

THE PROPOSED

HASTINGS AND ROTHER NEW COLLEGE

AN OUTLINE CURRICULUM

June 2004

8 Pages

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report is prepared following the publication of *Opportunity and Excellence for All* by the Sussex Learning and Skills Council and East Sussex County Council. The purpose of this report is to review the current curriculum provision in Hastings College of Arts and Technology, Bexhill College and the school sixth forms at Filsham Valley School, The Grove School, Helenswood School, Hillcrest School and William Parker Sports College and to put forward an initial proposal for planning the curriculum for the proposed Hastings and Rother New College (HRNC).
- 1.2 Consideration has also been given to the Federal 6th Form model currently used by Helenswood and William Parker and the more recently published Federated Sixth Form Model put forward with support from all the schools with sixth forms in Hastings.
- 1.3 The following have also been taken into account: the Hastings and Rother Post-16 Transport Study; the Sussex Learning and Skills Review 2003 – Planning Area F; performance of 16-19 year old students in all the post 16 schools and performance of all students in the two colleges; and the prospectuses provided by some schools and both colleges.
- 1.4 The proposals provided are the result of examination of the key documents listed above provided by the LEA, the LSC and the schools and colleges; the evaluation of performance data of all the institutions involved in the proposals; the review of recent Ofsted/ALI reports and discussion with relevant senior staff from Hastings College of Arts and Technology, Bexhill College, William Parker and Helenswood Schools.
- 1.5 Under the terms of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 the governing body of the new institution will have the responsibility to determine the educational character and curriculum of the new college and as such these proposals are indicative of the potential each site can offer. They do, however, take account of the views of the proposed college's important stakeholders

2. Background

- 2.1 The Sussex Learning and Skills Review 2003 for Planning area F identified inconsistent levels of achievement and improvement in post 16 education and training across the area. There was clear evidence of weaknesses in students' performance and participation; also in the levels and range of provision. Average post 16 achievement rates in schools in the area were noted as being below county and national levels and the value added to students learning was low compared with regional patterns. Since the report was published there has been some improvement in some schools, but overall the levels of participation and achievement remain below national averages.
- 2.2 In order to address the issues noted in the Learning and Skills Review, the Sussex Learning and Skills Council and East Sussex County Council developed the proposal to establish new post-16 education provision in Hastings and Rother. The formal public consultation on proposed changes to the organisation of post-16 education in Hastings and Rother has now been completed.
- 2.3 Robertsbridge Community College, Claverham Community College in Battle, Bexhill High School, St Richard's Catholic College and Glyne Gap School, all in Bexhill, do not have post-16 provision. However, their needs and the progression of students from these schools are integral to the proposal. Educational links already exist between these schools and some of the post-16 providers – for example there is a federation of Bexhill area schools with the college for 14-19 and a close working relationship between Bexhill College and Glyne Gap School. It is envisaged that this relationship will be strengthened when Bexhill College moves to its new location on Penland Road in September 2004.
- 2.4 Adult and community provision is made by both further education colleges through day and evening classes on the main sites. However, across the area it lacks coherence. There is Access to F/HE provision at both colleges and outreach work in the community. Claverham Community College also offers evening only courses for adult learners.
- 2.5 There is little e-learning to support rural learners or those for whom this would be a more accessible, appropriate or motivational mode of study. Learndirect provision is made through Sussex Enterprise but a planned approach to

utilising e-learning to promote participation and achievement is needed; at college centres linked with schools, at workplaces and in community venues. HRNC offers the potential to achieve this.

- 2.6 The reform proposal suggests four main college sites with outreach provision as required and/or requested either by communities or employers, subject to resources. The four colleges will be at Battle, Bexhill and Hastings/St Leonards.
- 2.7 The choice of Claverham campus in Battle may cause difficulties in that the site is not easily accessible from many neighbouring rural settlements or from any other part of Hastings and Rother. This will be the only rural campus and as such should have a role to support adult returners, but the nature of its location on a school site may inhibit adult returners who could find the surroundings inappropriate. It is also more likely that the campus will have a 'school' feel, rather than the atmosphere more commonly associated with post-16 education and training. This will be particularly evident during the day when many adult learners with childcare responsibilities have the time to study. However, Rother College will offer the potential to operate as a hub for all HRNC services to rural areas through outreach provision.

