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## **Report to the Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee**

<b>Title:</b>	Education Strategy
<b>Committee date:</b>	Tuesday 5 September 2017
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<b>Cabinet Member sign-off:</b>	Mike Appleyard

### **Purpose of Agenda Item:**

**To ensure that members have been briefed about and have been able to contribute to the consultation process regarding the development of the Education and Skills Strategy.**

### **Background**

This is a time of unprecedented local and national change impacting the educational landscape.

- Budget reductions as a result of a decrease in central government grants have had, and will continue to have, a significant impact on the centrally retained funding for school support services at the same time that demand for our support services for vulnerable, SEND and disadvantaged pupils is growing.
- The DfE have stated an aim that school improvement should be school-led and self-improving, building on excellence within the system
- The government drive for academisation and increasing selection has resulted in a diversity of school provision whilst demand for places continues to increase despite financial pressure on capital budgets.
- The 30 hour childcare offer needs to be in place from September 2017 in order to continue to maintain and facilitate excellent Early Years provision for our youngest children

- We need to ensure that we provide a wide range of opportunities for the development of skills to meet the needs of a thriving local economy.
- The gap in performance between disadvantaged pupils in Buckinghamshire and their non-disadvantaged peers is one of the widest in the country. The attainment gap needs to be addressed by using data more intelligently drawing from expertise in the school system.
- There has been an upward trend in the number of Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) in Buckinghamshire which is higher than the national average, with special schools in Buckinghamshire are operating near full capacity.
- The number of schools that are in category has increased over the past two years and is higher than nationally
- There has been an upward trend in the number of children that have been excluded over the past two years. The PRUs (Pupil Referral Units) are now the mainstay of alternative provision and these are operating at near full capacity. The consequence of this has been that out of County placements have been sought which are expensive; this needs to be addressed by building capacity in mainstream schools and ARPs to manage need earlier.
- There has also been a corresponding increase in the number of children missing education along with the rise in exclusions. Some of this is due to parents/carers choosing to remove their child from school for a variety of reasons and electing to educate them at home

In light of the key changes that are impacting the educational landscape and the challenges that these bring, Buckinghamshire needs to have a strategy in place to ensure that we have the appropriate educational provision for our children and young people. The strategy needs to be an all-encompassing roadmap that caters for 0-19 year olds (up to 25 years for SEND) and should set out a blueprint on how appropriate provision across all age ranges is going to be configured and delivered.

The notion of a strategy with a suggested vision, principles and priorities, was presented to Corporate Management Team (formally known as OCB) in March 2017 and it was agreed that the next step was to consult with key stakeholders within the education community. The prime objective of the consultation would be to find out if the potential vision, principles and priorities identified that could underpin an education and skills strategy were correct and endorsed by a wide range of key stakeholders.

## Summary

Awareness of a consultation process was raised through the existing networks of meetings within the Early Years and school community, including post 16 providers and governors. A



great deal of interest was expressed in being involved in the consultation process, with a number of schools volunteering to form a reference group with officers from BCC to work in partnership to design and deliver the consultation events that were scheduled to take place in July 2017. The reference group of headteachers (which is at present composed of 5 Secondary heads, 1 Special School head and 6 Primary Heads) has met twice with BCC officers since June 2017. Some of the headteachers helped to facilitate discussions and/or were involved delivering the initial scene setting at the consultation events along with senior colleagues from BCC.

The consultation process began with some initial informal discussions with some childminders at the National Childminder Day which was held at the Bucks Goat Centre on 28 June 2017. Childminders were asked about their views on what was important to them with regards to education and what they felt about existing provision and how it might be improved. Initial findings suggested that the childminders were very happy with the support provided through PACEY (Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years) and the QIPS (Quality Improvement Partners – employed by BCC). A key area for improvement identified was communication between Early Years providers and Primary Schools so that transition arrangements were smoother and more seamless for the children. Further informal discussions within Early Years forums have revealed similar findings but these need to be analysed in greater depth.

The three dedicated consultation events were held in July 2017 and were designed to engage as many different stakeholders as possible. The consultation events were entitled “Developing an Education and Skills strategy and Early Help services for Buckinghamshire” and were promoted using the Eventbrite system which allowed interested parties to book onto whichever of the events was most convenient for them. The events were held at:

- Monday 10 July, 9.30 – 1pm.  
The Kings Church, Raans Lane, Amersham
- Wednesday 12 July, 9.30 – 1pm  
Darke Hall, Green Park, Aston Clinton
- Wednesday 12 July, 6.30 – 9pm  
Darke Hall, Green Park, Aston Clinton

Nearly 200 colleagues from the educational community and those agencies related to supporting Early Help signed up to attend one of the events. The overall turnout rate was 82% with the two morning events being most popular. Over 61% (97) of the delegates came from a pre-school, primary, secondary or specialist school so there was a strong educational representation from the events. At present the responses produced from the

three events are being worked through into a meaningful way so that this can be shared with the educational community and other key stakeholders in the Autumn Term.

## **Key issues**

Five key questions were raised with the delegates in the consultation events

- 1) What is working well in our current education provision and what could be even better?**
- 2) Is the vision set out in the draft strategy correct?**
- 3) Are the principles set out in the draft strategy correct?**
- 4) Are the priorities set out in the draft strategy correct and what might the barriers preventing us realising these?**
- 5) How might we deliver our strategy? (some optional models were shared to gain feedback)**

**(Please see appendices A – D)**

## **Resource implications**

There will inevitably be resource and financial implications that arise from the outcome of the consultation process, the finalisation and adoption of the strategy and subsequently its delivery. There will be budgetary implications as statutory duties still need to be executed despite the removal of the ESG general funding and the reduction in money available for school improvement. The overall portfolio budget is set to break-even for 2017-18, with the development of future educational provision being a key project of the Change 4 Children transformation programme set on course to deliver savings over the next four financial years. This also has to be set in context of the pressures on the Home to School Transport budget and the overall SEND budget.

## **Next steps**

- Feedback from the events will be communicated to schools, post 16 and Early Years providers, and also to governors through the existing network of meetings that are already scheduled for the Autumn Term.
- The next meeting of the reference group has been arranged for 12<sup>th</sup> September to consider the feedback and it will be instrumental in developing with us a delivery model that will be future proofed to cater for the challenges faced by changes in funding and the role of the local authority with regards to education.



- Wider stakeholder engagement will take place through an online consultation beginning on 5 September to 23 October 2017.
- All feedback will be incorporated into updating the draft strategy which will be presented to Cabinet in November 2017.
- To combat the vulnerabilities (persistently wide attainment gap and outcomes for vulnerable groups) within the current approach to school improvement, the current arrangement for the internal Team Around the School Meeting” will take on a more proactive and preventative approach through extending the membership of the group to include representation from Early Help and from other services in BCC that support schools
- A Business Case will be created to support a targeted approach to school improvement that will address our persistent issues for under performance. In order to improve outcomes for vulnerable groups the mechanisms for school to school improvement will need reinforced through having a much more outcome focussed Contract with BLT. The Business Case will be presented at a future SLT.

## **APPENDICES**

### ***Appendix A– The vision discussed at the Consultation Events***

#### **A Vision for Education in Buckinghamshire**

Education is fundamental to improving life chances and can transform the lives of children and young people. Education in Buckinghamshire should provide an exciting journey of self-discovery and fulfilment that sets our children and young people up for a lifetime of learning, ambition and achievement, made possible through an inclusive learning environment that is characterised by excellent teaching. The education system in Buckinghamshire should provide all children and young people the opportunity and support to fulfil their potential, regardless of their gender, ethnicity or socio-economic background. All children and young people should feel safe, respected and valued in an education system which celebrates diversity. Every child should be treated as an individual, with specific needs taken into account and the appropriate support provided.

## Appendix B – The principles discussed at the Consultation Events

### Guiding Principles – Comments and Barriers



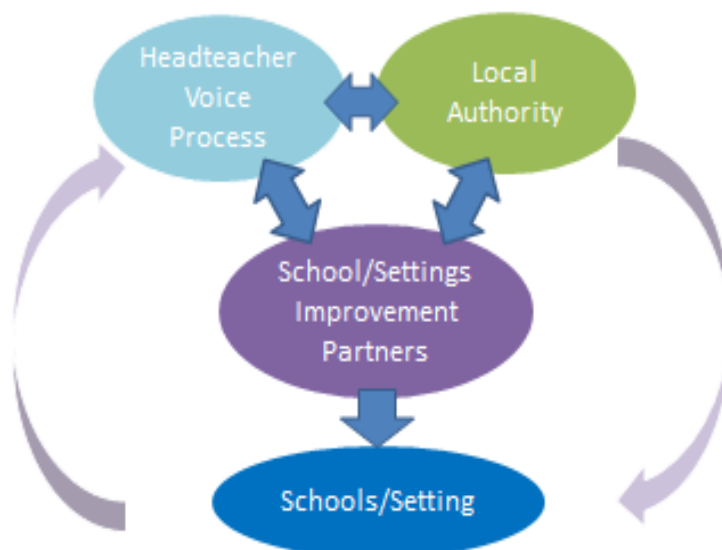
## Appendix C – The priorities discussed at the Consultation Events

<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>Early Years and Childcare</b>
Developing sufficient high quality places, in the right locations, to meet the growing need	Providing the best start to enable all our young learners to flourish and develop a love of learning
<b>School Improvement and Engagement</b>	<b>Inclusion – Supporting the Vulnerable</b>
Working collaboratively to deliver high standards and excellent results for all our pupils	Delivering a positive and inclusive education for all children and young people
<b>SEND (SEND Strategy 2017)</b>	<b>Post 16 Provision &amp; Skills Development (Industrial Strategy 2017)</b>
Enabling excellent outcomes for all children and young people with SEND	Equipping young people with the knowledge, skills and experience needed to thrive in a modern economy

## Appendix D – Delivery model options discussed at the Consultation Events

In order to deliver a new Education and Skills Strategy, BCC and the education community need to work together more closely. Our current delivery model is as below:

### Current School Improvement Delivery Model



A proposed model in which schools and other education settings can be supported is through the “**Team around the School**” concept. This could provide schools and their pupils with the right services at the right time through efficient channels in a consistent, clear and joined up process. By bringing together the wide range of services that BCC can provide will make our services closer and more responsive to the needs of schools and most importantly their children and young people.

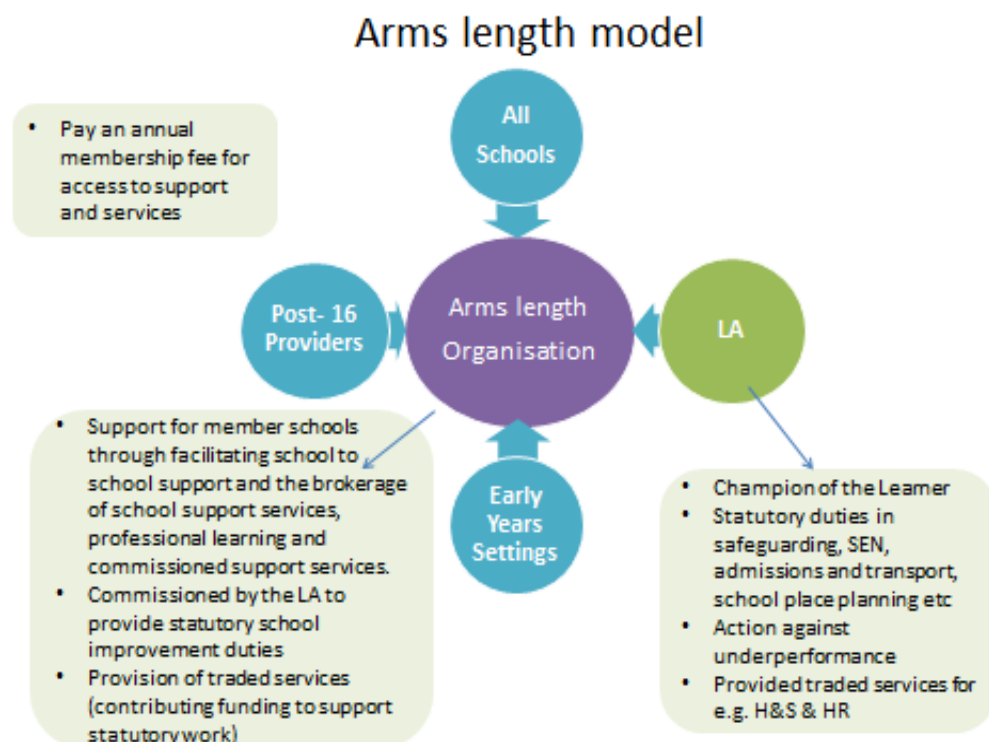
An integrated and dedicated operating model will provide the mechanism for strengthening partner relationships with the school, through a joined up approach for support services, better and quicker deployment of multi-agency support and alignment of early help with school improvement.





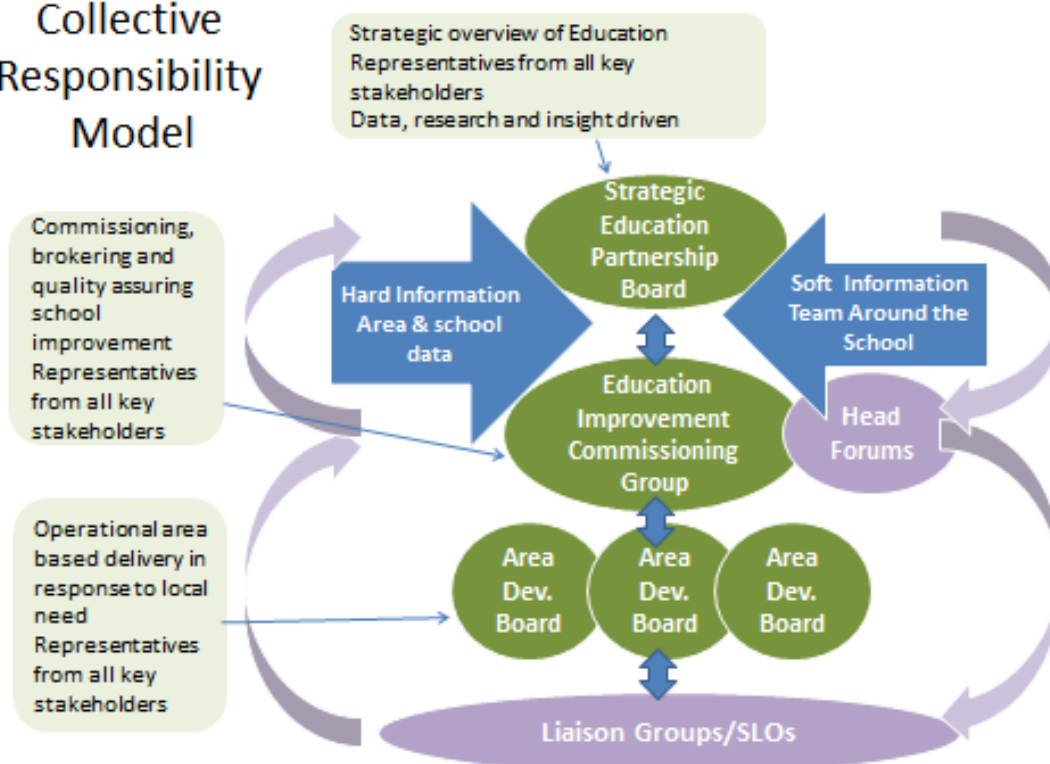
There are other delivery models used by other local authorities which could be considered. Some local authorities such as Warwickshire County Council provide services **in-house but through a dedicated schools team**. This team is known as Warwickshire Education Services, which is the name for all Warwickshire County Council traded services that schools can purchase from money in their delegated budgets. It includes services ranging from Catering to Finance to the Schools Library Service. All of these services work closely together to ensure that schools are provided with the best possible services.

In other authorities, services for schools and other education settings are provided through a **separate arms-length organisation** (such as Hertfordshire for Learning, Hackney Learning Trust) on behalf of the local authority as seen below:



Other models based on a commissioning framework such as in Warrington have been deployed successfully. Such a model would fit with one of the key principles highlighted earlier in the workshop, **collective responsibility**. This would involve all educational partners in Buckinghamshire, irrespective of status, working together, drawing upon expertise and experience within schools and settings, in order to provide excellent education that is inclusive to all of our children and young people. This will mean creating an education system with outward looking system leadership which actively supports others to improve and works in partnership to take collective responsibility for performance across their locality. This model could look like this:

## Collective Responsibility Model



### Your response:

Please rank your preferred model and note pro's and con's of each with any commentary in the following table:

Delivery Model	Rank - out of 4	Advantages	Disadvantages	Comments/Suggestions
Current Delivery Model				
Dedicated Team Model (e.g. Warwick-shire – no diagram)				
Arms- Length Model (e.g. Herts for Learning)				
Collective Responsibility Model (e.g. Warrington)				

Please comment on the **Team around the School Model**

Advantages	Disadvantages	Comments