

## **LISKEARD TOWN COUNCIL**

**AT A MEETING** of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber on Tuesday 17 November 2015 at 7.30 pm there were present:

The Deputy Mayor - Councillor Jane Pascoe - in the Chair

Councillors: - Rachel Brooks, Sally Hawken, Sue Pike, Anne Purdon, James Shrubsole, Lorna Shrubsole, Hella Tovar and Christina Whitty

Mayor's Chaplain - The Reverend Mark Pengelly

Town Clerk - Steve Vinson

Minute Clerk - Stuart Houghton

Members of the Public - None

Before the commencement of the meeting, the Deputy Mayor expressed the sympathy of the Council to the family of the High Sheriff of Cornwall and of the families of the victims of the Paris shooting; she then asked her Chaplain to include these when leading with prayers.

The Deputy Mayor then advised of Housekeeping matters.

### **467/15 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from the Mayor Councillor Phil Seeva and Councillors Roger Holmes, Adam Hodgkins, Tony Powell and Ian Goldsworthy

An apology was also received from Cornwall Councillor Mike George.

### **468/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS, REGISTERABLE AND NON REGISTERABLE**

No declarations of interests were made.

### **469/15 MAYOR'S REMARKS**

The Deputy Mayor reported that she and the Mayor had attended a meeting with Cornwall Councillor Biscoe, the Portfolio Holder for car parking, at Luxstowe House, where the views of this Council had been expressed. The Deputy Mayor had also chaired a meeting of ECCABI, in the Mayor absence, and had shared judging duties at the Prime Stock Show with her.

She expressed the Mayor's thanks to those that had attended the Remembrance Sunday Parade.

Future events included attending a local Climate Vision meeting and the greeting of a team of cyclists who are cycling to Paris for their arrival to coincide with the Climate Summit. The British Heart Foundations Swimathon would be held on Saturday 21 November 2015, when we would field a team of Lady Councillors, and on Monday 30 November the WI would be planting their 100 year anniversary memorial tree in Thorn Park.

**470/15 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2015**

An amendment to Minute 386/15 (Cornwall Councillor Updates) was agreed;

Councillor Brooks proposed, Councillor Pike seconded and the Council **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 20 October 2015 be adopted with the above amendment.

**471/15 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No members of the public were present.

**472/15 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

The Town Clerk reported that he had been informed that the production of the site manuals for the Library had been delayed, but Cornwall Council had proposed that they met with the Council on either the 25 or 30 November 2015.

Members asked the Town Clerk to arrange a later meeting, to give them a chance to digest the site manuals before the meeting was held. They also thought that Rio and representatives of the school should also be invited to attend.

**473/15 COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**a. PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2015**

Councillor Whitty proposed, Councillor J. Shrubsole seconded and the Council **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Tuesday 20 October 2015.

**b. MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 27 OCTOBER 2015**

The Deputy Mayor proposed, Councillor L. Shrubsole seconded and the Council **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the Minutes of the Finance Committee held on Tuesday 27 October 2015.

**Motion 1**

That the Council accepts the recommendation of WPS for the revaluation of its

.2. 257/15

property, and assets, by Barratt Corp Harrington.

The Deputy Mayor proposed, Councillor Purdon seconded and the Council **RESOLVED** that the reassessment should be made by Barrett Corp Harrington

Motion 2

That the Council support free parking on four Saturdays from 28 November 2015 to 19 December 2015 to a maximum cost to the Council of £1940.

The Deputy Mayor proposed, Councillor Brooks seconded and the Council **RESOLVED** to support the free parking to a maximum cost of £1940.

Motion 3

That the Town Clerk and Councillor J. Shrubsole draw up an appropriate specification for the required planning advice and policy for the Neighbourhood Plan, and that the existing Neighbourhood Plan Manager be appointed to do the necessary work, at a cost up to the amount of the grant awarded for this item.

The Deputy Mayor proposed, Councillor Pike seconded and the Council **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk should draw up the specification and the current Neighbourhood Plan Manager be appointed to do the work at a cost up to the amount of grant received.

