

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT BOARD**

**To:** Children and Young People Committee

**Meeting Date:** 30 June 2015

**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 to inform the Committee of the discussions that have been taking place to establish a Cambridgeshire School Improvement Board and to invite comment on the draft proposals.

**Recommendation:** The Committee is asked to:

- a) Approve the Terms of Reference for the Cambridgeshire School Improvement Board, subject to any amendments arising from the Committee's discussion; and
- b) Agree Children and Young People Committee representation on the Board.

<b>Officer contact:</b>	
Name:	Keith Grimwade
Post:	Service Director: Learning
Email:	<a href="mailto:keith.grimwade@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">keith.grimwade@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a>
Tel:	01223 507165

## **1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The 2010 Education White Paper heralded a new direction for school improvement, with a move away from centrally-led initiatives, e.g. the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, to sector-led improvement, e.g. school to school support. Support from outstanding headteachers and schools is seen as the most effective way to bring about improvement in other schools.
- 1.2 The government established a network of Teaching Schools as the delivery vehicle for most school to school support. Teaching Schools are outstanding schools that have been accredited by the National College for Teaching and Leadership to provide a range of school to school support, including continuing professional development, Initial Teacher Training and school-based research. Funding that used to support Local Authority consultants to deliver the National Strategies is now channelled through the Teaching Schools.
- 1.3 Cambridgeshire Local Authority has encouraged and supported eligible schools to apply to become Teaching Schools. There are eight Teaching School Alliances (TSAs, groups of Teaching Schools and their key partners) in Cambridgeshire, significantly exceeding the average number of three or four per Local Authority. However, they are mainly found in the Cambridge area and the south of the County.
- 1.4 Alongside the Teaching Schools and the Local Authority, other agencies have taken on new, or enhanced, leadership roles for school improvement, resulting in an increasingly fractured school improvement landscape. For example, Multi Academy Trusts have a school improvement role for the schools in the Trust, the Diocesan Authorities have become more active in school improvement and Ofsted has been given a school improvement, as well as an inspection, function.

## **2.0 CAMBRIDGESHIRE'S SCHOOL-LED SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE**

- 2.1 This increasingly fractured school improvement landscape has led to a number of inefficiencies, e.g. duplication of provision, some schools missing out on opportunities because they are not part of TSAs and confusion about who is bidding for national support funds.
- 2.2 Cambridgeshire's schools have responded by agreeing to work together with a range of partners to consider a more coherent approach for the county. This work has been led and facilitated by the Local Authority.
- 2.3 A task group comprising representatives from nursery, primary, secondary and special schools; a sixth form college; a Multi Academy Trust; the Diocese of Ely; and the Teaching School Alliances met twice in the autumn term 2014 to develop and consider options.
- 2.4 The Task Group agreed that it wanted to achieve a school improvement system that:
  - brings the whole system together, preventing further fracturing;
  - is led by those best placed to bring about school improvement –

- schools themselves;
  - builds on success, e.g. Cambridgeshire's Teaching School Alliances and school partnerships; and
  - is a key factor in delivering the change Cambridgeshire needs.
- 2.5 Further, the Task Group identified the following potential advantages of a school-led system:
- easier and more equitable access to high quality support for all schools;
  - more robust professional challenge and support from peers;
  - a better understanding of, and response to, local needs;
  - a more effective use of school improvement resources;
  - better recruitment and retention of high quality teachers, school leaders and support staff; and
  - new opportunities for learning what works best in the classroom through action research.
- 2.6 In the spring term 2015 extensive discussions were held with school and stakeholders, including:
- Learning Directorate team managers;
  - 250 + school governors;
  - Cambridgeshire Secondary Heads;
  - Cambridgeshire Primary Heads;
  - 120 primary headteachers at the termly Breakfast Meetings; and the
  - Governor Advisory Group.
- 2.7 Views on the aims and potential advantages were sought, together with thoughts on four different models of organisation that are being developed in other Local Authorities:
- a Community Interest Company (many London schools as a follow on from the London Challenge initiative);
  - an independent company (Hertfordshire, where a company, 'Herts for Learning', has been established with schools owning 80% of the shares and the Local Authority owning 20%);
  - a joint venture, e.g. Surrey County Council and Babcock Education; and
  - a School-led School Improvement Board (an agreement to work together, with a greater or lesser degree of responsibility and buy-in, e.g. Peterborough and Norfolk).
- 2.8 Feedback was very positive, although some concerns were expressed, including:
- the potential loss of Local Authority support;
  - a concern that small schools might be left out;
  - the capacity of schools to be involved; and
  - the quality assurance of provision.
- 2.9 There was reluctance, at least at this stage, to accept the risk inherent in establishing any of the 'company' models, and there was a strong preference for a School Improvement Board whose governance would be underpinned by Terms of Reference agreed by all stakeholders.
- 2.10 The Task Group met for a third time shortly before the Easter break and agreed that we should move forward to establish a Cambridgeshire School

Improvement Board with effect from September 2015.

- 2.11 The draft Terms of Reference for the Board, including its purpose and proposed membership, are set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.12 In April 2015 the Regional Commissioner for Academies and Free Schools announced his intention to establish a Secondary Academies Improvement Board (SAIB), to address the underperformance in many of Cambridgeshire's secondary schools.
- 2.13 The LA has met with the Regional Commissioner and the Chairman of the Cambridgeshire Secondary Headteachers' Association to agree strategic and operational alignment of the Cambridgeshire School Improvement Board (CSIB) and the Secondary Academies Improvement Board.
- 2.14 It has been agreed that for the life of the SAIB, which may be no more than three or four school terms, it will lead on secondary issues while the CSIB will lead on primary, special and cross-phase issues. The Service Director: Learning and the Regional Commissioner will sit on both Boards.

### **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 correlates with poor life chances. Children who fall behind find it hard to catch up. In particular, children from low-income families, as measured by eligibility to Free School Meals, achieve badly compared with children not eligible for Free School Meals.

### **4.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

#### **4.1 Resource Implications**

- 4.1.1 There are no significant implications within this category. Efficiencies will be gained by schools and key partners working more closely together.

#### **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:
- There has been extensive consultation with schools and key partners, see 2.6 above.

### **4.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement**

- 4.5.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:
- Educational performance, and schools' access to school-led support, varies across the county.

### **4.6 Public Health Implications**

- 4.6.1 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.

## **SOURCE DOCUMENTS GUIDANCE**

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