

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2nd September 2014

Academies and Free Schools Scrutiny Action Plan

Recommendation

That the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1) Considers the update on the implementation of the recommendations outlined in the Scrutiny Actions Plan; and
- 2) Determines whether any of the recommendations have been completed.

1.0 Background Information

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Action Plan document was introduced in early 2012 to provide members with an effective procedure for the monitoring of recommendations that have been formulated by previous Task and Finish Groups and subsequently approved by Cabinet. The document will allow members to receive regular progress updates at Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Information from the relevant Portfolio Holder / Head of Service responsible for the implementation of the recommendations will include key timescales, milestones and outcomes. Members are encouraged to raise questions in terms of the progress of recommendations.
- 1.2 The Scrutiny Action Plans that are currently live for the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee are:
 - Academies and Free Schools
 - Children's Centres (refer to Item 4 on the agenda)

2.0 Academies and Free Schools

- 2.1 A Task and Finish Group was appointed in July 2012 to explore the various aspects of academisation and the impact it would have on the future role of the Local Authority (LA) in education. Following completion of the review, the Group's nine recommendations were endorsed by the Children and Young People OSC on 30th January 2013 and subsequently approved by Cabinet on 14th March 2013. A copy of the Scrutiny Action Plan, which includes the list of recommendations and an outline of progress, is attached at **Appendix A**.

2.3 The Committee is asked to consider whether any of the recommendations included in the Scrutiny Action Plan have been completed and determine appropriate timescales for future updates.

Appendices

Appendix A – Academies and Free Schools Scrutiny Action Plan

**Scrutiny Action Plan
Academies and Free Schools**

Recommendation	Cabinet Comments	Lead Officer	Target Date for Action	OSC Update	Progress Notes
<p>R1 The LA should provide a timely response to any school that indicates an intention to convert to academy status, and ensure that the response contains up-to-date and accurate guidance and contact information.</p>	<p>Approved</p>	<p><i>(Philip Edmundson / Greta Needham)</i></p> <p>Vince Quayle/ Meena Lekhi/ Sarah Duxbury</p>		<p>2nd Sept 2014</p>	<p><u>27th January 2014:</u> Philip Edmundson is now taking the role of key contact for all schools considering transfer to Academy status. He will be supported in this by Legal Services (Meena Lekhi) who ensure that all supporting guidance and guidance information is accurate and update.</p> <p><u>1st April 2014:</u> Sarah Duxbury became Head of Law & Governance.</p> <p><u>July 2014:</u> Legal Services has co-ordinated the development of supporting guidance and documentation for those schools considering converting to Academy status and this has been made available to all schools considering conversion. The guidance is reviewed periodically to ensure it remains up to date and accurate</p> <p>Vince Quayle will be joining WCC as Leadership and Governance Manager in October 2014 and he will be the key contact for all schools considering transfer to Academy status. He will be supported in this by Legal Services (Meena Lekhi) who ensure that all supporting guidance and guidance information is accurate and update. (CW)</p>

**Scrutiny Action Plan
Academies and Free Schools**

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					WES team are notified at the earliest opportunity to discuss continuation of purchased support after conversion.
R2	The LA should co-ordinate an event, such as a seminar or conference, for headteachers of all schools, lead officers/members of the LA and other appropriate stakeholders. The intention would be for headteachers to network, share issues and build relationships, and to work towards agreed protocols with the LA around key issues such as school-place planning.	Approved (Philip Edmundson) Nigel Minns / Claudia Wade / Graham Pirt		2 nd Sept 2014	<p><u>27th January 2014</u> Learning and Achievement has plans to lead an event for head teachers of all schools, chairs of school governing bodies, lead officers, elected members and other stakeholders entitled “The Local Authority’s New Relationship with Schools and Academies” before the end of the financial year. Democratic Services will timetable this into the Member Development Programme and School Governor Services will contribute to the event.</p> <p><u>July 2014:</u> The suggested event for head teachers of all schools, chairs of school governing bodies, lead officers, elected members and other stakeholders entitled “The Local Authority’s New Relationship with Schools and Academies” has not been delivered but HoS and SI team are working closely with Academies to secure effective working relationships. All Academies are participating actively in the Consortia structure.</p>

