

Charities and Trusts Committee – 12 June 2018

Stafford 14-19 Partnership: Revised Business Plan 2016-2020v3

Stafford 14-19 Partnership (formerly known as Stafford Collegiate) previously had its central administration based on Trust land known as the Chetwynd Centre until August 2017 when it relocated to Stafford Manor High School, as a result of the Trustees authorising the sale of the Chetwynd Centre.

Recommendations:

The Trustees of the Charities and Trusts Committee to:

1. review and approve the Stafford 14-19 Partnership revised Business Plan 2016-2020 (version 3 refresh - hereinafter called the Business Plan) – copy attached.
2. consider for approval the funding request to the Staffordshire Education Centre Charity (registered number 528604) as set out in the Business Plan for 2018/19 and 2019/20 academic years. If approved the release of funds will be from the charitable income, interest from the capital investment of the permanent endowment, from the Staffordshire Education Centre Charity:
 - 2.1 For 2018/19 academic year this will be a sum of £92,516 as set out in the Business Plan, this is an increase of £7,516 on the amount (£85,000) approved in principle by the Trustees last year. The increase is due to additional costs relating to the relocation of the Partnership's computer server and support for GDPR implementation costs;
 - 2.2 For 2019/20 academic year the Stafford 14-19 Partnership is requesting a sum of £150,000 as set out in the Business Plan. This is a 62% increase on the 2018/19 request as the Partnership wish to develop a wider alternative vocational curriculum for 14-19 year olds. This will be explained in more detail at the Committee meeting.
3. consider giving approval in principle to the Stafford 14-19 Partnership to be supported by Staffordshire Education Centre Charity with financial contributions for a further five years based on the production of a new Business Plan for 2020 to 2025, to be produced in May 2019.
4. approve Staffordshire County Council's County Commissioner for Skills and Employability to continue to be authorised to approve the release of funds set out in the second recommendation above subject to the successful delivery of the 2016-2020v3 Business Plan.

Staffordshire County Council's role as a Charity Trustee:

1. Trustees have and must accept ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of a Charity, ensuring that it is solvent, well-run and delivers the charitable outcomes for the public benefit for which it has been set up.

2. Local Authorities are well suited to being a charity trustee as they are:
 - rooted in the local community;
 - open and transparent in their dealings;
 - highly accountable for their actions; and
 - have the high standards of public conduct embedded in the way they work.
3. Charity trustees have a duty to act solely in the best interests of the Charity and its beneficiaries with a view to furthering its charitable purposes and for no other purpose whatsoever. They must also ensure that any charitable assets are managed independently and prudently in accordance with their charitable purpose and any restrictions in the charity's governing document.

Background to the Stafford Education Centre Charity:

1. Staffordshire County Council (the Council) is the sole administrative trustee of the Stafford Education Centre Charity (SECC - registered number 528604) and is responsible for the general control, management and administration of the Charity. The Council discharges its obligations through the Charities and Trusts Committee.
2. SECC was governed by the Scheme dated 10 September 2010; however a revised Scheme was approved by the Trustees at the Committee meeting held on the 17 November 2015. The Charity Commission gave final approval of this revised Scheme on 11 March 2016. The revised Scheme sets out the object of the Charity which is *"the promotion of education of persons between the ages of 14 and 19 years who are resident in [or being educated in] Stafford in such ways as the trustee thinks fit."*
3. The Chetwynd Centre, built in 1860 a grade 2 listed building was the permanent endowment of the SECC and the Council held the land and buildings on trust status. The Trustees approved the sale of the Chetwynd Centre and the sale was completed in early 2018. The funds from the sale have been added to the endowment investment.

Background and Context:

1. The Charities and Trusts Committee agreed on 16 July 2015 the preferred option of the disposal of the Chetwynd Centre through sale and the Committee agreed to:
 - a) ensure current arrangements are stabilised for the next two years providing short-term continuity as requested by the Collegiate. Including producing an annual Business Plan and budget approval process;
 - b) explore the next steps to implement the preferred option this seeks permission to amend the objectives of the SECC removing the requirement on Trustees to retain the Chetwynd Centre;

- c) instruct officers of the Council from Legal, Finance, Learning and Skills teams to work with the collaborative of 14–19 education providers in Stafford to develop and implement appropriate and timely mechanisms for the submission and approval of a Business Plan to the Committee as the new application process for the use of the available charitable funds in the future. The Business Plan must set out how the Stafford 14-19 Partnership will meet the educational objectives of the SECC and provide assurance to the Committee on how the endowment funds requested will be deployed.

2. Progress towards the July 2015 recommendations:

- a) Council Officers have continued to have ongoing dialogue with the Manager of the Stafford 14-19 Partnership to consider the implications of developing a wider collaborative approach across all 14-19 providers in the Stafford district. This has been reflected in the refreshed Business Plan that is being presented to the Committee. The existing partners are committed to working collaboratively to improve and develop the delivery of 14-19 education in Stafford and to broaden the Partnership to work with other educational providers to ensure the best outcomes for young people across Stafford. Collaborative working is a key thread throughout the Business Plan.
- b) The Council's Legal team worked with the Charity Commission for a revised Scheme for SECC. The Charity Commission gave final approval of this revised Scheme on 11 March 2016. This approval allowed for the disposal of the Centre by way of sale, but without requiring the Centre to be replaced with equivalent land. Following the sale of the Centre in early 2018, the capital receipts have been invested in the permanent endowment of the SECC.
- c) Council Officers have supported the developments of the Stafford 14-19 Partnership including the third refresh of the Business Plan that is attached for the Trustees approval and this sets out plans for the operational delivery of the Partnership. The Plan clearly identifies the objectives of the Partnership and it sets out the case of how the endowment funds requested will be deployed and it requests that the Committee continues to approve financial support. The Trustees are being asked to approve the allocation and release of funds from the charitable income, interest from the capital investment of the permanent endowment, from the SECC (registered number 528604). The Stafford 14-19 Partnership is requesting the following contributions that are set out the refreshed Business Plan:
 - For 2018/19 academic year this will be a sum of £92,516 as set out in the Business Plan, this is an increase of £7,516 on the amount approved in principle by the Trustees last year. The increase is due to additional costs relating to the relocation of

the Partnership's computer server and support for GDPR implementation costs;

- For 2019/20 academic year the Stafford 14-19 Partnership is requesting a sum of £150,000 as set out in the Business Plan. This is a 62% increase on the 2018/19 request as the Partnership wish to develop a wider alternative vocational curriculum for 14-19 year olds. This will be explained in more detail at the Committee meeting.
- d) The Council Officers will continue to work with the Partnership Manager to promote good financial management and an agreed approach to managing the delivery of the Business Plan. Colleagues from the Partnership will attend the Committee on an annual basis to present progress against the Business Plan and to demonstrate the positive action and outcomes from receiving the financial contribution from the SECC.

Equalities Implications:

1. None identified.

Legal Implications:

1. The Committee (in its capacity as Trustee of the SECC) is legally obliged to ensure that the SECC is managed in accordance with its objectives and to prevent any conflicts of interest between the administration of the SECC and of the Council.

Resource and value for Money Implications:

1. The Committee may apply the income and capital of the SECC in meeting the proper costs incurred when administering the Charity and managing its assets.

Risk Implications:

1. Decisions made by the Committee must be made in the capacity as Trustee only and must ensure that any decisions are made in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and Charity Commission guidance.

Report Author:

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