

Council

26 July 2018

Education Strategy: Consultation Findings and Proposed Strategy Documents

Recommendations from Cabinet:

That Council notes the outcomes of the consultation process and, in line with the recommendation from the Cabinet meeting of 14th June 2018:

- a) That the Education Strategy in Appendices 1-6 be approved
- b) That Cabinet approves an annual update on the implementation of the Education Strategy, with the delivery plan and contextual documents being dynamic documents which are updated on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

1.0 Key Issues/Summary

- 1.1 It is time to update Warwickshire County Council's Education Strategy so that it reflects current challenges. The new Education Strategy will replace the current Document 'Education Strategy' – Championing the Learner – Vision, Values and Priorities, 2014. An overarching vision for education in Warwickshire is needed so that one agreed strategy can guide the work of The Council and partners.
It will have one uniting and overarching purpose: to improve educational outcomes, and thus the life chances, of learners of all ages in Warwickshire. The purpose of this Education Strategy is to set out clearly our aspirations and priorities for education in Warwickshire, and to summarise how Council teams will be working with partners to achieve them.
- 1.2 This report provides details of the key findings and outcomes of the consultation process which have informed the proposed Education Strategy (see Annexes 8 and 9). It also includes recommendations regarding the set of six short Strategy documents. The first document is known as 'Warwickshire Education (WE) Strategy'. The second document is the delivery plan and the remaining documents provide contextual detail and 'sign up'.

2.0 Consultation Process

- 2.1 A 5 week consultation process was undertaken from 5 March – 2 April 2018. The aim of this consultation activity was to effectively engage with a wide range of education stakeholders to 'co-produce' the new Strategy.
- 2.2 The consultation process was framed around co-production i.e. a bottom-up generation of a shared vision and Strategy. A draft one page Vision, 12 page

Strategy and separate pack of Annexes were provided to promote discussion and provide context. Four priorities (WE1,2,3 and 4) were proposed:

- WE1: Promoting the best possible start in life through early education
- WE2: Unlocking talent, building resilience, and fulfilling the potential of our vulnerable learners
- WE3: Supporting successful system leadership, empowering education communities
- WE4: Promoting employability; offering the best possible opportunities for all learners

2.3 A range of engagement methods were employed to maximise opportunities for stakeholders to put forward their views, these included:

- An online survey
- Focus groups with school staff, parents, children and young people
- An Early Years Visioning event on 28 February 2018
- A headteacher co-production session on 14 March 2018
- Engaging stakeholders at existing boards, committees and forums, for example The Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, The Challenge Board and Schools Forum.

3.0 Consultation findings

3.1 There was an overwhelmingly positive response to the consultation which generated wide ranging views from a cross section of stakeholders. Themes have emerged that have support from across the education sector. These now form the main content of the Strategy.

3.2 In total there were over 431 participants in the consultation exercise, online and face to face.

The table below illustrates a breakdown of response rates through the various face to face consultation activities, in addition to the 176 online respondents:

<i>Participants & engagement method</i>	<i>Numbers of attendees</i>
Headteacher briefing: 93 primary schools, 9 secondary schools, 6 special schools, 1 all through school, stakeholders included: Gateway Alliance and the Coventry Diocesan Board of Education	106
1 school focus group: parents (primary)	10
School focus groups: staff (primary, secondary, special)	21
School focus groups: children and young people (primary, secondary, special)	31
Governor focus group (governors and clerks)	12
Schools Forum; 13 school members (7 secondary schools) plus 2 non-school (union and Diocese)	15
Challenge Board 3 secondary heads, 1 primary and 1 special in addition to attendees of briefing above, plus MAT	6 additional

CEO	
Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee; 10 councillors, 2 portfolio holders plus 2 (unions and parent governor)	14
Early Years Visioning event	40
22 recorded meetings; attendance not counted	
Total	255

- 3.3 Overall, well over 255 participants were involved in face to face engagement through focus groups and meetings. These provided opportunities to listen to a wide range of participants in education in the county. The Head of Education and Learning led the school-based focus groups. In addition the proposals were outlined at many meetings, and leaflets were given out. For example 90 leaflets were taken away from an attendance of 140 people at the Warwickshire Skills Conference.
- 3.4 It is really encouraging to note that of the 176 online responses, 88 were from parents / carers. This is particularly welcome as most of the face to face opportunities involved education professionals.
- 3.5 The majority of respondents to the online survey were female (73%), of White British ethnicity (84%) and aged between 30-59 years (80%). The north of the county is under-represented in the sample. However, three focus groups were conducted in the north. There were no online responses from secondary headteachers although 20 secondary headteachers participated in face to face consultation opportunities.
- 3.6 All proposed priorities 1,2,3,4 were considered relevant and were supported with over 90% of online responses supporting WE1,2 and 4, and 83% supporting WE3. Through analysing both the questionnaire responses and the feedback received through face to face engagement, there were a number of common overarching themes. These are captured in Annex 8 'You said, we did' and in Table 12 Annex 9.