**c. PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2015**

Councillor Whitty proposed, Councillor J. Shrubsole seconded and the Council **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Tuesday 3 November 2015.

**d. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2015**

Councillor Brooks proposed, Councillor L. Shrubsole seconded and the Council **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the Minutes of the Communication and Engagement Committee meeting held on Tuesday 3 November 2015.

**e. PROPERTY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2015**

The Deputy Mayor proposed, Councillor Whitty seconded and the Council **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the minutes of the Property Committee held on Tuesday 10 November 2015.

Motions 1 and 2

That the ban on individual plotters holding bonfires be retained and that up to four communal bonfires may be allowed each year between 1 October and 31 March.

The Deputy Mayor proposed, Councillor Whitty seconded and the Council **RESOLVED** that the ban on individual bonfires be retained, and that up to four communal bonfires may be held.

Motion 3

To consider the provision of a bus shelter in Charter Way opposite Peppers Park

It was agreed to defer this matter as a bus shelter might be provided by one of the developers already or planning to work, in this area.

Motion 4

To award a contract for the design of a new entrance into Westbourne Gardens to a maximum cost of £4k.

Councillor Brooks proposed, Councillor Hawken seconded and the Council resolved that the local engineering company be asked to breakdown his price, so that each stage could be ordered individually, the outline design of the new entrance to be progressed to a maximum cost of £800.

Motion 5

That the Council agree to the installation of a Public Access Defibrillator in the Barras Street entrance to the Public Hall, connections to be made by others, and that the Council accept the annual surveillance charge of £295 + VAT for the defibrillator.

Councillor Hawken proposed, Councillor Pike seconded and the Council **RESOLVED** to agree to the installation of the defibrillator and to accept the annual surveillance fee.

**474/15 LISKEARD SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

In April 2015 members of the Liskeard School and Community College addressed the Council about the proposed construction of a new College Campus at Bodmin. The Town Council registered an objection to the proposal.

Recently the Town Clerk had received a communication from the Liskeard School and Community College giving the detail of their objections to the planning application that has now been made for the new Campus. Members discussed the new Campus proposal;

- i. It was known that the further students had to travel, fewer take up further education
- ii. Liskeard School had stated that there had been a lack of dialogue about the new campus
- iii. This proposal would not meet the needs of this community
- iv. The application seems to be self-centred, the needs of the surrounding area, or South East Cornwall, do not seem to have been taken into account

- v. Increased travel requirements did not mesh with current sustainability requirement

Councillor Purdon proposed, Councillor Tovar seconded and the Council **RESOLVED** to **SUPPORT** the **OBJECTION**.

#### **475/15      CORNWALL COUNCIL PLANNING DECISIONS**

The Cornwall Council planning decisions had been circulated and were noted.

#### **476/15      ACCOUNTS**

The accounts, which had been circulated, were noted.

#### **477/15      CORNWALL COUNCILLORS UPDATES**

Councillor Hawken reported that the Cabinet had met to discuss the Leisure Centre tenders and had agreed to include both leasehold and freehold options. Work on the Library options was progressing and the open door meeting in the ECHO Centre had been successful and was well attended. The next meeting of the Local Community Area Network would be its AGM.

In answer to a question she replied that some Leisure Centres that had special conditions were not included in the tender process.

#### **478/15      OTHER REPORTS**

##### 1. Town Forum

The Minutes of the Town Forum meeting held on Wednesday 9 September 2015 were noted.

##### 2. Devolution Working Group

The Minutes of the Devolution Working Group held on Tuesday 27 October 2015 were noted.

#### **479/15      CORRESPONDENCE**

The Town Clerk reported that he had received notification that a Community Right to Bid application had been made in relation to the Clubhouse and Sports Pitches at Lux Park. It was confirmed that these areas were not included in the Cornwall Council Leisure Centre tender process.

Councillor Brooks proposed, Councillor Pike seconded and the Council **RESOLVED** to support the Community Bid.

#### **480/15      DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Town Council would be held on Tuesday 15 December 2015 in the Council Chamber.

