

PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL

EDUCATION REVIEW

By

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August 2017



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A. INTRODUCTION

Setting the Scene

1. When the Key Stage 2 results were published in November 2016 it became apparent that there was a crisis in the education of many children in Peterborough. The KS2 performance tables placed Peterborough 151st out of 152 local authorities in England.
2. Understandably, this caused great concern - not only within the local authority itself but also with the Regional School Commissioner (RSC), the headteachers and teachers of the affected schools, the parents, governors and naturally the pupils themselves. The local Member of Parliament, Stewart Jackson, expressed the major concern of all parties in the local newspaper, the Peterborough Telegraph - this despite the fact that at the time Peterborough City Council was Conservative group controlled.
3. The Local Authority Education Department had many hypotheses why this circumstance had arisen and was particularly taken by surprise since the Ofsted inspection outcomes in the previous two years had shown that the schools within the LA - both maintained and academy schools - had achieved either good or outstanding in approximately 91% of cases. How could it be that the inspections results were so good and covered so many pupils within the region and yet the attainment scores at Year 6 were so poor?
4. The Leader of PCC determined that there should be a review of education across the Unitary Authority and, in conjunction with the Chief Executive Officer Gillian Beasley, requested that I carry out such a review. I am not an educationalist but a local solicitor of some 46 years experience and am used to enquiring into different circumstances and assessing the evidence obtained. In order to assist me - since obviously many assessments relating to methods of education and examinations would be required – John Harris was commissioned as my professional adviser.

5. John Harris has recent and relevant experience in education as Chair of the Hounslow Learning Partnership, Chair of a multi-academy Free School Trust, and as a School Governor. He chaired the South Gloucestershire Education Commission in 2013 and prepared its report. He has extensive experience in working with Peterborough schools, having been contracted by the City Council to establish the Peterborough Self-Improving Schools Network in 2013. Previously he had been Director of Children's Services in Hertfordshire from 2003-2011 and Director of Education in Westminster from 1999-2003.

Terms of Reference

6. These were formulated by the Corporate Director of People and Communities, Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, in conjunction with the Leader of Peterborough City Council, John Holdich OBE, as follows:-

Review One

7. *'John Harris Consulting Limited has just completed a review on Education in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire and we would like John Harris to take you through this and for you to be assured that this review was thorough and evidence based, drawing conclusions about the way forward which are based on evidence.'*

8. Review Two

'Commission Success for All UK to do a deep dive into the challenges facing Peterborough - this should consider the challenges we as a Local Authority have identified and confirm if we have identified the right challenges, and if there are any more; also consider whether the interventions we currently have in place to support improvement in schools are the most effective and if there is anything else we could reasonably do.'

9. Inevitably there has been a large concentration on the key issues relating to primary schools in the Local Authority as there has only been a short time to reach conclusions across the whole area of education. Many recommendations however apply to both Primary and Secondary Schools and the major considerations are applicable for both.
10. I have attempted a broad remit of looking at the strategic level in this review and have brought into consideration the advice of John Harris and the recommendations received from the Nullam Group, the commercial arm of Success for All. The latter have advised on certain matters relevant to both Reviews as set out in the terms of reference.

Basis of Report

11. Professional Advice from John Harris

Many meetings have been held with him and information and advice obtained. In particular, he has given in depth assessment to many reports to assess most acutely the workings of the self improvement system for schools in the area.

12. Meetings and Discussions

In addition, I have interviewed and had assistance from the following over both Reviews:-

- (1) Several interviews with the Leader of Peterborough City Council - Councillor John Holdich OBE
- (2) Several interviews and information provided by the Assistant Director for Education - Gary Perkins
- (3) Meetings with the Director for People and Communities within Peterborough City Council - Wendi Ogle-Welbourn

- (4) Meeting jointly with others with the Interim Director of Education for Peterborough City Council - Terry Reynolds
- (5) Meeting jointly with others the Regional Director of Ofsted - Paul Brooker
- (6) Meeting jointly with others Heather Yaxley - Senior HMI for Schools
- (7) Meeting with Stewart Jackson - MP for Peterborough
- (8) Meeting with Shailesh Vara - MP for North West Cambridgeshire
- (9) Meeting with Matt Ditchfield - CEO of Success for All, an Educational Charity
- (10) Meeting with the Regional Schools Commissioner - Dr Tim Coulson, together with the Deputy RSC Jonathon Lewis
- (11) Meetings with Councillor June Stokes - Cabinet Adviser for Education and Safeguarding
- (12) Meetings with, and request for information and reports in relation to Collaboratives - Eric Winstone, Chairman of the School Improvement Board
- (13) Meeting with Mark Woods - CEO of Cambridge Meridian Academy Trust and Mike Sandeman – Headteacher Arthur Mellows Village College
- (14) Meeting with the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services - Councillor Sam Smith
- (15) Meeting with CEO of Nullam Group - Eddie Austin, together with their independent consultant Tony Ryan
- (16) Meeting with the Headteacher of the Peterborough Virtual School for Children in Care - Dee Glover

(17) Meetings with Sheelagh Sullivan–Head of SEN and Inclusion, Brian Howard–
Head of School Infrastructure and Karen Hingston–Manager of EYFS &
Childrens Centres

13. I have attended meetings of the School Improvement Board during a full day, in conjunction with (inter alia) its Chairman, Eric Winstone, and seven Lead Headteachers of the Collaboratives.
14. I have attended a meeting of the National Literacy Trust Literacy Hub Steering Group.
15. I have not visited schools in the local authority separately as Councillor June Stokes is in the process of carrying this out in her position as Cabinet Adviser.
16. A list of the principal documents I have read or have been considered by John Harris and myself is attached as Appendix (2)

B. EDUCATION REVIEW ONE

Discussion

1. I have held meetings with John Harris, the author of the report entitled 'Strategic Review of Education Services in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough'. The review carried out was extensive following the decision by Peterborough City Council to share the services of its Director, Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, with Cambridgeshire County Council which he concluded in December 2016.

The purpose of the report was to decide upon the following matters:-

- (i) *To take account of existing Change Programmes already underway in both Peterborough and Cambridgeshire; and*
- (ii) *For both Peterborough and Cambridgeshire to review current and any proposed organisational arrangement for delivering education services, statutory and non statutory. This was to include:*
 - (a) *Admissions, Passenger Transport and schools infrastructure;*
 - (b) *SEND Services, including 0-25 years;*
 - (c) *School Improvement;*
 - (d) *Attendance, the Virtual School and Governor Services;*
 - (e) *Early Years; and*
 - (f) *Pupil Referral Service*
- (ii) *to provide options for more efficient organisation of those services in both Authorities and in particular to identify the opportunities for joint working.*

2. I have had the opportunity of looking through the entire report together with a Scene Setting Analysis Grid provided by John Harris.

The report rehearses many of the changes which occurred in the educational field in the previous two years, and in the political arena mentioning the Combined Authority for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, which has since then been formed.

