

**RAISING THE PARTICIPATION AGE STRATEGY**

**To:** Cabinet

**Date:** 17 September 2012

**From:** Hannah Woodhouse – Service Director, Strategy and Commissioning, CYPS

**Electoral division(s):** All

**Forward Plan ref:** Not applicable      **Key decision:** Not a Key Decision

**Purpose:** To consider, comment and agree on the Raising the Participation Age Strategy as set out in Appendix 1

**Recommendation:** To agree to the adoption of the Raising the Participation Age Strategy

For more information on whether the decision should be classed as a key decision please see the following link and refer to article 14 “ Decision making”  
<http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/db/council1.nsf/1ce8fdf14189ade780256626006632dd/57a2895fa99278538025700c00636005?OpenDocument>

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1** The Education and Skills Act 2008 increased the minimum age at which young people in England can leave learning, requiring them to continue in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17 from 2013 and until their 18th birthday from 2015 (the first cohorts to be affected are the current Year 10 and the current Year 9).
- 1.2** Raising the participation age (RPA) does not mean young people must stay in school; they will be able to choose one of the following options:
- full-time education, such as school, college or home education;
  - an Apprenticeship, or other work based learning; and
  - part-time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering for more than 20 hours a week.
- 1.3** The Department for Education has consulted on policy to form the secondary legislation for how RPA will work in practice. For example the definitions of residency, full and part time education, and any wider ways of working that could be considered as participating, combined with part time study. Statutory guidance will be developed for local authorities in Autumn 2012 and focused secondary legislation will be laid before Parliament in early 2013.
- 1.4** This paper outlines and explains the implications of the local (draft) RPA Strategy titled 'Increasing Participation: A Strategy for Cambridgeshire'. The draft strategy has been discussed by CYPS Management Team (March 2012), Overview and Scrutiny Committee (March 2012) and by Informal Cabinet (May 2012), as well as with local area secondary education partnerships. The strategy can be found in **Appendix 1**.
- 1.5** The strategy is supported by a detailed Action Plan, which Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 July 2012 agreed will be reviewed by a small Task and Finish Group, following further development by school, college and County Council practitioners.

## **2. MAIN ISSUES**

- 2.1** The strategy sets out current levels of post 16 participation in employment, education and training in Cambridgeshire, why raising participation is important and what the County Council commits to do, together with partners.
- 2.2** Raising the participation of 16-18 year olds is important because it makes a lasting difference to their lives and also supports Government and local ambitions to improve social mobility and stimulate growth in the economy. The strategy outlines six objectives to raise participation and support young people to progress and achieve. These are:
- I. Getting the data right so that we know where the young people are and how they are doing.
  - II. Improving support for young people at risk of not participating.
  - III. Putting in place the right provision to meet the needs of young people and local employers.
  - IV. Linking employers with schools and colleges to support the

progression of young people into skilled employment.

- V. Guaranteeing general and targeted high quality information, advice and guidance to all young people.
- VI. Making sure that all young people, their families, schools, colleges, employers and providers understand what RPA means for them.

**2.3** Each of the six objectives is addressed in detail in the under-pinning Action Plan.

### **3. ALIGNMENT WITH PRIORITIES AND WAYS OF WORKING**

#### **3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

The following paragraphs set out details of implications identified by officers:

**3.1.1** Paragraph 2.2 above refers to the lasting difference that participation in education, training and employment can make to the lives of young people. Those who do not participate are more likely to have low skills, to go on to be unemployed later, to earn less and to suffer from poor health or depression, which can continue to impact on their adult life. This can block social mobility for individuals and families, and research also suggests that a lack of skills impacts on the productivity gap between this country and some other countries.

**3.1.2** In contrast, participating in and achieving qualifications can dramatically increase young people's life earnings – for example, people with an Advanced Apprenticeship earn between £77,000-£117,000 more over their lifetimes than those without, whilst the employment rate of adults with a Level 2 qualification is twice that of those without qualifications.<sup>1</sup>

**3.1.3** The strategy has clear synergy with other strategies that have already been approved by Cabinet -The Adult Skills Strategy and The Apprenticeship Strategy, and also the Narrowing the Gap Strategy, which is currently under consultation.

