

Title of meeting: Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education

Date of meeting : 7 February 2023

Subject: Education Advisory Board

Report by: Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director, Education

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

Full council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To provide the background and rationale for dissolving the Education Advisory Board (EAB) and how the responsibilities of the EAB will be covered in the future.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education:**
- **Dissolves the Education Advisory Board (EAB) and transfers the EAB responsibilities to the Cabinet Member and the EYCP scrutiny panel**
 - **Receives regular updates from officers on school improvement and standards through the Lead Member Briefings and that an annual report in the Autumn (covering the items in paragraph 3.5) is prepared for a Cabinet Member Decision meeting.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The EAB replaced the Schools Standards & Improvement Group (SSIG) in 2016 following a decision at an [Education portfolio meeting in June 2016](#) to create the EAB. A report by the Director of Children, Families and Education stated the SSIG was the main mechanism for members to review and scrutinise educational performance. However, it held schools causing concern to account rather than LA officers. The LA's approach was not supported by schools and those schools that found themselves being held to account said the process was unhelpful and damaged the relationship between schools and the LA.
- 3.2 The EAB's purpose was stated to give members the opportunity to regularly review and scrutinise educational performance and the impact of work to

support progression and achievement, particularly with respect to LA maintained schools for which the LA continues to have statutory duties in relation to school improvement. It was intended to be the key mechanism for members to hold senior officers to account. The legal comments in the report said there was a statutory duty to promote high standards and under the terms of the council's constitution, the Cabinet Member had the appropriate powers to agree the recommendation proposed.

- 3.3 There was also a report at the same meeting by the Director of Children, Families and Education with an action plan to improve standards as a result of an Ofsted inspection of the LA's school improvement arrangements in February 2016; it also mentioned setting up an education partnership to address common issues amongst schools (the Portsmouth Education Partnership was approved by at an Education portfolio meeting in September 2016 and set up in November 2016; the PEP Chair attends the EAB).
- 3.4 The EAB's terms of reference states it is a formal committee of the council, operates in an advisory capacity to the Education Cabinet Member, provides a conduit for stakeholders to inform the Cabinet Member and relevant scrutiny panel and can prepare reports for the scrutiny panel.
- 3.5 The reports that go to the EAB regularly cover the following:
- A summary of the support and challenge provided by the LA to its LA maintained schools
 - A summary of recent Ofsted inspections (both academies and LA maintained schools) with specific details about any actions the LA is taking with respect to LA maintained schools
 - A summary of the end of academic year results (attainment and progress) for all schools in Portsmouth.
- 3.6 Due to the reasons set out in section 4 it is recommended that the EAB is dissolved and its responsibilities be transferred to the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education and the EYCP scrutiny panel. Furthermore, it is recommended that the Cabinet Member receives regular updates from offices on school improvement and standards through the Lead Member Briefings and that an annual report in the Autumn (covering the three items listed in the paragraph above) is prepared for a Cabinet Member Decision meeting.

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 Since 2016 there have been a number of developments and changes which provide a strong rationale for the proposal to dissolve the EAB.
- The majority of schools (70%) are now part of Multi Academy Trust (MAT). MATs are responsible for school improvement and raising standards in their schools and are accountable to the Regions Group.

There are now 14 MATs that have a presence in the city and one single academy trust (UTC Portsmouth).

- The Portsmouth Education Partnership (PEP) is now firmly established with robust structures in place to implement an agreed three year education strategy. The PEP has also taken on the responsibility of a Local Partnership Board in terms of preparing and delivering the Priority Education Investment Area delivery plan, following the government announcement in 2022 that Portsmouth would be one of 12 new PEIAs. All 14 MATs are members of the Board.
- The support to our 18 LA maintained schools has been strengthened considerably through regular half termly LA briefings, half termly visits by members of the SLT to all 18 schools, a co-produced document setting out what can be expected of the LA and what can be expected of the schools, and robust support and challenge from the LA's small school improvement team.

4.2 The above demonstrates a changing education landscape that is now heavily academised but which retains strong collaborative arrangements across the city through the PEP and where there is robust school improvement council support for LA maintained schools.

5. Integrated impact assessment

5.1 The implementation of the recommendation to dissolve the EAB will not have a negative impact on any of the areas of equality of diversity, community safety, regeneration and culture or environment and public space.

6. Legal implications

6.1 A local authority must exercise its education functions with a view to promoting high standards, s.13A Education Act 1996. In addition, Part 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2016 sets out a local authority's school improvement functions together with the Schools Causing Concern Guidance (October 2022). These functions require the monitoring of performance of maintained schools, arranging school improvement provision and intervention when appropriate. Beyond this, local authorities have considerable discretion as to how they deliver their statutory responsibilities in terms of school improvement in their maintained schools.

6.2 The EAB was established by the Cabinet Member, and it can also be dissolved by the Cabinet Member. The appointments made to it are agreed by Cabinet rather than Full Council. It is within the Cabinet Member's powers to make the recommendations described above.

7. Director of Finance's comments

7.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendation.

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Signed by Director of Children, Families and Education

Appendices:

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

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

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