

Deputy St Pier
President
Policy & Resources Committee
Sir Charles Frossard House
St Peter Port
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21 February 2020

Dear Deputy St Pier

Requête – P.2020/14 – Determining the Best Model for Secondary Education

Thank you for your letter, dated 6th inst., in which you invited the views of my Committee on the above Requête, in accordance with Rule 28(2) of the Rules of Procedure of the States of Deliberation and their Committees.

General comments

My Committee considers the Requête to be unnecessary, ill-considered and, if the Prayer is turned into States' Resolutions, damaging and destructive. The effect of the Requête, if approved, would be to stop, for an indeterminate period of time, the transition into one school in two 11-18 colleges which has been under way since 2018. This would be damaging to many hundreds of students. For many of them it would remove the certainty of where they will be at school in the next academic year and in future years. It would leave them in the current configuration of four sites, which is widely considered to be unsatisfactory despite the best efforts of schools to overcome its inherent weaknesses. It would deny them the benefits of the reforms agreed by the States twice, in 2018 and 2019, which include broadening the curriculum offer, equality of opportunity, access to high quality facilities for all and enhanced provision for students with special educational needs and students with communication challenges.

It would be especially destructive to do this, as is the case with this Requête, without proposing any viable alternative model for secondary education but rather taking the States back years to review models previously rejected. In the case of most such models previously rejected, they were rejected by the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture before the election of the current Committee and, ironically, when some of the signatories

to the Requête were members of the Committee. The Requête might more properly be entitled 'Not Determining the Best Model for Secondary Education'.

Financial Impact Assessment

If the States approve the Requête, not for the first time they will be writing off significant sums of money which they have caused to be invested in developing the future model of secondary education by directing the introduction of that model twice in the past two years, and most recently six months ago. They will also be committing substantial further expenditure in order to carry out more comparisons between the model of secondary education they have approved twice against an unquantified number of other models which have previously been rejected. It is difficult to see how this pattern of decision-making can add to the credibility and reputation of the States for making strategic decisions and putting them into effect.

My Committee and the Office of the Committee have expended much time and energy attempting to compile an impact assessment with regard to the Prayer of the Requête.

After repeatedly requesting to meet the requérants over a period of three weeks, I am pleased to report that we did eventually meet with two of them on the 6th inst. I am less pleased to report that we were unable to elicit sufficient information from them to form a clear understanding of the effects of their Requête as they see them, or the sequence of events they intend to be followed if their Requête is successful. This has made it harder than it would have otherwise been for the Committee to provide an assessment of the financial implications of the Requête as envisaged by Rule 4(3).

We are able to provide an Impact Assessment, including an estimate of the likely financial implications of two different scenarios:

Scenario 1 supposes that it is possible, which my Committee strongly asserts it is not, to produce a 'comprehensive comparison' of viable alternative models for the Committee *for* Education, Sport and Culture to consider after the General Election, and then to produce a Policy Letter recommending the favoured option, for the States to debate in December 2020. It then assesses the impact of the States i) progressing the one school in two 11-18 colleges model (Scenario 1A); or ii) selecting a different model for the delivery of 11-18 education (Scenario 1B).

Scenario 2 provides a more realistic timeline for the progression of the work necessary to produce a 'comprehensive comparison' of viable alternative models for the new Committee *for* Education, Sport and Culture to consider, and then to produce a Policy Letter recommending the favoured option to the States. It then assesses the impact of the States i) progressing the one school in two 11-18 colleges model (Scenario 2A); or ii) selecting a different model for the delivery of 11-18 education (Scenario 2B).

The Impact Assessments are set out at Appendix 1 and the timelines at Appendix 2 (Scenario 1) and Appendix 3 (Scenario 2). The financial implications of the delay that

would be caused by the Requête range from £2.4m (Scenario 1A) to £11.3m (Scenario 2B), when compared with allowing the current States-approved programme to continue on its current timeline.

