

New Community College Proposed For Carrigwohill

A large crowd was in attendance at Scoil Mhuire Naofa in Carrigwohill on Monday night 21st November last, to hear a presentation from County Cork VEC in relation to a proposed new second-level school for the area, following the recent announcement by the Minister for Education and Skills, Mr Ruairi Quinn TD, that Carrigwohill had been designated by his department to be the location of a new school to open by 2017.

This public meeting took place following an invitation extended by the local community to Ms Joan Russell, Chief Executive Officer of County Cork VEC, to inform the community of how County Cork VEC might meet the needs of the area in terms of second-level education provision. Prospective parents and interested members of the community were among the crowd of over 120 people who heard Ms Russell present a proposal to develop a community college which would involve County Cork VEC sharing trusteeship with the Diocese of Cloyne.

County Cork VEC is a significant provider of quality second-level education in the county, with direct responsibility for 21 post-primary schools and a co-trustee role in all 7 of the county's community schools. The VEC also provides for adult, community and further education and oversees the County Cork School of Music. Central to its core mission is the support of the expert services provided by County Cork VEC Head Office for all schools in its care in relation to buildings procurement, ICT, finance, grants and human resources; as well as access to quality training for boards of management and professional development for teachers and school leaders.

Ms Russell presented an overview of the model of community college envisaged for Carrigwohill, which includes the provision of a broad curriculum and a range of policies under the stewardship of a board of management encompassing parents and nominees of both the VEC and the Diocese of Cloyne. She emphasised the value placed on an inclusive and caring environment in the community college model, where the voice of both student and parent is heard and where accountability and transparency are paramount.

Ms Russell also spoke of the particular focus of County Cork VEC in fostering excellence in Teaching and Learning and pointed to the leadership role that County Cork VEC has played in promoting the Instructional Leadership Programme, which extends teachers' instructional practices, at local and national level. In concluding a well-received address, Ms Russell also promised the large attendance that, if invited by the Minister, County Cork VEC would be proud to join with the diocese in leading the development of a new school which would ensure the highest standards of education and opportunity for progression for the young people of the area.

Parents who are interested in availing of the opportunity to see a community college built in the area can fill in 'Expression of Interest' forms that are now available in local primary schools. Upon completion, these forms may be returned to the primary school or mailed directly to County Cork VEC Head Office, Yeats House, Barrack Square, Ballincollig, Co Cork. Alternatively, online versions of the form are available to complete and return through the County Cork VEC website www.cocorkvec.ie.