

REPORT TO CABINET

17 SEPTEMBER 2026

**REPORT OF PEOPLE SELECT
COMMITTEE**

CABINET DECISION

**Cabinet Member for Children and Young People - Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor
Clare Besford**

Scrutiny Review of Post 16 Provision

Summary

The attached report presents the outcomes of the People Select Committee's review of Post 16 Provision.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)/Decision(s)

The topic was included on the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2025-2026. The review is now complete, and the recommendations have been endorsed by the People Select Committee for submission to Cabinet.

Recommendations:

The Committee recommend that:

1. Transition support is strengthened by developing a consistent borough-wide transition framework between schools and post-16 providers, including clear pre-enrolment guidance, earlier course matching, data sharing, and structured support during the first term/end of Year 12 when drop-out risk is highest.
2. Early warning systems for flagging declining attendance, behaviour, and attainment are embedded across all post-16 providers with clear escalation and intervention pathways are in place before disengagement reaches crisis point.
3. Collaborative initiatives that are showing signs of successfully assisting young people, such as Teach Meets, Skills for Success, and Business Mentor Support, are expanded to all providers and prioritising subjects with historically smaller student cohorts.
4. Communication between all providers and young people and their parents/carers regarding the Post-16 in-Borough offer is strengthened
5. Careers education is embedded in to the curriculum in all schools and post-16 providers to ensure young people choose the right pathways for them and reduce early withdrawal by:
 - ensuring careers advice and guidance/post 16 options are available from Year 9 (or earlier) to enable young people to build their knowledge

- developing resources and staff training to show how subject-specific knowledge and skills translate into employment, business and industry
 - give clear course expectations, progression routes and employment outcomes to reduce early withdrawal from and dissatisfaction with courses.
6. Labour-market intelligence and cohort growth data is utilised to plan academic, vocational and apprenticeship provision more strategically, to ensure capacity keeps pace with demand and competition between age groups does not disadvantage younger learners.
 7. Cross-provider enrichment opportunities are broadened to not only create a more competitive offer compared with regional competitors but also raise aspirations.
 8. Post-16 providers explore collaborative approaches and strategic networks to address transport barriers, highlighted as a significant influence on post-16 choice including connectivity to all in-Borough post-16 providers and cost, so young people can access efficient, cost effective in-borough provision.
 9. Post-16 providers ensure that vocational courses provide coherent pathways to meet industry requirements

Detail

1. There is a broad and high-quality post 16 offer for young people in Stockton-on-Tees, with five providers offering a range of courses and qualifications. However, enrolment figures have been impacted in recent years with students choosing to attend out of borough providers and Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) rates are high. The review therefore aimed to consider the current position, challenges, and proposed solutions in the Stockton-on-Tees post 16 provision, and in doing so, assist in increasing attraction and retention of post 16 education, reduce the number of young people becoming NEET, and lead to better outcomes for the young people of the Borough.
2. A Post 16 Partnership has been established, with senior representative from all providers, Careers Service, School Support Economic Development and other relevant stakeholders. The Partnership seeks to enhance strategic collaboration and communication between providers as well as improve the quality of training in the borough, identify and address common challenges facing the sector, and promote the offer more widely. The Partnership had four work strands in 2025/26 to achieve their aims: Excellence for All, Communications and Marketing, Careers, and Transitions.
3. The review's recommendations therefore build on the strong foundations already in place, with a focus on continuing the collaborative work taking place to strengthen communications, careers education, data sharing, and transitions from school to post 16 education.
4. Contributions have been received from representatives leading the Post 16 Partnership work strands, including Egglecliffe School and Sixth Form College, Stockton Sixth Form College, the Education Training Collective, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's Career

Service, and the Employment and Training Hub. Members of the Committee also attended a meeting of the Post 16 Partnership.

Community Impact and Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment

5. A EPIA has been completed with the outcome that the recommendations will potentially have a positive impact on the protective characteristics age, poverty, and experience of care due to aim of the recommendations being to strengthen post-16 outcomes for young people.

Corporate Parenting Implications

6. There are no direct implications in the report.

Financial Implications

7. There are no direct financial implications in the report.

Legal Implications

8. There are no direct implications in the report.

Risk Assessment

9. The review is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

Wards Affected and Consultation with Ward/Councillors (refer to Concordat for Communication and Consultation with Members)

10. This review is relevant to all Wards across the Borough.

Background Papers

11. None

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