3. Curriculum proposals

- 3.1 All of the new colleges in the HRNC family must provide some programmes at entry, foundation and intermediate levels. This could be limited to basic education in literacy and numeracy, a small range of vocational subjects at level 1 and 2 in subjects that do not have high capital and/or revenue costs such as health and social care and business, together with an enrichment programme for all students. All colleges should provide core skills courses in application of number, communications and computer literacy at levels 1 and 2. Significant staff development will be required to support all the staff involved in the delivery of or support for this work. Student numbers involved in this provision will vary between colleges. To optimise participation, HRNC will need to enable low numbers of students to learn in some vocational and core subjects at some colleges in the initial phases of its development. Some support for this may be found through partnerships with schools, employers and community groups. This will need the full commitment of the Corporation Board and College Councils, supported by the LSC and the LEA.
- 3.2 In the development of the curriculum existing links and specialisations should be noted and used to the benefit of students. Specialist schools could offer their specialism in sport, performing arts or other subjects across the local area for all students aged 11-16. Post-16 students should also be able to benefit from the expertise, facilities and equipment associated with a specialist school. The benefits of using these specialisms will not only support post-16 students with excellent facilities and experienced staff, but will also provide good progression models for pre-16 students. The concept of a local educational

focus for a particular specialism can benefit all phases of learning and break down the barriers, perceived or real, between institutions from primary, through secondary to further and higher education. In this way, learning communities can be created, linking learning for its own worth with learning for work or recreation.

- 3.3 Similarly, the existing links between Bexhill College and Glyne Gap School to support students with disabilities and learning difficulties should be developed further and provide opportunities for students with learning disabilities and/or disabilities to tap into the full range of vocational activities with the new college. The new Bexhill College could become the focal point for support services to students with LDD across HRNC and a centre for professional training for their staff.
- 3.4 Pastoral and tutorial services will be an essential feature of support for students of all ages at all colleges, but particularly valuable for younger students. The broader spiritual, moral, social and cultural requirements will also be addressed, with whole-college standards being developed. HRNC will develop consistent, high quality policies and procedures for this work, related to individualised or group learning or personal development as necessary. Good liaison with external support services will need to develop, including drawing upon best practice elsewhere in the local educational networks. Through the work of the proposed Tertiary Board and by other means, areas of common need in student welfare services across local communities may be identified and shared actions agreed. The faith dimension to pastoral care will need to be recognised and could be developed through the wider HRNC learner welfare network.
- 3.5 A caveat on the curriculum offer outlined below, insofar as it will be provided for young people, is that it could be subject to the reforms outlined in the Tomlinson proposals during the period of the formation of the proposed new college. However, HRNC does offer a single delivery model for the reforms post-16 and should be able to work with its partner schools to optimise the benefits to students in the 14-19 phase.

The Individual Colleges

- 3.6 *St Leonard's College.* The main vocational provision should be based here. Under present proposals it would be divided between the Plaza site and the Ore site. Work based learning will also become an important element of this college's services. This vocational college should set out to develop Centres of Vocational Excellence (or successor arrangements for this type of work, to level 3 and above) in as many vocational areas as LSC policy and resourcing will support. The curriculum between the two locations should include:

- i. *The Plaza site:* pre-entry to degree level in Art and Design; Hospitality and Catering; Hair and Beauty; Travel and Tourism; Health and Social Care; Information Technology; Business and Administration; Management and Professional. This site would support the development of the proposed College for Business. Students with LDD should be integrated into mainstream provision. This work will cover Ofsted/ALI areas of learning 5,6,8,9,10,11 and 14.
 - ii. *The Ore site:* this should cater for craft courses from entry level and level 1 to degree level in mechanical and manufacturing engineering; electrical and electronics; construction; wood trades. The provision on this site should be extended to include building trades not currently adequately provided for– plastering, roofing, demolition, restoration, and modular construction techniques. Consideration should also be given to the development of motor vehicle courses although these will have a space, capital and revenue impact that will need to be quantified. This work will cover Ofsted/ALI areas of learning 3 and 4.
 - iii. In conjunction with Bexhill College, this college should develop and offer a broadly based Access to Higher Education for adults in a range of both academic and vocational subjects. This will complement and extend the existing provision currently offered by both colleges.
 - iv. The proximity of Plumpton College suggests the potential for partnership delivery of land-based provision – programme area 2. Hastings College could support the engineering and construction elements of this as necessary (equipment maintenance or landscaping, for example). It is suggested that Rother College would be the main focus for this work.
- 3.7 *Hastings Sixth Form College:* The central Sixth Form college should provide the core curriculum as described in para 3.5. In addition, there would be a range of A and AS level subjects that will provide a broad offer for young people (and some adults) seeking university entry or personal development. Essential GCSE re-sit courses should also be offered. The offer should respond to the known local demand and typically would include both arts and science subjects including at A/AS level accounting; art; biology; business studies; chemistry; design and technology; economics; english language and literature; english literature; geography; government and politics; history; maths; further maths; a range of modern foreign languages; physics; psychology; religious studies; sociology; general studies. Other subjects will be planned into the offer in collaboration with the schools serving Hastings and Rye. In anticipation of the Tomlinson proposals, it is also suggested that appropriate local groups (e.g. 14 – 19 Federation, local travel to learn area group) should be charged with helping to develop a 14-19 offer which would serve to integrate KS4 learning and achievement with post-16 provision in this area.

