

14 October 2013**Agenda Item: 5****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, STANDARDS AND
INCLUSION****POLICY STATEMENT FOR SCHOOLS****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to invite the Committee to comment on the revised Policy Statement for Schools, as set out in **Appendix 1**, and to recommend it to Policy Committee for approval.

Information and Advice

2. The Policy Statement for Schools, agreed in 2010 and last updated in December 2012, has been a key document that has guided the work of officers in supporting and challenging schools, in promoting school to school partnerships and in responding to the government's agenda to promote diversity and choice. The Policy has been amended in the past three years to reflect changes in the re-structure of the Children, Families and Cultural Services Department and in changes to legal responsibilities and statutory guidance, such as that concerning the Admissions Code of 2012, with a particular emphasis to protect the interests of vulnerable pupils as schools and academies acquire greater autonomy.
3. The revised Policy, attached as **Appendix 1**, asserts the belief of the Council that schools, and especially primary schools, can exercise appropriate autonomy and fulfil the potential of their children and young people while retaining their status as community schools. The Policy outlines the serious reservations the Council has in regards to the development of Free Schools because of their potential to undermine planning for the provision of sufficient and appropriately sited school places, which remains a key statutory function of the Council. The revised policy reflects the development in the arrangements for children and young people who are excluded, or in danger of being excluded, from school, and especially the more vulnerable.
4. An ongoing piece of work has been to negotiate and agree principles and protocols with all Nottinghamshire schools and academies, covering such areas as partnerships and collaborations, data sharing, place planning and admissions. An updated version of these principles and protocols is shown in **Appendix 2**.
5. The Policy Statement for Schools has underpinned the improvement model which has served the County's schools well over the past seven years. From 2006 – 2012 (inclusive) the outcomes for children and young people at the end of their statutory

schooling at 16 have improved ahead of the national average in each year. This revised Policy Statement will sustain a partnership approach, properly respect the autonomy of all schools and retain the emphasis upon protection of the most vulnerable pupils, which have been the hallmarks of the Policy since 2010. The revised Policy emphasises the commitment of the Council, as a champion of children, young people and their families, to support and challenge all schools and academies, a duty made clear in recent months by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (HMCI). Additional emphasis is given to the option which community schools have to remain within the family of schools directly supported by the Council.

6. The Policy Statement for Schools will be reviewed annually.

Other Options Considered

7. The Policy Statement for Schools has contributed to school improvement and provided clear guidance to officers and schools since its inception. The revised Policy will sustain improvement. No other option has, therefore, been considered.

Reasons for Recommendations

8. The Policy Statement has supported the creation and maintenance of partnership working between schools that has focused upon providing good and outstanding schools for Nottinghamshire.
9. The revised Policy Statement reflects the improved arrangements for children excluded or in danger of exclusion from school which will help schools retain more children and young people within mainstream schools, better control costs and lead to better outcomes.
10. The revised Policy Statement accurately reflects the statutory duties of the Council.
11. The revised Policy Statement includes the updated principles and protocols agreed with all Nottinghamshire schools, following consultation.

Statutory and Policy Implications

12. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation and discussion has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That:

- 1) the revised Policy Statement for Schools, as set out in **Appendix 1**, be recommended to Policy Committee for approval.
- 2) the Policy Statement for Schools be reviewed annually.

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Constitutional Comments (LM 12/08/13)

13. The Children and Young People's Committee has responsibility for policy development in relation to children and young people, subject to approval by the Policy Committee.

Financial Comments (KLA 01/08/13)

14. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Policy Statement for Schools – report to County Council on 16 September 2010
Policy Statement for schools – report to Policy Committee on 12 December 2012

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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