

**CABINET RESPONSE TO : MEMBER LED REVIEW – EDUCATIONAL  
ATTAINMENT IN FENLAND**

*To:* **Cabinet**

*Date:* **14 December, 2010**

*From:* **Gayle Gorman, Service Director: Learning**

*Electoral division(s):* **Fenland**

*Forward Plan ref:* **Not applicable** *Key decision:* **Yes**

*Purpose:* **To consider the Joint Fenland District  
Council/Cambridgeshire County Council Member-Led  
Review on Educational Attainment in Fenland**

*Recommendation:*

- a) To thank Scrutiny for its part in producing a  
valuable and detailed report.**
- b) To approve the proposed response to the Member  
Led Review on Educational Attainment in Fenland**

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Member Led Review, conducted jointly with Fenland District Council, on Educational Attainment in Fenland has produced a report which contains ten recommendations for consideration by Cabinet.
- 1.2 Cabinet would like to thank Scrutiny for producing the report and seeking the views of officers and members during the study.
- 1.3 The report is comprehensive and detailed, and is welcomed by Cabinet and officers within the Authority.

## **2. RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The proposed response to the recommendations of the Member Led Review are set out below. Dates for the commencement and completion of activities are shown. These dates take into account the recommendations of the member led review and necessary lead-in times.
- 2.2 **Recommendation 1: CCC and FDC to work in partnership with schools and other providers to raise aspirations in Fenland through:**
  - **Communicating successes and opportunities**
  - **Developing parental engagement with schools and education in all its forms, particularly those from migrant communities**
  - **Developing parental skills in supporting children's education**
  - **Targeting work to ensure children in Fenland have access to a broad range of cultural and sporting opportunities**
  - **Targeted work to address young peoples confidence about controlling their own health and wellbeing**

### **Proposed Response**

In terms of overall partnership working between CCC, FDC, schools and other providers, lead officers from both councils supporting the review will meet to develop a joint plan to address the specific recommendations. Plan to be produced by March 2011.

In terms of CCC's own response to specific recommendations, a number of actions will be taken:

#### **i) Communicating successes and opportunities**

Greater use will be made of CCC communications, such as Learning Together, to highlight successes and opportunities in Fenland. Standards & Effectiveness Services will ensure that particular strengths and successes are shared through best practice audits, the Cambridgeshire Directory of Best Practice; meetings of the Fenland headteachers, senior leaders and subject leaders; and developmental work linked to supporting school-to-school improvement partnerships.

**ii) Developing parental engagement with schools and education in all its forms, particularly those from migrant communities**

CCC officers from the Learning Directorate and the Enhanced & Preventative Services Directorate will liaise with FDC, schools and other partners to agree a more co-ordinated and cohesive approach to this challenging issue. The restructuring of the Learning Directorate along area lines will support improved partnership working. The impact of current work will be evaluated and actions adjusted and added to, as appropriate. Action to be completed by March 2011.

**iii) Developing parental skills in supporting children's education**

CCC officers will ensure that the implementation of the parenting strategy includes an appropriate and specific emphasis on Fenland. Action to be completed by April 2011.

**iv) Targeting work to ensure children in Fenland have access to a broad range of cultural and sporting opportunities**

This will require a collaborative strategic approach between Fenland District Council and CCC and further discussions by lead officers will take place. This will be supported by the move to embed Cambridge Culture activity at a local level and to develop and fund local events and activities, driven by local schools and groups of children. Action to be completed by September 2011.

**v) Targeted work to address young people's confidence about controlling their own health and wellbeing**

CCC will liaise with Fenland District Council and Health and other community partners to investigate funding sources that would enable a deeper and more detailed analysis of health-related outcomes for young people in Fenland to be undertaken and appropriate actions to be taken. CCC will seek financial support for all Fenland schools to join the extended Healthy Schools programme with subsequent school-level actions guided by the analysis referred to in the previous sentence. CCC will support, through funding and guidance, the extension of the Kick Ash smoking cessation programme to all Fenland secondary schools. Action to be addressed by April 2011.

**2.3 Recommendation 2: CCC and its partners to widen the availability of provision at the Early Years foundation Stage, taking advantage of proposals for additional provision for 2 year-olds and ensuring it is targeted at those most in need.**

**Proposed Response**

CCC officers, using the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, will continue to be aware of the pressures on free childcare places for 2, 3 and 4 year-olds, and will deploy appropriate resources in order to a) address these pressures and b) develop places in quality settings. CCC officers will focus future work on promoting parental awareness of early years provision to ensure maximum take-up in Fenland, with particular reference to 'hard to reach' families. CCC officers will continue to develop innovative approaches to reaching and supporting disadvantaged children, e.g. by

providing an outreach translation facility for migrant families to ensure that such families are well informed about services available.

