

**UPDATE ON EDUCATION STRATEGY AND PLAN**

**To:** Children & Young People's Committee

**Meeting Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> September 2018

**From:** Wendi Ogle-Welbourn Executive Director: People & Communities

**Electoral division(s):** All

**Forward Plan ref:** n/a **Key decision:** No

**Purpose:** The report provides members of the committee with an update on the development of an Education strategy to improve education outcomes in Cambridgeshire.

**Recommendation:** The Committee is recommended to:

- a) review the progress in ensuring Cambridgeshire has a high quality Education service which promotes and supports good outcomes for all children and young people;
- b) note and comment on recommendations from the Early Years Social Mobility Peer Review and plans to develop an Early Years Strategy which will support the wider redesign and integration of relevant children, young people and families services;
- c) request regular reports on the work of the Programme Board and the emerging strategy.

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Following the appointment of a new Executive Director for People and Communities for both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in 2017, it was agreed that for each of the key service areas, a joint Service Director would be appointed. The new Service Director for Education started in role in February 2018 and was given the remit to develop a strategy to drive improvement in education services and educational outcomes across both Local Authorities.
- 1.2 The changes in Department for Education policy since 2010 have meant that the role of the Local Authority in education has evolved and Local Authorities are having to adapt to reduce funding and direct oversight whilst still fulfilling all their statutory duties. This is despite the move of some schools to Academy status.
- 1.3 This report outlines the progress that has been achieved in developing this strategy and the analysis that has been undertaken to understand and review the services we provide. The developments to date have taken place by engaging education leaders from all education sectors. A full plan is being developed and this will be available in the autumn once further consultation takes place with Education leaders. It will also reflect the 2018 academic outcomes and the challenges these present. The strategy and action plan will evolve over the academic year and it is proposed that updates are brought to this committee to allow scrutiny of progress.
- 1.4 This report covers the following areas –
  - School survey of the Local Authority (LA) education services
  - Shared and Integrated Education Services Programme
  - Early Years Peer Review
  - Emerging strategy

## **2. MAIN ISSUES**

### School Survey of the LA Education Services

- 2.1 In order to understand performance of education services in Cambridgeshire, the Service Director undertook a survey of schools based on the former Audit Commission survey of the Local Authority which ran until 2008. The school survey was a collaborative tool that was designed to act as a source of evidence about schools' perceptions of the support they receive from their council and the statutory services provided locally for children and young people. The questions from the last survey in 2008 were updated to reflect legislative changes and to include a number of specific questions relevant to the local area.
- 2.2 The rationale for undertaking a survey was -
  - There has been a significant change in relationship between the LA and schools in recent years including Academisation. There is a need to ensure schools and academy trusts understand our statutory role.
  - We need an appropriate methodology to directly assess our performance rather than through the proxy of assessment outcomes.
  - Local Authorities nationally have been through some tricky national reform

including funding, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and accountability changes. It's a good opportunity to take the temperature of perception from schools, and think how we might address them.

- The survey results will give a baseline for considering the strategic direction for the council. It can also be rerun to see how perceptions change over a period.
- Opportunity to share with Councillors the challenges / successes the Education department has had.

