

Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Outdoor Education and Learning Strategy 2022

Progress Update

Recommendation

That the Children and Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the progress of the Warwickshire County Council Outdoor Education and Learning Strategy 2022 as outlined within its Delivery Plan 2023-2024.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CYPOSC) with an update on the progress made to deliver the Warwickshire County Council's Outdoor Education and Learning Strategy 2022 (**Appendix 1 – Outdoor Education and Learning Strategy 2022**).

1.2 Since the last report, which was presented to the CYPOSC in Spring 2023, a deep-dive review has been undertaken to facilitate an understanding of the activity required to deliver the Strategy, along with any associated commitments or requirements, and the identification of potential future improvements. The result of this has been the creation of a Delivery Plan for 2023-24 (**Appendix 2 – WCC OELS Delivery Plan 2023-2024**) which will be reviewed and updated for 2024/25. The Delivery Plan has been regularly updated to monitor its progress.

1.3 In the period between April – December 2023 there have been a number of activities undertaken to further the progress of the strategy:

- 109 settings (43% 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.
- An online event took place in June on 'Why Teach Inside?', with 25 attendees.
- Opportunities for future sessions have been identified, which include promoting webinars available from the National Education Nature Park and Eco-Schools.
- Based wider data, internal to WCC¹, for engagement in outdoor education and learning activities, the figure to date is **51.6%** (129

¹ This includes data secured from the Country Parks team on schools that have visited their venues over the same timeframe for the strategy to date; anecdotal information obtained via colleagues with

settings out of a total of 250). This demonstrates that a culture of outdoor education and learning is being embedded across Warwickshire.

- Since April 2023, there have been 635 views of the Homepage for the website. The next highest number of views is for the Education Visits page (at 464 views), followed by the webpage on Grants and Funding (at 257 views).
- Opportunities have been identified to signpost to resources available through Adult and Community Learning, such as the Family Learning 'Let's Go Outside' packs, available for the North, Central, East and South of the county, the 'search Out Warwickshire' Directory of Leisure and Culture Activities for Families', and '50 things to do in Warwickshire' for Families.

2. Background

- 2.1. Warwickshire Outdoor Education and Learning Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 7th December 2021. The purpose of the Strategy is to promote and coordinate outdoor education and learning opportunities to schools and education settings rather than the Council directly delivering services. The Strategy 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 ambition is, that all children and young people in Warwickshire can engage in high quality outdoor education and learning, appropriate for their age and ability.
- 2.2. An underlying principle of the Strategy is the ambition of creating a sustainable approach towards longer term delivery. The aim of which is to develop a culture within the wider education system that values outdoor education. It is envisaged that this culture will continue to grow and benefit children and young people for years to come.
- 2.3. Since the approval of the Outdoor Education and Learning Strategy 2022 work has progressed and Appendix 2 provides an overview of this.

3. Future delivery

- 3.1. The Delivery Plan will continue to be monitored throughout 2023/24 and will be refreshed for 2024-25. A key ambition will be to sustain the successful activities developed in 2023/24 which include:
 - Creating and circulating regular Outdoor Education and Learning newsletters
 - Reviewing and updating the Outdoor Education and Learning webpages

awareness of relevant activities at schools; and details of schools' PTAs (Parent and Teacher Association) or Friends of schools in receipt of WCC grant funding for outdoor education projects, whether via the Councillors' Grant Fund or the Green Shoots Fund

- Collaborating with internal stakeholders and external organisations to encourage participation in training events and generate wider networking opportunities.
- Linking with schools and education settings to encourage and further equip them to deliver Outdoor Education and Learning opportunities.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. The success of the Outdoor Education and Learning Strategy relies upon the availability of financial resources from the Council which is determined on an annual basis. In February 2024, the Council approved funding for 2024-25.

5. Environmental Implications

- 5.1 The Outdoor Education Strategy 2022 has direct environmental implications outlined within its ambitions which include:

- *That all children and young people have access to and enjoy high-quality outdoor education and learning, appropriate for their age, ability, and experience.*
- *That educators value and embed outdoor education and learning in their curriculum planning.*
- *That education settings provide regular, frequent, enjoyable, and challenging opportunities for all children and young people to learn outdoors.*
- *That a culture of outdoor education and learning is developed within all education settings, raising awareness of the importance of the outdoors for leisure and learning for both children and their families.*

6. Supporting Information

None.

7. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

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

Appendices

Appendix 1: Warwickshire County Council's Outdoor Education and Learning Strategy - Outdoor Education and Learning Strategy 2022

Appendix 2: WCC OELS Delivery Plan 2023-2024

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

Local Member(s):

Other members: