

12 July 2018

Dear Mr Brady

Dene Magna 6th Form Consultation

The Forest Economic Partnership (FEP) was launched in 2018 by the Forest of Dean District Council. Its mission is to deliver a thriving economy in the Forest of Dean District by connecting business, Councils, people, ideas and resources. Already over 100 organisations/individuals participate in its quarterly steering group or 4 sub-group meetings.

The Education and Skills Sub-Group of the Forest Economic Partnership (FEP) has a mission within a lifelong learning context to get the workforce we need for the District now and in the future to power and sustain economic growth by removing barriers and raising aspirations. We therefore fully support Dene Magna's proposal to establish a Sixth Form at the new Gloucestershire College campus in Cinderford as it removes barriers and raises aspirations among the young in the Central Forest, while continuing to provide multiple routes to meet inspirations including their current skills based initiative.

We particularly highlight the following:

- **Partnership.** Dene Magna has a strong record within the Forest of working collaboratively with other education providers to raise standards. Although FEP is still young, representatives from Dene Magna have been active within it to assist with resolving the perennial challenge of the gap between education and business and in taking forward emerging ideas. A Sixth Form for the Central Forest provides further opportunities to remove that gap
- **Raising Aspirations.** There are many different valid routes into the workforce. Currently, the A level route is restricted, due to a lack of local provision. This results in these students needing to travel outside of the central area, incurring additional time and cost implications that can be a barrier to our young people. -The effects of this can be seen most acutely amongst those eligible for free school meals in FoDDC. 26% achieve 2 or more A levels and 12% enter higher education, which ranks the Forest as 243rd and 275th of all English Local Authorities. (Social Mobility Commission). This more accessible Sixth Form removes the travel and other real barriers to aspirations.
- **Skills drain.** The Forest has significant issues with outbound travel at peak times among its working population. For students, this issue can be significantly worse meaning that a

proportion will stay and/or work in the school or university area once their courses have finished. For some years the Dene Magna mantra has been go out into the world and explore, but then come back. If applied to the Sixth Form Centre, the route to meet an individual's A Level and/or university aspirations can be met with an increased likelihood they would consider local Forest –based employment. This assists in the Forest economic regeneration and meets the core themes of Glos 2050 in retaining the young within the county and increasing higher skilled jobs.

In summary the foundation of a Sixth Form accessible for the central Forest meets both current and future needs by enabling local opportunity.

Regards

Andrew Callard
for and on behalf of the Forest Economic Partnership (FEP)