The report recommends that in order to re-direct the present different assumptions in the two Authorities in relation to organisation of education, change and timetables there was the need for:-

- (1) A joint strategic development of education in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, which required there to be an agreement for key working assumptions about the local authority's role in education;
- (2) The need to establish a single Strategic Director for Education across the two Local Authorities with each Local Authority having an Assistant Director for Education reporting to the Strategic Director
- (3) The need to develop and agree a shared underpinning framework for the four Local Authority education functions, which would encompass school improvement and other work to support children and families
- (4) The need to establish a partnership governance framework fit for a "School led System"
- (5) The need to establish and promote systematic arrangements for a self improving school system
- (6) The need to establish an enabling framework to support the establishment of Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) building on existing collaboration between schools

- (7) Promote opportunities for joint working across the two Local Authorities for all education functions
3. The most important aspect of leadership is dealt with in the report concerning the education field for both Authorities. The aspect of an organisational arrangement which covers all of Children's Services under one Director is approved. This person would appoint a single Strategic Director for Education across the two Local Authorities in order to drive forward joint strategic development. There were further very important recommendations for establishing a different way of working with schools to support school improvement.
 4. The suggestion of establishing a Strategic Director for Education who would drive forward joint strategic development is an imperative. This person would be a Strategic Director for Education. The report further determines that this single Strategic Director would have two Assistant Directors for Education reporting to him/her; one for each Authority. At the time of this Review the principal leader has not been appointed - but should be as soon as possible, in my opinion. The appointment of Gary Perkins as Assistant Director for Education in Peterborough becomes substantive on 1 September 2017 thus giving the vital leadership necessary for Peterborough.
 5. The Nullam Report also addresses the prospect of a service with a Strategic Director and comments:

'The challenge for the City, should it consider the development of any such collaborative service, is within its current senior leadership team structure and its capacity, experience and current knowledge resources to successfully establish a fully functioning operational service.

This post, operating across Peterborough and associated counties, such as Cambridgeshire, would offer greater capacity and capability to lead the current and

future strategic and operational direction for all services in Education. Furthermore, a Shared Services Director could, and should, offer a more objective and considered approach in the development of the collaborative, system led environment that stakeholders and their teams are now demanding. The newly appointed colleague should also be able to demonstrate a proactive approach towards peer-to peer networking amongst other LAs, ensuring that best practice strategies and models are measured, tested and costed for internal suitability.'

6. I have had a lengthy meeting with the Director of People and Communities and discussed with her the prospects, in particular the joint working prospects, and it follows more efficient organisation of the services over the two Authorities.
7. John Harris had concluded his report by commenting upon six functional aspects in relation to School Improvement, "Access to Education, Special Educational Needs and Disability/Vulnerable Pupils, Behaviour, Attendance, Early Years and Traded Services" with regard to each of the Local Authorities.
8. The six functions he commented upon were: strategy/legislation, improving performance, capacity and sustainability, financial implications and risks and then a conclusion in each case. The document gives RAG ratings with regard to each of those areas in respect of their readiness to meet new expectations - green being the best, i.e. that the current arrangements anticipate and fully meet new expectations, and red being the worst in that current expectations are not met. The complexity of his report and the detail of it also provided an assessment of the scope of joint arrangements between the functional areas in the two Local Authorities based upon a continuum of 1-4, 4 being that a single service management system or policy would be possible.

9. John Harris concluded in relation to Access to Education and Traded Services there was a prospect for immediate joint working. However, encouragingly, in none of the areas was the situation stated to be “Current Expectations Not Met” in either authority. However, the situation in the Authorities is very different under several of the headings and much work would be needed in order to make them come together to meet the new expectations of joint working. Inevitably, he reported that the two Councils had evolved separately, politically, strategically and culturally. Fortunately, one of the areas, namely School Improvement which is so important for Peterborough, is RAG rated as blue in both authorities and both have the same level 2 indicating that they can cooperate on certain aspects.
10. In discussion with the Director for People and Communities the following became apparent:-
- One can conclude from looking at the areas where joint working is possible that this would be a fairly long process, but definitely possible.
 - Service Directors have already been informed and have given a positive response to the idea that there should be shared Service Directors in all areas of both authorities. In June 2017 Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council agreed the sharing of all five Service Director Posts that sit within the People and Communities Directorate. The RSC, Dr Tim Coulson, agreed with this proposal when I met with him in January 2017.
 - On inspecting all of the areas and their RAG ratings I consider that, although the RAG ratings and the continuum finding may be different in certain areas, they are close enough to enable joint working to take place.
11. Part of the report commissioned from Success for All UK, deals with certain aspects that were previously considered in the report by John Harris. The Nullam Report

concur with many of the conclusions in the review undertaken by John Harris, in particular the appointment of a Strategic Director and his views on the current impact and further development of the Peterborough Self Improving Schools Network (PSISN).

12. The Nullam Report makes a number of important additional recommendations, relating to school performance data and its use, and school place planning. In respect of school performance data, the Nullam report notes:

'data sharing protocol is not clear, making it difficult for officers to gain access to and analyse data to determine key trends and areas for concern. Schools have received poor Ofsted outcomes where data trends should have been identified long before they became defining for the school, and where intervening conversations and interventions could have been put in place. This 'lack of sharpness' results from:-

- a) schools' performance data being dispersed across a number of platforms making data mining and analysis difficult to impossible*
- b) no one that we could identify in post with the sole job of 'schools data manager' whose responsibility it is to collect school data, arrange this in a manner that makes data mining and analysis easy and who can then produce reports for key officers at pre-determined intervals.'*

13. In respect of school place planning, the Nullam report finds that:

'place planning is an ongoing issue given the current levels of family movement in and out of the city. Council officers require current data (ensuring that offers made to families have in fact been taken up) and also need to dynamically project expected growth/decline over a 3-5-year period,' and suggests 'a city place planning group is formed involving key officers, the LA person responsible for place planning and representative Heads from mainstream primary and secondary schools and

academies. The Group to meet once per term (to be revised) in order to look at movement in and out of the city and to prepare projections for future years.'

14. The Nullam Report highlights an important concern about capacity within the Education Department, noting :

'a challenge...around the fragility and sustainability of the current succession planning in all teams. Within certain teams there is an assumption that any capacity issues can be mitigated through the exporting of additional workload to colleagues in Cambridgeshire. This is an over reliant assumption and does not consider any capacity or capability that may or may not exist in Cambridgeshire.'

15. Conclusion

The Nullam Report came to the following view:

'[The] proposed plan and restructure has the correct level of assumptions that would allow the department and City Council to adjust service provision in light of changes to LA responsibilities set by government, and funding changes aligned to this. The proposed changes set out within the document appear to position the LA to meet all statutory requirements. It is suggested that once the restructure has taken place, the LA will need to outline its new offer in a separate document and ensure that the detail within this is communicated to all stakeholders.

Officers clearly recognise the need for impact from the new structure and, where possible, have mitigated any significant barriers to successful implementation.

Capacity planning to ensure delivery of statutory requirements has been tested and should be able to meet current demands.'

16. The report of John Harris Consulting Limited is both well founded and well thought through. It assumes a "work in progress" which is ever continuing but gives a firm foundation on which to work. Changes are occurring again since the report was

concluded with regard to the legal responsibilities of the Local Authorities which will inevitably alter some of the recommendations and will need to be reviewed continually.

My view is that the report is to be highly recommended.

C. EDUCATION REVIEW TWO

Discussion

1. This review specifically deals with education in Peterborough and its support for school improvement.
2. There have been continual changes in the expectations of government regarding the local authority role in education since 2010. A brief chronology is as follows:

(a) 2010

National policy changed requiring autonomous schools, i.e. academisation. The Local Authorities Statutory duties were confined. Schools had been used to being linked with a School Improvement Adviser from the local authority who offered challenge and support,

(b) 2013

The LA proceeded with the investigation of a Self-Improvement Board, which would tie in with the autonomy of schools generally, and obviously for those which were becoming academies. There was a considerable reduction in staff within the Education Department of the Local Authority.

March 2013

Following a report to the Creating Opportunity and Tackling Inequality Scrutiny Committee the Education Department were authorised to look into other delivery models for self-improvement, e.g. Wigan which dealt with peer challenges.

June 2013

John Harris was commissioned to lead and facilitate a conference of Headteachers in conjunction with the former Director of Education, Sue Westcott, and her Deputy Jonathan Lewis. There were a series of different approaches to this in different areas of the country. The conference determined in the end to go for a variation of the Wigan model and a consultancy team led by John Harris was authorised to work with a task group to design a 'Peterborough Model'. There were a series of meetings that took place to design and pilot the model in spring 2014.

(c) 2014

June 2014

The 'Peterborough Model' (known as the Peterborough Self-Improving Schools Network) was signed off by all headteachers and the Director of Children's Services. Eight Lead Headteachers were appointed to take the programme forward. The principle derived by the Headteachers was that there should be support for all schools to drive improvement overall - not just for the weaker schools.

September 2014

The peer challenge model proceeds. There are six Primary School Collaboratives and one Secondary School Collaborative and a Special School Collaborative created.

The Legal Responsibilities of Local Authorities

3. In the past six years the context in which local authorities have exercised their statutory responsibilities for education has changed significantly, with local authorities

now expected to work more through influence rather than direct control of schools. This has been brought about as a result of the Government's desire for academisation and self-improvement from within. The economics of the situation have changed insofar as the financial support for Local Authorities has lessened and finally there has been the phased reduction in the Education Services Grant. This grant has previously funded services, such as the commissioning and monitoring of School Improvement support. The sum that has been allocated to Peterborough in 2017/18 is £105,000.

4. The Local Authority is still required to identify, challenge and support schools which are causing concern, and has to work closely with the Regional Schools Commissioner to determine whether they should apply to become Academies. It would appear to me that the most important relationship now following the changes in the responsibilities of Local Authorities and the increase of responsibilities for the RSC is the relationship between those two. There is a need for them to be completely agreed in how to proceed in the future.
5. At the present time Peterborough has 46 maintained and 12 academy Schools in the primary phase. It has three Maintained and nine academy schools in the secondary phase, although all three Maintained Schools are in the process of awaiting academy status. There are in addition six Maintained Special Schools and one academy. It is anticipated that the impact of government changes will mean that within the next three to four years all Secondary, and most primary schools will have become academies.
6. The Local Authority in discussion with the RSC is recommending that schools should join together locally into Academy Trusts, or else to go into Multi Academy Trusts which have been set up separately and include schools in other local authority areas. The benefit of joining together several schools is that a strong school improvement infrastructure can support the weakest schools.

7. The RSC is very keen on Teaching Schools and there are not enough in Peterborough itself. Teaching Schools need to meet key performance indicators and also demonstrate the ability to work in collaboration with other schools to lead developmental work on matters such as quality of teaching, leadership, specialist areas of the curriculum, work with vulnerable groups etc.
8. I am uncertain whether the lack of Teaching Schools in Peterborough is because there are not enough who meet these criteria, or that the current Teaching Schools are not being used in the most effective way to improve educational performance in Peterborough. Whichever - this needs to be sorted.
9. At the present time the Teaching Schools that have been established are Phoenix Special School, Arthur Mellows Village College, Glinton and Hampton Hargate Primary School. We should be aiming for a further one or two as soon as possible. It is encouraging that the Peterborough Teaching Schools are now working with Cambridgeshire counterparts.

Peterborough Self-Improving Schools Network (PSISN)

10. This system comprises of:-
 - (d) Triads - these comprise of three local schools; either Maintained or Academy. The Headteachers of the three schools review and support each other with the purpose of challenging the school self-assessment to identify strengths, vulnerabilities and support needs, and agree a priority level for support for each school. Each visit results in a short report and priority rating for the school in terms of support for school improvement.
 - (e) School Collaboratives - these comprise of either nine or 12 schools formed from either three or four Triads. The Special School Collaborative comprises of five Special Schools and also includes the Pupil Referral Service. The Collaborative

Groups meet each term also to review the outcomes from school visits and commission any support required. They are accountable to the School Improvement Board.

11. The School Improvement Board has specific Terms of Reference to:-

- promote aspiration in the community
- increase the number of good and outstanding schools
- accelerate the rate of improvement in the attainment and progress for all pupils
- to close the gap in performance for the most vulnerable

12. The Board appointed a Lead Headteacher for each Collaborative. These positions were applied for and required the applicant to be the leader of a good or outstanding school with a track record of collaborative working and credible evidence of leading school improvement beyond their own school. John Harris and a colleague drew up the job description and person specification, interviewed and appointed the Lead Headteachers and also trained them in the role. This occurred in 2014 and they are all still in role. The Board has a stated membership. It also has a stated agenda for each term's meeting.

13. The whole system is supported by a 'School Review and Support Handbook' which contains the terms of reference for the Triads, Collaboratives and the lead Headteachers together with the School Improvement Board. It has set forms for the Triad meeting and Collaborative meetings to try and ensure consistent approach.

Scrutiny

14. The Peterborough Local Authority runs a scrutiny committee in public called (since 2016) the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee. This is a public meeting when

reports are scrutinised by a politically balanced committee. In addition there is a further scrutiny panel which is called the Education Scrutiny and Challenge Group, which is chaired by the Leader of the Council and attended by elected Members, Senior Officers, the Chair of the School Improvement Board and others who have a good knowledge and understanding of individual schools and overall Peterborough performance. It is possible at this internal meeting to take account of many details relating to individual schools and to have discussions about them - which due to confidentiality reasons - could not be discussed in public. Both Scrutiny Groups are important to ensure a vigorous and in depth discussion which requires the officers to account fully and carefully for their work.

The Position of Ofsted

15. The method of inspection by Ofsted is vigorous and is ever present in the mind of the Headteachers and teachers generally. It would seem however that they are particularly focussing on progress in schools as opposed to judging them solely by attainment. Schools in the Peterborough Authority have done well in their reports from Ofsted, despite the poorer attainment which is apparent. In consequence, a meeting with the Regional Director of Ofsted, Paul Brooker, and the Senior HMI for Schools, Heather Yaxley, was convened in January to discuss that situation.

16. The conundrum of the differing attainment in the Peterborough schools and the results of the Ofsted inspections was discussed at length. It was pointed out that the only outside evidence during any year available to Councillors was the result of Ofsted inspections until the attainment scores and examinations are known. It is very important therefore that they reflect what is actually happening in the schools. The Education Department of PCC is very proactive and advises and involves the schools, whether Maintained or Academy, in various projects with outside bodies such as the National Literacy Trust and Success for All. There has been a Reading Project at KS1

and KS2 level dealing with phonics. The Local Authority has been involved in school readiness projects also, which are very popular.

