

Meeting: Policy Development and Decision Group **Date:** 4/2/19

Wards Affected: All

Report Title: Education Strategy

Is the decision a key decision? No

When does the decision need to be implemented? February 2019

Executive Lead Contact Details: Councillor Stocks, Executive Lead for Children and Housing, cindy.stocks@torbay.gov.uk

Supporting Officer Contact Details: Rachael Williams, Assistant Director, Education, Learning and Skills 01803 208743 rachael.williams@torbay.gov.uk

1. Proposal and Introduction

This is a mid-term review of Torbay's Strategy for Achieving Education Excellence Everywhere: Vision and Priorities 2016 – 2020.

This strategy for achieving education excellence everywhere is a key element of the framework to deliver our vision for the children and young people in Torbay. Our ambition is to ensure that through greater collaboration, we can ensure children and young people are given the best start in life and can grow and prosper within safe families and communities that give them the best start for the future.

In a diverse educational landscape the local authority must exercise a range of roles and responsibilities within a growing mix of education providers. Torbay positively works with maintained faith and community schools, alternative provision, early year's settings, special schools, academies, independent schools and further and adult education providers who comprise a part of the mixed economy of local education provision.

The following report provides an overview of what has been achieved from the introduction of the strategy and sets out the future direction through a new action plan.

2. Reason for Proposal and associated financial commitments

To deliver its statutory duties, the Local Authority has exercised its role as champion by influencing and where possible generating consensus. Over the past two years officers in partnership with schools have created a narrative that describes a shared commitment to high aspirations and achievements, whilst also promoting equality of opportunity and access to education. To ensure maximum outcomes have been achieved the four priority areas agreed as part of the original strategy have acted as the guiding principles.

The following paragraphs set out what has been achieved against each priority area.

Priority Area One – Ensure every child has a place to be educated

- pupil projections are now accurate
- an annual sufficiency report for all phases has been created
- local need is communicated to elected members, local education providers and external bodies.
- an annual conference is held related to school place planning and wider capital assets management.

The methodology for pupil projections continues to be refined and reviewed. The Department for Education has confirmed that Torbay provides accurate SCAP data and subsequently Torbay has received the basic need allocation to support capital investment for new school places. The outcomes of this analysis are now communicated through member briefings, headteacher/trust briefings and published on an annual basis.

Since the introduction of the strategy the Council has completed work at Torquay Academy providing new classroom accommodation, secured agreements with The Spires College, Kings Ash School and Roselands to admit additional pupils and developed additional capacity at White Rock Primary School and Ellacombe School to provide additional early years places.

In addition the Local Authority has demonstrated sufficient need for two additional primary schools in the Paignton area. This demand data, coupled with two high quality free schools bids from the Learning Academy Partnership and Coast Academies will result in the local area benefiting from two primary schools under the free schools programme.

Priority Area Two – Ensure the needs of vulnerable pupils are met

- a comprehensive Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy has been developed
- needs assessment of alternative provision undertaken to ensure the generation of sufficient alternative placements
- intelligence gathered on the number of children receiving part time packages, fixed term exclusions and permanent exclusions
- this intelligence is used to both support and challenge schools to ensure that pupils are re-integrated and their school place retained
- A range of local policies and protocols to ensure that there is clarity in how to safeguard children in education has been developed
- a shared raising attainment plan to enhance the outcomes of Children Looked After and hold ourselves and schools to account for the money received through pupil premium plus has been developed

The Local Authority has developed a comprehensive Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy, this was developed by health, social care and education with parents, children and young people. This strategy has been approved by Members. The strategy is being actively delivered and will be subject to an interim review in March 2019.

Immediate success to be noted is the progress made on the conversion of Statements to Education Health and Care Plans, with 99% being completed by the DfE deadline. This conversion has ensured that children and young people's needs have been reviewed resulting in further focused plans. The parental confidence in these plans placed Torbay Local Authority in 6th place out of a national DfE survey.

The Local Authority has established a Higher Needs Recovery Group, this group of system leaders from across education, health and social care have worked relentlessly to try and understand and address demand pressures within the Higher Needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. The actions of the group have included generating new alternative provision. This includes additional Autistic Spectrum Provision at The Spires College and provision for Anxious Learners at Paignton Community Academy.

In partnership with all Schools the Local Authority has re-established a live data link enabling individual pupil level information to be accessed by officers. This information is used to identify trends in relation to attendance, the use of part time packages and exclusions. Using this intelligence the Local Authority has been able to intervene and provide support and challenge to schools with negative trends. These interventions lead by the Head of Vulnerable Pupils have on many occasions resulted in co-ordinated plans for children and young people with social care involvement. In addition the information gathered by the LA has been shared at the Local Education Board and School Forum resulting in direct challenge to schools with varying trends from system leaders in education.