- 2.3 The survey was undertaken in May 2018 and focused on schools only. The survey asked more than 60 questions, gathering both quantitative and qualitative feedback about the services delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and Peterborough City Council (PCC). It is intended to re-run this review annually. A similar survey has taken place with Early Years providers and this is currently being analysed.
- 2.4 The survey had 200 complete responses from CCC education providers. Respondents were predominantly Headteacher/Principals (around 75%), however responses were also received from Executive Principals, CEOs, Governors/Board Members, School Business Managers and others. These included a range of Nursery, Primary, Infant, Junior, Secondary, Special, All Through, Pupil Referral and Independent schools, and Sixth Form Colleges, as well as responses intending to represent wider Academy Trust and School Federations.
- 2.5 Overall services provided by the Local Authority were judged to be adequate. The key areas of strength emerging from the feedback (using the questions asked in the survey) were identified as -
- The effectiveness of LA support for Education Safeguarding
  - The effectiveness of LA support for combating racism and the wider 'Prevent' agenda
  - Your LA's knowledge and understanding of your school
  - The effectiveness of LA support for looked-after children; that is, the Virtual School
  - The LA's support for early years education
  - The effectiveness of LA support for health and safety in your school
  - The quality of the LA's support for the development of the Schools Forum
  - The quality of financial support and advice provided by the LA
  - The quality of payroll services provided by the LA
  - The quality of HR services provided by the LA
- 2.6 This feedback shows there are strong building blocks for supporting the key statutory function of the local authority. It is also pleasing to see the focus and emphasis on vulnerable groups in recent years has been recognised by schools in terms of the quality of the services we provide. This feedback gives an excellent basis for driving a programme of change.
- 2.7 The weaker areas of services were identified as being –
- The effectiveness of your LA's arrangements for disseminating best practice
  - The LA's role in brokering and developing Teaching Schools to enhance the school led system

- The LA's effectiveness in encouraging schools to work together and to become self-sustaining
- The effectiveness of LA support to schools in bidding for external grants
- The efficiency with which statutory assessments of pupils with SEN are made
- Your LA's management of the procedures for re-admission of excluded pupils
- The transparency of your LA's asset management planning process and allocation of resources
- The quality of LA support for Headteacher well being
- The extent to which schools influence LA policies / plans / procedures
- Your LA's support to make you an effective purchaser of traded services, whether from the LA or from external providers

2.8 These areas for concern will be fully considered as part of the wider review of education services. Analysing these results and the significant level of qualitative feedback that was given, the specific themes that emerge from the report as follows -

1. **Communication:** schools encouraged as much communication as possible, in an ongoing manner. Responses identified that CCC communicate most with schools who require more support, however there were gaps in communication with better performing schools. The newsletter was praised throughout as a positive step that will assist CCC's strategic leadership; more communication, including celebrating successes, is also desired. They also identified the need for more effective cataloguing of information about services, for example contacts.
2. **Reactive and not proactive:** CCC officers were often considered prompt and supportive when requested, but not proactive enough in offering support and leadership. This will be considered as part our review of the schools causing concern process and better understanding the needs of our schools.
3. **CCC should be more creative, innovative and help the spread of effective ideas.** Responses regularly cited the need for CCC to be more creative and produce guidance that is leading, with many noting they got better information from other sources.
4. **Place based approach.** One size does not fit all: Responses regularly considered that CCC priorities don't always reflect schools at the individual level, causing friction. It was felt an appreciation of divergence in different areas of Cambridgeshire would help CCC build a more coherent picture.
5. **Review the relationship with Academies:** it was felt that CCC lacked leadership of the academisation agenda, and now is an opportunity to redefine the relationships between academies and the LA with a common purpose at the core. Questions were raised as to why joint working may have been more effective pre-academisation.
6. **Lead the system, whilst supporting school-to-school relationships:** many respondents felt that CCC could exert very effective strategic leadership and should brand itself in such a way. A variety of suggestions addressed the need for CCC to act more as a facilitator for effective and positive school-to-school support, particularly in continuous professional development.
7. **Lack of clarity as to the LA's strategy:** respondents and the experiences they discussed showed a lack of clarity as to CCC's strategy for intervention and support – how, why, when etc. is not obvious or transparent.
8. **Quality of service depends too much on individuals:** respondents

overwhelmingly identified that the quality of service they receive depends too much on specific individuals that they are dealing with. Turning pockets of excellence into excellence across the board is a key challenge. Respondents also wanted to see greater visibility of CCC officers, including in school.