17. An important point was made that the School Improvement Handbook projects four key measures for peer challenge - the first two relate to the Ofsted reports and better results there and the third and fourth relate to attainment. It is only in relation to the first two measures that the local schools have achieved overall.
18. The Regional Director of Ofsted pointed out that the Ofsted reports deal mainly with the progress of schools and many areas which relate to that, and not just attainment. He accepted that it was important in the future to review how this was being dealt with during the inspection process.
19. The Senior HMI for Schools commented that there was a tendency to “teach to the test” and if the schools had not altered their curriculum in accordance with the new test coming, or were relying upon how they had always taught in the past, this may be a reason why the attainment scores in 2016 were not as good.
20. Paul Brooker did accept, following much discussion, that the Peterborough Local Authority could be uniquely challenged and accepted it was important to find this out. If there was a deep dive audit into the schools which was planned to be commissioned, the suggestion of Heather Yaxley was that schools across the country who were experiencing the same challenges - albeit not necessarily all at the same time - could be used to obtain experience of how to deal with those challenges in the future. The Director of Education for Peterborough City Council, Terry Reynolds, emphasised the importance of having a common approach with the RSC.
21. My impression of this meeting is that it was open and transparent with no excuses being made by the Education Department at Peterborough. There is an obvious desire to get things right for the future.

Meetings with the MPs and their attitude

22. I met with the then MP for Peterborough, Stewart Jackson. He had many concerns, which he had expressed publicly, and he felt the time had come when he needed to do so for the benefit of his constituents.

He raised several matters which he felt were important:-

- (1) He did not consider there was any consistency of approach across the Primary Schools in the LEA. He pointed out that if certain schools did not want to carry through projects, they simply did not.
- (2) He felt that the leadership and vision within the LEA was "hit and miss". Certain schools were excellent and others not good enough, and this needed to change.
- (3) He considered that the present Cabinet Member for Education, who was also the Leader of the Council, should be changed since the combination of the two was a very considerable involvement to have. He believed there needed to be a change.
- (4) There were many schools with many pupils having English as a second language, and he did not consider that the efforts to teach EAL were being used sufficiently by some schools.
- (5) He felt that there should be an in-depth survey into what was actually happening within the schools.
- (6) He was being told that there were many behavioural problems within the schools and more help was needed for the teachers from Social Services.
- (7) He suggested that more use should be made of Parental Contracts, which could be used not just for behavioural reasons but also to stop the children being moved, creating more churn of pupils during a year.

- (8) He felt there should be more appraisals in relation to teachers and payment related to performance.
- (9) Basically, his concern was that there should be more vision and leadership coming from PCC and its officers.
23. I had a later meeting with Shailesh Vara, MP for North West Cambridgeshire. I informed him of the position taken by Stewart Jackson and he confirmed that basically he was in agreement with him. He felt that the Education within the LEA had been far too long at the bottom of the league tables and this needed to be worked upon and changed. He said carrying on in the usual way was not an option and that big changes were required and they had to be implemented quickly. He expressed the view that it was most important for the City to improve the education across the board in order to attract the investment and businesses that were needed to come to Peterborough and the region in the future. It followed that the situation was not just - albeit importantly - required for the individual, but for the whole region and City itself.

The Peterborough Schools inspection and KS2 attainment levels in 2016

24. John Harris has supplied Appendix 1 being a spreadsheet to compare the Peterborough Schools to Regional and National figures for children meeting the expected level in Reading, Writing and Maths combined for Key Stage 2 in 2016.

Commissioning Nullam Group

25. It was agreed there should be an extensive review of several areas relating to the Education Department covering existing systems and proposed changes taking place at the present time. The audit proposal for PCC would cover the following areas:-
- (1) A review of the new service proposal which was in prospect following the changes in a Government Directive in relation to financing education within Local Authorities. This review would 'sense check' and identify areas for further

consideration in the event that any had been omitted from the restructuring proposal. This aspect of the review would help identify matters for consideration in Education Review One also. Where this has been the case, references from the Nullam Report are highlighted in that part of my report.

- (2) A 'deep dive' audit to challenge the hypotheses to establish why and where the present situation had arisen within the Local Authority schools dating from 2003/4. This would be an extensive data audit carried out in conjunction with the Fisher Family Trust.
- (3) An audit covering certain schools to look at services and communication and RAG rating of those schools against the hypotheses provided by the City Council and involving consideration of Peterborough's collaborative model of school improvement (the PSISN).

Certain hypotheses were put to Nullam by officers from the City Council for consideration and verification, as follows:-

- Peterborough has a high proportion of "White Other" pupils in its cohorts, predominantly from E Europe, including Roma, but also Portuguese, creating a high EAL cohort.
- The EAL cohort contains a greater proportion of "White Other" and new arrivals from Eastern Europe than many other Local Authorities.
- There has been rapid population growth, from within the UK but mainly from outside the UK.
- This population growth causes excessive demand for school places placing a strain on our schools infrastructure services and also creating very high

levels of in-year admissions, mobility and “churn” which is much higher than other Local Authorities.

- Peterborough has a higher proportion of new arrivals to the UK than many other Local Authorities.
- Peterborough has a high level of deprivation compared to many other areas.
- Peterborough has low attainment on entry to school, with children starting primary school with attainment and school readiness levels which are lower than many other areas, therefore already starting “behind the start line”.
- Peterborough has a low skill, low wage economy, resulting in high numbers of “working poor” - those who do not qualify for FSM but whose children are equally deprived emotionally and in terms of adult contact because family members are working so many hours, often in multiple jobs, and are therefore out of home for long periods.
- Schools which are not full are adversely impacted by in-year “churn” because of constant demand for school places due to sustained high levels of inward migration to the City.

(4) An audit of non-school based service provision mapping the internal service delivery functions and provision to schools. This would involve consideration of SEN, admissions, attendance and transport. There would also be a high level review of teaching staff recruitment and retention. This area again relates to Education Review One concerning non-school based service provision.

26. This review was commissioned in February 2017 and a final overarching audit review report concluded and handed over in August 2017 approving of its content. The report

will be shared with the RSC in order to ensure that the relationship between the local authority and the RSC continues as a vital part of progress for the future.

27. The list of recommendations at the end of this review includes any recommendations made by Nullam which will all have been approved by John Harris and myself - together with others that we consider to be important also.

Meeting with Dr Tim Coulson, Regional Schools Commissioner and Jonathan Lewis, his Deputy

28. I had a lengthy meeting with both with a view to discussing the present situation, and in particular to find out whether the RSC believed that the local authority was challenging the schools in the area enough, both Primary and Secondary, and how well the officers at PCC were working together with the RSC and making progress.
29. The Deputy RSC was himself employed as the Assistant, then Services Director for Education at the time when the School Improvement system was being considered and agreed and finally put into implementation. His knowledge of the schools in Peterborough is extensive.
30. Following considerable discussion the main points raised in this meeting were as follows:-
 - (1) The RSC considers that the structures set up within Peterborough are very good and could be more utilised within Cambridgeshire itself. Peterborough however was more challenged in its schools due to a diverse pupil population.
 - (2) The RSC is very keen on target setting, both for individual schools and for the local authority as a whole. Expectations need to be raised, and a wider range of initiatives is required to drive improvement in educational attainment.

