

**REPLY BY THE PRESIDENT OF
THE COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION, SPORT & CULTURE
TO QUESTIONS ASKED PURSUANT TO RULE 14 OF THE RULES OF
PROCEDURE BY DEPUTY GAVIN ST. PIER**

Question

In developing its recommendations on the transformation of secondary education to bring to the States of Deliberation, the Committee has understandably, given the history, emphasised the importance of extensive consultation with important stakeholders. Please could you set out whom the Committee consider to be ‘important stakeholders’ and detail the consultation with each such stakeholder group which has been organised by the current Committee, i.e. organised after the Committee’s election in October 2020?

Answer

In answering this question, the Committee is grateful for the opportunity to first clarify its position with regard to the ‘transformation’ of secondary education.

The Committee is currently finalising the high-level priorities and commitments within its Education Strategy, in respect of which it has sought feedback from States Members and Head Teachers/Principals and education officers. This Strategy will benefit from engagement with the wider education sector during the Summer term.

That Strategy, when combined with the outcome of related workstreams such as the SEND Review and the introduction of Ofsted inspections, the completion of both of which has been significantly hampered by the travel restrictions imposed due to the global pandemic, will allow the Committee to assess the extent of the ‘gap’ between the aspirations within its Strategy and the position today, based on those objective external assessments. This will inform the cycle of continuous improvement within all of our States schools and the services that support them. Work on this cycle of continuous improvement has already begun. Much of it is not dependent on, or specific to, any model linked to the reorganisation of Secondary and Post-16 education which is necessary – and over-due – as a consequence of the States’ decision to introduce a non-selective secondary education system.

In the context of the on-going work of the Committee with regard to the organisation of Secondary and Post-16 education in a non-selective system, the Committee considers its important Stakeholders to be (in no particular order):

Students

School & The Guernsey Institute staff and their representative bodies

Parents & carers
The community
States Members

When the Committee took up office, and in the context of the Review initiated by States Resolutions in March 2020 (just before the first COVID-19-related lockdown), surveys of all education staff had been carried out, alongside a community survey which had a high take-up rate, and a cycle of consultation workshops was already underway with secondary school staff. Soon after its appointment, the Committee was appraised of the structure, content and objectives of those consultation sessions, and was able to assess the findings of the surveys, which, in respect of the staff surveys had already been made public. The Committee was very content for the staff consultation sessions to be completed, as it recognised the invaluable contribution the output of those sessions, and the staff and community surveys that preceded them, would make.

With regard to hearing the voice of students, the Youth Commission had already been engaged and had run consultation workshops with students at each of the secondary schools, exploring the same topics as those explored in the community survey. The output of these sessions has also been fed into the Committee's ongoing work.

Had the above programme of consultation not been underway, the Committee would have instigated it. However, the Committee was satisfied that the content and structure of the stakeholder consultation that had taken place was sufficiently robust that there was nothing to be gained by varying or repeating it simply so that the Committee could say it had been carried out on its say so, which would have served only to frustrate participants.

The feedback from the above consultation was influential in informing the Committee's Guiding Principles with regard to the organisation of Secondary and Post-16 education in a non-selective system.

The Committee held a workshop to which all States Members were invited in December 2020, when it sought feedback on its emerging Guiding Principles and its emerging Education Strategy.

The Committee sought feedback from all education staff on its emerging Guiding Principles in December 2020.

During January, the Committee had lengthy visits to each for the four high schools as part of its introduction to staff. Members spent time getting to know the fabric of the school buildings and understanding how they each operate. The Committee also held drop-in sessions on each site for school staff a pre-cursor to further engagement sessions.

The Island's second lockdown came without warning on 23rd January and, for reasons that are well understood, placed all education staff under considerable and sustained additional pressure. That pressure has eased somewhat with the move to Stage 3 on 22nd March and as a result the Committee is now able to recommence its direct in-person engagement with staff. These further engagement sessions will take place shortly, having regard to the Easter break which for schools commences on 1st April, and the need for school and TGI staff to have a well-deserved break.

The Committee has held two engagement sessions with the NCTLG (the combined staff representative bodies) during the lockdown period.

It held a briefing session for all States Members in March 2021 at which it set out details of the many component parts of the 'education eco-system' including those that contribute to the cycle of continuous improvement via which any deficit between the Committee Education Strategy and the objectively validated position today, will be addressed. The Committee has already confirmed that further briefing sessions will follow.

Given the extent to which the Island's second lockdown has hampered the Committee's ability to undertake in-person engagement with a number of stakeholder groups, the Committee took the unusual decision to publicise its high-level policy direction with regard to reorganisation of Secondary and Post-16 education well in advance of the finalisation and publication of the Policy Letter setting out its policy direction in greater detail. It has done so to generate public and political discussion on this subject and to ensure that all those participating in its upcoming engagement sessions, details of which the Committee will shortly be announcing (having regard to the Stage 3 requirements placed on large indoor gatherings), have had the benefit of foresight of its policy direction so as to maximise their participation during those sessions. It has also done so to ensure transparency when it comes to the Committee's desire to rescind certain extant Resolutions as part of the Government Work Plan process.

Date of receipt of the Question: 10th March 2021
Date of Reply: 25th March 2021