**6. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT – TOWN COUNCIL MEETING 17 November 2015 For Information**

**Update**

**Councillor Vacancy** Two written applications were received before the deadline. Both candidates have been contacted and made aware of the situation and invited to attend the office to discuss key elements relating to being a Councillor e.g. the amount of work and you don't get paid. Draft questions to be asked at an interview process will be circulated to all Councillors. A date for the necessary interviews will be fixed.

**Funding Opportunities** One of the presentations given at the 23<sup>rd</sup> October Grants Roadshow in the Public Hall was of the South and East Cornwall LEADER grant programme. This subsequently was launched on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2015. Liskeard is an eligible town for the purposes of relevant projects. The programme runs until 2020 for the receipt of applications and 2023 for the completion of spend. All Town and Cornwall Councillors have been e-mailed details of this programme. The information has also been sent to the Town Forum, South East Cornwall Tourism Association S.E.C.T.A., Stuart House Trust, Liskerret Centre, RIO, and ECCABI. The Communications and Engagement Committees' and Museum Committees' draft three work programmes have projects that can possibly be funded via this grant programme. The programme coordinator for South and East Cornwall has been appointed and is Caroline Hanlan. Caroline has agreed to make a presentation at an appropriate Town Council meeting.

**Council Social Media – Facebook.** Since this policy was approved items have been posted on the PV panels press release and the award of cups from the annual allotments competition.

**Cornwall Council Leisure Strategy and Lux Park** Cornwall Council have been contacted and informed "The Town Council has recommended that if Cornwall Council is minded to put the Leisure Centres out to the private sector a longer lease or agreement of 20 years might be necessary to be more attractive for the private sector to consider investing in the fabric of the Leisure Centres. Also if the disposal of freehold is the course of action that is eventually approved that an overage of minimum of 20 years should be applied."

**Libraries** Cornwall Council has been contacted and asked for the Liskeard Library Profile once it is available. They have advised that a meeting date with interested parties will not be likely until near the end of November. The Cornwall Council representation would include Libraries, IT and Property. RIO and Liskeard School and Community College have both indicated that they would be interested in discussing options for the Liskeard library.

**Tourist Information Centre Assistant Manager** Tina Barrett has been appointed to the post.

**Casual and Office Cover Post** Yvette Hayward has been appointed to the post.

**Car Parking – Free Christmas Parking** This was referred to the Finance Committee, on 27 October 2015, that recommended that free parking should be progressed for the Upper Sungirt, Cattle Market and Westbourne car parks on the last Saturday in November and the three Saturdays in December leading up to Christmas, at a total cost of £3440.

The Town Forum had agreed to contribute £1500, towards the Cornwall Council charges, leaving the Town Council's contribution at £1940. The Communications and Engagement Committee at its 3<sup>rd</sup> November meeting has approved for the Town Council contribution to come from a salaries underspend in their budget. The Town Centre Partnership (CIC) had explained that it was not giving any more grants but would be transferring its outstanding money to the Town Council. At this stage the Town Council could agree to use £970 of this money towards the parking offer.

The Chamber of Commerce and Liskeard Traders Association are taking the lead in marketing the availability of the scheme amongst members of the public.

Town Council contacts with the press should see an article in the Cornish Times in 20<sup>th</sup> November edition.

**Devolution Working Party Membership** Since the last meeting of the Town Council two proposals have been received regarding filling the vacancy. These being Councillor Whitty and Councillor Pike.

**8. LISKEARD SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE – to consider the request that the Town Council objects to the Planning Application PA15/06688 for the creation of a new college campus at Old Callywith Road, Bodmin.**

Following a presentation by the Liskeard School and Community College, the Town Council has previously registered objection to the disposal of land to allow the construction of a new college campus at Bodmin. The item has now progressed to the submission of a planning application PA15/06688. The Liskeard School and Community College case is attached. In brief, their view is:

The Governing Body of Liskeard School and Community College objects to this application on the following basis:

- The need for the development is not established There is no identifiable need for an additional 2000 campus-based post-16 places in Cornwall
- The proposed size and scale of the development is excessive
- The proposal is not consistent with the direction of travel of local plan policy on rural communities
- The proposal conflicts with the direction of travel of local plan policy on sustainable transport
- The proposal is not consistent with national and local policy on sustainability
- Communities and organisations that would be affected by this proposal have not been properly consulted

More details of the objections in each of these areas are given in the attached report.

