooperation between Trusts, especially in teaching and learning as well as progression. It also helps secure more future students for the PET as well as providing future opportunities for joint tendering etc. Other such relationships will be explored over time.

The changes to the entire national curriculum provision from the primary phase upwards, together with continued reductions in public finances provide both challenges and opportunities. The upcoming implementation of the T level qualifications, piloted within the PET, provides a useful opportunity to shape this new type of course in the way we would wish to see it work. At the same time, whilst being qualifications of value, there is real pressure from ministers to replace BTEC courses entirely or mostly with T levels over a period of time. Whilst the entire sector is fighting this retrograde step, we must nevertheless position ourselves to be ready to smoothly move from one system to the other if necessary – bringing on board more T level qualifications each year as they become available and in line with the academic students and ethos of the PET. Of course at Key Stage 4 this provides a further transition challenge into the future in preparing young people to progress onto T level qualifications which don't exist pre 16 at level 2.

BREXIT will also create its own issues for the public sector if the suggested resultant worsening in national finances are realised. What is also troubling regarding BREXIT is the revelation that around one third of all DfE officials have been moved for a period of months to the BREXIT department to deal with the transition phase.

Recent Ofsted judgements about the improving progress of children in City schools have been much more positive, although raw achievement remains low by any national standard. At the same time the citywide mathematics improvement plan – the Mathematics Excellence Partnership – shortly to be matched by one in science and in English, with Opportunity Area support, show the appetite of SASCAL to recognise and solve its own problems. The College and the PET are well-placed to play a key role in helping these improvements to be achieved.

The Opportunity Area initiative in Stoke on Trent is now halfway through its three year course and a series of projects are just beginning, many led by PET staff. There is a clear opportunity here to make a positive impact on the region and for our children and young people. At the same time, there is always a risk that we fail to achieve the demanding targets of each project, leading to reputational or financial impact. This is why close management of these projects is so important.

Other recent political developments include a focus on off rolling and exclusions in schools and there is evidence that the next phase of inspections will judge these things very harshly. It is thus important that as a PET we take a principled stand that we will all endeavour to keep our students with us, to do all we can to support their progress at school or college as well as keeping them safe, happy and fulfilled.

Another issue in the news has been the salaries of CEOs and other Trust employees. Lord Agnew has personally written to each Trust Chair where the CEO earns in excess of £150,000 or where two Trust employees each earn over £100,000 expressing concern about the fact that this potentially sucks resources away from

the children. As CEO I fully support Lord Agnew's actions and we must as a PET avoid this kind of behaviour in my view.

Overall, each college and school, together with the Trust as a whole need to recognise and respond to the rapid pace of change whilst maintaining a clear and unshakeable commitment to our core under-pinning values.

Challenges and Opportunities

Some of the challenges and opportunities across the area are as follows:

- Levels of deprivation in the City are high, the 13th most deprived local authority on the most recently available 2015 index of multiple deprivation, with 30% of its neighbourhoods in the bottom 10% of all wards nationally:

Table 3: The 20 local authority districts with the highest proportion of their neighbourhoods in the most deprived 10 per cent of neighbourhoods nationally on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015, and change since the 2010 Index

	IMD 2015		IMD 2010		Percentage point change from 2010
	N	%	N	%	
Middlesbrough	42	48.8	41	46.6	2.2
Knowsley	45	45.9	45	45.5	0.5
Kingston upon Hull	75	45.2	70	42.9	2.2
Liverpool	134	45.0	148	50.9	-5.9
Manchester	115	40.8	118	45.6	-4.8
Birmingham	253	39.6	251	39.2	0.4
Blackpool	36	38.3	35	37.2	1.1
Nottingham	61	33.5	45	25.6	7.9
Burnley	20	33.3	20	33.3	0
Hartlepool	19	32.8	21	36.2	-3.4
Bradford	101	32.6	94	30.6	2.0
Blackburn with Darwen	28	30.8	31	34.1	-3.3
Hastings	16	30.2	15	28.3	1.9
Stoke-on-Trent	48	30.2	50	31.3	-1.1
North East Lincolnshire	31	29.2	27	25.2	4.0
Salford	43	28.7	47	32.6	-4.0
Rochdale	38	28.4	35	25.9	2.4
Pendle	16	28.1	17	29.8	-1.8
Halton	21	26.6	21	26.6	0.0
Great Yarmouth	16	26.2	13	21.3	4.9

