

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 2 November 2015

Report Title: **Management Response: Overview and Scrutiny Review of the council's role in raising educational achievement in Hastings and educational outcomes for the town's children and young people in an academised context**

Report By: Jane Hartnell
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Purpose of Report

To provide a management response to recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Review team.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. That Cabinet thank the scrutiny review team for their report**
- 2. That Cabinet approve the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Team**

Reasons for Recommendations

To acknowledge and respond to the recommendations arising from the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Review Team.

Introduction

1. As part of the 2014/15 overview and scrutiny annual work programme a review was undertaken into the council's role in raising educational achievement in Hastings and educational outcomes for the town's children and young people in an academised context. The review began in October 2014 and concluded in April 2015 and fell within the remit of the Services Scrutiny Committee.
2. The focus for review stemmed from a longstanding interest in educational outcomes for young people in the town, and a recognition that historically these have been much worse than national averages. Members were keen to explore the emergence of academies given that all the secondary and majority of primary schools in the town now have academy status.
3. Members were interested in considering not only how results can be improved, but also in inspiring a shared cultural ethos that informs collective efforts from across the town's educational establishments to improve the life chances of all the town's children and young people.
4. Following a thorough and productive review, a number of recommendations have been agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Recommendation 1 - The review team supports partnership working and recommends the formation of a Task and Finish Group. The group would be asked to bring forward proposals for Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) partners on how a future education partnership might be shaped and work.

Recommendation 2 - Proposals brought forward to the LSP from the Task and Finish Group carefully consider how best to encourage a creative partnership between educational and non-educational partners to improve outcomes in local schools.

Recommendation 3 - The Leader of the Council is asked to report back to Hastings Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny committees on the outcome of the proposed Task and Finish Group.

Recommendation 4 - O & S to receive an annual report on the work of a future partnership group.

Recommendation 5 - The council continue to work with partners to address the issues identified with regard to key worker accommodation in the town and build on the promotion of Hastings as a place to work and live.

5. The Review team also suggested the following next steps:
 - a. That the Task & Finish Group is set up to investigate options to support closer partnership working. The Task and Finish Group will assess whether this is best achieved by forming a new partnership model, or utilising existing structures.

- b. That HBC and ESCC provide the limited clerical and officer support that the Task & Finish Group will require to arrive at a conclusion on the way forward. Resource implications should form part of the Task & Finish Group's considerations.
- c. That the LSP be invited to discuss both the outcome of this review and the conclusions of the Task & Finish Group.
- d. That the management response report to Cabinet to include an update on the progress of the Task & Finish Group.

Management Response

- 6. This detailed and robust review has produced appropriate recommendations that are all fully supported by the Council's senior officers.
- 7. The proposals for a 'Task and Finish' Group comprising of key senior stakeholders to bring forward proposals on how a future partnership might be shaped, what remit this might have, who might be involved or whether added value can be realised through existing structures will be an extremely helpful outcome.
- 8. It is understood that the key stakeholders identified will need to be a 'coalition of the willing', who come together on their own terms and arrive at conclusions on the appetite for future partnership working and any associated structures or processes.
- 9. Recommendation 2, (which requests the Task and Finish Group to consider how best to encourage a creative partnership between educational and non-educational partners to improve outcomes in local schools and bring forward such proposals to the LSP) is very welcome, as this will serve as an opportunity to shape LSP partnership efforts under the key theme of education.
- 10. The recommendations 3 & 4, regarding reporting back to Scrutiny and production of an annual report on education issues, will clearly be dependent on progress to form an appropriate partnership, and willingness of partners to undertake production of such a report.
- 11. It is suggested that if/when this report is available it is considered by the Local Strategic Partnership at the same time as consideration of the annual education achievement data. Scrutiny Members would of course be able to attend to hear the debate at the LSP and subject to the approval of the LSP Chair could be invited to contribute on this item.
- 12. In terms of recommendation 5, the council is committed to continuing its efforts to work with partners to address the issues of key worker accommodation in the town and to build on the promotion of Hastings as a place to work and live.
- 13. Finally, in terms of the next steps, whilst the council is able to provide the identified 'limited clerical and officer support' to assist the Task and Finish Group, this support will come from the Corporate and Democratic resources that are available for supporting the 2015/16 scrutiny review programme. If the support needs are identified as more significant, this provision will need to be revisited.

14. In conclusion, officers welcome the outcome of review and look forward to making progress in implementing the recommendations.

Task and Finish Group Update

15. It is pleasing to report that shortly before the deadline for this report the meeting of the Task and Finish Group took place and a clear focus for further partnership working has emerged.

16. The Task and Finish Group identified an area of work regarding the recruitment and retention of high quality staff, which was linked to the perception of Hastings as a place to live and work.

17. It was agreed to work towards convening a round table meeting of representatives of local employers from across the sectors of health, education and local authorities, as well as private sector employers including Saga, Hastings Direct and the Chamber of Commerce to consider how to address challenges with the recruitment and retention of staff. The meeting would also focus on opportunities to improve the image of Hastings. A letter would be sent to these partners on behalf of all members of the Task and Finish Group, advising of this proposal and seeking their participation in further work.

18. HBC also agreed to explore funding opportunities for a piece of work to improve the employability of local people via the council's regeneration team as part of this programme of works.

19. Officers are encouraged by these next steps and are keen to see how this work develops, mindful of the challenges of partnership working and capacity issues outlined elsewhere in this report.

Policy Implications

20. The implications of poor educational attainment and the impact this has on the outcomes, poverty and life chances for our town's young people have been explored during the review. The recommendations put forward are a constructive means of channelling partnership efforts to address these issues.

Wards Affected

Ashdown, Baird, Braybrooke, Castle, Central St. Leonards, Conquest, Gensing, Hollington, Maze Hill, Old Hastings, Ore, Silverhill, St. Helens, Tressell, West St. Leonards, Wishing Tree

Policy Implications

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

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Yes
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	No
Risk Management	No

Environmental Issues	No
Economic/Financial Implications	No
Human Rights Act	No
Organisational Consequences	No
Local People's Views	Yes
Anti-Poverty	Yes

Additional Information

A copy of the final report of the overview and scrutiny review can be found at
<http://hastings.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=131&MId=1350&Ver=4>

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