**RECOMMENDATION: THAT THE TOWN COUNCIL CONSIDERS WHETHER TO OBJECT TO THE PLANNING APPLICATION PA15/06688.**

***Planning application number PA15/06688 Creation of a new College Campus, Old Callywith Road Bodmin***

The Governing Body of Liskeard School and Community College objects to this application on the following basis:

- The need for the development is not established There is no identifiable need for an additional 2000 campus-based post-16 places in Cornwall
- The proposed size and scale of the development is excessive
- The proposal is not consistent with the direction of travel of local plan policy on rural communities
- The proposal conflicts with the direction of travel of local plan policy on sustainable transport
- The proposal is not consistent with national and local policy on sustainability
- Communities and organisations that would be affected by this proposal have not been properly consulted

More details of our objections in each of these areas are given below.

*Fundamentally we believe that the attempt to create a very large single hub campus for this large area of Cornwall is misguided and will damage educational opportunity for young people. A high quality, distributed model would be more sustainable and offer better outcomes across the whole ability range, vocational and academic. The forthcoming Post-16 Area Review should we hope address these issues and it would be a grave mistake for this proposal to be rushed through now in a way that could prejudice the outcomes of the review.*

**1. *The need for the development is not established. There is no identifiable need for an additional 2000 campus-based post-16 places in Cornwall:***

- a. The number of 16-18 year olds in Cornwall is declining for the foreseeable future, not reaching 2008 levels again until 2031, according to Cornwall Council demographic projections
- b. Numbers completing A levels at Truro College have declined in recent years reflecting this. The most recently published OFSTED data dashboard for the College shows:
  - i. The number of learners fell from 10,530 in 2011/12 to 9,650 in 2013/14
  - ii. The number of starts or enrolments fell by around 30% from 30,477 to 21,299 over the same period
  - iii. The College is in the bottom 40% of providers of vocational programmes at both level 2 and level 3
  - iv. 4/5 of the College's Level 3 provision is academic and only 1/5 is vocational
- c. There is no need for more campus-based A level provision, which is what this proposal would mainly offer. The need is for additional high quality employer led vocational provision

- d. We believe the figures in the proposal substantially overestimate the number of learners currently travelling to the college from north and south east Cornwall, and demand from mid-Cornwall would better be met by expanded and improved provision in mid-Cornwall itself (particularly the St Austell area where there are 3-4 secondary schools but currently no sixth forms and only a small amount of A level provision in Cornwall College)
- e. The Government's forthcoming local Review of Post-16 education and training will reconsider the future pattern of College-based provision in Cornwall and may lead to radical change. This review is imminent in Cornwall because of the Devolution settlement. A premature decision to allow the proposed expansion would prejudice the outcome of this review

**2. The proposed size and scale of the development is excessive:**

- a. The proposal would more than double the number of post-16 places available locally, from 1,325 to 3,145. The number of post-16 learners studying in Bodmin is fewer than 350. The table below illustrates this

<b>Location</b>	<b>2014 sixth form (16-18) numbers (all years)</b>
Bodmin	322
Launceston	241
Liskeard	177
Newquay Tretherras	266
Treviglas	202
Wadebridge	117
<b>Total number of places currently<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>1,325</b>
Additional places proposed by Truro College	1,820
<b>Total number of places if proposal goes ahead</b>	<b>3,145</b>

- b. At this scale, the proposal is likely to lead to the closure of provision in a number of neighbouring locations, despite the likelihood that the majority of learners would still prefer to study in their local communities as they do currently. This is a significant issue for both student choice and community sustainability (see further comments below).
- c. This is not just an issue for communities in the east. If as the proposal suggests, the new development would divert learners from communities in mid-Cornwall from which substantial numbers currently travel to Truro, then by freeing up space at the Truro campus this could have an effect on the

<sup>1</sup> NB schools in the St Austell area do not have sixth forms and a breakdown of current numbers at Cornwall College St Austell site is not publicly available.

viability of sixth forms in the west as well. The potential impact of this on sixth forms in Falmouth, Camborne and Redruth in particular should also be considered.

