

Agenda item:

Decision maker Education Advisory Board

Subject: Development of the Portsmouth Education Partnership and the transition to a schools led, self-improving system

Date of meeting: 30 September 2016

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

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

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform the Education Advisory Board about:

- the changing educational landscape and implications for Portsmouth
- proposals to establish an Education Partnership for Portsmouth
- the approach the council is now taking with regard to school improvement and academisation
- a summary of the provisional outcomes for 2015/16

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Education Advisory Board note:

- a) The progress that has been made to establish the Portsmouth Education Partnership
- b) The approach the council is taking with regard to school improvement and academisation
- c) The provisional educational outcomes for 2015/16
- d) That a report will be taken to the next meeting of the Education Advisory Board to provide an update on all of the above and to include details of a new education strategy for the City.

3. Background

Changing educational landscape

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, whereby every school would become an academy by 2022 and the responsibility for school improvement would shift from local authorities to schools and system

leaders (teaching schools, National and Local Leaders of Excellence and Multi Academy Trusts)

- 3.2 Whilst reaffirming reaffirming the Government's continued determination to see all schools become academies in the next 6 years, the Government recently announced that it will not be necessary to bring about legislation for the blanket conversion of all schools to achieve this goal. However, the government is proposing to bring forward legislation which will trigger conversion of all schools within a local authority in two specific circumstances
- Where it is clear that the local authority can no longer viably support its remaining schools because a critical mass of schools in that area has converted
 - Where the local authority consistently fails to meet a minimum performance threshold across its schools, demonstrating an inability to bring about meaningful school improvement
- 3.3 Whilst the White Paper 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

Ofsted inspection of the Local Authority's school improvement arrangements

- 3.4 In February 2016, Ofsted undertook an inspection of the council's arrangements for supporting school improvement. In response to the inspection the council issued an action plan setting out 8 key priorities ([Appendix 1](#)). The plan acknowledged that the achievement of pupils and learners in Portsmouth is not improving quickly enough and that at ages 11 and 16, and from 16 to 19, outcomes remain below the national figures and too many pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education. A step change is required in outcomes at all ages.
- 3.5 The council reaffirmed its commitment to the vision of '*Achieving the best education outcomes for all children and young people. We expect excellence in education for every child and young person, at every stage of their learning, regardless of their background or circumstance*'.
- 3.6 To achieve this vision the plan set out the following:
- Working with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) to develop Multi Academy Trust (MAT) arrangements in Portsmouth which are best suited to achieving rapid improvement in educational attainment in the city
 - Working with the RSC, system leaders, Teaching Schools, schools and MATs in the city to create arrangements through which all schools experience on a regular basis both high challenge and high support that is well targeted to meet their needs

- Ensuring that the school improvement support available to schools across the city is effectively prioritised and co-ordinated, based on a sound collective analysis of strengths and weaknesses
- Working with schools, academies, MATs and Teaching Schools to drive implementation of agreed strategies to tackle common issues and themes such as teacher recruitment and retention, attendance, leadership development and effective inclusion
- Supporting all stakeholders and partners to get behind educational attainment: parents; health visitors; family support; and social care.

4. Portsmouth Education Partnership

- 4.1 In recognition of the changing educational landscape and the Ofsted inspection earlier this year of the council's arrangements for supporting 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.
- 4.2 A formal consultation was launched on 5th September 2016 and will last until 21st October 2016. The consultation document (Appendix 2) 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.
- 4.3 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
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 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](#)).
- 4.7 The Operational Group met on 13th September 2016 and will meet again on 11th 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.
- 4.8 The Strategic Board is due to meet on 18th October 2016. An independent chair (Hilary Loder) has been appointed. A formal launch of the Partnership is planned for 4th November 2016 at The Portsmouth Marriott Hotel.

5. School Improvement

- 5.1 As highlighted above, 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. 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.
- 5.2 For 2016/17 Portsmouth City Council will be commissioning the Portsmouth Teaching School Alliance to deliver the local authority's statutory school improvement responsibilities in respect of promoting high standards in schools and maintained schools causing concern. The work will be supported by senior officers from the council and by the data team. Implicit in this is the requirement that this work is embedded within the newly established Portsmouth Education Partnership and is led by the shadow Operational Group.
- 5.3 The council will continue to provide all schools and academies with a summary overview of their attainment and progress data, but the way in which resources for challenge and support are targeted and deployed will change. The shadow Operational Group is currently analysing the 2016 provisional outcomes and is agreeing an approach to be taken in relation to local authority maintained schools in the first instance. There will also be close liaison with the RSC and with MATs, to co-ordinate support for academies where appropriate and agreed.

6. Academisation

- 6.1 Taking into account the above and from discussions held with schools, the council's position is that full academisation of the city through the MAT model, carefully developed to meet the needs of Portsmouth's schools, offers the best prospect (together with other initiatives as set out in the Portsmouth Education Partnership consultation document) of delivering the step change in improvement which the city needs.
- 6.2 The council is committed to working closely with the Regional Schools Commissioner to oversee a smooth transition towards academisation and will look to capitalise on the opportunity to increase the capacity for sector led school improvement through Multi Academy Trusts and the establishment of a second teaching school in the City, as well as addressing long standing structural issues in terms of transition dips (infant, junior, primary, secondary and post-16) through vertical alignment where appropriate.

- 6.3 A third of our schools are now academies (21 academies operated by 11 Multi Academy Trusts) and the vast majority of schools are now actively considering options for academy conversion.

7. Provisional outcomes for 2015/16

- 7.1 A new assessment framework was introduced from 2015/16 which removed assessment by levels and introduced scaled scores and expected standards at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Due to these changes in assessment frameworks, 2016 results for KS1 and KS2 cannot be directly compared with previous years. A new accountability framework was also introduced at Key Stage 4 which includes new headline measures of performance.
- 7.2 Provisional results for 2015/16 are set out in [Appendix 5](#). A summary overview of performance at each stage is given below:
- **Early Years Foundation Profile** - provisional results for 2016 are in line with the proxy national having been above in 2015. The percentage of children achieving a good level of development has increased from 69% in 2015 to a provisional result of 69.7%.
 - **Phonics Year 1** - provisional results for 2016 are in line with the proxy national having been below national in 2015.
 - **Key Stage 1** - provisional results for 2016 are below the proxy national having been above national in 2015.
 - **Key Stage 2 Attainment** - provisional outcomes are below national as has been the case in previous years, and the gaps from Portsmouth's performance to national averages have increased in reading, writing and in maths, as well as the combined measure. For all pupils achieving at least the expected standard in Reading Writing & Maths, Portsmouth is provisionally joint 140th out of 150 local authorities nationally in 2016.
 - **Key Stage 2 Progress** - average progress scores for reading, writing and maths are all negative and significantly below the national average.
 - **Key Stage 4** - attainment in GCSEs has improved from 2015, with the percentage of pupils achieving both English and Maths GCSE grades A*-C improving from 52.6% to 57.5%.

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

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:

| Title of document | Location |
|-------------------|----------|
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The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by: