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## **Children and Young People’s Services Scrutiny Committee**

### **Education and Learning Strategy Task and Finish Group Outcomes Report**

#### **Report by Cllr Janet Duncton, Chairman of the Task and Finish Group**

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#### **Summary**

The Task and Finish Group (TFG) was made up of Members of the Children and Young People’s Services Scrutiny Committee. Its purpose was to scrutinise and input into the development of the County Council’s Education and Learning Strategy 2023 – 2025. The TFG considered the following areas: the draft Education and Learning Strategy, including the key themes and priorities, the draft work streams and the consultation proposals to develop and co-create these, and how the outcomes and recommendations from CYPSSC on 12 July had been considered/addressed within the draft.

Members of the Children and Young People’s Services Scrutiny Committee were invited to volunteer to serve on the TFG in the first instance, membership of which should be cross-party and comprise no more than seven. Group leaders were consulted before the final membership was agreed which was Councillors Burgess, Cornell, Duncton, McGregor and Mercer.

The TFG met informally on 6 October 2022. This report summarises the discussion that took place at that meeting and the recommendations of the TFG for consideration by the Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills.

This report, along with the responses from the Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills will be presented to the Children and Young People’s Services Scrutiny Committee on 18 January 2023 as part of its considerations when carrying out pre decision scrutiny of the final Education and Learning Strategy 2023- 2025.

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## **1 Discussion**

1.1 Paul Wagstaff, Assistant Director – Education and Skills and Derry Richardson, Head of Service – Commercial and Contracting highlighted the following key points:

- The Schools White Paper- Opportunity for All had currently been paused for a policy review. Any outcomes of this could impact on the statutory role of the Local Authority.
- Feedback from the Scrutiny Committee on 12 July had been taken on board and incorporated into the Draft Strategy
- The work streams would be co-created with the education and learning community, including schools, over the coming weeks and would be developed to include timelines for implementation and financial implications.

This detail would be included in the final Strategy that would be considered by CYPSSC on 18 January 2023.

1.2 Members of the TFG considered the draft Strategy and a summary of the discussion is as follows:

- It was important that the style and content of the strategy was easy to understand for all audiences and that the actions were clearly set out. A version for parents and children and young people would be developed once a final version was agreed.
- The Strategy needed to ensure it focused on maximising the potential of all children, including high achievers throughout. Key Theme 1 was focused on improving the attainment of all children. The role of the Local Authority is to champion achievement of all children, whilst having direct and statutory responsibility for vulnerable children and young carers.
- The ambition for key stage 2 and key stage 4 attainment to be in top quartile was a continued ambition as set out in the Council Plan. There would be specific workstreams in the strategy focused on improving attainment in Primary and Early Years.
- Partnership work between schools to share key learning and best practice was important. This work was already carried out by the service in various ways including Schools Forum and Headteacher Executive, Headteacher Briefing publications and school to school support. The workstreams within Theme 6 would have a key focus on strengthening partnership with academies and bring together partnerships in localities. It was suggested this could be more explicitly referenced under Theme 6 within the Strategy.
- Highlighted the financial constraints and recruitment issues for schools and the impact this could have on them to be able to deliver the workstreams and whether this should be referenced in the Strategy as a risk. The Strategy was there to support schools, however the financial management was down to individual schools.
- The Strategy was a high level document focused on strategic intentions to deliver the Local Authority's statutory duties. There was other work that was carried out by the service (e.g. Admissions, home to school transport) that was not included in the Strategy, but details were already available.
- The members noted the relatively low responses from schools in the consultation in the spring, and that it was important to try and engage with as many schools as possible in the co-creation of the workstreams over the autumn.

## **2. Conclusions**

2.1 The TFG made the following conclusions for consideration by the Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills:

- 1) That the wording of the Strategy is reviewed to ensure it is clear and concise and that actions and outcomes are more explicit. It also asks that the Strategy sets out what it doesn't include (e.g. business as usual functions) and where details on these can be found.

- 2) Suggests that the wording of the Strategy is strengthened to ensure that it is clear that it refers to the achievement and needs of *all* children being met.
- 3) That the improvement of outcomes for early years and primary are a key area of focus and the ambition for these should be clearly set out in the Strategy workstreams so that progress can be assessed, and should aim to be at least in line with our statistical neighbours (as per the Council Plan).
- 4) That it is important to have clear targets, measures and outcomes in the Strategy so that its progress, achievement and impact can be measured and would like to see this in the Final Strategy (for example achievement, attendance and children attending outstanding and good schools).
- 5) That the Committee considers what outcomes, actions and workstreams it wishes to focus on so that it can measure the impact of the Strategy as it is implemented.
- 6) Glad to hear of the well embedded work to share and learn best practice between schools and should consider referencing this work within the Strategy more explicitly under the workstreams in Theme 6.
- 7) Recognised the national financial and recruitment issues impacting some schools and to consider if this should be referenced in the strategy as a potential risk on the delivery of the workstreams.
- 8) Ask that every effort is made to engage with more schools and the BAME community when co-developing the workstreams over the autumn.

Cllr Janet Duncton

**Chairman of the Task and Finish Group**

**Contact Officer:** Katherine De La Mora, Senior Advisor – Democratic Services,  
0330 22 22535 [katherine.delamora@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:katherine.delamora@westsussex.gov.uk)

### **Background Papers**

None