9. **Offer around Headteacher well-being:** Many respondents were highly critical of the offer around Headteacher well-being. CCC is a partner in delivering this support and further consideration of this is needed, especially working in conjunction with governors, who were often seen as a good source of support for well-being.
10. **Issues around support for excluded children highlighted regularly.** The work reviewing the Behaviour And Attendance Improvement Partnership (BAIP) was welcomed but further work is needed especially around primary age children.
11. **Clarity on responsibilities of schools vs LA:** respondents expressed a lack of clarity on responsibilities (including statutory responsibilities) of schools and CCC respectively.
12. **Transparency of place planning and admissions:** the systems for admissions and planning were criticised as slow, unresponsive and reactive. Concerns seemed to show worries that the system is not evidence-led enough and place planning etc. does not reflect reality on the ground in localities. Greater transparency over plans, especially growing schools, is critical.
13. **EHCP (Education Health and Care Plans) Process:** Respondents outlined concerns about the EHCP process. This included a lack of clear guidance and communication with schools on the CCC perspective. Respondents regularly felt they had to put in too much effort/resource to get provision for pupils, even where compared to other authorities. More transparency would also help.

2.9 Despite these challenges, schools were positive about the role of the Local Authority and were keen that we play a key role in leading and shaping the education landscape. A full response to all the issues raised is currently being prepared and will be shared with school leaders in the autumn term. The emerging strategy objectives identified later in this report reflect much of this feedback.

### **Shared and Integrated Education Services Programme**

- 2.10 It was agreed in early 2018 by members of both councils that a programme would be undertaken to explore opportunities for improving services and ensuring financial sustainability through greater sharing and integration of services (in various forms). The purpose of the project intended that any review of services should -
- Be outcomes focused, not organisation focused.
  - Reduce costs/increase income.
  - Meet future needs and manage demand.
  - Put people at the heart of a system that makes sense to them.
  - Lead change and innovation.
  - Use evidence and best practice to ensure what we deliver has the best chance of success.
- 2.11 As part of workstream 2 of this programme (People & Communities), it has been agreed to undertake a Shared & Integrated Education Services Programme between Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council.

2.12 The programme will look more closely at the opportunities for better outcomes from shared/integrated service delivery across the two Councils, with all areas of delivery considered. Any redesign has improving educational standards explicitly at its core and any change in service design should consider –

- Quality – any change should improve the quality of the services we provide.
- Capacity – the new service should have sufficient capacity to support improved outcomes through reducing duplication or standardising processes.
- Innovation – services should be evidence based and reflect best practice. Any design should allow for appropriate changes to become innovative.
- Value for money – services should be cost effective but also add value in the services they deliver. This includes meeting any statutory obligation or legislation.

2.13 The programme has been split into four workstreams to enable complimentary services to be considered alongside each other. These workstreams are -

- School & Settings Improvement  
– including schools intervention and advice, early years, education safeguarding, recruitment and retention, governor services.
- Vulnerable Pupils/SEND  
– including specialist services, statutory assessment team, SEND provision, Post 16 provision, virtual school, behaviour support, vulnerable children's outcomes, SEND commissioning.
- 0-25 Place Planning  
– including admissions and appeals, capital projects, school place planning, attendance and our strategic responsibilities for transport.
- Service Infrastructure  
– including traded services, communication, data systems, effective use of schools data, senior management structures and administration support.

2.14 At this stage, there are 35 services packages which have been identified and will be reviewed over the next academic year. It is intended to deliver the service reviews by September 2019. Any project strand will also have due regard to other projects currently underway including statutory or legislation changes or other council projects such as outcomes focused reviews (OFR).

2.15 An informal programme board has been established to be comprised of the Service Director; lead elected members; representatives of Human Resources (HR) and Finance. The key responsibilities of the group are to provide strategic direction, monitor delivery of objectives through workstreams, challenge to ensure the best possible outcomes and act as sign off at key stages. This process will be shared as part of the Educational Achievement Board.