Note: Based on all neighbourhoods i.e. Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs). Due to boundary changes, the numbers of LSOAs should not be directly compared across the Indices of Deprivation 2015 and 2010; changes are measured as percentage point changes.

Hastings and Stoke-on-Trent are equally ranked as 13th most deprived on this measure according to the 2015 Index.

- The percentage of adults economically inactive in Stoke-on-Trent is approximately 5% above the national average.
- An ever-increasing rate of teenage mental health problems - locally and nationally. Some of this is linked to drugs and gang issues, or to the ever increasing number of dysfunctional families in the area. So far in 2018-19 there has been a large increase in mental health and safeguarding cases both in the Sixth Form College and across the City. At the same time the local CAMHS service is overwhelmed to the point where last year only 1 out of 80 referrals from the college made it through to treatment by CAMHS – in effect there is currently no service for 16-18 year old young people in the area, and limited capacity pre-16. This may change with a new trailblazer project but we await and see what will happen.
- A growing level of community tension and gang related issues across Stoke on Trent. This has been further exacerbated by the BREXIT process, local by-elections and a national trend towards increasing drug & gang related knife crime.
- Levels of achievement in GCSE English and Maths continue to be well below national averages, although the Mathematics Excellence Project is having an impact on Maths. The successor to this project's support for resit Maths and English, funded by the Opportunity Area and led by the PET, will provide further support for teacher development in both resit subjects. However, it is still the case that a low proportion of young people in Stoke on Trent can access level 3 courses due to their achievement level at KS4.
- A high proportion of young people in City schools are in receipt of free school meals or pupil premium.
- All of the above led to Stoke on Trent being identified as an Opportunity Area under the government's initiative to increase social mobility. A series of priority groups have produced detailed, funded action plans, now just starting to be enacted, to support the worthy aim of improving the situation.
- Up until recently there was an increase in the number and range of post 16 providers in the City, but a decrease in the actual range of provision – small school sixth forms have struggled to provide the breadth of curriculum that a sixth form college or larger school sixth form such as Biddulph High School can, or even reasonable standards of quality, let alone financial stability. This has led to recent closures of the smallest of these school sixth forms.
- The area has not only high levels of deprivation but low levels of aspiration, parental education, low skills and a nationally very low proportion of the population educated to at least level 4 (see latest POLAR 4 data)
- New industries continue to grow in Stoke on Trent and new job opportunities especially in sectors such as medical sciences, engineering, logistics, creative industries and renewable technology amongst others. A growth in job opportunities in skilled areas brings the tension of a low-skilled population to resolve.

- The impact of central government funding cuts in the sub region remains disproportionately high. Of particular concern is the static sixth form funding rate of £4000 per head – unchanged for 5 years and meaning a 20% cut in funding over this time in real terms. The CSR in November 2015 ensured the continuance of this inequity for the lifetime of the parliament instead of some form of redistribution of funds. The situation has been worsened by an ever increasing cost of employing staff as national living wage, national insurance and pension contribution rises have led to an increase from around 20% to now 33% on costs for every employee. Further rises are shortly to occur in employers' pension contributions (from 16% to 23%), and although these are being covered by government in the immediate short-term, there is no guarantee this will happen in the future. Were this not to be the case it would amount to an approximate reduction in funding per child of around £140 per annum. All of this makes the development of alternative funding streams as well as efficiency more vital than ever for the PET.
- As described above, despite government recognition of the pressures on school budgets pre 16 and some temporary additional funding as a result, post 16 provision continues to be funded at one of the lowest rates in the developed world. Increasing pressure from AoC, SFCA, ASCL, Ofsted and IFS will continue to be maintained to address this scandalous situation but with no impact as yet. Anybody able to promote the Raise the Rate campaign for sixth form education:

<https://www.raisetherate.org.uk/>

is encouraged to do what they can to contact their MP to encourage them to support this change in funding level for all sixth form students – whether studying in a school or a college.

