

**Decision maker** Cabinet Member for Education

**Subject:** Portsmouth Education Partnership

**Date of decision:** 22 September 2016

**Report from:** Alison Jeffery, Director of Children's Services

**Report by:** Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director of Children's Services - Education

**Wards affected:** All

**Key decision (over £250k):** No

---

## **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform the Cabinet Member for Education about the proposals to establish an Education Partnership for Portsmouth and the progress that has so far been made, including the publication of a consultation document and the implementation of some shadow arrangements.
- 1.2 The consultation document (Appendix 1) sets out proposals for a new Education Partnership for Portsmouth, led by schools but with the full participation of a range of stakeholders. The Partnership will have a clear focus on raising standards and improving educational outcomes for children and young people in Portsmouth. But it also offers opportunities for collective action through a range of initiatives.

## **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet Member:
  - a) Notes the progress made to establish the Portsmouth Education Partnership; and
  - b) Receives a follow up report to consider the outcomes of the consultation and approval of the final arrangements for the Partnership, including an outline of a new education strategy for the City.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 The educational landscape is undergoing a period of significant change. The White Paper '*Educational Excellence Everywhere*' confirmed the Government's commitment to a school-led, self-improving system, and every school to become an academy by 2022. Whilst it signaled an end to the local

authority's current responsibilities in terms of school improvement, the White Paper also set out a clearly defined continuing and important role for local authorities: ensuring every child has a school place; ensuring the needs of vulnerable children and young people are met; and acting as a champion for parents and families.

- 3.2 In recognition of these changes and the Ofsted inspection earlier this year of the council's arrangements for school improvement, discussions have been held with headteachers, governors and MAT leaders, led by an experienced education consultant, to explore their views and ideas around partnership working in the city. These discussions to date have indicated two things:
- a) There is a strong appetite to develop new collective arrangements, led by schools, which provide a vehicle through which schools, academies, MATs, colleges, the university, teaching schools and wider stakeholders can take forward well founded joint projects and programmes and ensure that system resources, including NLEs, SLEs, LLEs and NLGs, can be effectively deployed across the city. There is an anxiety that without some form of collective arrangements, academisation, whatever advantages it may bring, could lead to a fragmentation of the education system in Portsmouth. There is also a desire to maintain and build on historic strong relationships between schools and between schools and the local authority.
  - b) There is developing consensus around a number of key priority areas where collective action could add value, over and above the efforts of individual schools, academies and MATs. If a Partnership is established, its priorities and annual work programme will need to be agreed formally through the governance arrangements established for the Partnership.

#### **4. Portsmouth Education Partnership**

- 4.1 The consultation document sets out some **guiding principles** which include shared accountability and collective responsibility for all pupils in Portsmouth, promoting a culture of openness and trust and ensuring that all available resources are well used and duplication is avoided.
- 4.2 A number of **priority areas** have been identified but others are likely to emerge. Priority areas include:
- Creating more options for schools and academies to receive the highest quality challenge and appraisal
  - Co-ordinating school improvement support and making effective use of system leaders
  - Teacher recruitment and retention, including career pathway development
  - Leadership development at all levels
  - Curriculum development and subject networks
  - Inclusion
  - Recruiting and supporting volunteers working in schools

- Collective interface for Multi Academy Trusts that operate in the City

- 4.3 In terms of **structures**, it is proposed that a Strategic Board be established to steer the work of the Partnership and develop and agree the strategic vision and priorities, chaired by an independent Chair. Below that Strategic Board, an Operational Group could sit which would meet every half term and which would be accountable to the Strategic Board. The Operational Group would be the engine of the Partnership, responsible for analyzing the data and proposing priorities / areas of action. Membership of the Partnership would be open to all schools and a range of partners.
- 4.4 In the first two years the local authority will be investing **resources** both in terms of staff time and funding. This includes the arrangements with the Portsmouth Teaching School Alliance to deliver school improvement on behalf of the local authority for its maintained schools but embedded as part of the Partnership. Schools will not be asked to help resource the work of the Partnership overall. Individual projects may require full or part funding from participating schools. As and when local authority funding ceases to be available, it will be for schools to decide whether the Partnership is a structure which they wish to underpin financially and if so how.

