

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 7
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Report of the Executive Director of Children's Services

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THE CHANGING ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN EDUCATION

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is highlight the changing role of Local Authorities in Education, both nationally and within Peterborough and suggest the purpose and strategy of the Education division in the future.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The committee is asked to consider the implications of the new legislation and the proposed direction of travel. Once a formal draft of the education strategy is completed, it will be brought to committee for sign off.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 Single Delivery Plan - Programme 1 – Creating jobs through growth and improved skills and education.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In November 2010, the Department for Education published the schools White Paper 'The Importance of Teaching', which set out a radical reform programme for the schools system with the inference that schools would be freed from the constraints of central Government direction and teachers placed firmly at the heart of school improvement.
- 4.2 Drawing heavily on evidence from education systems around the world, it outlined –
- How the government raise the prestige of the teaching profession including initial teacher training and continuing professional development.
 - The cutting away unnecessary duties, processes, guidance and requirements.
 - Powers for teachers to improve discipline, and trialling a new approach to exclusions.
 - A vision for a transformed school curriculum supported by rigorous assessment and qualifications
 - More academies and free schools and a strong strategic role for local authorities
 - Changes to school performance tables, Ofsted inspections and governance
 - A fairer funding system including a pupil premium to channel more money to the most deprived children
 - School-led school improvement replacing top-down initiatives.
- 4.3 Many of the policies that underpinned this vision were enshrined in the Education Act 2011. This changed the landscape of Education for local authorities and their role with schools.
- 4.4 This paper outlines Peterborough's response to these changes including the drivers for change, the role for the Local Authority in education going forward and proposes an early view on the vision, aims and deliverables for the Education departments for the next 5 years. The intention

is to fundamentally reform the way it works with schools to improve outcomes for children and young people.

5. KEY ISSUES

Drivers for Change

5.1 Peterborough has provided a full education support service for its schools since the inception of the unitary authority under the local government review. Little has changed in this time and the authority continues to provide a legacy education service to its schools. There are a number of compelling drivers for change to review the current education provision provided by the City Council -

- To respond to and be proactive to changes in national guidance and policy around education delivery in settings.
- Changes to funding arrangements for education. Schools and certain education functions are funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The DSG is being revised to allow greater delegation for schools with a view to schools having greater control. There are also significant savings expected on other education services funded by the council tax and revenue support grant. There is a need to fundamentally reconfigure services to meet these changes.
- The socio-economic profile of children in the city has changed in recent years. We have seen a rise in the number of children with English as an additional Language (EAL) and also a change in the needs for those children with SEN. Our education support services must change to support these needs.
- The changing nature and diversity of schools with the development and expansion of academies and free schools. Currently the city has 8 academy schools. Peterborough has used these emerging opportunities to bring high quality academy trusts to the city to support educational improvement. This has also brought funding from central government to deliver transformed learning environments especially in the secondary sector where the schools are some of the best in England.
- The repeal of many key statutory duties and responsibilities for local authorities, the loss of grant funding, with the subsequent reduction in the number of employees required within the service. This needs to be dealt with in a whole system approach not just reducing services piecemeal.
- Peterborough schools continue to underperform in the national picture and the current systems of intervention and support are not creating sustainable improvement at the rates seen in other authorities.
- The vulnerability of a significant percentage of schools previously judged satisfactory by Ofsted, which may now require intervention and support programmes as the new, more rigorous Ofsted framework is inspected in schools.

5.2 A review of the school improvement function was undertaken during the summer and it identified many of the key themes identified above. Specifically in relation to school improvement it suggested that a school improvement partnership is developed in co-operation with schools to drive continual improvement. This will support the re-organisation of the school improvement function.

The Changing Local Authority Role in Education

5.3 In a more autonomous school system where schools lead on Education, local authorities have an indispensable role to play as champion of children and parents, ensuring that the school system works for every family and using their democratic mandate to challenge every school to do the best for their population.

5.4 The key roles for Peterborough as a Local Authority for education in the future will be to:

1. Support parents and families through promoting a good supply of strong schools – encouraging the development of Academies and Free Schools which reflect the local

- community and ensuring outstanding maintained schools.
2. Ensure fair access to all schools for every child through providing sufficient school places and a range of different schools to support the community.
 3. Use their democratic mandate to stand up for the interests of parents and children.
 4. Support vulnerable pupils including Looked After Children, those with Special Educational Needs and those outside mainstream education.
 5. Support maintained schools performing below the floor standards to improve quickly or convert to Academy status with a strong sponsor, and support all other schools which wish to collaborate with them to improve educational performance. Likewise work with academy governors to ensure all schools exceed the government floor targets on standards and progress.
 6. Support schools to develop their own school improvement strategies and work between schools within the city and traded with those schools outside of the area.

Considering a new approach to education services in Peterborough

5.5 Within this context, the priorities of the Council have been used to explain a long-term strategy for developing the education service as a strategic commissioner and enabling service working strategically to influence change in the landscape of provision.

Key deliverables of this change –

- Review all existing services to ensure fit for purpose, decommission where no longer required and develop new services where it has been identified that gaps in provision currently exist.
- Review partnership models for driving up attainment between the LA, schools and other interested parties. This could be used as a basis to commission future school improvement activities for the city.
- Facilitate school-to-school support, support cluster working, and broker relationships with potential sponsors through the Peterborough Learning Partnership (PLP);
- Commission a strong admissions service, acting at a strategic level across the system
- Commission and deliver rapid intervention to schools causing concern as required; this will include a formal intervention approach so schools understand the processes involved.
- Update the SEN strategy to highlight and ensure the progress and attainment of vulnerable pupils in the city;
- Develop a strategy for EAL including an assessment centre approach and adequate support for parents who do not speak English.
- Adopt integrated technology solutions to maximise operational efficiencies and provide access for schools to a high quality e-learning community through working together with schools.
- Development of SCITT (School Centred Initial Teacher Training) with schools to promote high quality teacher training and become advocates for other methods of school led teacher training e.g. teaching school.
- Work with local employers and the FE sector to determine the range of required qualifications and skills and encourage schools to offer flexible vocational opportunities;
- Deliver a school organisation plan to ensure sufficient school places and work with schools and further education providers to achieve RPA requirements.
- Develop effective traded services offer for all the local authority schools and academies.
- Developing a brokering function to encourage academy sponsors and free school providers to Peterborough to support the need to provide choice and meet the challenge of school places.

Programme for Delivering Change

5.6 The information presented above outlines the emerging thoughts around the development of a new education service. The process of developing this Education strategy is underway and it is

intended to undertake a full consultation of the proposals in the new year. This will lead to significant changes in services and it is intended to put in place all the changes in terms of staffing, structure and delivery models by September 2013.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The need for change outlined above will impact significantly across the city. There will be a full design of the education service and this will impact upon every school in the city. There will also be an impact on staffing within the Education and Resources division within Children's Services.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 A full consultation will take place in the new year once the strategy has been fully developed. Key stakeholders will be involved in the development of the strategy during the autumn.

8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 It is proposed to bring the formal strategy for consultation in the new year. Any information will be sent to member of the committee when available.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 9.1 None

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 None