Impact on Further and Higher Education

You have asked the Committee to comment on tertiary education and in particular the States-agreed policy to integrate further and on-island higher education in The Guernsey Institute in new purpose-built facilities.

The Requête proposes that “three school models” previously considered (and rejected) should be revisited. Models previously considered include, for example, the proposals of the previous Committee, which would have split the College of Further Education into two separate institutions with one of those combined with A level and IB studies, and a “tertiary college” combining A level and IB studies and all further education. Both of these models are inconsistent with the States-agreed policy of integrating existing further and on-island higher education providers (but not A level and IB studies) into a single entity: The Guernsey Institute.

Since the Requête requires all models previously considered to be reconsidered, including those above, approving the Requête would inevitably require work on the creation and development of The Guernsey Institute to be stopped until such time as the States came to a new settled position with regard to the future structure of secondary education. Secondary and post-16 education are two sides of the same coin, which has been recognised by successive Committees and successive States, and cannot be developed in isolation from each other.

The existing College of Further Education facilities were deemed by Peter Marsh Consulting to be “*some of the least fit for purpose, most dispersed and uninspiring that we have seen in the FE sector*”. Alas, if the Requête is approved, work to remedy this by overhauling the estate from which the island’s further and on-island higher education provision is delivered would also be stalled for an unspecified period of time. It should be noted that these reforms have significant support from staff in the sector (‘Post-16 experts: “Just get on with it”’, *Bailiwick Express*, 28 Jan 2020).

Assessment of quality of access to education via three school models

Your letter also seeks an assessment, insofar as an assessment is possible in the short time available, of the potential to provide equality of access to education and improved educational outcomes for those of compulsory school age via either:

- Three 11-16 schools and a sixth form college on one of the sites (which for all practical purposes would inevitably mean two 11-16 schools and one 11-18 school); or
- Three 11-18 schools

The Committee's detailed assessments in this regard are set out in Appendix 4 and 5, so are not repeated here.

When the States agreed the model of 'one school in two 11-18 colleges' - as mentioned, initially in 2018 and then most recently in September 2019 - they did so after successive States and successive Education Committees had spent several years studying the advantages and disadvantages of numerous potential models for the future structure of education. Long periods of time have been spent examining "four school models", "three school models" and "two school models". There is no startling new information to unearth. In the opinion of the Committee it would be highly regrettable and disadvantageous for the States to stop the current reforms and direct that a different model of education be adopted instead. But at least clearly adopting a different model would provide some direction and before too long re-establish some certainty. However, it would be extraordinary if the States, having come into office in 2016 pledging to resolve the future structure of education above all else, should leave office handing their successors more or less the same blank sheet of paper which they inherited four years ago - and yet that would be the practical effect of turning the Prayer of the Requête into States' Resolutions.

The States agreed the current reforms because they are the optimum model for delivering important principles on which secondary education should be founded. These include: promoting the highest possible educational standards and outcomes; capturing the best of non-selective education for young people in the islands; equality of opportunity regardless of where in the island a student lives; providing all schools and students with high quality facilities; and making the best use of the funds the States are prepared to invest in education annually. My Committee remains fully committed to this model because it is overwhelmingly in the best interests of the young people whose futures are the paramount consideration in this debate.

The current reforms are in the second year of a five-year transition plan. All students and parents have known for nearly 18 months what each of their steps would be through their years of secondary education. It is almost incomprehensible that the States should want to consider stopping the reforms now and remove the certainty of the current transition plan for schools and students when a clear majority of members have supported the reforms twice in the past two years and when the benefits of these reforms remain unchanged and when, nearly five years after this debate resumed, no Committee and no member has been able to put forward a different model which would better fulfil the principles upon which this government pledged to build non-selective education. Stopping the reforms now with no clear idea of which other structure should be adopted instead - and leaving students in the current model which is almost universally acknowledged to have fundamental weaknesses in a non-selective system - would be an abdication of leadership unprecedented in recent times and would greatly disadvantage young people whose futures will not be secured by another round of weakness, vacillation and indecision from their government.

