

## **Schools and colleges band together for better deal for young people in Thetford**

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Four schools and colleges have joined forces to develop proposals that could see up to 200 more young people over the age of 16 years old in Thetford staying in education to improve their qualifications and skills.

Charles Burrell High School, Rosemary Musker High School, West Suffolk College and Easton College have submitted a proposal to the Learning and Skills Council Norfolk (LSC Norfolk) after the LSC launched a competition to provide a wider choice of education and training for 16 – 19 year olds in the town.

Significantly fewer young people aged between 16 to 19 are in some form of education or training than the Norfolk average and the LSC Norfolk has ambitious plans to increase the Thetford and wider Norfolk average to 90 per cent participation by 2015.

The proposal put forward by the 'Thetford Post-16 Providers Consortium' includes recommendations to:

- Create a new post-16 educational centre in the town, including training facilities for local businesses
- Develop a greater range of work-based learning opportunities
- Enhancing the town's pastoral and welfare support, for example by providing each young person with a named mentor
- Developing new courses in response to need, particularly around land-based and vocational courses

It is expected that the support of Mildenhall College of Technology, Norfolk Connexions Service, Thetford Grammar School and Broadland Training will be required to deliver the proposals.

Graham Brough, Area Director for the LSC Norfolk, said: "It is really quite rare for so many local educational institutions, from across county boundaries to come together to improve the learning opportunities in one area. This says something about the strong commitment and belief that exists within the town that the results of the competition can affect real change for Thetford's young people. We also believe that the ripples of this change will be felt by everyone in the town."

The LSC Norfolk is now urging people to read the proposal and respond to its recommendations between now and 21 March when a local stakeholder panel, put together in response to the bid being received, will convene to consider the proposal and any representations made from the public. A further meeting will then be held by the LSC to review the proposal and the recommendation of the panel before making a decision on the proposal by 9 May.

If it is approved, the proposal will then be developed to include full financial and property details and go to the regional LSC Board.

More information on the proposal can be gained from Marion Nobbs at the LSC Norfolk at [marion.nobbs@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:marion.nobbs@lsc.gov.uk).

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#### **Notes to editors**

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**LSC**

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In the east of England we have six offices, one in each county: Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. We work with our partners, local employers, training providers, schools and colleges to realise the vision of developing the region as one of the most successful knowledge-based economies in Europe.