CCC officers will support promote Children's Centres in Fenland as the key foci for community engagement; the provision of facilities and networking opportunities; and the identification of disadvantaged 2 year-olds. CCC officers will work with early years settings in Fenland to develop the accurate use of the Early Years Foundation Stage progress summaries for all disadvantaged 2 year-olds in receipt of funding and use these to ensure good transition into school. CCC officers will ensure that settings providing funded places for 2 year-olds remain engaged, motivated and effective.

- 2.4 Recommendation 3: Health engagement needs to be improved and best practice implemented consistently across the district. In particular, work to:**
- **Identify, assess and refer children with developmental needs at the earliest stage**
  - **Ensure effective engagement of key stakeholders including GPs, health visitors, children's centres and schools**
  - **Address the outcomes of the Health Related Survey for Fenland**

#### **Proposed Response**

The links with early identification from Children's Centre teams will be developed to ensure clearer communication of early indicators and joint working with midwife teams and health visitors will be strengthened.

A meeting will be arranged between relevant stakeholders to agree a strategy and plan to ensure effective engagement and improved outcomes for children and families in Fenland.

This recommendation will need to be addressed by CCC, Fenland District Council, Cambridge Health, schools and other partners and will be the subject of further discussions, leading to agreed actions.

- 2.5 Recommendation 4: Continue to strengthen the work of schools and the Councils in 'cluster groups' including continuing to focus on the development of transition projects and services.**

#### **Proposed Response**

This recommendation will be the focus for a set of current and future actions to be taken forward by CCC officers in the Learning Directorate and Enhanced & Preventative Services Directorate. A key outcome of the restructuring of the Learning Directorate will be an improved focus on educational support at area and 'cluster' levels. This will align well with the new 'localism' agenda promoted by the Coalition Government.

Plans are in place to strengthen links between localities and the education support teams to ensure that partnerships and cluster activity is developed. This will be driven by the new Education White Paper focus on school to school support and partnership, and will be supported by the area lead officer from the Learning Directorate who will facilitate and promote the development of local clusters for successful impact on pupil outcomes.

- 2.6 Recommendation 5: To support the joint project led by Fenland District Council and CCC to address recruitment and retention of public sector staff, particularly teachers, health visitors and social workers.**

**Proposed Response**

Cabinet is asked to support the recommendation regarding the joint project and associated work being developed by the Cambridgeshire Schools Workforce Steering Group.

- 2.7 Recommendation 6: Fenland District Council and CCC to support stronger links between business and schools at all curriculum levels and in particular to:**

- improve the quality of work experience placements
- support the growth of apprenticeships

**Proposed Response**

CCC and its partners will address this recommendation under the aegis of the Education Business Partnership, which is in the process of being established and will replace the Cambridgeshire Education Business Links Organisation. Specific actions to improve work experience placements and support the growth of apprenticeships will be contingent on forthcoming legislation and funding settlements but priority will be given to ensuring that such stronger links are made in Fenland.

- 2.8 Recommendation 7: Fenland District Council and CCC to pilot the extension of community transport initiatives to support the provision of after school activities, particularly in rural villages**

**Proposed Response**

The recommendation is agreed, subject to the availability of identified funding.

- 2.9 Recommendation 8: It is essential that resources continue to be targeted to reduce the educational attainment gap across Cambridgeshire. In addressing the reduction of resources, CCC and Fenland District Council should ensure that the potential of community assets are maximised and that duplication is avoided.**

**Proposed Response**

The recommendation is agreed and is already a high priority for the Council. Focused work by CCC officers, schools and other partners to further raise attainment in Fenland will continue but the precise nature of future work will need to be determined in response to forthcoming legislation and funding arrangements.

- 2.10 Recommendation 9: Further work needs to be undertaken to understand the reasons for high levels of School Action and School Action Plus identification in Fenland**

## **Proposed Response**

CCC officers will undertake this work as a) part of a project within the Special Educational Needs Programme and b) through monitoring in individual schools undertaken by Standards & Effectiveness officers.

### **2.11 Recommendation 10: The conclusions of this review need to be tested through engagement with children, young people and families.**

#### **Proposed Response**

A series of stakeholder visits/events will be jointly coordinated and organised by Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council members to discuss the outcomes of the review and seek stakeholder views. Action to take place by May 2011.

## **3. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

### **3.1 Resources.**

The cost of the response to the recommendations will need to be determined in consultation with Fenland District Council.

### **3.2 Statutory Duties**

No direct implications arise from the recommendations or the response to the recommendations, although forthcoming legislation may have such implications.

### **3.3 Climate Change**

No direct implications arise from the recommendations or the response to the recommendations.

### **3.4 Access and Inclusion**

The recommendations and response have significant implications for access and inclusion.

### **3.5 Engagement and Consultation**

The recommendations and response have significant implications for engagement and consultation.

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
None	NA