

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 6 MAY 2009

16+ LEARNING CHOICES

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval, using Scottish Government funding, to enhance the 16+ Learning Choices Team by the temporary (23 month) appointment of an education professional with a designated responsibility to lead and manage the 16+ Learning Choices programme.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In session 2007-2008, the Scottish Government piloted a programme called 16+ Learning Choices. The aim of the programme is to formalise partnership activities between Education, Skills Development Scotland, the Colleges, Universities, Local Business (Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce) and the third sector organisations, who work with young people post-16. The shared aspiration is to create an education, training or vocational pathway for all young people as they reach 16 years of age which leads to a positive and sustainable destination. The programme will work with all young people in advance of them reaching their statutory leaving date and is a central part of delivering a Curriculum for Excellence and in realising the Scottish Government's commitment to improving participation rates post-16.
- 2.2 In session 2007-2008, East Ayrshire Council was one of the first authorities to join the pilot programme. In the initial phase, emphasis was placed on the transition point from compulsory education to post-16 learning, with particular attention to winter leavers. James Hamilton and Stewarton Academies participated in the programme. All fourth year (S4) winter leavers were interviewed by a Careers Scotland adviser to ascertain their preferences. Subsequently 26 out of 38 school leavers were offered a positive destination when they left school in December 2008. Those without a positive offer were followed up by their school and Skills Development Scotland staff.
- 2.3 The proposed roll out of the programme for East Ayrshire in 2008-2009 is:

School /	Winter 2008	Summer 2009	Winter 2009
James Hamilton Academy	●	●	●
Stewarton Academy	●	●	●
Loudoun Academy		●	●
Grange Academy		●	●
St Joseph's Academy		●	●
Auchinleck Academy			●
Cumnock Academy			●
Doon Academy			●
Kilmarnock Academy			●

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1** As intimated in paragraph 2.2, East Ayrshire Council has already made good progress in the 16+ learning Choices programme. A team, which includes partners such as Skills Development Scotland, has already begun to evolve and initiate effective joint working. This work has been enhanced through close links with the More Choices: More Chances Strategy group which has emphasised a focus on supporting all young people, but particularly those at risk of exclusion from employment, education or training. Adding the 16+ programme to the overall strategy of supporting young people secure a positive and sustained destination would clearly be beneficial and could be facilitated by the appointment of an educational professional, preferably with senior management experience with a designated responsibility for the 16+ programme. The post holder would manage the roll out of the programme to all of our young people in every school in East Ayrshire within the timescales in 2.3.
- 3.2** A summary of the key responsibilities which underpin the specification for a designated 16+ Learning Choices post are outlined below in 3.3 to 3.10.
- 3.3** Develop an action plan, with milestones, to facilitate the rollout of 16+ Learning Choices for summer 2009 leavers in the target schools and subsequently for all leavers by winter 2009.
- 3.4** Develop performance management arrangements which ensure that the Local Authority is able, with partner agencies, to report on performance in the programme, including the ability to track individual young people to monitor the sustainability of destinations achieved.
- 3.5** Develop and manage a communication strategy to support the rollout of 16+ Learning Choices across the authority.
- 3.6** Chair the 16+ Learning Choices Operational Group which includes, Skills Development Scotland, secondary schools, community learning and development , East Ayrshire Skills Employability Service, representatives of the voluntary sector and employer representation.
- 3.7** Work with key partners to seek out and map education, training and employment provision, including employability training opportunities, for all leavers. Seek to make best use of this information with schools and other organisations supporting young people pre-16. Such organisations would include, for example, Youth Strategy.
- 3.8** Communicate the views of East Ayrshire on national projects which are developing data sharing/access agreements.
- 3.9** Develop effective partnership working to ensure the best use of all available resources.
- 3.10** Ensure that the 16+ Learning Choices and the More Choices More Chances programmes are jointly managed and co-ordinated to achieve the best possible outcomes for our young people.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** An offer of £100,000, spread over the next two financial years, has been received from the Scottish Government to support the 16+ Learning Choices programme, conditional on the Council continuing to share its learning with the Scottish Government and other Councils. Council match funding of £20,000 is also required. The Department will be able to meet this funding from within existing resources.

5. POLICY/LLEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** NIL

6. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** The 16+ learning choices programme contributes directly to the delivery of key targets in the Improving Lifelong Learning and Delivering Community Regeneration plans.

7. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** All activities are appropriately risk assessed. There may be an adverse impact on the level and quality of co-ordination of the programme should support funding not be identified.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1** It is recommended that Members:

- i) approve progress made to date in the 16+ Learning Choices programme and agree to the proposal to appoint an educational professional with a responsibility to lead and manage the programme on behalf of the Council.
- ii) be kept informed of future developments; and
- iii) otherwise note the contents of this report.

Graham Short
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services
AS/E'ON
29 April 2009

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

Members wishing further information should contact Graham Short, Executive Director of Educational and Social Services, Tel: (01563) 576017 or Andrew Sutherland, Head of Service: Schools , Tel: (01563) 576126.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER

Andrew Sutherland: Head of Service, Schools