My Committee recognises that there is a need to respond to the legitimate concerns raised by staff in schools in relation to elements of the space standards adopted for the two 11-18 colleges and elements of their day to day operation. My Committee is confident that these matters can be successfully addressed by the Committee, officials, school and college leaders and school staff working on them together during the remainder of the transition period. An amendment has been submitted by me and the Vice President as follows:

To delete the Propositions and substitute therefor:

"1. To note that in 2018 and 2019 the States directed that secondary education in the mainstream sector shall in future be organised in two 11-18 colleges operating as a single school as the optimum model in terms of educational benefits, equality of opportunity, high quality facilities for all students and making the best use of the funds which the States are prepared to invest in education annually.

2. To note that in September 2019 the States approved the capital investment necessary to establish two 11-18 colleges (de Saumarez College at Les Beaucamps and Victor Hugo College at Baubigny) operating as a single school (Lisia School) and also in relation to the co-location of health and care facilities at those colleges, the integration of further and on-island higher education in one institution (The Guernsey Institute) in new purpose-built facilities (at Les Ozouets), the redevelopment of La Mare de Carteret Primary School and improvements in digital infrastructure and services at schools and colleges.

3. a) To note that the reforms to secondary education are already well under way in a transition period which started in 2018 and will conclude in 2023;

b) To note that in October 2018 parents were advised where their children will be at school in every year of the transition period and thereafter and that these arrangements for students cannot be maintained unless the development of the 11-18 colleges proceeds according to the current timetable and that no credible or reliable alternative transition model for students could be put into effect without certainty about the future model of secondary education;

c) To note that the number of students in the colleges will increase gradually until there are year groups in all seven years at both colleges in the academic year 2023/24 and that the operation of the school and its colleges (including, for example, arrangements for lunch and enrichment activities and the future staff structure) is being developed iteratively and remains subject to further discussion between the Committee, the Office of the Committee, school and college leaders and teachers and support staff; and

d) To direct the Committee to ensure that decisions about the operation of the school and its colleges shall follow an improved process of consultation with teachers and support staff and that such consultation shall proceed in a way which secures the maximum possible confidence of key stakeholders.

4. a) *To note that the space standards at the 11-18 colleges upon which the Committee's plans are based are the result of a rigorous independent external review of the space necessary which was commissioned by the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture and the Policy & Resources Committee and not insubstantial additional space which the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture considers to be desirable for the benefit of students and staff;*

b) *To note that stopping the reforms to secondary education approved in 2018 and 2019 would cause new and unnecessary uncertainty and disruption to many hundreds of students and deny them the benefits associated with the reforms – including broadening their curriculum offer, equality of opportunity, access to high quality facilities for all and enhanced provision for students with special educational needs and students with communication challenges – and would maintain, possibly for a lengthy period and certainly for an unidentified period, the numerous inadequacies of the current arrangements and invariably cost many millions of pounds which, if they are to be spent, would be better spent investing in educational facilities and services; and*

c) *To direct that as soon as possible, and after further consultation with school and college leaders and teachers and support staff, the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture shall submit to the States a Policy Letter, together with any Propositions considered necessary, in which it shall set out its opinion on whether further building space should be added at the 11-18 colleges for the time when they have year groups in all seven years and in order to provide the best possible facilities which the States are prepared to fund, and in doing so the Committee shall consider space for, inter alia, recreation and social times, sport (in the case of Victor Hugo College including for students at Le Murier School), libraries and sixth forms."*

Yours sincerely



Deputy Matt Fallaize

President

The Committee for

Education, Sport & Culture

Cc: Deputy Dudley-Owen, Deputy Gollop, Deputy Lowe, Deputy Meerveld, Deputy Prow, Deputy Smithies & Deputy LC Queripel

Enc' Appendix 1 – Impact Assessment
Appendix 2 – Timeline (Scenario 1)
Appendix 3 – Timeline (Scenario 2)
Appendix 4 – Assessment of Equality of Access – Narrative
Appendix 5 – Assessment of Equality of Access – Comparison