

## **Briefing Note – “Shaping the Future – Petroc 2020-25”**

Petroc is currently undertaking a consultation with staff and stakeholders in order to shape their future strategic plan. The first stage of the consultation, called "Shaping the Future - Petroc 2020-25", is a listening exercise around four scenarios exploring the key themes for their future development. The scenarios are purposely provocative to stimulate 'blue-sky' thinking about the potential role of Petroc within the education and training sector in 2025 and beyond. The four scenarios are based on the possible outcomes in a high growth versus low growth economy, combined with a high technology versus low technology environment. It would be difficult to summarise the scenarios as they are extremely detailed, but they can be viewed at <https://sites.google.com/petroc.ac.uk/petroc-consultationstaffviews/home>.

As an important stakeholder, we are being asked for our input into the consultation process. Mid Devon's Corporate Plan 2020-24 recognises working in partnership 'to deliver outcomes and improvements to the area' as a core value, and identifies working "with education providers to secure appropriate post-16 provision within the district to minimise the need to commute out for A/T level studies" as a specific objective under the Community theme.

The consultation is in three stages:

- Scenario planning
- Identification of Key Themes
- Consultation on the draft strategy

Looking at the scenarios they seem more directed to staff and those directly involved with the college, and the Council may have limited input we can provide into this stage. It would seem most appropriate to input the Council's comments at the second and third stage of the consultation. However, if members want to respond at the scenario planning stage, the consultation can be found at:

<https://sites.google.com/petroc.ac.uk/petroc-consultationstaffviews/home>

In responding, members should consider the following:

- Petroc is a 'not-for profit' organisation operating in a market in which there is competition not only from other FE colleges (e.g. Exeter College, Richard Huish, Bridgewater and Taunton College, Cannington, Bicton College) and other local education / training providers but increasingly from national private sector 'for-profit' businesses.
- Post 16 education is a market in which 'consumer choice' is driven not only by the range of courses available, but increasingly by the whole educational, social and leisure offer to students. This includes the learning environment and facilities available, the social and leisure opportunities available, the attractiveness of the place, and, as the scenarios point out, the green credentials of the provider.
- Petroc, specifically the Tiverton campus, finds it difficult to compete with Exeter (and Taunton) both in the comprehensiveness of its courses and the attractiveness of its wider offer – the perceived lure of 'the big city'.

- Exeter and Taunton, because of their much larger catchment, benefit from economies of scale to maintain a broader range of qualifications and topics.
- The landscape of educational and training qualifications is changing, with the introduction of T levels, and increasing focus on higher-level apprenticeships. Given the uncertainties over the direction of the national and local economy post Brexit, and wider pressures such as automation and the zero carbon economy, the needs of the future workforce is rapidly changing.
- Improvements in technology over the next few years will potentially lead to a revolution in how education / training is provided, leading to greater opportunities for remote learning and virtual campuses. The speed, extent and affordability of these technologies will shape the market in which Petroc functions – but will potentially make physical presence tied to a specific location less important.
- Uncertainty over the direction of the national economy post-trade negotiations with the EU, and the value of tax-revenues will determine not only on the demand on work-based courses, but also on the amount of funding the government has available to invest in education and training
- Since Devon County Council does not provide universal subsidised transport for post-16 education, the cost of transport remains an important factor in students choices, particularly in a rural district like Mid Devon.

Letter from Petroc, dated 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Dear Stakeholder

We are embarking on a process to formulate and draft our next strategic plan.

We are calling our process As one of our key strategic stakeholders, we would like to invite you to be part of our process and are seeking your views as to the role you would like to see Petroc play in the coming five years.

#### The Process

We are adopting an approach that involves three stages: scenario planning; identifying strategic themes; and producing a written strategic plan and would welcome your input at all or any of these stages.

For the scenario planning stage, we have devised four different hypothetical scenarios for how the world might be in 2025 and are working through exercises with our staff, learners and stakeholders, to consider how Petroc would be successful if that scenario were to occur.

Our strategy will seek to consider what we will need to be successful in relation to our customers, our partners, our products, our staff and our resources. Your input into this process will be invaluable in ensuring that both internal and external factors are fully considered.

Details of the scenarios and notes for how to work with them can be found by clicking on this [link](#) to open the consultation.

<https://sites.google.com/petroc.ac.uk/petroc-consultationstaffviews/home>

### Your Input

We would welcome your input in any or all of the following ways:

First, by reviewing any of our four scenarios and outlining what points you feel the College should explore, under the five areas: customers, partners, products, staff and resources between now and the end of March.

Equally, when we have drawn strategic themes from the inputs to the scenarios, we would welcome your thoughts on those strategic themes. I will write to you again at this stage.

Finally, we will consult you on the draft written Petroc Strategy 2025 and would welcome your input at that stage too.

We would welcome your thoughts or ideas at any stage of the process. Please send these to the Strategy Project lead Sheena Murphy-Collett, Director of HR & Organisational Development, by email [s.murphy-collect@petroc.ac.uk](mailto:s.murphy-collect@petroc.ac.uk)

Thank you for considering contributing to Petroc's strategy development and thank you too for your continued support of the College.

Best wishes  
Sean

**Sean Mackney**  
Principal and Chief Executive

**Petroc**  
North Devon Campus  
Old Sticklepath Hill  
Barnstaple Devon EX31 2BQ

T +44 (0)1271 852521

[www.petroc.ac.uk](http://www.petroc.ac.uk)