2.16 It is important to recognise some key features of the programme. It is not a process that assumes a single service is better but more an opportunity to review what we do, the impact it has, how we can work together and engage in positive service redesign and redevelopment working effectively with Peterborough. Where appropriate, external reviews may be undertaken to ensure we fully consider opportunities for service development. As the programme progresses, further updates will be provided to the

committee.

## **Early Years Peer Review**

- 2.17 On the 12th December 2017, the Department for Education (DfE) launched 'Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential: A plan for improving social mobility through education'. Over the course of five ambitions the DfE social mobility action plan sets an overarching vision of no community left behind. Ambition One is to close the word gap in the early years. Strong foundations in early years enable children to start school in a position to progress. Gaps in development are most effectively tackled at the earliest opportunity, focussing on key early language and literacy skills, so that all children can begin school ready to thrive.
- 2.18 As part of the programme, the DfE is working with the Local Government Association (LGA) to develop the sector led improvement offer and in particular to stimulate local discussion about how councils and their partners can become more effective in delivering improved outcomes for children at this crucial stage in their development.
- 2.19 Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council jointly commissioned a peer review of their early year's services, as part of the LGA's efforts to develop the sector led offer. The peer review was undertaken by experienced officer peers in July, whose make-up reflected the requirements and focus of the review. The review team were asked to focus on three key lines of enquiry in relation to early year's social mobility: Leadership; Wider Child Family & Health Services; Partnerships.
- 2.20 The approach involved reviewing a range of documentation and data from across services in both local authorities, interviews with a range of staff and visits to observe practice in child care settings. Inevitably it was not possible to cover all potential material in the time available, and one omission was the political oversight and scrutiny carried out by the Cambridgeshire County Council Health Committee. A copy of the peer review report can be found in appendix 1.
- 2.21 The recommendations from the peer review are:
- Carry out a mapping exercise around needs, services and expertise across the different locations.
  - Develop a multi-agency early years / 0-5 strategy and clarify governance arrangements.
  - Develop an integrated 0-5 outcomes framework which specifically references speech, language and communication with aspirational targets to enable the identification of trends, deficiencies and areas of good practice.
  - Review the service specification and delivery model of the community health offer pre-birth to age 5, including the role of the Family Nurse Partnership.
  - Ensure that the Speech & Language Therapy offer is easily accessible for families, particularly for those who are disadvantaged and where services are not being accessed by parents.
  - Ensure all practitioners are engaging with the Early Help offer at the earliest opportunity and that the Integrated Review is embedded consistently to promote positive outcomes, and appropriate timely early intervention.
  - Afford high priority to the Social Mobility Offer Area in Fenland and East

Cambridgeshire to drive innovation in the wider early year's system.

- 2.22 The Wisbech Literacy Project, Early Help in Peterborough and the START Programme in Peterborough were highlighted as very positive with words used such as “dynamic” and “transformational”.
- 2.23 The Review identified that there is strong committed leadership across both Peterborough and Cambridgeshire, recognising that the shared Executive Management Team arrangement provides a platform to share ideas, good practice and achieve better outcomes for children. It also identified that political leaders across both local authorities are committed to ensuring that children have the best start in life.
- 2.24 In response to the recommendations of the peer review the Joint Child Health Commissioning Board met with providers of health visiting, school nursing, children's centres, early year's education and early help.
- 2.25 It was agreed that following the peer review, and given the desire to deliver more integrated services that need to be provided for less money, we needed to consider a more transformational approach.
- 2.26 It has been agreed that:
- Current service delivery to achieve public health, community health, social care and early education outcomes should be considered together and not separately.
  - Development of appropriate governance of a transformational programme to deliver outcomes.
  - Development of an early years strategy.
  - Research into 'what works' to deliver the outcomes we want.
  - Development of a design group and stakeholder events.
- 2.27 The integration of early years into wider school improvement strategy is a key interdependency so the development of the wider education strategy will reflect this work to ensure a more joined up approach in the early years.

