

# Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

26 April 2023

## Outdoor Education and Learning Strategy progress report

### Recommendation

The Children and Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers and comments upon the progress made to date delivering Warwickshire County Council's Outdoor Education and Learning Strategy

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the progress undertaken to date to deliver Warwickshire County Council's Outdoor Education and Learning strategy, the outcomes achieved, and highlight future priorities and opportunities.
- 1.2 Feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will help to inform the direction and purpose of future work.
- 1.3 The report shows the strategy has been well received and engagement with schools continues to increase. Of the 11 objectives, two have already been fully achieved, eight are in progress, and one objective is in development. The delivery plan is regularly updated to ensure progress remains on track.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 Warwickshire Outdoor Education and Learning Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 7 December 2021. The purpose of the Strategy was to promote and coordinate Outdoor Education and Learning opportunities to schools and settings rather than directly delivering services. It aims to support and enable Warwickshire's education system and those working within it to confidently deliver and/or access a range of outdoor learning opportunities. The goal is that all children and young people in Warwickshire can engage in high quality outdoor education and learning, appropriate for their age and ability, throughout their developmental journey.
- 2.2 The aim is to implement a sustainable approach to the strategy delivery. Where possible, delivery has focused on developing a culture within the wider Education workforce that values outdoor education and that is self-

perpetuating. It is envisioned that this culture could continue to grow and benefit young people.

2.3 Since the approval of the Outdoor Education and Learning Strategy and appointment of an Outdoor Education Strategy co-ordinator in May 2022, a range of work has taken place to progress with implementation of the strategy and its associated delivery plan. This report provides an update on progress and includes:

- Progress against the objectives of the strategy
- Engagement mapped against measures of success
- Future plans and priorities

### 3. Progress Against the Objectives of the Strategy

Objective	Activity undertaken to achieve objective
Encourage and support education settings to deliver their outdoor education and learning by providing information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A database was created of outdoor education practitioners across Warwickshire to enable targeting of communications to named key professionals within schools and settings.</li> <li>• Outdoor Education specific webpages were developed (<a href="https://schools.warwickshire.gov.uk/outdoor-education">https://schools.warwickshire.gov.uk/outdoor-education</a>) containing links to teaching resources, grant opportunities and further information and guidance relevant to the strategy's audience.</li> <li>• Attendance at the Spring Headteachers conference as an exhibitor to promote the strategy and provide Headteachers with an opportunity to find out more about how the strategy could support their settings.</li> </ul>
Develop an on-line directory of outdoor venues and activity providers who offer high quality outdoor education and learning opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A searchable directory was created of free or low-cost outdoor education destinations.</li> </ul>
Signpost online resources useful for the planning and coordination of outdoor education and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first of twice termly Warwickshire Outdoor Education Network newsletters (electronic) was developed and issued to subscribers. The newsletter aims to keep schools and settings up to date with local and</li> </ul>

Objective	Activity undertaken to achieve objective
	national schemes of interest and provide helpful teaching resources and funding opportunities information.
Provide an opportunity for education leaders to share best practice and inspire each other and all their children and young people in the pursuit of education and learning outdoors, enabling inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first online training session for Warwickshire schools and settings was delivered. The event was led by a Warwickshire primary school teacher and outdoor education expert. Participants were equipped to identify learning experiences through their curriculum planning and become more confident planning a learning experience outside the classroom.</li> <li>• An 'Outdoor Education Open Day' was held at Michael Drayton Junior School. The session included a tour of the outdoor education facilities and an opportunity to observe teaching an outdoor lesson to a class.</li> </ul>
Survey children and young people and education settings on an annual basis to understand their needs and wants of Outdoor Education and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaising with the Child Friendly Warwickshire team to establish whether questions regarding the provision, quality and availability of local outdoor education can be included in the next CFW survey.</li> </ul>
Establish a collaborative professional development network for Leads of Outdoor Education and Learning/ Educational Visits Co-ordinators and encourage all education settings to make a commitment to actively engage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed branding for the Warwickshire Outdoor Education Network</li> <li>• An online forum has been created to allow the opportunity for education workers to share ideas, resources, and network outside of planned events. This private group was created after seeking feedback from professionals on their preferred platform.</li> </ul>
Promote access for disadvantaged pupils to outdoor education and learning opportunities by signposting to advice, funding sources and best practice information on promoting inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with a special school to link them up with another setting to share their experience of developing their site. Supporting the re-establishment of their link with Country Parks.</li> <li>• Working with the head of virtual school to produce information for schools to explore ways of using Pupil Premium Plus money for Outdoor Education and Learning opportunities.</li> </ul>

Objective	Activity undertaken to achieve objective
<p>Raise awareness among education leaders of local environmental issues and their relationship to the global climate by strengthening the links between nature, people, learning and skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of the accessibility and ease of 'local visits' to teach pupils about their local environment.</li> <li>• The online directory contains all of Warwickshire's local wildlife reserves, many in urban areas.</li> <li>• Working with Council lead on sustainable futures to actively support the Zellar rollout (where schools will be encouraged to reduce their climate footprint by completing climate friendly tasks little and often).</li> </ul>
<p>Build on the experience of education providers, to enable the development of local services, facilities and activities, and to strengthen the provision of outdoor education and learning opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning visits across the Key Stages are taking place to understand more about the current provision of outdoor education and identify good practice examples. Visits have taken place to Michael Drayton Junior, Weddington Primary, Stockingford Nursery, The Revel Primary, Whitnash Primary, The Avon Valley School (secondary) and The Stratford Upon Avon School (11 – 18.)</li> </ul>
<p>Act as a link between education settings, County, District and Borough Council teams (e.g. those providing outdoor facilities, or who can offer information and support for learning outdoors), as well as wider stakeholders both within and outside of Warwickshire.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings held with several key stakeholders to understand the needs of the wider audience of the strategy and to look at opportunities to work together. Links have been made internally with: Country Parks, Heritage and Culture, Sustainable Futures team and Fire and Rescue. Externally with Everyone Active, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, Stratford Town Trust, The Field Studies Council and Natures work and Coventry City Council's Outdoor Education Service</li> </ul>
<p>Facilitate the provision by the Council and others of lifelong education and learning opportunities outdoors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity to support this objective to be identified and undertaken within year 2</li> </ul>