**3. The proposal is not consistent with the direction of travel of Local Plan policy**

- a. The Cornwall Local Plan recognises the dispersed rural nature of settlements in Cornwall (eg paragraph 1.22 repeated in paragraph 1.25) and *“promotes this as a longer term sustainable pattern of development which recognises that many of our smaller places provide better opportunities to be more self-contained or work collectively to provide a range of services allowing development of an appropriate scale to meet their needs. Our spatial strategy aims to support this and to ensure all communities and their services and facilities remain viable”*. This settlement pattern is particularly prevalent in the north and east of the county, with in some cases considerable distances and limited public transport between each local market town and its nearest neighbour.
- b. A proposal which concentrates the provision of such an essential service as Post-16 education and training in just one centralised hub location is directly contrary to this policy and will lead to the non-viability of other local post-16 provision to the detriment of local settlements other than that in which the hub is located. No evidence is provided that this centralised pattern of provision delivers significantly better participation and outcomes in other similarly dispersed rural areas, and contrary to claims made in the submission documents there is evidence from a large-scale national data study sponsored by DEFRA that increasing the travel-to-study distance would lead to a drop in participation among marginal learners.
- c. The proposal does not take into account the substantial distances between settlements in what it describes simplistically as “the east”. More than 150,000 people live in North and South East Cornwall which together cover more than 750 square miles. The travel distance coast to coast is approximately 55 miles at its widest point; put in context, this is further than the distance from Penzance to either St Austell or Bodmin. Bude to Bodmin is 30 miles, further than Penzance to Truro and only marginally shorter than Bude to Barnstaple. Saltash to Bodmin is about the same distance as Penzance to Truro. Viewed in this light, it is nonsense to suggest that a single hub campus can adequately meet the needs of learners across such a wide area, emphasising the importance of a distributed network of services for this area as set out through the sustainability policy in the local plan.
- d. Although PP11 Bodmin CNA identifies a local need “1.f. Address deprivation in education, training and skills”, the proposal is far larger than the needs of just the Bodmin CNA. There is no similar reference in any of the neighbouring CNA plans – except PP14 Launceston CNA, policy 1.d “Provision of further and higher education facilities in the CNA” which would be specifically undermined by the creation of a large Hub in Bodmin.

- e. Within Bodmin itself, Callywith Gate is an unsuitable location for an educational institution and is not identified for this use in the Local or Neighbourhood Plans. It is not easily accessible by public transport (either bus or train) and the topography will make cycling an unattractive option for many. The proposed location is on the opposite side of town to the main areas identified for future housing development, again with topography adding to these difficulties. The applicant states in the transport addendum that the 20 minute flat walk from the Truro Park and Ride site to the Truro campus is unrealistically far – the proposed Bodmin site is further than this from most of the local housing developments with the added disincentive of hills meaning that students would be very unlikely to walk to the campus from across town. The proposed location is too far from the town centre for the development to make any measureable contribution to retail footfall and the viability of the town centre, with the most likely beneficiaries of additional retail spend being an out of town supermarket and an international fast-food chain. In the emerging Bodmin Neighbourhood Plan the site is identified for mixed use housing / light industrial which is not compatible with the proposed use.

**4. *The proposal conflicts with the direction of travel of local plan policy on sustainable transport***

- a. By putting at risk post-16 provision in existing settlements, the proposal conflicts with Local Plan paragraph 2.119 (2.113) which states *“The plan reflects our existing communities and their potential to be more sustainable as the ability to travel is restricted due to cost and other factors. By having the opportunity to live more locally with less need to travel our communities will be more resilient and healthier.”* The analysis in the proposal is seriously flawed because it fails to take account the travel patterns of those whose existing provision would be displaced by this proposal, focusing only on those few students who currently choose to travel long distances to Truro.
- b. In the same vein, the proposal conflicts with Local Plan Policy 27.2. *“Locate development and / or incorporate a mix of uses so that the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised by prioritising safe access by walking, cycling and public transport and providing new facilities and services to minimise car travel.”* The model of providing Post-16 education through a large hub campus is inappropriate for a widely dispersed rural area and conflicts with this planning policy by increasing the need to travel.
- c. The proposal ignores the impact of additional journeys by those who currently study locally and would prefer to continue to do this, and there are errors in its claims that journeys would be reduced for learners switching from the Truro campus to the new provision which overestimate this effect. This is untrue, for example, in the case of learners from Newquay (15 miles to Truro