#### **3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives**

**3.2.1** There are no significant implications for this priority.

#### **3.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people**

The following paragraph sets out details of implications identified by officers.

**3.3.1** RPA focuses attention on a number of categories of vulnerable young people, set out in the strategy. Implementation should result in earlier identification of those at risk of non participation, and improved multi-agency support at an earlier age.

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<sup>1</sup> Building Engagement, Building Futures: Our Strategy to Maximise the Participation of 16-24 Year Olds in Education, Training and Work (HM Government, published December 2011)

### **3.4 Ways of working**

The following paragraphs set out implications identified by officers for leadership and working locally:

**3.4.1** The objectives in the strategy set out what we commit to do, together with partners. The strategy includes a 'Statement of Responsibilities' for the County Council, for schools and colleges, and for partnerships under each of the six objectives. For example:

- Data will be shared between the locality teams, schools and colleges to ensure that support is put in place for young people at risk of non participation and for those who drop out;
- Joint work with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) will be established to support local employer engagement with schools and colleges; and
- The County Council will share data and other information, including the 'Post 16 Education and Training Capacity Review', with providers to inform provision planning.

**3.4.2** A number of meetings have been and will be held with stakeholders, these include:

- Meetings were held with 14-19 Area Partnership Chairs to ensure that they support the arrangements in principle. They agreed that local area partnerships are well paced to lead a joint approach.
- A workshop was held on 4<sup>th</sup> July when locality teams had the opportunity to discuss working arrangements. This was very positive.
- More workshops are being planned for the Autumn term for each of the three 14-19 partnership areas, where locality teams, schools and colleges will discuss joint working arrangements.

**3.4.3** The Apprenticeship and the Adult Learning and Skills Strategies detail ways of increasing engagement with employers. There is synergy with the RPA Strategy and Action Plan in order to link employers with schools and colleges, to support the progression of young people into skilled employment.

**3.4.4** The Youth Support Service will offer supportive arrangements to assist schools in meeting their statutory requirements to deliver information, advice and guidance (IAG). A Cambridgeshire IAG Quality Award will be made available to schools, which will meet the national standard.

## **4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

### **4.1 Resource and performance implications**

The following paragraphs set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- In order to support effective implementation there will need to be adjustments to the targeted youth support delivery and the work routines

of other teams. It is anticipated that this can be achieved within existing staff resources.

- Data sharing protocols are being reviewed to enable the required information sharing between the local authority and institutions.

## **4.2 Statutory, risk and legal implications**

- 4.2.1** The report above sets out the legislative background in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.3. Failure to successfully implement the Strategy and Action Plan could result in failure to meet County Council statutory duties to 16 and 17 year olds.

## **4.3 Equality and diversity implications**

- 4.3.1** There are no significant implications for any of the prompt questions within this category.

## **4.4 Engagement and consultation**

The following paragraphs set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- 4.4.1** The six objectives in the strategy were identified for action following a County self assessment in September 2011, in conjunction with the ISOS Partnership. In addition, County Council staff, partners and stakeholders had the opportunity to inform the development of the strategic approach by completing a questionnaire during Autumn 2011.

- 4.4.2** A 'Raising Participation Operational Board' has been in place since Autumn 2011 to lead the development and delivery of the strategy and action plan, including cross directorate representation from the County Council and from the local 14-19 area partnerships. This Board is accountable to the CYPS Management Team via the Service Director for Strategy and Commissioning who chairs the Board.

- 4.4.3** Consultation with Members to date has been outlined in paragraphs 1.4 and 1.5, above. Ongoing arrangements for engagement and consultation with other stakeholders are outlined in paragraph 3.4, above.

### **4.4.5 Health**

There are no significant implications for any of the prompt questions within this category, although paragraph 3.1.1 makes reference.

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
Increasing Participation: A Strategy for Cambridgeshire	16-19 Commissioning Service
Post 16 Education and Training Capacity Review	<a href="http://camweb/cyps/stratcomm/16-19/">http://camweb/cyps/stratcomm/16-19/</a> and 16-19 Commissioning Service