#### 4. Engagement Mapped Against Measures of Success

Education leaders report:	
Measures of Success	Engagement feedback
They have engaged with the support available to them through the strategy.	<p>The strategy was officially launched to all education settings in Warwickshire.</p> <p>To date 81 settings (33% of all schools in Warwickshire – Primary, Secondary and Special Schools) have engaged meaningfully with the strategy. Meaningful engagement means schools/settings that have been visited, been involved in a session, group meeting, or registered to attend the first training event.</p> <p>Since its launch there have been 398 hits on the Outdoor Education webpages which have been developed specifically for schools and settings.</p> <p>68 individuals have subscribed to the Outdoor Education Network newsletter since it launched in December 2022. With plans to increase these membership levels through targeted activity.</p> <p>Categorisation of school engagement using a RAG rating method (those who have actively engaged so far to those who have yet to engage in any capacity) is underway, this will enable development of approaches to target those schools who have not yet engaged.</p>
They feel better equipped to deliver outdoor education and learning.	<p>Over 60 education professionals attended the first online training event. Feedback received was overwhelmingly positive with 71% of attendees saying that they would provide more outdoor education within their settings because of the training. Further sessions are planned for May and July.</p> <p>An ‘Outdoor Education Open Day’ was held at Michael Drayton Junior School in Nuneaton. <i>‘All teachers said the session would help them to better use their existing outdoor education facilities, and to improve on those facilities and all agreed that as a result their pupils will get better and more frequent outdoor learning opportunities’</i></p>
They have strengthened their outdoor education and learning offer.	<p>This is being captured on an ongoing basis and will be reported at the next Overview and Scrutiny committee to enable time for impact to be realised and measured.</p>

<b>Education leaders report:</b>	
<b>Measures of Success</b>	<b>Engagement feedback</b>
Children and young people, including disadvantaged pupils, are developing the skills they need to flourish in life through the outdoor education and learning opportunities that they provide.	This is being captured on an ongoing basis and will be reported at the next Overview and Scrutiny committee to enable time for impact to be realised and measured.
Children and young people have the opportunity to be heard and their views contribute to developing outdoor learning.	This is being captured on an ongoing basis and will be reported at the next Overview and Scrutiny committee to enable time for impact to be realised and measured.
<b>Children and young people report:</b>	
<b>Measures of Success</b>	<b>Engagement feedback</b>
They have increasing opportunities to learn outdoors.	This data will be captured via the next scheduled Child Friendly Warwickshire survey
They have had increased positive experiences from engaging in outdoor activities and opportunities	This data will be captured via the next scheduled Child Friendly Warwickshire survey

## **5. Future Plans and Priorities**

- 5.1 We are currently planning the key activities for the co-ordinator to focus on during their second year.
- 5.2 We are continuing to embed several activities developed within the first year. This includes continuing to write and issue bi-monthly newsletters, refreshing and updating webpages and meeting with education settings and other external organisations, to encourage participation in training events and wider networking opportunities.
- 5.3 Following feedback from schools the co-ordinator is working with internal and external colleagues to write guidance for Warwickshire teachers on

successfully finding grant funding for outdoor education and how to take more local visits in a school's local area

- 5.4 We are liaising with the Child Friendly Warwickshire team to establish whether questions regarding the provision, quality and availability of local outdoor education can be included in the next CFW survey, or other mechanisms which could be used.
- 5.5 We are in the process of identifying 'outdoor education champions' who will promote the benefits of, and good practice in, outdoor learning amongst their peers. Looking to identify primary and secondary champions in the north and south of the county.
- 5.6 Preliminary discussions have been held with Coventry City Council's Outdoor Education Service to co-deliver the next training session to schools and settings. Delivery of an online seminar will enable attendees to take away a six-week lesson plan to be used with their class back in their school/setting.
- 5.7 Ryton Pools Country Park have agreed to host an in-person training and networking event at the end of the summer term 2023.
- 5.8 We will continue to work closely with schools and settings to encourage and further equip education providers as they deliver the Outdoor Education and Learning opportunities to the children and young people of Warwickshire.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The strategy has had a further year's funding confirmed for 2024/25. Plans are being developed to look at what activity is undertaken within year 3 and how we ensure future sustainability.

## **7. Environmental Implications**

- 7.1 None

## **8. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps**

- 8.1 Feedback on the progress of the Outdoor Education and Learning Strategy to date will be received during the meeting.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Warwickshire County Council's Outdoor Education and Learning Strategy - [Outdoor Education and Learning Strategy](#)

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

Local Member(s): not applicable as county wide strategy

Other members: Councillor Kaur, Councillor Dahmash, Councillor Roodhouse, Councillor Brown