The Torbay Safeguarding Children's Board (TSCB) Education Sub Group has effectively developed its membership to include health, social care alongside system leaders in education. This group has proactively developed policies and procedures on behalf of the local area, this includes a new approach to Section 157/175 safeguarding audits, a new transition process for children and young people moving between education at all phases, a comprehensive best practice guide to supporting transgender pupils and the development of tools for education practitioners to use the Signs of Safety social work model.

In addition to the work of the TSCB group the Local Authority has also secured a three year commitment to the Torbay Education Safeguarding Service (TESS). This service working within the MASH and Schools provides a comprehensive programme of support to improve partners understanding of thresholds and training for Dedicated Safeguarding Leads. The work of TESS was praised in an Ofsted monitoring visit and their contribution to the MASH is highly valued.

The Virtual School and its Governing Body has maintained its focus on improving outcomes for Looked After Children. Individual packages of support continue to be well directed through the appropriate allocation of Pupil Premium Plus, effective monitoring is in place via the Electronic PEP system. Ofsted confirmed that the targeting of resources was effective. The work of the virtual school team has been targeted to provide interventions to individual pupils, with a particular focus on improving attainment in English and

Mathematics. The virtual school team recognise the importance of considering the child's needs in a holistic manner. Alongside academic support the team have provided an number of enrichment activities to support children and young people, this has included Get Gritty Events, Surf Days, VS Choir, Celebration Events, STEM days and University Taster Days,

In addition to maintaining a focus on attainment the virtual school team have worked with designated teachers to support the development of inclusive cultures. This has resulted in the vast majority of schools accessing Attachment accredited training. This successful approach has also been expanded to include training for social workers and health practitioners.

Priority Area Three – Act as a champion for all parents and families

- specific guidance and advice for parents to enable them to raise concerns and have their questions answered has been developed
- an online space where information can be accessed has been developed
- information is available to help parents, children and young people to make informed choices.

The Local Authority has developed comprehensive guidance that is available to all parents to support them in raising concerns regarding schools. This includes how they can navigate a schools complaint system and where necessary raise concerns directly with Ofsted, the Regional Schools Commissioner or the Local Authority.

The School Improvement Officer has proactively worked with parents to ensure that matters are fully investigated and concerns are answered, this has also included linking with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) when required.

The Local Authority has updated the education pages of the council website and developed a comprehensive Local Offer of services that can be accessed by young people, parents and professionals. New processes using IT systems have been developed with schools to share information and help to protect vulnerable groups.

Admissions information has been updated and additional digital capacity created to ensure parents can use technology to make requests and applications.

Priority Area Four – Act as a champion for high standards

- implement a new and transparent performance monitoring system that is shared with schools and used by systems leaders at the School to School Board
- system leadership and collaborative capacity developed, engaging with regional partners, local leaders and accountable bodies to share local priorities and gaps.
- centrally commission services targeted at local need

- consideration given to how the LA can facilitate a forum beyond 2019 for collective financial decision making.

The Local Authority has developed a comprehensive data package using the expertise of a current Ofsted inspectors. This data is used to drive forward the key priorities including the identification of schools with positive practice and where challenge/support is required. The Local Education Board has received this information and are proactively working to try and reduce the gaps that exist for priority groups and between providers.

Working with the Regional Schools Commissioner Office, Teaching School Council and our local National Leaders of Education we have developed a School to School commissioning board to ensure that resources are being co-ordinated to schools. In addition the local area has also grown the Specialist Leader in Education (SLE) capacity across the area, appointing new SLE's. These are being directly commissioned by schools and the local authority are utilising their skills to drive forward task and finish groups.

The Local Authority has proactively worked with Public Health to realign the commissioning of services for children and young people from 0 – 19 years. This joined up commissioning approach will enable the removal of duplication, better integration and a stronger offer to children, young people and professionals.

The national implementation of a central funding system for schools has been delayed. The Local Authority continues to retain a duty to operate a School Forum and agree the mechanism for devolving the Dedicated Schools Grant. The Forum have proactively worked with officers to ensure that the decisions being taken are in the context of meeting both universal and higher needs pupils. The work of the School Forum has been proactive and engaging of the education sector and is a credit to Torbay. The School Forum will continue to meet and address the pertinent issues that are being experienced.

From a position of influencing a wide range of partner agencies there are many achievements to note. The Education Strategy continues to be given attention to ensure the actions and priorities are at the forefront of delivery. In addition the work of the strategy is also being complemented by the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.

Officers have reviewed the associated action plan and updated to ensure that future work progresses the key priorities.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 3.1 That members note the progress made on the Education Strategy and agree the revised action plan.

Appendices

- 1 - Original Education Strategy
- 2 - Rag rated action plan
- 3- Updated action plan