

Scrutiny Review Terms of Reference Document

Scrutiny Review	Scrutiny Review of 'Coping with Change – the Way Forward'
Responsible Committee	People Scrutiny Committee
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Background

[What has led up to the suggestion of this topic for a scrutiny review and the outcome of any initial scoping work. What is the issue? Why it is something that scrutiny should look at? What would the review focus on?]

Members have become increasingly aware of the scale and pace of change our schools are coping with and the potential impact this might have on educational attainment and school performance in East Sussex. As discussed by Members, the issues impacting on schools include matters relating to:

- the sustainability of schools and in particular, small schools;
- the impact of the National Funding Formula;
- how schools are now increasingly making decisions regarding which services they purchase and the impact this may have on performance and attainment.
- the changing role of the Local Authority
- changes to the national curriculum and assessment methods

Members recognise that these changes present both opportunities and risks. They therefore want to help schools and the Local Authority successfully adapt to these changes. Given the above, the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee appointed a 'Coping with Change – the Way Forward' Review Board. The Board was created with a particular emphasis on adopting a forward-looking approach and trying to anticipate the future shape of the local educational landscape.

The Board has now undertaken its initial scoping work into this broad area and has identified specific areas which it recommends should now be the focus of the review going forward. The inception of the new 'People Scrutiny Committee' therefore presents an ideal opportunity for a discussion of the Board's refined approach and its associated key targets.

Scope of the Review

[Describe in more detail what the scope of the proposed scrutiny review would be, including the proposed lines of enquiry/ questions, and any particular areas of evidence gathering that the review should cover. Include any desired outcomes of the review and also describe any areas that are outside of the scope of the review to help provide a focus for the review work].

The Review Board has conducted a number of evidence gathering sessions which has enabled it to start to focus on some key subject areas. As identified by the Board, these include the following proposed lines of enquiry:

- **School partnerships and the sustainability of small schools.** Evidence suggests that schools are more likely to be successful and sustainable if they operate within a partnership model. There are different types of partnership model and the Board what to explore these in more depth and understand which are the most effective, what the barriers are to their effective operation and whether schools are fully exploiting the benefits of the partnerships already in place.
- **The future role of the Local Authority and its relationship with other key stakeholders.** How is the LA adapting to the changing landscape and what are the opportunities and risks here? This broad subject area includes the future shape and role of the Standards and Learning Effectiveness Service (SLES) and the possibly fragmented nature of the governance/management systems that may evolve in the future (with regard to multi-academy trusts, single academies, federations, collaborations).
- **Traded services and effective school improvement support.** In terms of purchasing school improvement services, it appears there is significant variation in the levels of take up by schools within different authority areas. The Board are interested in understanding this variation and whether there are any lessons for our local situation.

Review methods

It is anticipated that the Review Board will review documentary evidence, question witnesses and undertake research in order to gather evidence to inform its recommendations.

Sources of Evidence from Witnesses

The following list is not exhaustive and will change and develop as the review progresses.

- The Children's Services Department's views on the impact of the National Funding Formula
- The Regional Schools Commissioner on its role, how it interacts with key stakeholders and how it manages performance issues at academies

- The CEO of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) on the benefits and drawbacks of a MAT model.
- The Executive Head of an Academy Trust which is comprised of one secondary phase and one primary phase school.
- A Diocesan perspective on the challenges schools are facing and its views on how these could be addressed.
- The views of Governors and teaching staff at selected schools with regard to the benefits and drawbacks of the partnership model they are operating within.
- The views of a School Federation and its thoughts on the benefits and drawbacks of that particular model.

Documents and research:

The Review Board is taking into account a range of written evidence which includes:

- National Guidance on issues such as governance in Multi-Academy Trusts and the role of the Regional Schools Commissioner. The Board are carefully reviewing this type of evidence so as to ensure any review findings have regard to relevant guidance.
- Local guidance and policy documents. The Board are also carefully reviewing local guidance and policy documents as this will help ensure Members have a clear understanding of the local situation. This will then help inform their findings. This type of guidance includes the latest version of East Sussex County Council's 'Excellence for All' strategy document.
- Financial information. The Board wants to ensure it has a good understanding of the key financial factors that are relevant to the changing educational landscape Members are interested in.

Review Organisation and Responsibilities

Review Board

The Review Board is comprised of: to be confirmed

The Chair of the Review Board is: to be confirmed

The Review Board is responsible for:

- *Making decisions regarding the scope and direction of the review;*
- *Monitoring and control of the overall progress of the review;*
- *Agreeing where Board members will undertake evidence gathering activities as required by the review;*
- *Considering and providing challenge to all evidence presented to it; and*
- *Developing and agreeing the final report, including the findings and recommendations of the review.*

Scrutiny Review Support

Support for the review will be provided by the Member Services Team to:

- Manage the review process;
- Undertake research as agreed by the Board;
- Draft the final report

The Lead Officer who will support the review from the Member Services Team is Stuart McKeown, Senior Democratic Services Adviser. Their role is to manage the review, ensuring its aims and objectives are met and that the final report is delivered to the People Scrutiny Committee within the agreed timescales.

Scrutiny Review Completion

When the review has been completed the Lead Officer will co-ordinate the production of a final report outlining the findings and recommendations for agreement by the Review Board. Once agreed, the Review Board will present this to the People / Place Scrutiny Committee for it to agree the recommendations.

The report will then be presented to Cabinet for comment and County Council for approval. Progress updates on how the recommendations are being implemented by the department will be presented to the People / Place Scrutiny Committee in due course (usually six and twelve months after the review has been approved by County Council).

Review Timetable

Based on the initial scoping of the review, the Review Board aims to submit the final report to the People Scrutiny Committee at the meeting to be held on 27 November 2018.

An initial timetable of the meetings and activities required to complete the review is outlined below. [The number of review board meetings is not fixed and there can be more or less depending on the nature of the review. The Review Board should agree the number and content of the meetings and review activity].

Activity	Timescale/Date
<u>People Scrutiny Committee consideration</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Committee will consider progress made to date and will be asked to affirm the Board's proposed approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 25 June 2018
<u>Review Board Activity/Meeting – Evidence Gathering and Planning</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct further evidence gathering activities in accordance with revised focus of the Review• Agree a plan of action that accords with timescales agreed by the People Committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• July 2018

<u>Review Board Activity/Meeting - Summary and Review of evidence</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine if any further is evidence required. • Review and summarize evidence heard to date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early September 2018
<u>Update the People Scrutiny Committee on Progress</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If required, the Review Board to provide the People Scrutiny Committee with a progress update. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 October 2018
<u>Review Board Activity/Meeting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarise findings and recommendations from evidence • Drafting of scrutiny review report, finalise findings and recommendations of the review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 2018
<u>Final Review Board Meeting to agree Report</u> Review Board meeting to agree draft report, findings and recommendations with input from key officers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early November 2018
<u>Deadline for Final Report to be agreed.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 November 2018
<u>Report to People Scrutiny Committee for agreement</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27 November 2018
Report to Cabinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 December 2018
Report to Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 February 2019