- Pre-16, the pressure on local councils to support the ever-increasing costs of the Educational Health Care Plan system is acting as a drain on resource, with direct impact on school budgets as councils move money from the schools block.
- Opportunities within Mathematics have emerged lately with initiatives involving additional funding for level 3 Maths growth (using 2017-18 as the baseline) and resit Maths project funding, as well as the possibility of University Maths Schools. The PET is well-placed to take advantage of these given its expertise in Maths education, but the sums of money involved for some of these remain small.
- Similar inequities exist in school funding in comparison with other regions, and the new funding formula looks to only worsen the situation.
- There has been a growing population of black and ethnic minorities; for instance, the college has seen an increase from 18% to 21% over the last 4 years (which also masks a decline in 2016-17 from a previous high point of 26%). A growing proportion of students from outside the City (now one third) has contributed to arresting this rise.

- The perception of the college and its teaching quality is changing over recent years in a positive direction, whilst being mindful of competition within the locality for this reputation. Similarly, Biddulph High School's reputation continues to grow locally, linked to ongoing strength in results and Ofsted judgements, as with the Sixth Form College. New schools who are now joining the PET as Associate Members all also have a real strength in teaching and learning, with strong Ofsted and data outcomes. There is thus an opportunity to further develop the strength of the PET as a whole in teaching and learning quality, building on its current successes, but seeking to be Outstanding in all areas, as we prepare children and young people for the next stage in their lives.
- There has been a growth in primary school populations and decline in high school population (by roughly 3% annually) over the period 2015-2019. From this point there is a considerable surge in the population post 16, to match the large increase in years 7 to 11 in high schools.
- There is a growing pressure across the public sector following years of austerity, low wage growth, increased demands for varied and new activity, and constant structural change, with now the added burden of BREXIT, and the associated financial concerns and distraction from key priorities that this brings. All of this leads to uncertainty and increases work pressure on everyone working in this sector.

Key Challenges for the Future 2019 - 2022

The key challenges facing sixth form colleges and schools include:-

All Phases

- Cost pressures and the squeeze on public funding for education, with increased institutional contributions to pensions and national insurance.
- Difficulty in recruiting teaching staff – currently new recruits to PGCE courses are down by one third with greater numbers leaving the profession due to workload issues or through retirement.
- Changing student populations –post 16 before a dramatic increase now imminent (year after next); radically growing in the primary and secondary phases. The problems above make this even worse to manage.
- Growing problems with the mental health of children and young people in all phases of education with shrinking resource available through the NHS
- Societal issues in areas such as dysfunctional families, gang culture and loss of male role models impacting significantly on the well-being of students
- Changes to the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework and the implications for curriculum design and teaching and learning
- Continuing to put radical curriculum change across the sector successfully into practice
- The paradox of an Ofsted framework that promotes curriculum diversity that central government funding is increasingly insufficient to afford. In addition,

the relentless pressure to maximise the percentage (ultimately circa 90%) of students taking Ebacc subjects pre 16 or facilitating subjects post 16.