## 5. Shadow arrangements

- 5.1 The changing educational landscape and the changing role of the local authority in terms of school improvement is making a strong case for change. But this is reinforced by the latest set of provisional results for 2016 (refer to [Appendix 2](#)). Whilst there was an improving picture overall in terms of KS4 results, the provisional data for KS1 and KS2 show that our gap with the national average has widened.
- 5.2 Rather than wait for the outcomes of the consultation and in response to a clear view from schools that we should press on, shadow arrangements have been put in place including a shadow Strategic Board and a shadow Operational Group (draft Terms of Reference are attached at [Appendices 3 and 4](#)).
- 5.3 The Operational Group met on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2016 and will meet again on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2016. An early focus of the Group is to undertake a detailed analysis of the data to determine which schools need the greatest level of challenge and support and in which areas this support should be focussed. For LA maintained schools this will form part of the school improvement work that the council has contracted the Portsmouth Teaching School Alliance to deliver on its behalf.
- 5.4 The Strategic Board is due to meet on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2016. An independent chair (Hilary Loder) has been appointed.
- 5.5 A formal launch of the Partnership is planned for 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016 at The Portsmouth Marriott Hotel.

## **6. Equality impact assessment**

- 6.1 The development of the Portsmouth Education Partnership will not have a negative impact on any of the equality groups. A key priority of the Partnership is to promote inclusion particularly with regard to SEND, as reflected by the statement: *'Our ambition is for Portsmouth to be a leading example of good, inclusive practice, with the vast majority of children and young people with SEND able to have their needs identified early and met within what is 'ordinarily available' (universal and targeted services) across education, health and care. Where additional support is required, this needs to be accessed in a timely way and should be of a high quality.'* A full EIA was therefore not required.

## **7. Legal comments**

- 7.1 It is understood that the intention of the parties is to form an informal partnership arrangement which does not seek to require incorporation by registration at Companies House. As such, it will not be a separate legal entity and its role is an advisory one only.
- 7.2 The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 set out the composition, constitution and procedures of schools forums, any priority areas which the partnership advises on must not duplicate the role of the school forum in any way,
- 7.3 It should be noted that no decision of the Strategic Board (SB) or the Operational Group (OG) should be capable of binding any party to any *agreed* decision including expenditure or resource commitments.
- 7.4 Moving forward clear operational terms will need to be drafted for both the SB and OG setting out voting rights and scheduled meetings.

## **8. Finance comments**

- 8.1 As highlighted within the report, the government is intending to remove the current school improvement responsibilities from Local Authorities. It is intended that these responsibilities will cease from September 2017.
- 8.2 In addition, the government has also announced the cessation of the Education Services Grant (ESG) from April 2017. In recognition of the fact that the school improvement responsibilities continue until 2017, the government has confirmed that transitional funding will be made available from April to August 2017.
- 8.3 In order to support the establishment of the Portsmouth Education Partnership, the Local Authority will be investing resources both in terms of staff time and funding, in its first two years; by reallocating resources from within its existing staffing establishment and available budgets.

.....  
Signed by: Alison Jeffery, Director of Children's Services

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 - Portsmouth Education Partnership Consultation document
- Appendix 2 - Provisional Educational Attainment and Progress Results 2016
- Appendix 3 - Strategic Board Terms of Reference
- Appendix 4 - Operational Group Terms of Reference

## **Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>
Detailed action plan to address issues identified by Ofsted in its inspection of the arrangements for school improvement in Portsmouth 6 May 2016	Education

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by ..... on .....

.....  
Signed by: