

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny

Date of Meeting: 6 June 2018

Report Title: Overview and Scrutiny Review of Education: Update and Proposed Next Steps

Report By: Mark Horan Continuous Improvement and Democratic Services Manager

Purpose of Report

To update Members on Scrutiny review work with regards to Education and to propose next steps for continued Scrutiny work in this area.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. The 2017/18 Education Scrutiny review team recommends that the 2018/19 Scrutiny Members work programme includes a continued focus on the local education landscape.**
- 2. That should recommendation 1 be agreed, then the 2018/19 Scrutiny chair or her/his Scrutiny nominee in conjunction with the Leader of the Council facilitate the Opportunities Area briefings to HBC Members to involve (a) chairing the briefing meetings and (b) preparing lines of inquiry.**

Reasons for Recommendations

Scrutiny has a longstanding interest in local education attainment and opportunity and this is shared with cabinet colleagues and members more broadly. It is therefore important that members have fruitful dialogue with Opportunity Area colleagues to ensure longstanding concerns are being raised and addressed in a coordinated manner where possible.

Introduction

1. Overview and scrutiny members are keen to support improvements to local education provision in the town. As part of the 2017/18 work programme, the committee agreed to undertake a review to understand how the local education landscape has changed and explore opportunities to support increased communication between education providers, the council and the local community.
2. The review had also been initiated, in part, by an earlier [motion](#) to full council regarding the conversion of a local primary school to academy status and feedback review team members had received through their casework.

Review Team

3. The review team members are Councillors John Rankin (Chair), James Bacon (Vice Chair), Mike Howard, Mike Turner, Tania Charman and Warren Davies
4. Officer support was provided by Mark Horan, Michael Courts, Ryan Hill, Deniz Musa and Chris Barkshire-Jones as required.
5. The review has also benefited from input from a range of education providers and partners, including Carole Dixon, Chief Executive of Education Futures Trust, Emily Williams, Education Opportunity Area and Yvonne Powell, Executive Principal of Ark William Parker.

Overview and Scrutiny Review of Educational Attainment in an Academised Context

6. As part of their [2014/15 work programme](#), overview and scrutiny members had undertaken a review of educational attainment in an academised context. The review coincided with a number of local schools transferring from local authority control to academy status.
7. Members considered the recommendations of the original review at the outset of this piece of work. The original review had made recommendations to increase communication between schools and non-education partners, particularly on shared issues such as challenges with the recruitment and retention of staff. Members agreed that this would also form a key line of inquiry for their work.

Local Education Landscape

8. Carole Dixon, Chief Executive of the Education, provided the review team with an update on changes to the local education landscape over the past 2 years,
9. Overall, the position was considered to be more settled, with fewer schools transferring to academy status.
10. Challenges remained in respect of the recruitment and retention of staff, the vacancy rate in Hastings was above the national average at 5%. The Department for Education recently launched a national campaign to attract teachers to work in

Hastings. This work has been more recently followed up (December/March) through Now Teach and Teach First.

11. Ofsted continued to assess schools against pupil attainment, progress, and attendance as well as safeguarding and pupil premium.
12. The review team also gathered data on local and national education attainment.

Educational Attainment

13. Throughout the review, members have been keen to explore ways the council can support education providers in realising improvements to educational attainment. Members were also keen to ensure schools provided a broad curriculum and appropriate provisions were in place for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN).
14. In Hastings, 53.5% of pupils were achieving the expected standard in reading, writing, and maths at the end of Key Stage 2, compared to the National Average of 60.9%.
15. At Key Stage 4, the percentage of pupils in Hastings achieving the basic measure (A* - C / 9 – 4 in English and Maths) was 50.0%, compared to the East Sussex average of 61.2%.
16. During the review, full council approved a motion instructing the Leader of the Council to write to the Regional Schools Commissioner raising concern at the levels of educational attainment in the town. A copy of the response was shared with the review team members, setting out the Department for Education's priorities to improve performance, principally through the Opportunity Area. The letter added that two special schools in Hastings had recently been inspected by Ofsted and judged as good and outstanding.
17. The review team met with the newly appointed Executive Principal of Ark William Parker, Yvonne Powell, to discuss how learning from other areas could be applied in Hastings to improve educational attainment. Key to this was making links between education and employment, to raise aspirations amongst young people. Local schools also need to work with parents to ensure they remain central to the local community.
18. The Chair also raised the issue of educational attainment in Hastings with the local MP, who has agreed to monitor this issue.

Opportunity Area

19. Hastings has also been selected as one of twelve opportunity areas across the country. The twelve opportunity areas will share £72 million worth of new funding over the next two years, and will also have prioritised access to other funding streams from the Department for Education.
20. The purpose of the programme is to remove obstacles to social mobility. The opportunity area is overseen by a board comprising representatives of local education providers, statutory agencies, businesses and the voluntary sector.

21. The board has been working closely with local partners and has identified four key priorities for the programme; improving literacy, raising attainment in mathematics, improving mental health and resilience and broadening horizons and developing skills for employment. A full copy of the delivery plan is available to view online [here](#). The delivery plan has been designed to provide flexibility to adapt delivery of the initiatives as the programme progresses.
22. Overview and scrutiny members are keen to monitor the impact of the education opportunity area and to ensure that improvements are sustained beyond the programme.

Conclusions

23. Scrutiny review team members remain concerned by the levels of [educational attainment](#) in the town and associated life chances of young people in the borough.
24. The review has enabled overview and scrutiny members to re-establish dialogue with key partners to ensure their concerns could be heard and work to date through this review has so far successfully built trust and confidence between scrutiny and key educational stakeholders.
25. The review team are now keen that this focus is sustained particularly given the prospects afforded through the Hastings Opportunity Area set to deliver an ambitious programme and budget into 2018/19.
26. There are a number of other partners and stakeholders that the review team have yet to engage with directly including East Sussex County Council and the Regional Schools Commissioner.
27. Furthermore as a result of meetings with those listed there are a range of associated areas that the review team feel require further future scrutiny such as the impact of cuckooing on young people and the roles of schools in addressing this challenge.
28. On this basis, the review team make the following recommendation:

Recommendation

1. The 2018/19 scrutiny members work programme includes a continued focus on the local education landscape and in particular:
 - (a) An appropriate scrutiny representative works with the leader of the council or his Cabinet nominee to Chair and facilitate discussions at the Opportunities Area briefings and draft the lines of inquiry accordingly.
 - (b) On appointment of a new Scrutiny Committee following the May elections that a Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis be completed by at least one member of the existing committee with the new scrutiny Chair and Vice Chair with a view to tailoring lines of inquiry for a continued focus on the education landscape into the 2018/19 scrutiny work programme.

Wards Affected

Insert the list of wards affected

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness

Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)

Risk Management

Environmental Issues

Economic/Financial Implications

Human Rights Act

Organisational Consequences

Local People's Views

Anti-Poverty

Additional Information

Insert a list of appendices and/or additional documents. Report writers are encouraged to use links to existing information, rather than appending large documents.

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