- The multi-academy trust landscape has numerous examples of both good and bad practice. This is an opportunity for the PET in espousing and promoting our approach to MAT growth and development, maintaining our core values of the primacy of every child and young person and a rich, diverse curriculum that goes wider than just qualifications.
- Pressure from the Regional Schools Commissioner to grow and amalgamate trusts

Primary

- In the primary phase, the still relatively new and harder KS2 testing has placed particular demands on the ability of primary schools to continue to deliver a rounded curriculum whilst meeting the challenge of the tests.
- The new Maths and English curriculum is especially challenging at KS2, with reading and also problem solving a concern for many. Maths mastery has become a real opportunity to move Maths education forward at this and every level.
- For schools in the Stoke on Trent region, the challenge of the burden of PFI financing is an ongoing concern with many facing annual bills of circa 10% of income to the PFI companies concerned. This creates challenges for any school seeking to academise or to move sponsors.
- Pressure on funding and changes to subsidies for nursery places creates its own concerns whilst the challenge to maintain ever more pre and post school activity continues to increase.
- The difficulty in developing the curriculum to support changes in government priorities e.g. around languages and computing is a thorny problem for some schools.
- Surging population in the primary phase presents challenges of resource, leading to cramped conditions in many schools.
- Growing problems linked to societal change and exacerbated by poverty in areas such as child mental health, gang culture for children even as young as 10 or 11 and complex safeguarding cases mushrooming.

Secondary

- The impact of changes in the pre-16 curriculum, GCSE Maths and English, the impact of Progress 8 and a frankly absurd national target of 90% of all young people to take the EBacc.
- In particular the narrowing of the curriculum that the above two developments are producing is a major concern for the continuing health of the creative subjects. As recognised above this creates a tension with the curriculum emphasis in the new Ofsted framework.

- For schools in the Stoke on Trent region, the challenge of the burden of PFI financing is an ongoing concern with many facing annual bills of circa 10% of income to the PFI companies concerned. This creates challenges for any school seeking to academise or to move sponsors.
- The removal of local authority support that traditionally has been available to non-academy schools places added pressure to take decisions on each school's future.
- The still relatively new GCSE grading systems continue to run the risk of causing confusion to parents and students and the difficulty in setting that standard for the new grades as well as tracking and monitoring performance is a key concern. In particular, the value of a grade 4 versus grade 5 – for many subjects a grade 4 will allow progression to a sixth form education but not to study that specific subject. There is a real student transition issue here and a tension for academies in deciding on relative prioritisation of achievement versus future progression.
- For secondary schools, the challenge of recruiting high calibre staff, especially for 11-16 schools in shortage subjects such as science and maths is a key concern. This is exacerbated by a surging population lower down the school as the demographic bulge continues in this age group.

College/Post -16

- Maintenance of the sixth form college brand now the college has achieved academy status, whilst achieving financial sustainability. At the same time maintaining a healthy sixth form mix of provision within the PET, either in a school sixth form or a college setting – no other Trust in the area has this richness of provision.
- Competition and a marketization of education leads inevitably to young people and their parents as consumers being swayed by at times unrealistic promises to effectively delay their progression or reduce their future opportunities by the decisions they make.
- Implementing nationally agreed but chaotic changes in the curriculum at all phases, with the post-16 challenge of now more demanding A levels and BTECs and the requirements of Level 2 Maths and English. This is complicated by having two BTEC systems in operation – one with and one without exams.
- Planning for the implementation of T Levels – an exciting but complex new qualification.
- Maintaining and increasing the profile of the college and Biddulph High School sixth form within our local communities whilst we face the above-mentioned demographic challenges as well as competition.
- The above mentioned funding pressures at sixth form level add genuine pressure on curriculum breadth and efficient staffing and class sizes, especially in minority subjects such as languages and music.

Other Relevant Information

Demographics

Secondary and Post -16:

A detailed analysis of the latest DFE SFR 16/2015 school census data for current partner feeder schools showed a decline in year 11 cohort of 9.5% to the year 2018. However, this is now being followed by a sharp rise such that by 2020 the equivalent year 11 cohort will have increased by 4% on the previous (2018) level. However, there is some evidence (DFE Edubase school cohort enrolments) that the official EFA census data is slightly pessimistic in that they do not take into account high levels of mobility and the growth in the local population from, in particular, Eastern European countries (See Oxford University Migration Observatory data 2015), although BREXIT may now impact on this of course. In planning for the future we have taken into account the reduced size of the cohort and the subsequent financial impact.

