

CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 6
18 JULY 2019	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Wendi Ogle Welbourn, Executive Director, People and Communities	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cabinet Member for Children’s Services and Education, Skills and University	
Contact Officer(s):	Jonathan Lewis – Service Director (Education)	Tel. 01223 507165

ATTENDANCE OF SUE BALDWIN, REGIONAL SCHOOLS COMMISSIONER

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM: Jonathan Lewis – Service Director (Education)	Deadline date: N/A
<p>It is recommended that the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Note the background contents of the report to aid the discussion in the meeting around the Regional Schools Commissioner and her responsibilities. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report has been written by the Service Director (Education) following a request at the Children and Education Scrutiny agenda planning meeting to meet with the Regional School Commissioner.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 This report is offered to the Committee to outline briefly the role of the Regional School Commissioner (RSC) and the position in Peterborough in relation to the Academies programme. The agenda item is intended to be a discussion around the role of the RSC and its work with schools in Peterborough. It is hoped the chance to meet with the RSC will give the Committee members a better understanding of her role and how it operates in a mixed environment of educational delivery.

2.2 This report is for the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2.1 Functions determined by Council :

Education, including

- a) University and Higher Education;
- b) Youth Service;
- c) Careers; and
- d) Special Needs and Inclusion.

2.3 This report links to –

- Corporate Priority: Improve educational attainment and skills

- Children in Care Pledge: Support children in care to have a good education.

3. TIMESCALES

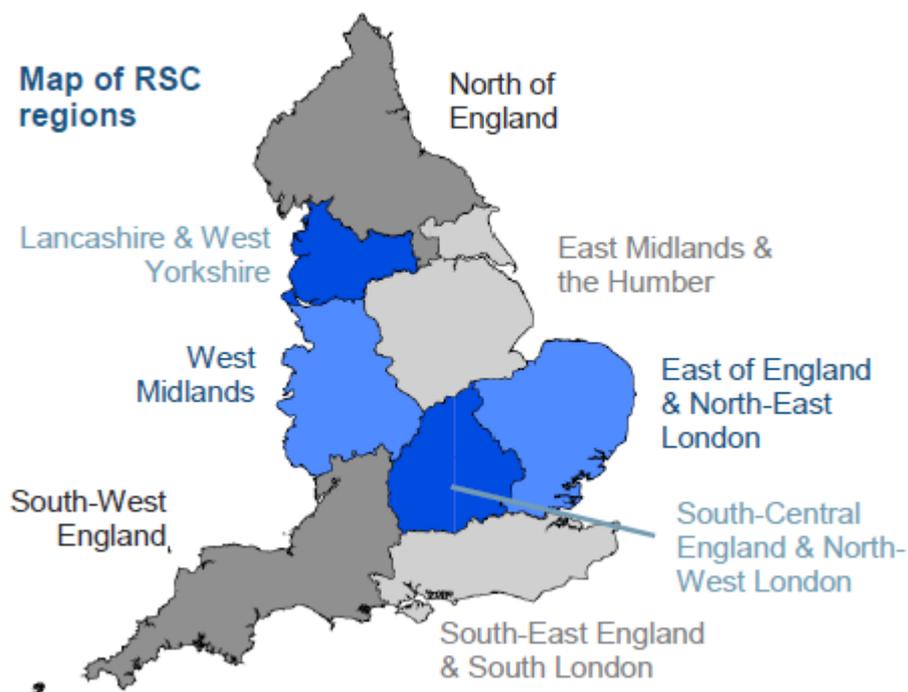
Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
---	-----------	----------------------------------	-----

4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 The Department for Education (DfE) announced the introduction of Regional Schools Commissioners in December 2013. In September 2014 eight Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs) were appointed to oversee the growing numbers of academies in England.

4.2 The country (covering England only) is split into 8 regions –

- East Midlands and the Humber
- East of England and North East London
- Lancashire and West Yorkshire
- North
- North West London and South Central England
- South East England and South London
- South West
- West Midlands



4.3 Regional schools commissioners (RSCs) act on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education on the operation of the academies regime. RSCs, with the help of elected Head Teacher Boards, will approve applications for new academies and free schools, approve and monitor sponsor capacity. Headteacher boards (HTBs) are responsible for advising and challenging regional schools commissioners on academy related decisions. HTBs are made up of experienced academy head teachers and other sector leaders. The RSCs also take intervention action where either performance [or governance] is poor. They are accountable to the National Schools Commissioner

4.4 RSCs' more detailed responsibilities include:

- taking action where academies and free schools are underperforming
- intervening in academies where governance is inadequate
- deciding on applications from local-authority-maintained schools to convert to academy

- status
 - improving underperforming maintained schools by providing them with support from a strong sponsor
 - encouraging and deciding on applications from sponsors to operate in a region
 - taking action to improve poorly performing sponsors
 - advising on proposals for new free schools
 - advising on whether to cancel, defer or enter into funding agreements with free school projects
 - deciding on applications to make significant changes to academies and free school.
- 4.5 Many of these responsibilities are outlined in the DfE ‘Schools Causing Concern’ guidance which describes how Local Authorities and the RSC work together to improve education outcomes in schools which are causing concern.
- 4.6 The role of the RSCs is also to work closely with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to develop a coherent and joined up picture of a trust that considers:
- educational performance (led by RSCs)
 - finance (led by ESFA)
 - governance (RSCs and ESFA both contribute)
- 4.7 The Regional School Commissioner for the East of England and North East London is Sue Baldwin and the current vision statement for the region is to focus on the following –
- Challenge underperformance
 - Build strong sponsors
 - Open high quality new provision
 - Facilitate collaboration
- 4.8 As at May 2019, there were 46 academy and free schools in Peterborough which accounts for 58% of the schools in the City. 3 more schools are currently in the pipeline for conversion from the 1st September 2019 and currently there are no more schools planning to convert.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Not applicable

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 6.1 Members of the Committee will have a better understanding of the role of the Regional School Commissioner and how Peterborough Academy schools are overseen.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 Not applicable.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 None

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 9.1 No direct implications but funding allocation for capital maintenance and support for school improvement reduce as more schools transfer to academy status.

Legal Implications

- 9.2 None

Equalities Implications

9.3 None

Rural Implications

9.4 There is a mixed position with academy status in the rural communities, with 3 of the 10 schools having academy status currently. There is 1 school in the pipeline for conversion.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

10.1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/schools-commissioners-group/about>

11. APPENDICES

11.1 None.