- (3) The leadership of School Improvement within the Authority is vital, both at scrutiny level and at Headship level. There is a need to consider this urgently to ensure that the best School Improvement arrangements and the best Headships at individual schools are in place.
- (4) The general spirit within the Local Authority is good, but there is a need to focus on particular schools to encourage them to 'up their game'.
- (5) Certain schools did not belong to the School Improvement system and were not in Triads. They originally were given a choice, but it was necessary to find out why they had not joined during the second year when the system was continuing.
- (6) The RSC believes that the Triads should change every three years at least, as was intended originally, as this would create a greater challenge.
- (7) The RSC had a very good relationship with Peterborough City Council officers, Terry Reynolds and Gary Perkins.
- (8) The local authority will ultimately be aiming to streamline resources and processes once more schools attain Academy status. The most important aspect of schools belonging to Multi Academy Trusts, whether internally or externally led, is the ability to communicate within them and to assist each other.
- (9) They consider that there needs to be excellent Headteachers across the board ultimately, and the same is true of governors.
- (10) The scrutiny by elected members within the Local Authority is vital and all of the political groups should have champions for education.
- (11) They are extremely pleased with the outcome of the Director, Wendi Ogle-Welbourn working within the whole of Cambridgeshire as well as Peterborough.

They consider this has helped across the board. They consider there is a need to focus on things that will make a difference, and this can be by determining just one or two matters on which to determine to improve. Focus is required.

(12) The RSC is concerned to ensure the quality of the triad and Collaborative reports and ensure that the system does not get too 'cosy'.

(13) The setting up of teaching schools is an absolute requirement and they need to be effective. There is an opportunity for the local authority to be proactive by exploiting the opportunities that come from the Department for Education's Strategic School Improvement Fund, working in conjunction with Teaching Schools.

(14) The RSC is keen to promote high quality Nursery and Early Years education, and this should be encouraged. The Local Authority has responsibility for Early Years attainment.

(15) The RSC would be keen to be more involved in the School Improvement system within the Local Authority and would welcome visiting the entire day to understand how it works more fully.

Meeting of the School Improvement Board - February 2017

31. I attended this at their February meeting. Eric Winstone is the Chair of this Board having taken over from a previous Chairman from when it was first set up in September 2014.

32. The meeting is attended by the Headteachers of the eight Collaboratives and others who have a particular interest within the education field. It is only the officers from the local authority who support the Board - namely the Senior Education Officer, the Officer responsible for Early Years, the Officer responsible for Post Sixteen Education

(at the City College) and the Officer responsible for Adult and Continuing Education (ditto) who can attend during the morning session when all of the triad reports and collaborative reports are considered. In my opinion it is necessary to reflect upon the membership of this Board at this juncture. Many of the representatives only attend a shorter afternoon session.

33. The discussions during the morning are free flowing and diverse, with each Collaborative reporting upon its progress and to determine the priority for the future in relation to School Improvement. The arguments are sensible and there is no doubt that the Headteachers present when I attended were well committed to the system and wished to see it work properly and to improve in itself. They all confirmed individually to me that the schools themselves like the support of the Triads and Collaboratives and that this arrangement should continue into the future. They were not blinkered and did consider that the system could be improved upon.
34. There are certain schools within the PCC who do not belong to this self-improvement system.
35. As I will comment upon later, I have been involved with John Harris in extensive consideration of the system and together with recommendations received from Nullam we do have proposals to alter how it will work in the future. Most systems once instituted require consideration after two to three years and that is the case with this present arrangement. In saying this, however, there is no intention to denigrate the system in itself as time given by the best Headteachers to other schools who are struggling or wishing to find and take advice has to be good for education in my opinion. Some of the concerns raised during this meeting were as follows:-
 - To improve attainment should there be more involvement and more engagement in Nursery and Pre School teaching to a high standard. Problems surround

resources and utilising any finances given over to the Secondary Schools to finance this engagement at a younger age would be very difficult indeed in the present financial crisis.

- Much consideration needs to be given to the 'revolving door' or 'churn', particularly of Eastern European families within the City of Peterborough. The question is will this cease or continue post Brexit?
 - Concern was expressed over the proposals to join different schools together in Academy Trusts to ensure that the culture would be beneficial for all schools involved.
 - Could not the schools who were not engaged in Triads now be encouraged to do so - particularly the achieving schools who could be of such help to the more under achieving schools?
 - Concerning the Secondary Schools and Teach East (the local SCITT), some of the schools within Peterborough are not engaging. Understanding why this was the case would be important for the future.
 - Recruitment was difficult and much needed to be done to try to encourage good teachers to come to Peterborough.
 - I noted that there was no Special School Collaborative report and had discussions subsequently to find out why (see later).
36. My concern is that the morning session of the SIB appears very effective, but the afternoon session is simply a reporting mechanism, rather than an in-depth discussion to determine what is good for School Improvement across the Authority. It is informative, however, and I note particularly comments such as "collaboration is good

in Peterborough". The need to earmark housing for key workers was also brought into the discussion by the Leader of PCC.

Meeting of the Education Scrutiny and Challenge Group

37. The purpose of this Group is to bring together Elected Members, Senior Officers, Governors and other invitees to scrutinise and hold to account senior members of the Education Service within PCC - specifically with regard to the outcomes in schools.
38. I attended their meeting in April and found a wide selection of people in attendance. The discussion was intense with particular comments upon the School Improvement system. This group is able to talk and challenge what appeared to be accepted norms, but also to ensure that the important members of this Group are all aware of exactly where the Local Authority stand in relation to their ability to make changes in an era when there is far less mandatory requirement imposed upon Local Authorities.
39. The Group was concerned at the speed of change over the past few years in relation to education generally and how it affected the ability of the LA to require change from schools. I thought it was noticeable that no one from the Regional Schools Commissioners Office was present at these meetings, despite the fact that many of the schools under discussion were in fact Academies.
40. There was much discussion concerning the reading ability of children and what the LA was doing to try to improve upon this, since generally speaking the main area of disappointment in the KS2 tests in 2016 related to reading, and this badly affected the percentages. There is no doubt that the new test, which was known about from 2014, expected a wider reading experience, and the question was debated whether there had been enough time for schools to give children a wider reading experience to achieve even more. There were comments that some migrant children were able to read, but not necessarily understand what they were reading. There has been an

engagement with Vivacity to ensure that they develop their role looking after the libraries of the Local Authority to create an environment where more reading takes place. The Local Authority is engaging with the Literary Trust and much work is continuing now to try and affect the reading ability of the school children.

41. Concern was expressed that the Local Authority was heavily engaged in looking at the improvement within the school system and would still have the responsibility for doing this without any power to do anything about it.
42. The influence of the Local Authority will need to be great in the future to ensure that areas for improvement within Education do in fact happen. This requires real cooperation and deep understanding between the local community and the RSC.
43. There are known to be huge changes coming along also within the Secondary School system, particularly in relation to GCSEs. Comparisons in the future will be difficult whilst these changes go through at differing times. There will need to be an in-depth understanding of what in fact is happening in order to ensure that the situation is fully scrutinised as it proceeds.

Meeting with Elected Members

44. I have had discussions with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Sam Smith, and the Cabinet Adviser for Education and Safeguarding, Councillor June Stokes.
45. Councillor Smith's concerns related to the requirement to motivate, not just for schools but the parents and children also. She was concerned to know if all of the teachers in all of the schools were conscious in 2014 of the considerable change in the curriculum and how this would impact on the KS2 results two years later. Even if they did know, her question remained - did the parent of the children know and had they been

informed directly by the schools? Only if the parents had been contacted and became conscious of the need to, for example, read with their children at home, was there likely to be the improvement required. She believes that there should be across the authority system whereby parents are fully informed about the curriculum their children have to deal with.