Themes include:

- At consultation events it was clear that most participants preferred a **short, succinct document**.
- **Participants were adamant that they wanted a clear action plan which could be monitored and would succeed.** They did not want a long document with laudable words that led to no change.
- **Many people referred to stretched resources and increased demand for services.**
- There was an overwhelmingly strong view from children and young people, parents and carers and professionals that a **broad and practical curriculum that fosters resilience and a positive attitude to learning** is

more important for life skills than league tables and academic success measures.

- Clarity was wanted on the part that WE1 in this Strategy will play in the Transformation agenda for **children's centres, and the SmartStart programme.**
- Many respondents emphasized how WE2 should start with **all learners**, not only vulnerable learners.
- **Transition** into, from and between schools and settings is a time of vulnerability was said to need more focus, particularly from Year 6 to 7.
- There was a high level of concern about **exclusions and schools taking students** off their roll, with a commitment to work together to find solutions.

3.7 Following collation and analysis of all coproduction and consultation material, the emerging key themes have been considered, and the proposed new Education Strategy has been drafted. A reference group of headteachers from the Challenge Board has met twice to proof-read the Strategy. This led to fine-tuning of the wording.

4.0 Proposed Education Strategy

4.1 The new proposed pack of six short strategy documents being presented today should satisfy requests for short, simple and clear documentation. They will be available on a dedicated webpage:

- 1) The Strategy (one tri-folded sheet of paper)
- 2) A Delivery Plan
- 3) A simple Performance Monitoring framework
- 4) Contextual data
- 5) 'Sign up' by champions and partners (to be completed once the Strategy is 'live')
- 6) The role of the Council in Education including hyperlinks to related strategies and plans

4.2 The proposed four 'challenges' (priorities) following the consultation are;

- **WE1:** Our challenge is to foster children's love of learning from birth through early childhood and into Year 1 so that all young children achieve their potential.
- **WE2:** Our challenge is to promote a broad, empowering and creative curriculum, focusing on times of transition, and prioritising vulnerable groups.
- **WE3:** Our challenge is for all learners to enjoy a high quality learning experience.
- **WE4:** Our challenge is to champion employability by promoting the best opportunities for all learners.

These are very different to those proposed in the consultation and are the result of a comprehensive co-production process. The strapline has been changed to include quotations from responses to the consultation. It started as; 'Working in partnership so that a good education is available to everyone' and is now 'Working in partnership, celebrating success, aiming for excellence'.

- 4.3 The Education Strategy has been co-constructed to address the current challenging financial position. Difficult decisions can now be made together, with transparency, through the new and refreshed Boards. Partners (schools, settings, colleges, employers, providers...) will all be able to contribute to improving outcomes. There is still room to reduce duplications and to add value, and the Strategy has pinpointed some of these. More will emerge as the Strategy is implemented.
- 4.4 WE1; there were many responses asking how this Strategy 'fits' with the Transformation agenda for children's centres. After much consideration and discussions with key stakeholders the decision has been made to focus the Education Strategy on what can be achieved from an education perspective. The vision that was co-constructed at the Early Years Visioning event works well under the statutory framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This will strengthen the contribution that education professionals make to parallel work led by colleagues in Public Health and Children's Social Care.
- 4.5 WE2: there is now an overarching focus on empowering all children, based upon children's contribution to the consultation, and responses in the survey. A powerful theme emerging from the consultation was that the current narrowing of the curriculum can further disadvantage vulnerable learners. Warwickshire's data tells us that our vulnerable learners of all ages do not achieve as well as vulnerable learners nationally we have therefore continued to focus this priority on those groups.
- 4.6 WE3: the Council's statutory role to anticipate growth in demand for places, to maximise use of capital in local areas, to efficiently administer school admissions and to continue to support governors in their vital role, have all been added. The role of the Challenge Board in leading school improvement has been stated more clearly. A significant commitment has been added to WE3: A new 'App' will be developed to celebrate the success of Warwickshire schools in relation to WE1,2,3 and 4. This will provide a new and alternative 'standard' to sit alongside Ofsted and Government assessments and could, in time, be helpful to parents in choosing schools for their children.
- 4.7 WE4: the new Employability and Skills Board has been added, as have T levels and apprenticeships.
- 4.8 The Head of Education and Learning presented the draft Education Strategy to the Warwickshire Youth Parliament on 8 May 2018. Following discussion, the Youth Parliament fully endorses this Education Strategy and looks forward to engagement in delivery.

5.0 Equality Impact Assessment

5.1 Following the consultation process, the Equality Impact Assessment has been reviewed and updated to reflect the consultation findings and profile of respondents. (Annex 7).

6.0 Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

6.1 Please see extract from timeline below:

Milestones	Deadline
Council meeting	26 July 2018
New Education Strategy starts	1 September 2018

6.2 Providing feedback to respondents is a vital element of the consultation process and this will be undertaken by ensuring the final consultation report is made publicly available on 'Ask Warwickshire' and widely shared with all partners and stakeholders. Links to final strategy documents will be provided, as well as an update on the dedicated Ask Warwickshire 'You Said, We Did' section.

Background papers n/a

Annexes provided separately:

1. Education Strategy
2. Delivery Plan
3. Performance monitoring framework
4. Contextual data and information
5. 'Sign Up' document
6. The role of the Council, and statutory responsibilities for Education and Learning
7. Equality Impact Assessment
8. You Said, We Did
9. Consultation findings report

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): none

Other members: none