College, 20 miles to Bodmin), and the difference is marginal for the St Austell and Clay Country area. We believe that the majority of the learners identified by the applicant as currently travelling to Truro from “the east” come from these mid-Cornwall settlements

- d. The proposal makes unrealistic claims about the use of cycling, walking and bus travel, as a result of which the number of journeys claimed is an underestimate
- e. The proposal to increase access by train via Bodmin Parkway through cycling or the use of shuttle buses is unrealistic. The Bodmin Parkway A38 junction is a serious blackspot and Highways England should be specifically consulted about any proposed increase in movements through this junction – substantial offsite infrastructure may be required to render this safe.
- f. Estimates of the number of dedicated bus services needed are not thought through given the wide geographic area which this campus is proposed to serve, particularly in the early phases. The assumption that buses would fill to capacity could only be achieved if students from many rural locations incurred significant additional private journeys from home to bus pickup point at the start and end of the day. Estimates of the number of staff journeys by private car are unrealistically low given the lack of public transport access to the site compared to Truro. More information should be sought about proposed bus routes and travel times to check that the claims in the proposal are realistic.
- g. The assumption that a 9.15 start would mean that most traffic to College would miss the morning peak travel period of 8.00-9.00 at Carminnow Cross is wrong. Buses and staff vehicles would have to pass through this junction between 8.30 and 9.00 to have time to get from there to the campus and then for students to get to lectures in time for a 9.15 start. This traffic would therefore be using the junction during the peak period.
- h. As a result of all these factors, the amount of additional traffic flowing through the A30/A38 junctions could be materially higher than estimated. The source data and assumptions used in the modelling need to be interrogated more closely with common sense and local knowledge applied, and a revised opinion sought from Highways England.

**5. *The proposal is not consistent with national and local policy on sustainability***

- a. National planning policy on sustainability is very clear that a combination of environmental, economic and social factors must be taken into account in assessing the sustainability of a proposed development. Access to education and skills is included in the scope of the economic and social dimension of sustainability. Objectors to this proposal were assured on the record by the Leader and Deputy Leader of Council at the time of the land sale decision that the educational impact of this proposal could and would be fully considered as a planning matter. Review evidence has supported the view that existing

provision in other locations could be put at risk of closure by this proposal. The lack of a sustainability appraisal accompanying the submission is therefore a major omission and prevents proper consideration of the sustainability of the proposal.

- b. We understand that the Council considers this a strategic proposal which will therefore be considered on a whole-Cornwall basis not just in relation to the immediate area. We agree. It is a serious omission from the proposal that no information is provided about the likely impact of this massive expansion of post-16 places, particularly for mainstream A levels competing directly with the existing offer, on local provision in communities other than Bodmin itself. Since the applicant makes clear that they envisage that the scheme if implemented would free up space in their Truro campus as well as expand provision in the north and east, the impact of this on the sustainability of other school and college provision in localities across the County (for example, sixth form provision in Camborne, Redruth, Helston and Falmouth as well as Newquay, Wadebridge, Bude, Liskeard, Launceston, Callington and Saltash) should be identified and evaluated. The impact on Cornwall College provision in St Austell and Pool is also of significance, and something that the Government Post-16 review process would undoubtedly wish to consider properly. Not all learners in these communities – probably not even a majority of learners - would choose a new College in Bodmin, but it may be that as a direct consequence of this proposal they would lose access to their preferred and more sustainable local option.
- c. The impact of this on learners and their access to and take up of Post-16 education is the driving factor, not just the impact on other providers. An important national study commissioned by Defra in 2010 used large-scale national datasets to produce an authoritative analysis of the impact of the distance to the nearest provision on young people's participation Post-16<sup>2</sup> with a focus on rural areas. In summary this study identified different patterns of participation among three groups: a "low" group with weak attainment at GCSE level who are unlikely to continue in full time study Post-16 regardless of distance, preferring local employment with training; a "high" group with strong attainment at GCSE whose educational ambition extends beyond A level and who are more motivated to travel despite distance; and a vital "middle" group of those at or around the 5A\*C including English and Maths point in attainment, who may or may not decide to progress. The study found very strong evidence that for this middle group, progression to Post-16 study drops off very significantly as distance to nearest provision increases, and that travel distances of more than 8km (5 miles) put off one in four of these learners from progressing.