46. The communication point continued with her in that she wished to ensure that all governors of all the schools were fully conscious of the need to be aware of the changes in the curriculum and what this would mean for the children in their schools.
47. We discussed the method of dealing with the problems which had arisen in certain schools and the need to challenge poor teaching or poor governance and she was completely agreed that the need for the officers of Peterborough City Council and the office of the RSC to get on well was a complete essential for the future.
48. Her further concern related to children in care, and as a result I had a meeting with the Head of the Virtual School, Dee Glover, who leads with the Virtual School for children looked after by the Authority. In relation to the children in care - she was able to utilise the pupil premium in order to obtain a better effect on literacy and this had appeared to be successful in relation to the KS2 results for those children. She was conscious of the fact that the results had been disappointing and how they might affect the KS4 results later on. Since some of the children in care are living in other Local Authority areas and she receives reports from those areas, she was very conscious that in other Local Authorities in 2016 they too had had disappointing results in many areas.
49. I have held meetings with Councillor Stokes and it is our plan for her to continue to visit the schools within the Local Authority area and to ask for responses following the 2017 KS2 and KS4 results, and try to obtain observations which will assist in ensuring that the School Improvement System could be more consistent in future years.

Meetings with John Harris

50. As stated above, John Harris is well known within the Peterborough City Council Education Department and to schools across the local authority. He has been advising me in relation to any educational matters of which he is expert.
51. I had determined quite early on that it would be necessary to take a view about the progress and impact of the PSISN. I attended a meeting of the School Improvement Board and had a discussion with the Lead Headteachers. It was evident that schools had a strong commitment to the PSISN, as was evidenced by their continuing engagement with the peer challenges in the triads.
52. I requested a sample of Triad and Collaborative reports which were made readily available by the Chair of the School Improvement Board. John Harris reviewed the sample reports and also reflected on his experience in other local authorities where similar arrangements to the PSISN are in operation. From his analysis he identified three key challenge questions in relation to the current effectiveness of the PSISN.
 - (1) How effective is the peer challenge process? Is there sufficient focus to the process? Do the reports provide clear enough focus on strengths, areas for development, and key priorities for improvement? Should there be external Quality Assurance? The reports sampled were completed to a variable standard and different formats were in use in the same challenge cycle. Would it be helpful to reduce the number of peer challenges each year from three to two?
 - (2) How effective is the support within the Collaborative/Triad? Sampling of the reports raises questions for me about whether the Collaboratives have the capacity to provide the support needed to accelerate the improvement in

attainment required in schools. There is also a question of variability in effectiveness of the challenge and support in each Collaborative.

- (3) How effective is the School Improvement Board? The original plan for the PSISN was to draw on the findings from peer challenge to identify key themes where the School Improvement Board would commission improvement support across the local authority. How far has there been timely and appropriate identification of key themes for improvement programmes?

53. It seemed to us that there was now the opportunity, after three years, to make some refinements to the PSISN, drawing on the experience of the Lead Headteachers and learning from other local authorities. This is a view that is also taken in the Nullam Report:

'Officers, closely guided by a team of external consultants, have led school leaders through an in-depth process to establish the Peterborough Self-Improving Schools network (PSISN). The creation of this structure involved school leaders in its construction, and the processes involved were 'tested' through Headteacher conferences at four stages of its development. Documentation around this improvement model was thorough, but the implementation of this has lacked overall ownership and attention to detail. Accountability structures carefully built into the system have not been followed by all, this has led to fragmentation, with the best cluster examples taking the format of a high performing MAT and other headteachers paying lip service only to the PSISN. The issues evident do not appear to emanate from faults within the structure of the PSISN, but are the result of ineffective leadership through the School Improvement Board and the need for all parties to fully engage in this management board. This is in our opinion recoverable, but thought will need to be given to overall leadership and accountability together with how to hold people accountable for measurable key performance indicators.'

54. We reflected on the current operation and membership of the School Improvement Board, and whether its functions could be built into a more appropriate partnership body. With an increasing number of schools converting to academy status and the fact that funding now goes direct to schools, we discussed the prospect of creating a Strategic Board for Education, Further Education and Skills. Such a body would be quite bold to create, but could have a real impact on education across the Local Authority affecting people's lives from very early years to adulthood. Such a Board would be important and make particular use of the very considerable experience of the best Headteachers in the Authority. This Board would be able to cope with dealing with the "wicked" issues which come to its table and for which there was no obvious immediate answer. It would, however, be very influential. This, too, is an approach favoured in the Nullam Report, which also highlights the importance of learning lessons from the way in which the School Improvement Board had been developed:

'A clear opportunity is available to Peterborough City Council to create a remodelled brokerage body that represents all stakeholders within the region (Schools, Academies, MATs, LA education improvement boards, Teaching Schools). This body would have the ability to co-ordinate data sharing protocols across the City and associated counties, identify targeted local improvement priorities, support national priorities and design and broker relevant sector led and third-party interventions that are strategic, sustainable and evidence based. It will be important to identify why the current SIB failed to make the impact intended before restructuring this brokerage body, in order to ensure that mistakes are not repeated.'

Audit of Pupil Demography

55. I have taken into account the changing demographic profile of pupils in Peterborough, which is summarised below from the Nullam Report.

'Pupil background

Language and ethnicity

Peterborough has a much greater share of children who have English as an additional language (EAL) than is the case nationally. At both primary and secondary level this is now approximately double the rate seen for England as a whole, both at primary and secondary level.

EAL rates have consistently been above those for England as a whole since 2003/4, the earliest year looked at, but these have pulled away from the national figure in the intervening period, particularly at primary level.

Such a trend will, without question, have placed extra demands on schools in Peterborough – which may not have been reflected fully in the amount of funding available to the authority, and to schools in the area.

Looked at by ethnicity, Peterborough has a much greater share of children from a background other than white British than is the case for the country as a whole – in recent years, driven by a particular growth in the number of children from 'other' white background.

In 2016, other white pupils became the second largest group by ethnicity at primary level, after white British; and the same is likely to be true of Peterborough's secondary schools in the near future¹.

School population growth in Peterborough has been at a rate well above that nationally. Between 2005 and 2016, primary populations rose by 29% in Peterborough, versus 10% for England as a whole, while at secondary level nationally the number of pupils declined by 5%, but there was a 13% increase in Peterborough.

Trends in ethnicity data suggest that much of this growth in numbers is children newly arrived in the country, or the children of recent migrants.

Special education needs

¹ Gypsy/Roma is identified as a distinct group in published figures – included within our *other white* group – but published data does not record them as being a particularly large grouping. Published figures record there only being 181 Gypsy/Roma children within Peterborough's mainstream state-funded primaries, and 183 in mainstream state-funded secondaries, in 2016.

The proportion of children with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or an education, health and care plan (EHCP) in any education setting in Peterborough has been markedly above the rate seen nationally since at least 2004.

Since 2014 there has, however, been a decline in the share of children in Peterborough with a SEN statement or an EHCP, bringing the rate closer to the national average.'

