

Meeting: Joint Commissioning Team Policy and Development Decision Group

Date: 27 October 2016

Wards Affected: All

Report Title: Torbay's Strategy for Achieving Educational, Excellence Everywhere: Vision and Priorities 2016 - 2020

Is the decision a key decision? Yes

When does the decision need to be implemented? After the call-in period

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1. Proposal and Introduction

- 1.1 Torbay now has a diverse economy of educational providers across primary, secondary and post 16 phases, including maintained schools, academies, special, studio and grammar schools. Alongside the programme of structural reform that created academies, studio and free schools that are accountable to central rather than local government, there has been a sustained programme of qualification and curriculum reform.
- 1.2 In March 2016, the Department for Education set out its vision for further educational reforms which will require Torbay Council to refresh its own approach towards working with local schools to further improve outcomes for children and young people. More recently, the Government has announced its intention to allow the creation of more Grammar schools. Although the detail of the Government's proposal has yet to be published, Grammar schools are already a feature of the local offer and should not materially impact on the strategy.
- 1.3 The revised strategy sets out a vision for the delivery of the Council's educational support services within a significantly changed operating landscape. A copy of the strategy and associated action plan is attached in Appendix 1. The action plan will be populated in partnership with schools and key stakeholders to ensure a consistent and shared approach towards improvement activity.

2. Reason for Proposal

- 2.1 The scale and pace of change within education over recent years has been unrelenting, encompassing significant structural change, qualification and curriculum reform and changes to the schools' formula funding. As the next stage in the Government's reform programme, Education Excellence, Everywhere has four key pillars:
- Workforce reform - teacher training, development and qualifications
 - Funding - a national funding formula for schools
 - Schools - all schools to be academies by 2022, with a changed role for local authorities
 - System Leadership - teaching schools alliances and national leaders in education
- 2.2 Notwithstanding the changes that have taken place over recent years, the local authority has continuing and substantive responsibilities in relation to educational provision. These include fair access to educational provision (including capacity planning), services for vulnerable learners and the promotion of educational excellence, encompassing intervention in maintained schools and raising concerns with the Regional Schools' Commissioner (RSC) about underperforming academies or free schools.
- 2.3 The challenge for local authorities is that the reform programme has removed many of the levers to direct change whilst leaving the duties imposed unchanged. As a consequence, change can only be achieved through collaboration and brokerage within a much more complex network of provider and stakeholder relationships. The revised strategy sets out a proactive approach that seeks to maximise our influence and involvement in the development of education provision in Torbay.
- 2.4 A further significant factor influencing the need for change is the proposal for a national schools' funding formula from 2017/2018. In the first year, (2017/18) this will involve a 'soft split' with funding coming to the local authority for subsequent distribution to schools, subject to local formula factors and preserving the current ability to move monies between 'blocks' via the schools' forum. However, from 2019/20 each school will receive a direct allocation, with revised blocks held by the local authority for special educational needs and its residual education support functions. The latter is understood to be set at £15 per pupil which will give an annual allocation of £286k. Although a significant reduction on the current allocation £500k, this had been understood to be reducing to zero.
- 2.5 The revised strategy for Torbay identifies four key areas for action:
- Ensuring every child has a place to be educated

- Ensuring the needs of vulnerable pupils are met
- Act as champions for all parents and children
- Act as a champion for high standards

2.6 The strategy identifies a number of high level actions to deliver the key aims. This will be supported by a detailed action plan developed with input from key partners and stakeholders during the Autumn Term. The completed action plan will be subject to regular review by Children's Services' Senior Leadership Team, Executive Lead, Mayor and via the collaborative focus with schools.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

3.1 The Mayor is asked to approve the Strategy for Educational Excellence Everywhere 2016/2020, attached at Appendix 1, giving delegation to the Director of Children's Services to make any final changes in consultation with the Executive Member and key stakeholders and agree to receive regular updates on performance.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Supporting Information and Impact Assessment

Background Documents