Prudent assumptions about increase in market share, growth in level 2 provision, and some increase in local school performance, are expected to continue to counter this demographic trend and allow the College to maintain a stable population with a hoped for growth of 50 per year in each up to 2021-2022 at which point the college would be full. Indeed, the college population for 2017-18 grew by almost 10% and current applications for 2019-20 are currently in line with this growth pattern at the time of writing this document.

The above growth has meant a significant rise in income under the lagged model in 2018-19 from the core 16-19 learners, offsetting increases in costs and falls in income in other areas (eg lower than expected HE recruitment). This income will then continue to grow in a measured way as we enlarge by roughly 50 students per annum. Failure to grow in this way will require further offsetting alternative income development and increased efficiency combined with continued rationalisation of the curriculum –as has been the case in each of the last three years according to need. Having said this, it is the intention of the College to substantially maintain its curriculum profile and avoid the vicious cycle of course cutting which ultimately reduces our attractiveness as a post-16 destination for young people.

Biddulph High School sixth form is currently encountering a small demographic related dip meaning next year's budget is a challenging one. After this with the population bulge coming through and PET supported promotion of the school sixth form, we envisage a steady rise to capacity once more.

Similar concerns affect High Schools of the 14-19 category in e.g. the Staffordshire Moorlands in managing falling demographic and rising costs. The challenge for the

PET is to work with any such schools who link with the Trust in supporting them in maintenance of a broad curriculum. Allowing them to share in the HE income stream will support this although caution needs to be given to too great expected growth following this year's lower than planned figure. Additionally, joint curriculum planning and resourcing will also aid the maintenance of curriculum breadth.

Primary and KS3:

The population in this age range continues to surge meaning that new schools will be required and existing provision is extremely stretched across the region in terms of class sizes, staffing and buildings. Schools need to carefully plan their responses to this issue and the PET can support in terms of e.g. business services as well as HR, IT, financial and curriculum planning.

Labour Market Information

During the past five years, the college has re-designed the curriculum model to better meet the needs of the local and national skills priorities, whilst maintaining the unique position as a key specialist provider of sixth form general education in the county. The process began in 2013 / 14, when the college mapped current curriculum provision against the identified Local Enterprise Partnership priority growth and significant growth areas. The curriculum courses and enrichment activities were then grouped into six Pathways, each designed to support progression into higher education and employment. Each Pathway is shaped to facilitate curriculum cohesion in both the approach to teaching and learning together with the development of the *Stoke 6th Graduate* attributes. The above-mentioned Futures Programme and Level 3 Foundation initiatives are all aligned to these pathways in order to enhance progression, aspiration and excitement in learning for our students.

Each student now follows a unique programme of study designed to meet their individual needs. Fundamental to this approach is the initial information, advice and guidance which will enable each student to be enrolled onto a particular pathway. During the year, the student is also supported in selecting one of four future 'progression routes'; Russell group, national university, local university or employment / apprenticeship. This will be enhanced using the Futures initiative via the relevant Baccalaureate option chosen – a reasonable proportion (10%) of our students continue to enrol onto one of these courses and we will seek to extend this over time.

The college carefully maps the progression of all our students in relation to key LEP priorities, with currently around two thirds of students progressing into one of these sectors.

A similarly carefully designed curriculum at Biddulph High School to meet the needs of students as well as the local economy has enabled very high retention rates from year 11 to year 12 and very low NEET rates post year 13. Progression to university destinations is strong and the involvement of both High School and Sixth Form College in Cambridge University's HE plus programme is generating further support for aspirational progression of students to top university destinations.

Local Higher Education providers have identified certain key growth areas linked to the above-mentioned LEP priorities, and the college is working with Staffordshire, Derby and Keele Universities, with support from local employers, in further promoting opportunities and progression routes in these areas. This will all continue to form part of the Futures Programme for the PET and the region.