

CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL AUTHORITY'S SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

To: Children and Young People Committee

Meeting Date: 18th November 2014

From: Adrian Loades, Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults Services

Electoral division(s): All

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

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is for the Committee to consider and comment on the final draft of the Local Authority's Strategy for School Improvement.

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to approve the Local Authority's Strategy for School Improvement.

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1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 There have been a great many changes in education since 2010 that have resulted in a different role for the LA (Local Authority). For maintained schools, the LA still has significant statutory responsibilities for school improvement. For Academies and Free Schools the LA has no power of intervention but is still required to monitor their performance as part of the LA's role as a champion for all children and young people. There are also new expectations on the LA, e.g. brokering school to school support.
- 1.2 Overall, school performance in Cambridgeshire is improving and the majority of children do well. However, there are some key areas where further rapid improvement is required. For example, the percentage of schools and academies judged good and outstanding by Ofsted is too low (74.4% compared with a national figure of 81%, August 2014) and gaps in attainment and progress between vulnerable groups and their peers, although closing, are still too wide, especially at Key Stage 2 (age 11).
- 1.3 At a time of significant change, and of such great challenge, it is essential that the LA's role in school improvement is set out clearly and is understood by all those with an interest and involvement in the education system in Cambridgeshire. A Peer Review of the LA's school improvement function in March 2014 identified as a weakness that too few schools had a thorough knowledge and understanding of the LA's changed role and its approach to school improvement. To address this concern, preparing a revised and refreshed School Improvement Strategy was included as one of the key tasks in the Post-Peer Review Action Plan.
- 1.4 There is widespread agreement that our aim should be the best outcome for every child in Cambridgeshire. What that means in practice for schools, academies, the LA and the many other stakeholders, e.g. the Diocesan Authority and the Multi Academy Trusts requires ambition, innovation and collaboration. The LA's role in helping to achieve that aim, with regards to school improvement, is set out in the attached strategy, **Appendix 1**.

2.0 CAMBRIDGESHIRE LA'S STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

- 2.1 The purpose of the strategy is to set out Cambridgeshire LA's vision, aims and priorities for school improvement, 2014-16. It is the outcome of discussions with headteachers, governors, parents, Members, key stakeholders and Local Authority Officers during the school year 2013-14. As such, it represents a shared ambition for Cambridgeshire's children and young people.
- 2.2 The strategy addresses the role and responsibility of the Local Authority, the growth and developing significance of school to school support and the protocols and procedures that the Local Authority follows when a school or academy is causing concern.

- 2.3 The strategy is not a stand alone document. It needs to be considered alongside our Accelerating the Achievement of Vulnerable Groups Strategy and we are also preparing a document that captures how all of our services across CFA promote educational attainment.
- 2.4 Earlier drafts of this Strategy yielded a great deal of useful feedback from schools. For example, schools were keen that the strategy should include a succinct statement of the LA's role; that it should set out how a school's support needs are determined; that it should explain what is available to all schools, to maintained schools and to academies; and that it should pull together new approaches to school improvement, e.g. our strategy for supporting schools judged to Require Improvement by Ofsted.
- 2.5 In the final draft we responded to these comments, and the reaction from schools and their representative groups has been very positive.

3.0 ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

- 3.1.1 The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:
 - improved educational outcomes will provide a more highly skilled workforce; and
 - a key factor in major companies' decisions to move to Cambridgeshire is access to good and outstanding schools for their workforce.

3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

- 3.2.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:
 - there is a positive correlation between educational outcomes, standards of health and independent living.

3.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

- 3.3.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:
 - poor educational progress of vulnerable groups is one of the main reasons why Ofsted judges that schools require improvement.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

- 4.1.1 There are no significant implications within this category. The actions identified can be met from within the Learning Directorate's current budget.

4.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

- 4.2.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 places upon LAs a duty to promote high standards and the fulfilment of potential in all schools.

4.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 4.3.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:
- The vulnerable groups who make poor educational progress include those covered by the protected / significant characteristics of race and deprivation, e.g. Gypsy, Roma Traveller and Free School Meals.

4.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

- 4.4.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:
- the School Improvement Strategy requires extensive engagement with schools, academies and key stakeholders.

4.5 Public Health Implications

- 4.5.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:
- improved educational outcomes will have a positive impact on standards of public health

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

- 4.6.2 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:
- the School Improvement Strategy is county-wide strategy and affects all Members equally

Source Documents	Location
None	