

REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Governance Committee met on 28 January 2014. Attendances:

Councillor Glazier (Chair)
Councillors Elkin, Howson and Tutt

1. **Proposal for the Formation of the East Sussex Education Performance Panel**

1.1 The Local Authority has statutory duties to promote high standards in schools and among other providers so that children and young people achieve well and fulfill their potential as defined by section 13A of the Education Act 1996. This includes support for schools causing concern. The Ofsted framework for the inspection of school improvement services clearly defines Local Authority (LA) accountability for the outcomes of children in all state-funded education (including those outside of their direct control).

2.2 Pupil outcomes in 2012 demonstrated improvements in attainment in some areas but, overall, results at all key stages for the County were disappointing. The 'Can Do' working group was established composed of Cabinet Members, officers with responsibility for education and external advisers to identify the key areas for development. The group looked at how the LA's school improvement delivery model could be developed in order to secure improvement at all key stages and ensure that vulnerable young people, especially those in receipt of free school meals, make expected levels of progress. The key findings from the interim report March 2013 were to:

- Support Members to adapt to a new role as the Council moves from being a provider of schools to become a champion of children and parents and of educational excellence.
- Develop a shared strategic role so that Members, officers, head teachers, governors and teachers have a joint commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes for all children and young people in East Sussex.
- Improve school leadership in the County by encouraging and incentivising schools to federate and cluster; working with new and existing academy sponsors to bring in outside expertise; and 'growing its own' leadership capacity by investing in training, support and recognition for promising future school leaders.
- Develop the school improvement offer in the County by recognising that school-to-school improvement is the best way to secure sustainable long term improvement in performance, with the County Council continuing to play a key role in enabling and brokering school-to-school support.
- Support Members to adapt to a new role as the Council moves from being a provider of schools to become a champion of children and parents and of educational excellence.

2.3 The Can Do Group reconvened after the Council Election to engage all political parties and share thinking to date. The immediate priority was to complete the development of the next stage of the East Sussex School Improvement Strategy, "Excellence for All", which was published in October 2013 (See Appendix 1 which has been circulated separately to Members). Then, at its meeting on 19 November 2013,

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the Education Standards Panel considered whether its remit was sufficiently broad to enable it to

support the aims in the Strategy and proactively promote high standards and improvement in East Sussex schools and among other providers.

2.4 The Standards Panel's remit is to monitor standards and review school OFSTED reports in order to update the Cabinet and the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee on any issues emerging and on progress made. It was agreed that this needed to change to enable it to support the Standards and Learning Effectiveness Service (SLES) in its work to secure rapid and significant improvement in outcomes across all key stages. In particular, it was agreed that the Panel needed to keep an overview of performance as SLES develops its new approach to the delivery of school improvement. This new approach, as set out in "Excellence for All", will need to reflect the new diverse educational landscape, be sustainable within the future resources available and align with the expectations of the Ofsted framework for the inspection of Local Authority arrangements for school improvement. A proposed remit and membership are set out in Appendix 2 which is circulated separately to Members. The key changes include that, as well as looking at Ofsted findings, the Panel will:

- (a) consider the Local Authority's own assessment of schools' performance and the impact of interventions put in place;
- (b) receive reports on the progress and performance of East Sussex schools at different key stages;
- (c) keep an overview of the progress of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils compared to their peers; and
- (d) monitor the success of programmes to attract and develop good school leadership.

2.5 It was agreed that the Panel membership should remain cross-party and that Council Officers should be included to enable thorough debate of the issues. The proposal is that the Panel will be an Advisory Panel to the Cabinet rather than an Executive Committee, so it will not have delegated powers to take decisions on behalf of the Cabinet.

2.6 As there is a change of emphasis from monitoring standards to ensuring school improvement, it is also proposed that the Panel's name should change from Education "Standards" Panel to Education "Performance" Panel. This reflects that schools' performance is not just measured according to the standards achieved by pupils, but that other factors are also important, including rates of progress, quality of leadership and behaviour and attendance.

2.7 The Committee **recommends** the County Council to agree to

- ☆ (1) the Education Standards Panel be reconstituted as an Advisory panel to the Cabinet, with cross-party Member and officer representation, the Members to be appointed to serve on the Advisory Panel until the end of the current municipal year;
- (2) the political balance provisions should not apply to the membership of the Advisory Panel;
- (3) the Panel is renamed the Education Performance Panel; and
- (4) the terms of reference and membership of the Panel be as set out in Appendix 2 to the report; and

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(5) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to make the appointments to the Panel in consultation with Group Leaders.

28 January 2014

Keith Glazier
(Chair)

