

23 April 2014**Agenda Item: 4****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION STANDARDS AND
INCLUSION****CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION STRATEGY****Purpose of the Report**

1. To invite the Committee to comment on the Department's proposed Children Missing Education (CME) Strategy (attached as **Appendix A**) and recommend it to Policy Committee for approval at its meeting on 7 May 2014.
2. The CME Strategy is designed to ensure the County Council fulfils its statutory duties to provide education for all Nottinghamshire children and young people. The strategy is intended to guide the work of local authority officers, schools and other agencies in the procedures and practices to track, monitor and maintain contact with children and young people at risk of or already missing education to ensure that vulnerable children and young people remain on a school roll and 'known' to relevant professionals.

Information and Advice

3. The Council is committed to ensuring that every child and young person of statutory school age is on a school roll, with the exception of those children and young people who are electively home educated.
4. The vast majority of children and young people engage positively with school, attend regularly and are actively encouraged to do so by their parents and carers. It is vulnerable young people who are most likely not to attend school. The numbers overall are relatively small and the Council recognises the responsibility to identify these vulnerable children and young people individually to ensure that the Council's resources are targeted on those who need them most.
5. Children and young people who do not access school or appropriate alternative education are deemed to be vulnerable and their risk is increased as they continue to be without a school place.
6. The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and share information. In order to fulfil this duty, the implementation of the County Council's CME strategy is led by the Service Director

for Education, Standards and Inclusion. This strategy (attached as **Appendix A**) and accompanying Action Plan (**Appendix B**) outlines the Council's strategic responsibility for children missing education (CME). A culture of shared responsibility is essential where all staff, whether school based or directly employed within one of the County Council's teams, has a duty to be alert to children who are not on a roll or attending school. Consultation with schools is currently being undertaken and further feedback will be sought when the strategy is directly mediated with all schools at the summer term headteacher briefings led by the Education Improvement Service.

7. All Council officers responsible for a particular vulnerable group have been tasked to review their current practice to develop a shared and systematic system to identify children and young people who are at risk of failing to access appropriate education or becoming 'unknown'. The strategy also aims to develop cross departmental systems to identify children and young people who are on a school roll but not attending school. These are sometimes referred to as 'grey exclusions'.

Other Options Considered

8. The County Council remains statutorily responsible to ensure that all children and young people of statutory school age access full time education. Therefore, there has been no consideration given to developing a strategy based other than that every school aged child should be on a school roll with the exception of those who are electively home educated.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

9. Members will wish to be assured that the Council's statutory duty to provide full time education for all children and young people of statutory school age is being properly fulfilled.

Statutory and Policy Implications

10. 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 has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That:

- 1) That the Committee comments on the proposed Children Missing Education Strategy and recommends it to Policy Committee for approval at its meeting on 5 May 2014, with further consultation with schools and other stakeholders to be undertaken during the Summer term 2014.
- 2) a further report be brought to this Committee which gives Members feedback from the consultation with schools and reports on the impact of the strategy in reducing the numbers of children missing education.

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Constitutional Comments (LM 03/04/14)

11. The Children and Young People's Committee has delegated authority within the Constitution to approve the recommendations in the report.

Financial Comments (KLA 04/04/14)

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

Background Papers and Published Documents

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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