### **Emerging Education Strategy**

- 2.28 As the report outlines, significant work has been undertaken to develop the basis to ensure an effective education strategy is developed. In order to push on the standards agenda, an action plan will be developed. Using feedback from the survey and other feedback from the sector, an emerging vision for education in Cambridgeshire has been developed -
- We need to set the highest expectation for both the education leaders but also for local authority services. National averages are not what we need to aim for – we need to be better than our peers.
  - Every child has access to a great school place in their communities – they are all our children.
  - We must be able to look outside of the area and support best practice coming to the area.
  - The education system in Cambridgeshire needs to be built upon true



partnerships, working together for improvement. This means we know our strengths and weaknesses and everyone agrees on how we move forward together.

- Every vulnerable and disadvantaged pupil receiving the support their need.
- Cambridgeshire needs an education vision that will attract education professionals to C&P ensuring a sustainable supply of good quality teachers, leaders and multi-academy trusts.
- We should be proud of what we do and the success we have together.

2.29 The development of the action plan will take place in the early autumn term but it will include the following -

- Developing greater collaboration for schools across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough – climate of self-improvement. Every school in C&P linked to a teaching school and local challenge and support arrangements including strong Multi Academy Trusts (MATs). Strong networks for settings.
- Refocusing challenge and support arrangements – using existing schools / MATs to get more capacity and reduce reliance on the LA including specialist skills.
- Strengthening trust and partnership in the system. Ensure the LA is visible, honest and owning our decision making.
- Starting to be brave. We have to do something different and innovative.
- Ensuring all the middle tier in education are working on a common purpose including Ofsted, MAT CEOs, Dioceses and the Department for Education.
- Securing rapid improvement in communication – both to schools and communities.
- Developing effective strategies as a system for the key challenges that Cambridgeshire face. This includes teacher recruitment and retention, EAL, disadvantage, maths, boys secondary performance, writing, primary science, SEND, low level behaviour, mental health, school readiness, permanent exclusions etc.
- Delivering strategic plans on sustaining and improving our school system including small schools, faith education, post 16, how structures might improve education.

2.30 Appendix 2 captures the current key workstreams that are being undertaken in the Education directorate. It also outlines some of the key successes from the previous academic year. It is important to recognise the excellent work that has been ongoing over a number of years and this programme is designed to create further momentum to ensure children and young people in Cambridgeshire have a truly excellent education experience.

### **3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

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

3.1.1 Providing high quality education should enhance the skills of the local workforce and provide essential childcare services for working parents or those seeking to return to work. Schools and early years and childcare services are providers of local employment.

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

3.2.1 Not applicable.

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

3.3.1 Not applicable.

## 4. **SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

### 4.1 Resource Implications

The development of a new educational strategy will have to met within available resources. As the strategy develops, the full financial implications of any proposals will be fully considered in conjunction with HR and finance colleagues.

### 4.2 **Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications**

Not applicable.

### 4.3 **Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications**

Any changes to services will fully consider statutory and legal issues. Risks will be fully considered as part of the shared services approach.

### 4.4 **Equality and Diversity Implications**

Not applicable.

### 4.5 **Engagement and Communications Implications**

The development of the strategy will be developed with key stakeholders in education.

### 4.6 **Localism and Local Member Involvement**

Where there are place based decisions on the education strategy, these will be fully shared with local members.

### 4.7 **Public Health Implications**

Not applicable.

<b>Implications</b>	<b>Officer Clearance</b>
<b>Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?</b>	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade
<b>Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by Finance?</b>	No Name of Financial Officer: Paul White The report contains no procurement issues.
<b>Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?</b>	Yes Name of Legal Officer: Shahin Ismail
<b>Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Jonathan Lewis
<b>Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Matthew Hall
<b>Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Jonathan Lewis
<b>Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Tess Campbell

**SOURCE DOCUMENTS GUIDANCE**

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