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<p>R3 The LA should strongly encourage academies to sign up to a data-sharing protocol that guarantees the transparency of key school information.</p>	Approved	<p><i>(Philip Edmundson)</i></p> <p>Graham Pirt / Michelle Pickering</p>		2 nd Sept 2014	<p><u>27th January 2014:</u> The Data Sharing protocol supports many aspects of the LA's work, including the consortia model and to offer a wide range of support and challenge to all compulsory settings, regardless of status. This needs to be updated and will be reissued to all schools and academies at the start of term 3 in 2014.</p> <p><u>July 2014:</u> A draft Data Sharing protocol will be shared with the primary and secondary School Improvement Boards at their next meeting in October 2014; to be effective from January 2015.</p>
<p>R4 The LA should investigate options for a jointly agreed protocol between elected members and headteachers to clarify and define members' role as "champion of the learner". This should include guidance about how members can get to know their local schools and how they can engage with headteachers and governing bodies.</p>	Approved	<p><i>(Philip Edmundson)</i></p> <p>Vince Quale</p>		2 nd Sept 2014	<p><u>27th January 2014:</u> This is an exercise that needs to be undertaken in consultation with Democratic Services (who are responsible for the member development programme) and Nigel Mills (Governor Services Manager).</p> <p><u>13th October 2014:</u> Vince Quale will start his role as Service Manager: School Governance & School Leadership Development.</p>

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<p>R5 The LA should continue to review the Governor Training service it offers to academies on a traded basis, to ensure it is up to date, fit for purpose and provides governors with clear guidance on their roles and responsibilities. This review should also ensure that the training offered to Academy clerks equips them with the appropriate skills.</p>	Approved	<p><i>(Greta Needham)</i></p> <p>Sarah Duxbury / Vince Quale</p>		2 nd Sept 2014	<p><u>July 2014:</u></p> <p>School Governor Services have invested significant effort in addressing Academy needs in a customised Governor Training and Development Programme offer available to Academies. The Programme offers a number of distinctive courses focused on the needs of Academy governors, Clerks and Chairs, and we are continuously responsive to newly arising needs.</p> <p>We have doubled the number of Academies buying into Governor Services in this academic year in 2013/14 when take up both in terms of subscriptions and also 'buy as you need' increased. We have also won a contract from the South Northamptonshire Academy group of schools.</p> <p>School Governor Services have also commissioned a nationally based trainer to deliver our Academy Clerks' training this term, with one of our Clerk Trainers working alongside her so that she can take this responsibility over in the future.</p> <p>The appointment of the new service manager with responsibility for governor services from 13th October 2014 will provide an opportunity to review our Governor Training offer and ensure that we continue to provide a holistic school improvement training offer to governors which is complementary to the school improvement offer being developed by Education and</p>

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					<p>Learning colleagues.</p> <p>We continue to seek opportunities beyond our borders and would like to build on the success of the contract we won to deliver governor training</p> <p>In pursuing the above direction, our aim is also to ensure that the Governor training and development offer from School Governance continues to aligns with the local authority's school improvement and attainment agenda</p>
R6	The Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee should investigate whether the School Improvement team has sufficient capacity to ensure it can carry out its role.	N/a – for the CYP OSC to consider	(Philip Edmundson) Nigel Minns	2 nd Sept 2014	<p><u>27th January 2014:</u> CYP OSC agreed to request a briefing note on the findings of the internal audit review of the School Improvement Team.</p> <p><u>August 2014:</u> Review of School Improvement by Simon Cox, Principal Audit, Risk & Assurance – conclusions about capacity.</p> <p>Audit ongoing. Core offer has identified a shortfall in FTE Improvement Advisors to ensure contact is made termly with all school. Re-structure to increase capacity in School Improvement team.</p>

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<p>housing developments.</p> <p>c) The Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee should request a report on the LA's strategy for addressing the risks to both insufficiency and oversufficiency of school places.</p>	8c – Approved	<p>Neale</p> <p><i>(Peter Speers)</i></p> <p>June Maw / John Harmon (Resources)</p>			<p>supply and demand for school places and will identify options for how any identified shortfall will be met. Options appraisals will identify the most economic means of addressing any unmet demand. The draft strategy will be considered by the Committee at its meeting on 2nd September. Updates on the implementation of the strategy can be provided annually.</p> <p>d) Law and Governance (Legal Services) continues to provide support to the Capital Access and Organisation Board. This is an officer working group which has school place planning within its remit.</p>
<p>R9 The LA should review its approach to future planning developments to ensure it has the strongest possible evidence base to access Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds.</p>	Approved	<p><i>(Peter Speers)</i></p> <p>June Maw / John Harmon (Resources)</p>		2 nd Sept 2014	<p>The LA responds to every relevant planning application and to the policy and strategy consultations carried out by DCs and BCs. The LA also works directly with developers during pre-planning to help shape the response to the supply of school places. The emerging sufficiency strategy will provide the basis of the evidence for accessing CIL funds.</p>