NOTE: The provision on this site should also be available to support vocational students from the Plaza and Ore sites who may wish to acquire additional A or AS level subjects to broaden their personal qualification base. Students wishing to undertake a vocational course within the Hastings area should be encouraged to go

to the St Leonard's College. This work will cover Ofsted/ALI areas of learning 1,6,12 and 13.

- 3.8 *The Rother College*: this should offer a similar range of provision to that described for the Hastings Sixth Form provision in terms of A/AS courses and the core provision referred to in paragraph 3.5. It should be recognised that this is likely to be for a smaller number of students and the choice of options will need to be slightly more restricted to ensure that group sizes make the provision financially viable. The offer should include both arts and science subjects at A/AS levels including biology, business studies, chemistry; english language and literature, english literature; geography, history; maths; further maths; one or two modern foreign languages; physics, psychology, sociology; general studies. In addition there should be essential GCSE re-sits, such as maths and English, alongside level 1 and 2 vocational courses to support 16 – 19 year old students who still require learning opportunities below level 3. The vocational provision should reflect local employment needs so that it can either lead directly into employment or to progression at level 3 at St Leonard's College. Typically the vocational provision could include area such as business and administration; information and communications technology; health and social care and hospitality. It is suggested that Rother College becomes the focus for all rural outreach and support services, including services to individuals, employers, and information, advice and guidance (IAG).It could offer land based education in association with Plumpton College and with technical support from the vocational college within HRNC. The courses offered from the Rother College will cover Ofsted/ALI areas of learning 1, possibly 2,5, 6, 8,10,12 and 13.
- 3.9 *Bexhill College*. The curriculum of the Bexhill College in its new location on Penland Road should reflect the breadth of facilities on the new site. In line with the other colleges, Bexhill College should provide the core curriculum as described in para 3.5, in addition to the wide range of A and AS level subjects currently provided. Work at this centre will cover Ofsted/ALI areas of learning 1,5,6,8,10,11, 12,13 and 14.
- i. This college will have greater numbers of students to provide the capacity to use the breadth of experience and expertise that currently exists here to offer minority subjects at A/AS level.
 - ii. The proposed subject offer would include both arts and science subjects including at A/AS level accounting; archaeology; art; biology; business studies; chemistry; classical civilisation; computing; design and technology; economics; electronic; English language and literature; English literature; environmental science; film studies; geology; geography; government and politics; history; human biology; information and communications technology; law; maths; further maths; modern history; music; modern foreign languages; philosophy; photography; physics; psychology; religious studies; sociology; general studies.
 - iii. It would be appropriate for this college to provide a number of GCSE subjects both for re-sit students and for adults returning to education. These subjects could include maths; English; French, Spanish; science.

iv. The specialist provision on the site for media, music, dance, performing arts and sports make it an ideal site for both vocational subjects from level 1 to level 3 and A/AS level in these subjects.

v. As the second largest site in HRNC, this college should also offer a range of vocational subjects at levels 1 and 2 to encourage students to study at lower levels before progressing to level 3 vocational provision at St Leonard's College. Typically this would include media related subjects; business and administration; information technology; travel and tourism; sports and leisure; health and social care; public services. These courses would complement and supplement provision at other colleges.

vi. The breadth of subjects offered at level 3 would make this site the most appropriate location to offer a broad and productive International Baccalaureate course and to provide, in conjunction with St Leonards College, a broad Access to Higher Education for adults.

Other Considerations

- 3.10 One clear benefit of the HRNC curriculum offer will be scope to respond to the needs of individual students from across the whole of Hastings and Rother in a comprehensive manner. It should be possible to provide minority subjects for viable groups other than at Bexhill College by the teacher moving to teach, by agreement, at an alternative college. Effective whole college timetabling will be an essential feature of service planning. In some areas, for example, in Hastings, it will need to be associated with school timetabling as well. There will be greatly enhanced opportunities for curriculum development by linking teachers through curriculum groups across the whole of HRNC. This should be a formal element of the plan for continuing professional development, shared with other education professionals in schools and HE as appropriate.
- 3.11 Through the use of information and communication technology it should be possible to provide a large bank of subject and support materials accessible through a college intranet from all sites and in many community locations. E-learning will be facilitated by common learning materials and support procedures. Remote access to college services can also be developed using information and learning technology. This will need to be a considered feature of the development of HRNC from the start if it is to be most effective, with a systems approach and an ILT plan cross-referencing local area curriculum planning.
- 3.12 It is envisaged that adult and community education would benefit greatly from the re-organisation by extending the range of provision offered through the new college and improved delivery under the auspices of a single organisation. This would provide consistency of experience for students, consistent quality assurance across the area, the opportunity to broaden the range of provision and the ability to offer a wider range of learning mediums including e-learning. ACL offers important access opportunities to both urban and rural learners and could be re-positioned through the engagement of the voluntary and community sector in the development of a new, coherent curriculum offer.