Special Educational Needs

56. I met with the Head of SEN and Inclusion, Sheelagh Sullivan, and she explained to me that, following her employment as the lead officer some 18 months ago she has been working with schools to establish more resilient arrangements for supporting children with special educational needs in mainstream schools. The creation of a hub network of 11 SEN hubs is central to this approach, along with improved support for SENCOs, increased and more appropriate specialist help for schools in aspects such as sensory support and autism, and a significantly increased and appropriate learning and development offer that includes an annual Peterborough SEND Conference. These developments are part of a drive by the local authority to promote more effective educational inclusion for children with SEN.
57. The local authority has worked hard with schools, wider services and parents to develop guidance for schools about when to apply for a statutory Education Health and Care assessment. The guidance and its application has been in operation for approximately twelve months. Feedback gathered as part of the Nullam Report suggests that some schools are still adapting to the new arrangements.

'SEN numbers across the City are above national averages but the gap between Peterborough and national statistics has been reducing since 2014 to a point where it is at its lowest point in years at 0.5%. There is no doubt that the 2014 Code of Practice has placed additional burdens on schools and SENCOs specifically. Schools generally appear to be coping with these pressures with many assigning clerical support to SEN

leads in schools to allow them to spend as much time as possible with students and their parents. School leaders report that the structures and qualifying criteria for reporting suspected SEN need are such that in many cases they simply “roll their sleeves up and do the best that they can.” ...Anecdotal evidence from school leaders suggests that this is currently not the case, resulting in many schools simply “rolling their sleeves up” and doing the best they can, without looking for the additional support that might often be in the best interest of the student concerned.’

58. Sheelagh Sullivan has advised that an evaluation of the impact of the new arrangements for supporting children with SEN is planned for the autumn term. This will be an important opportunity to take feedback from schools and other stakeholders and make any necessary adjustments.

National Literacy Trust

59. The Local Authority in Peterborough has been engaged in working with this national entity to considerable effect in past years. There are regular meetings chaired by the CEO Gillian Beasley to continue to emphasise the importance of improving literacy in the LA area. The meeting I attended was both vibrant and full of new ideas how to engage the children and parents to improve literacy in the future.
60. School readiness is part of the discussion and the Peterborough LA has developed a programme for this with most attractive pamphlets to engage with communities called ‘Ready to START School’. This is to be highly commended together with a programme called ‘Early Words Together’.
61. Vivacity is also starting to engage through the libraries with a Reading Strategy in conjunction with the LA Education Department which will become important not just for children but for parents also.

Governors

62. Although my remit did not cover this item in particular I do think it is worth commenting at this stage on the great importance of getting the right Governors for our schools .It is the job of the Cabinet member to approve all local authority governors for maintained schools and their input and impact cannot be overstated. In my opinion the importance of getting the right people with different skill bases is vital. Governing bodies should be encouraged and supported in undertaking regular skills audits, and should also commission external reviews of their effectiveness (for example by the National Governors Association).
63. Governors need to be involved in the school improvement push for schools within the Peterborough LA and in particular be informed by the Heads of any changes in legislation and curriculum which may affect outcomes –such as has been happening in more recent years.

Nursery & Pre-School

64. I do believe that this area of education is very important indeed. Done correctly it provides a strong foundation for children’s learning and wider personal development. In the Peterborough local authority area we have one maintained nursery school at Caverstede. Abbotsmede, Brewster Avenue, Old Fletton, Thorpe and Fulbridge schools all have pre-school classes. The rest of provision in the authority -106 settings - is made through private, voluntary and community organisations. In addition there are 152 childminders registered with the local authority
65. My understanding is that the funding rates provided for the 15 hour free pre-schooling are higher than many local authorities including Cambridgeshire. The majority of our pre-schools have signed up for the 30 hour provision also which is beneficial to the children within the authority boundaries. .

66. In relation to vulnerable and SEN children the local authority has established an SEN Inclusion Fund. This is from the early years funding provided by the Government and has to be claimed by the early years provider. It does mean that there is some additional funding for these children to support early years settings in meeting their needs.
67. Caverstede Nursery will be the Early Years hub setting for SEN Provision. The local authority is particularly concerned for there to be recognition of early years SEND. Children in their pre-school years who have complex SEND needs are supported via the Early Support Pathway process. When this support is provided by one of the private/voluntary early years settings there is a process in place for informing primary schools about children who have been on the Early Support Pathway so that there is an effective transition into Reception.
68. A Market Position Statement is formulated annually which is a great asset for all to consider. Although there is no capital funding available for new nurseries the authority has set aside extra funding to assist with the provision of the extra 15 hours requirement which seems to me to be excellent.

D. EDUCATION REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

Vision and Direction

- (1) There is a need for a new Vision and Mission for the Local Authority in relation to education from Early Years to Secondary level. The Vision should support 'an Education System that works for all children in Peterborough' There needs to be a system leadership approach to self-improvement that permeates through the professional system, children, young people and families.. The process for developing the vision and then turning it into a workable strategy and plan are key. The Vision should be to Educate Together and the Mission should be to Improve Education Together.

In giving effect to this recommendation, the Nullam Report has suggested:

'.....consideration be given to creating a tangible and far reaching strategic goal for all stakeholders within Peterborough City Council, irrespective of department. In previous discussions with officers and members we talked around the introduction of a "Target 100" goal that could be aligned to the proposed overarching vision. In principle, the concept is to have shared goal that all stakeholders can relate to and work towards. We used the number 100 to reflect an aspiration to move from the current council league position to number 100. This goal requires visibility around the key milestones and benchmarks that have to be achieved to be seen as an evolving council moving up any associated league tables, once the initial goal is achieved then a new target is set using the milestones and benchmark model. The "Target 100" is a top down initiative that offers easy stakeholder buy-in and strengthens internal communication.'

and:

'Ensure that the process for setting school based targets is completely transparent to school leaders; they need to 'buy into' the process and vision, and success will be the result of school leaders truly owning these school based challenges. Following a top down-bottom up approach to setting targets a gap analysis should take place to ensure challenge is delivered appropriately and that support is effectively targeted towards need.'

- (2) There should be a conference called to discuss and workshops run to debate the need for the Vision and Mission and the general target for the Local Authority in relation to Education over the course of the next 5-10 years. A “hearts and minds” approach is required from all taking part.
- (3) Togetherness being the theme, the togetherness of the Vision and Mission of the Education Department in Peterborough should be exactly the same as the functional requirements of the Regional Schools Commissioner and his/her Officers. If there is any visible disagreement between the two, the Vision and Mission will not succeed, or have greater difficulty in succeeding.
- (4) A high profile media campaign should be carried out to raise public awareness of the successes of – and the challenges for – education in Peterborough. The public should be more fully informed on a regular basis in order that a knowledge of the work carried out by the local authority, and the office of the RSC is better understood.
- (5) Consideration should be given to having a ‘leading headteacher’ for each phase of education who would work with local authority officers and the RSC to champion the Peterborough locally maintained schools. This could be a role for

the headteachers who chair the primary and secondary headteacher meetings currently.

Leadership and Governance

- (6) Consideration should be given to establishing a Strategic Board for Education, Further Education and Skills to ensure a bold educational strategy across the whole Authority. Similar Boards are being set up in Doncaster, Leicester and Hounslow, for example. The functions of the Board would need to be worked out alongside the RSC's sub-regional arrangements to ensure alignment of approach and to avoid duplication. This would also entail the abolition of the SIB to and the incorporation of its functions within the Strategic Board.

