



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20th SEPTEMBER 2018

PARTNERSHIP WITH UNITED WORLD COLLEGES (UWC) ATLANTIC COLLEGE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, CLLR J ROSSER AND CLLR C LEYSHON.

AUTHOR: Esther Thomas, Tel: 01443 744001

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members with information about the opportunities a partnership with United World Colleges (UWC) Atlantic College could offer learners at post 16 in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 1.2 To give members more detail about the College's ethos, philosophy and outcomes.
- 1.3 To explore whether the College's ambition to reach wider within Wales through their Outreach Programme could benefit young people in RCT schools.
- 1.4 To consider the efficacy of funding places for a small number of pupils who are looked after as an alternative to care.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Agree that Officers work in partnership with UWC Atlantic College to forge links with schools in RCT to promote the opportunities on offer.
- 2.2 Agree that Officers from Education and Children's Services work with the college to identify suitable candidates.

- 2.3 Agree that a further report to inform on progress is presented to Cabinet after a 12 month period.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 In a drive to broaden the College's impact and to apply its unique educational philosophy and ethos more widely, over the next few years, the College intends to focus its efforts on strengthening its outreach programme to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds from within the UK and specifically Wales. Senior staff from the College have approached the Director to explore the potential for partnership working with schools and learners in RCT.
- 3.2 As a College that is based in Wales, the vision is to increase support for students in the local area establishing an Associated Schools Programme linking the College to schools in RCT.
- 3.3 In addition to a scholarship(s) being offered to a student(s) from RCT, the College is interested in establishing a wider programme of engagement with other schools for joint student programmes.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 UWC Atlantic College established in 1962 is the founding member of the United World Colleges (UWC) movement, a group of 17 independent international schools and colleges spanning Europe, North and Central America, Asia, and Africa. It is a residential sixth form college for young people aged 16-19, situated at St Donat's Castle, Vale of Glamorgan. It is important to note that unlike other independent schools, students are selected to the College irrespective of their nationality, religious or ethnic background and socio-economic means, leading to a truly diverse student body. The College believes all people are of equal worth regardless of wealth, status, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, race or faith. The aim is to build a community that embraces individuality and responsibility and celebrates difference.
- 4.2 The College's outreach programme aims to break down intangible boundaries that continue to exist in the UK educational sector, by bringing the College's unique learning to a greater number of disadvantaged young people, unlocking potential, creating higher education aspiration and raising academic achievements.
- 4.3 Students at the College study the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme - a full-time two-year course that falls into two parts: the academic curriculum and a parallel co-curricular programme

of experiential learning that focuses on key aspects of peace, social justice and a sustainable future. Students serve in the community, organise conferences and help in the delivery of faculty programmes. Physical activity, youth leadership, initiative and authentic responsibility; team work, instilling community values and positive youth activism are key aspects of the curriculum. The College is also in the process of developing new career pathways that are more vocational in nature.

- 4.4 UWC Atlantic College is also very proud of the outstanding levels of pastoral care that it collectively, as a community, provides to all students. In this respect, there is extensive support to young people who have experienced disrupted lives. These, and other students can access support from house parents, welfare professionals, linked parents (based in the local community) and the career advice and guidance team.

5. RATIONALE FOR DEVELOPING A PARTNERSHIP WITH ATLANTIC COLLEGE

- 5.1 Nationally, the education and social outcomes for children in care are significantly lower than for non-looked after children. As the number of looked after children continues to increase year upon year, local authorities are under increasing pressure to find effective ways to support children in need so they can achieve improved outcomes across social care and education.
- 5.2 The latest Welsh Government statistics show there is still a wide gap between the educational attainments of children who are looked after and that of other pupils. Clearly boarding is not the right option for every looked after child, but for some it could provide the necessary stability and security, a place of 'belonging', a strong ethos of personal and social development to enable a child to gain access to many enriching extracurricular activities, as well as provide significant opportunities for educational success. There is already a wealth of evidence that supports this analysis. One example from Norfolk County Council is attached at Appendix 1.
- 5.3 In terms of selection it is suggested that the College in partnership with RCT schools and officers from the Council follow a 12 month selection/induction process timeline from identifying the learner(s) to entry at the school. This would include a group of potential pupils visiting the school, shown around campus, being provided with literature about the school, being interviewed by the head teacher or another senior member of staff and meeting some of the students. These visits would provide the pupil with a realistic understanding of

what it would be like to board at the school. Family members (as well as local authority professionals) would also be invited and encouraged to visit the school and spend time there, in order to demystify the often stereotypical image of a how boarding schools are run. It has to be clearly understood that the ethos of UWC Atlantic College is very different to that in a typical independent school.

- 5.4 Central to the success of the student placement would be the careful and suitable matching of the learner(s) to the College. In addition to the College's extensive experience of recruiting young people from all kinds of backgrounds, which is as varied as Syrian refugees, children from war-torn countries and deprived areas from the UK. The College can also draw from the expertise of organisations that specifically work in this area such as The Boarding Schools Partnership endorsed by Kirsty Williams, Education Minister Wales and the Royal National Children's SpringBoard Foundation (Appendix 2)..
- 5.5 Candidates would ideally be aged 16 or 17 on the 1st of September of the year they would start at the College. They would apply to the college while in (or about to enter) their last year of GCSEs or first year of AS-Levels (or equivalent). Whilst strong academic achievement is highly valued by the College, it selects students based on its ethos and the knowledge and skills that shape its students as sound individuals. Important attributes include the ability to mix with others and to be tolerant of fundamentally different opinions and attitudes. The student (s) would need to have the ability to keep up with the challenges of the International Baccalaureate or the individual subject Certificates (which are less academically demanding).

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equality Impact screening form has been prepared in relation to this proposal and concludes that a partnership with UWC Atlantic College will have a positive impact and therefore a full Equality Impact Assessment is not necessary. The screening form can be accessed by contacting the Author of the report or the Cabinet Business Officer.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 A consultation exercise is not necessary for this proposal

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 Funding for placements is available from existing resources, but in addition, UWC Atlantic College is in contact with a number of trusts

and foundations such as the Royal National Children's SpringBoard Foundation, Buttle UK and the Reedham Children's Trust, who might potentially be interested in co-sponsoring the student in partnership with the Council.

9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED
CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP

- 9.1 Reducing the number of children and young people becoming looked after remains a key priority of RCT Council – Children's Services Delivery Plan 2018-19 and the Council's Corporate Plan

10 CONCLUSION

- 10.1 Members are asked to consider the information provided and decide whether officers from Education and Children's Service should jointly further explore opportunities in partnership with UWC Atlantic College to improve the life chances of learners in RCT.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Children & Young People

Appendices Papers

Appendix 1: Boarding School Placement for Vulnerable Children & Young People

Appendix 2: Extract from the Boarding School Partnership Website

Contact Officer :

Esther Thomas
esther.k.thomas@rctcbc.gov.uk
01443 744001

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20TH SEPTEMBER 2018

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, CLLR J ROSSER AND CLLR C LEYSHON.

**Item: PARTNERSHIP WITH UNITED WORLD COLLEGES (UWC)
ATLANTIC COLLEGE**

Background Papers

None.