



# Northumberland County Council

## **Families and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: December 2020**

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### **Education Strategy Board Update, December 2020**

Report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care & Children's Service, Cath McEvoy-Carr

Cabinet Member for Children's Services: Councillor Guy Renner Thompsom

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#### **Purpose of report.**

To inform the committee regarding the development of the Northumberland Education Strategy Board

#### **Recommendations**

##### **It is recommended that:**

1. The committee considers the development of the Northumberland Education Strategy Board
2. The committee agree the initial priorities and identifies any additional areas for the future.
3. The committee agrees with the plans for the board to convene as soon as possible.

#### **Link to Corporate Plan**

This report is relevant to all the education priorities included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021.

#### **Key Issues**

- Northumberland has made significant progress in recent years in improving the outcomes for children and young people in the county.
- Overall, the education outcomes for children and young people have been on an upward trajectory and we have gradually moved up the national and regional league tables.
- Our exclusions both fixed term and permanent numbers have reduced over the last 3 years although the view is that this is still too high.
- There remain some issues of challenge and concern however including the disadvantage gap, inclusion agenda and sufficiency planning.

## **1. Background**

### **Areas for improvement in education across Northumberland include-**

#### **1. Narrowing the disadvantage gap**

Work in this area has been ongoing for a number of years with varying degrees of success (see Pupil Premium Report July 20). A new strategy needs to be developed if a sustained positive impact is going to be made in narrowing disadvantaged achievement gaps. It is possible that Covid-19 will add further challenges to disadvantaged learners and increase outcome gaps even further.

#### **2. Improving secondary outcomes**

Northumberland KS4 attainment (2019), as measured by Attainment 8, is above the national average and in the second quartile but progress, as measured by Progress 8, is below the national average and is in the third quartile. Given the low level of Pupil Premium funding in the county overall, this would indicate a degree of underachievement. Disadvantaged pupils perform poorly at Key 4 with both Attainment 8 and Progress 8 being in the 4<sup>th</sup> quartile nationally. There were no results to judge progress in this area in 2020. It is expected that Covid-19 will impact on outcomes for 2021 and beyond.

#### **3. Reducing exclusions and improving the quality of Alternative Provision**

An Exclusions Tracking Group containing a range of officers meet half termly to monitor exclusion rates and support schools with their practice around individual cases. To further explore this area the findings of an Exclusions Scrutiny Task & Finish Group were agreed in Cabinet. An Exclusions Working Group was established in January 2020, however the work of this group has been slowed by Covid 19.

#### **4. SEN provision and processes**

The county is developing a long-term strategic sufficiency plan to ensure that there are enough specialist places of the right type in the right place at the right time to meet the growing demand.

The Local Area had to complete a 'Written Statement of Action' following the October 2018 Ofsted inspection, re inspection in 2021 needs to demonstrate marked improvement.

#### **5. Post-16 Education**

This area needs to be developed to ensure a first class offer for learners. A comprehensive review is currently underway.

Council officers and schools have been working collectively on these development areas over time. Gains made have not always been maintained over time. Individual schools have made huge improvements with direct Local Authority support, but this is not the case in all schools. Direction and support have been provided by the Local Authority to all but delivery on these areas can only be completed by the schools. To maximise outcomes all the schools need to be working in the same direction. A sector led approach where leading schools initiate, coordinate, manage and oversee best practice could be the most effective way forward.

## **2. Proposal**

It is proposed that a Northumberland Education Strategy Board will lead, coordinate, manage and monitor all developmental practices to address the key education improvement priorities in Northumberland and to recommend actions as may be deemed necessary to accelerate improvement in these areas.

### **Terms of Reference / Role of the Northumberland Strategy Board**

- To monitor the priorities set in the Children and Young Peoples Plan and Enhanced Service Plans of the LA
- To lead by example, demonstrating best practice and encouraging the practice of others
- To offer support and challenge to all partners
- To consider regular progress reports from Lead Officers for each of the priorities
- To evaluate the pace of improvement and, where necessary, recommend actions aimed at accelerating progress and improvement in each of the priorities
- To direct changes to key issue work plans and to suggest new areas for development
- To allocate any additional resources, as appropriate
- To work collaboratively and inclusively for the benefit of all learners within the Northumberland.

### **Model / Work Programme for Northumberland Education Strategy Board**

- Establish the Vision Statement for the Board
- Bring together officers, schools, academies and other interested parties that may include colleges, businesses and/or community organisations
- Monitor actions and impact on the priorities
- Monitor the work already underway and any other education initiatives currently in place
- Plan further actions for each of the priorities

### **Suggested Membership of Northumberland Education Strategy Board**

- Chair: Executive Director of Children and Adult Social Care
- Service Director, Education and Skills
- Service Director Children's Social Care
- Lead Officer for each priority
- Secondary maintained school headteacher
- Secondary academy headteacher / chief executive
- Middle school headteacher
- Primary school headteacher
- Special school headteacher
- First school headteacher
- Early Years representative
- Post-16 representation
- Administrative Officer
- Governing Body representation
- Young Person representation
- Invited to attend but not Board members: RSC / DfE representatives

**Timing of Meetings-** The Northumberland Education Strategy Board will meet twice per term

## IMPLICATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE REPORT

<b>Policy:</b>	The recommendations of this report support the education priorities included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021.
<b>Finance and value for money:</b>	No implications
<b>Legal:</b>	No implications
<b>Procurement:</b>	No implications
<b>Human Resources:</b>	No implications
<b>Property:</b>	No implications
<b>Equalities:</b>  N/A	Should a xxx Strategy be approved to be developed at some point in the future, as set out in the Recommendations of this report, an EIA assessment would need to be carried in conjunction with this strategy in the light of its potential impact on protected groups.
<b>Risk Assessment:</b>	Should a strategy be approved to be developed at some point in the future, a risk assessment would be undertaken prior to the implementation of the strategy.
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder:</b>	This report has considered Section 17 (CDA) and the duty it imposes and there are no implications arising from it.
<b>Customer Considerations:</b>	The recommendations in this report are based upon a desire to support improved outcomes for all children in Northumberland
<b>Carbon Reduction:</b>	It is not envisaged that the recommendations set out in this report would have a significant positive or negative impact on carbon reduction
<b>Wards:</b>	All wards

**CONSULTATION** This report has been considered by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and the Chief Legal Officer.

**Background Papers** None

**Report sign off**

Monitoring Officer/Legal	LH
Executive Director of Finance & Section S151 Officer	CH
Relevant Executive Director	CMcC
Interim Chief Executive	KA

Portfolio Holder(s)
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GRT
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