Improving Challenge and Support for Self-Improving Schools

- (7) The local authority continues to have a statutory responsibility for monitoring, challenge and support in relation to schools causing concern. Local authority officers should work with schools to ensure that the associated processes are clear, transparent and consistently applied.

The findings from the Nullam report are important here:

'The processes for the LA monitoring and challenging school leaders and governors on school performance needs to be clear and transparent. School leaders need to be absolutely clear on why this process is necessary (and the LA's obligations here), how this will work in practice, the identity of key LA staff involving themselves in this process and the various types of intervention available to schools where it is identified that additional support may be required. The LA must make the actions that it may take, where concerns are identified, absolutely clear, this possibly involving RSC, Diocesan Authorities, MAT CEOs etc.'

- (8) The local authority should provide more systematic arrangements for collecting, analysing and using data to support school improvement.

The Nullam Report suggests:

'a fully integrated and accessible data sharing portal, one that would improve the process for educational leaders and impact the quality of education and services they provide. A key recommendation in this area is the need for a scoping exercise with relevant stakeholders drawing out a detailed ICT needs analysis. Data warehousing should also be a consideration, allowing system administrators to migrate key trending information from the current multiple systems....We would also recommend that consideration be given to introducing the post of schools data analyst. This person to be responsible for the structured input of data to a MIS and working closely with officers to produce trend and current performance reports to better inform conversations with school leaders and to enable the authority to adopt a proactive approach to identifying potential performance issues and pointing interventions towards these.'

- (9) Schools demonstrate a strong commitment to the PSISN. I would recommend working with the Lead Headteachers and local authority officers to remodel aspects of the PSISN, responding to the challenges identified by John Harris and the findings in the Nullam Report.

- (10) Review the composition of the School Improvement Board, e.g. the Assistant Director of Education at Peterborough should have a permanent seat on the Board and not be a mere invitee. It is vital that the Chair is determined and

appropriately experienced and the question of any succession planning for the future needs to be considered.

- (11) More teaching Schools are required and this will mean the best schools putting themselves forward to attain this standard. A concerted proposal by the Local Authority and the RSC to individual schools may be required to obtain more collaboration in this regard.

Tackling Barriers to Learning

- (12) As part of the drive to improve educational outcomes in Peterborough, the local authority should work with schools to develop a strategic approach to improving the attainment of vulnerable learners. The Nullam Report outlines a possible approach:

'.....concentrate attention on narrowing the gap between free school meal students and all students in all primary schools, and working with Teaching Schools to put appropriate interventions in place in schools where this gap is clearly widening over a three-year trend. We recommend assessment of an annualised local and national trends strategy that focuses on narrowing the gap and to monitor carefully the impact of the pupil premium grant.

It is clear that Peterborough City Council would benefit from working closely with schools in order to better define its most 'at risk' learners. The process of identifying these students and families is becoming ever more complex.

*We would suggest that **PCC should commission a research group involving key PCC Officers and school Early Years, primary and secondary school leaders, to investigate and identify who the most vulnerable learners are within Peterborough Schools and suggest strategies for better supporting these students and their families.***

- (13) The churn of pupils through the schools is the major problem within certain schools in the City of Peterborough. The local authority should adopt a more strategic approach to the issue of mobility in schools, examining pupil mobility in its schools against the wider national and local context.

Nullam comments here:-

[The local authority] should identify the particular causes and characteristics of mobility in Peterborough and their implications for schools and the LA in seeking to raise achievement. Our recommendation can be managed in two ways.

- The first being through a survey of the views of Peterborough headteachers. Findings should allow the LA to gain a deeper understanding of the administrative, pastoral and teaching and learning issues which face schools with high levels of mobility, and to identify strategies that minimise the effects of mobility on achievement.*
- The second should involve an analysis of available statistical and documentary information relating to the scale, pattern and dynamics of mobility in the school system, together with interviews with headteachers and staff in its high mobility schools, and local authority staff in Education, Housing and Social Services whose roles and responsibilities can provide further insights into different aspects of mobility.*

Building Capacity

- (14) The Corporate Director and senior leaders need to ensure that there is a strategic approach to succession planning and capacity building within the service to ensure the sustainability of the local authority's Education functions. The Nullam report highlights this as a key operational requirement.

'We anticipate that there could be several phases of development and growth within the School Standards and Effectiveness division. If this is case, officers should be considering their approach to internal recruitment and retention as well as their ability to attract suitable external candidates. HoS concerns on workforce demographic issues should be modelled and addressed where possible. Officers should ensure that capacity assumptions are fully explored and aligned to the perceived solutions.'

- (15) Teacher recruitment is absolutely vital and obtaining this in Peterborough is not easy. Schools should be involved in the Teach East Programme, or another programme of the same ilk as training locally is obviously very effective to obtain newly qualified trained teachers. Again, the Nullam Report concurs with this recommendation:-

'Our attention was brought to the successful TEACH EAST SCITT and its most recent high conversion of NQTs placed into local schools, some 87%. Schools should be encouraged to engage with the TEACH EAST programme at a much earlier stage to ensure potentially "outstanding" teachers are not recruited by out of borough schools.'

Appendix 1 – Peterborough City Council – Education Review – Comparison Spreadsheet Meeting Expected Standard at Key Stage 2 2016

Percentage of Pupils Meeting Expected Standard at Key Stage 2 2016														
	Bedford Borough	Cambs	Central Beds	Essex	Herts	Luton	Norfolk	Peterborough	Southend	Suffolk	Thurrock	Eastern Region	England	
% achieving expected standard in reading	59	66	65	67	72	56	64	55	67	63	63	66	66	
% achieving expected standard in grammar, punctuation and spelling	68	70	68	74	77	71	66	65	73	68	72	71	73	
% achieving expected standard in Maths	59	67	65	71	73	64	62	61	71	64	68	68	70	
% achieving expected standard in writing	68	72	77	76	79	70	77	72	79	71	76	75	74	
% achieving expected standard in reading, writing and Maths (RWM)	42	53	51	56	59	45	50	43	56	49	51	53	54	
LA national ranking for % achieving standard in RWM	152	84	106	50	24	147	119	151	50	123	106			

*Appendix 2 – Peterborough City Council – Education Review***List of Principal Documents considered by Councillor Lynne Ayres**

Document No.	Document Name	Date
1	Strategic Review of Education Services in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough – Final Report by John Harris Consulting Limited	Dec 2016
2	Nullam Final Executive Report Peterborough City Council Education and Support Service Provision Audit	Aug 2017
3	PCC Education Services Briefing Discussion Paper	23 rd Feb 2017
4	PCC School Improvement Board Membership & Governance Paper	Undated
5	PCC School Improvement Board Terms of Reference	Undated
6	PCC School Improvement Strategy	Sept 2016-2017
7	PCC School Review and Support Handbook	Sept 2014
8	PCC In-School Support Offer for Schools, “Helping children to be the Best They Can Be”	2016-2017
9	PCC Education Scrutiny and Challenge Group Purpose and Aims	Undated
10	DOE Schools Causing Concern	Mar 2016
11	Early Years Market Position Statement – Being reviewed	Mar 2017
12	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Inclusion Policy	2016-2019
13	A Guide to Peterborough Hub Network	Jun 2017
14	Update to the School Organisation Plan	2015-2020