

**Report to:** Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting:** 26 September 2016

**By:** Director of Children's Service

**Title:** Raising the Participation Age (RPA) – Monitoring report

**Purpose:** To provide the Scrutiny Committee with a progress update report on the implementation of the recommendations proposed of the Review Board.

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider the implementation of the Review Board's recommendations.

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### **1 Background**

1.1 The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee established its review of Raising the Participation Age (RPA) to examine whether East Sussex County Council (ESCC) was meeting its statutory duties and to identify whether any improvements could be made to increase the participation of young people in education, employment or training. The report focused on three key areas: careers advice, vulnerable groups and meeting employer's needs.

1.2 The aim of RPA is to ensure that young people remain positively engaged with education or training until at least the age of 18, offering the best possible opportunity of developing the skills that will enable them to pursue successful careers, and make a positive contribution to their community.

1.3 The Children's Services Department welcomed the Scrutiny Review of RPA (Appendix 1) which was presented to Cabinet in January 2016, in particular the recognition that it gives to the importance of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance in securing and sustaining education, training and employment opportunities. The Department produced an action plan to deliver the recommendations, which includes close working with schools who have the statutory responsibility to deliver high quality careers education. An update on the action plan is provided in Appendix 2.

### **2 Supporting information**

2.1 Significant progress on the implementation of the action plan has been achieved as outlined in Appendix 2. All actions have either been exceeded or are on track to be achieved by target deadline.

2.2 In accordance with RPA our participation targets for 2015/16 were achieved with 96% of 16 year olds and 88.6% of 17 year olds participating in education or training, ahead of both national and south east participation (February 2016).

2.3 The Council's RPA Strategy for 2013-2015 is now being reviewed. A 16-19 Summit was held on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2016 to review the current strategy and was attended by 69 senior leaders and decision makers from schools, academies, FE Colleges, training and apprenticeship providers, business, enterprise, voluntary and community sector, ESCC and District and Borough Councils. Very positive feedback was received from the Summit with attendees giving 8.7/10 for overall quality of the Summit and 8.2/10 given to the value of the interactive discussion tables.

2.4 The 16-19 Summit was an important and highly interactive opportunity to inform and influence the direction, priorities and content of this new strategy. As a result our new strategy will be based around four key themes:

- Education, skills and mindset appropriate to the needs of the labour market
- Career management
- Support for vulnerable learners
- Experience and involvement in the workplace and/or the community

It is anticipated the 16-19 Strategy will come into effect in October and a copy of the document will be circulated to Members at that time.

### **3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations**

The Scrutiny Review has provided a useful insight into RPA and its implementation in East Sussex and the recommendations have helped prioritise our actions going forward. The Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider the implementation of the recommendations made by the Review Board to date as outlined in Appendix 2.

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Appendix 1: RPA Review Board Report

Appendix 2: RPA action plan update September 2016