

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

***Embargoed until 00.01am Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2014***

### **New qualifications framework will provide high quality outcomes for all Bailiwick learners**

Young people will be able to access a range of qualifications including the new GCSEs being introduced in England, GCSEs from Wales and Ireland, international GCSEs and accredited vocational qualifications as part of a new qualifications framework being implemented by the Education Department. This framework will also include recognised non-examined programmes such as Duke of Edinburgh Award, ASDAN and Prince's Trust. At post-16 level students will be able to access AS and A Levels from England, Wales or Northern Ireland, International AS and A Levels, the Cambridge Pre-U qualification and International Baccalaureate Diploma plus BTEC qualifications and other recognised vocational qualifications.

All schools, including the grant-aided Colleges, have signed up to the framework which will offer a suite of qualifications for 14 to 19 year-olds and will see subject leaders across schools working closely together to agree to a common awarding body across the Island, wherever possible.

Headteachers have been closely involved in developing the framework taking into account the results of the recent public consultation and the views of the profession across the Island.

'As leaders of our schools we feel that in order to provide a qualifications framework that is in the best interest of all learners, it is vital that schools and colleges are allowed the freedom and flexibility to make the appropriate decisions for their learners, said Tina Watson, Headteacher of the Grammar School & Sixth Form Centre.

'What is really important is that we provide clear pathways so that all our young people are able to progress on to their chosen destination; be that continuing in education or training or going into employment.'

Les Beaucamps High Headteacher, Peter Le Cheminant, said that schools and subject leaders were best placed to make decisions about which awarding body to choose.

'As headteachers of the Guernsey Federation of Secondary Schools we will work with our colleagues in the grant-aided Colleges and the College of Further Education to ensure that we provide the most suitable course content and assessment method for the majority of our young people.

'Alongside the range of GCSEs we believe it is also important for schools to offer non-examined and skills-based programmes. Such provision is critical in developing young people with a broad base of transferable skills and we will work with the Youth Commission and other providers to ensure high quality outcomes,' said Mr Le Cheminant.

Principal of Elizabeth College, George Hartley, welcomed the collaboration across schools.

'Whilst our first priority will always be to provide the most suitable qualifications for our own pupils, it makes absolute sense to collaborate with other island schools where possible to ensure we are

fully aware of the pros and cons of all the options and for joint staff training purposes,’ said Mr Hartley.

‘It’s certainly a no-brainer that the schools let the subject leaders decide what specific GCSE options to adopt within their departments – they are the professionals and will know best what is in the best interests of their pupils, though I completely accept there is work to be done in ensuring parents and employers are fully briefed on the various gradings that will emerge.’

The Education Department believes that this solution provides a pragmatic, flexible and coherent basis for the further development of a high quality education system in Guernsey and Alderney.

Education Minister, Robert Sillars, said the Board believed the framework would deliver the most stable option for Guernsey at a time of political uncertainty in other jurisdictions.

‘We have taken on board some of the concerns expressed in the public consultation that a wholesale move away from the system in England would present us with recruitment problems and possibly make us less attractive to people wishing to move to the Island. However, we must make sure that the qualifications we offer are in the best interests of all our young people and should be capable of stretching learners and differentiating between them whilst at the same time being inclusive and recognising the achievement of all our students,’ said the Minister.

Deputy Sillars acknowledged that offering such a range of qualifications wasn’t without its challenges.

‘We know we will have to take time to explain to parents, employers and the wider community the difference between the grade profiles for each of the qualifications and how they can be compared. It will also be difficult to compare our performance with other jurisdictions, especially England, who will be introducing a range of different accountability measures which we will not easily be able to fit in to. We are continuing to look at benchmarking ourselves against wider international indicators, such as through PISA, and will also be able to judge how we are doing compared to previous years’ results.

‘What is important is that everything we offer will be recognised and valued by UK universities and those further afield and will prepare our young people for the next steps in their lives.’

The new qualifications will begin to be introduced from September 2015 alongside changes in the other UK jurisdictions. The first examinations will be in 2017. A programme of staff training and engagement with parents and employers will take place over the next year as schools prepare for transition to the new framework.

**Note to Editors:**

**The Minister, Mrs Watson, Mr Le Cheminant and Mr Hartley will be available for interview at the Education Department at 12.30pm on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> June. Please confirm with Nicky Bougourd if you wish to attend.**

## **Summary of Consultation**

The Public consultation was launched in March and closed on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2014.

It presented four options for consideration in relation to a new qualifications framework at Keystage 4 (14-16) and Keystage 5 (16-19). Continuing with the IB Diploma was common to each of the four options:

1. Adopting the new system of exams being introduced in England
2. Adopting the Scottish examination system
3. Implementing an interim solution where schools can use iGCSEs, or qualifications from Northern Ireland or Wales including GCSEs, AS and A Levels plus a range of vocational qualifications whilst taking time to further review and plan for the introduction of an alternative system. This could be the English or Scottish system.
4. Another option

501 individuals and organisations responded to the public consultation.

Overall there was a split in preferred options between Option 3 (45%) and Option 1 (39%) but when considering their second choice, respondents chose Option 2 (24%) ahead of either Option 1 (23%) or Option 3 (28%).

The results of the consultation, although not conclusive, did provide a rich and useful base for further discussion and development of the options.