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<sup>2</sup> "The Impact of Distance to Nearest Education Institution on the Post-Compulsory Education Participation Decision". Sheffield Economic Research Paper Series 2010007, March 2010

- d. The size of provision proposed in this application makes it quite clear that a number of other providers would have to be put out of business if this scheme is to succeed (see numbers in the opening section). It essentially proposes a strategic switch from locally-based sixth form provision in a network of market towns in the north and east of the county to a single hub. The local provision threatened by this is all based in towns significantly further than 5 miles from the proposed Hub location, with some parts of the catchment even further away. It is clear then that if this proposal leads to the closure of some other local provision, large numbers of young people in this “middle” group are likely to drop out of Post-16 education who might otherwise choose to continue and succeed. This runs contrary to national and local policy on the sustainability of local communities and on this ground alone the proposal should be refused.
- e. The potential impact of this proposal on the community in St Austell and the Clay Country is particularly worrying. This is by Cornwall’s standards a large settlement area, and aspiration and Post-16 outcomes from across this area are particularly poor. Local schools do not have sixth forms and young people progress to a combination of Cornwall College (mainly for vocational plus some A level provision) and Truro College (mainly the higher-end learners for A level provision). Addressing Post-16 educational attainment for this community should be a very high priority for the local authority in its desire to achieve a fully sustainable community and improved educational outcomes in this area. However there appears to be no strategy for achieving this, and any such strategy would have to include development of the quality, quantity and perception of provision in St Austell itself. If this very large Hub proposal in Bodmin were to be allowed to proceed, it would make it completely impractical for this to be achieved. The proposal therefore particularly damages the future social (educational) sustainability of the St Austell community.
- f. It is a major omission that the equalities impact of the proposal on more vulnerable learners, those with disabilities, young carers and care leavers is not considered in the application. For many of these learners, the availability of a local study option is particularly important and the shift to a single central hub might disproportionately affect them. What consideration has been given, for example, to the impact on progression for learners from the Liskeard-based Area Resource Base for those with autistic spectrum disorders?

**6. *Communities and organisations that would be affected by this proposal have not been properly consulted***

- a. This proposal will have an impact on all communities across Cornwall where there is currently Post-16 provision, and on providers particularly schools with sixth forms and the other College. These communities, their town and parish

councils and sixth form providers should therefore have been considered as consultees to this proposal, particularly in view of the fact that the proposal is contrary to the direction of travel of the local plan policy. They have not been formally consulted to the best of our knowledge, and indeed the timing of the submission at the start of the long summer break has created real difficulties for school-based consultees.

- b. The College ran one local consultation event in Bodmin as part of its preparation for this application. School-based invitees were given very short notice of this event and many were unable to attend as a consequence. This was a buildings-led consultation and no detailed information was available about the proposed educational provision or the mix and locations of students it is aimed at, and this information has also been repeatedly refused in response to direct requests. Without this proper informed consultation cannot be achieved.

We are led to believe that following meetings with the Portfolio Advisory Committees of Cornwall Council which pressed this point, the College has made an offer of collaboration with other providers. This has however not been drawn up after any discussion with these providers, and has not even been communicated to us to date so we are unable to comment on the extent to which it may mitigate some of the issues we have raised in this objection. The lack of dialogue, and lack of willingness of the College to share information about its plans as a precursor to informed dialogue, does not bode well for the prospect of meaningful collaboration.