

3 December 2012**Agenda Item: 4**

REPORT OF THE GROUP MANAGER, SUPPORT TO SCHOOLS SERVICE

POLICY STATEMENT FOR SCHOOLS

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to invite the Committee to comment on the proposed revised 'Policy Statement for Schools' implemented in September 2010 and reviewed in September 2012 and to recommend it to Policy Committee for approval on the 12 December 2012. This policy has been reviewed following the restructuring of the education improvement service and place planning and admissions into the new 'Support to Schools Service' in April 2012.
2. The revised policy, attached as **Appendix 1**, now incorporates the Local Authority's continued statutory responsibilities for ensuring the sufficiency of school places and includes responsibility for implementation of the Admissions Code 2012, particularly in relation to the admission of vulnerable pupils. **Appendix 2** presents the protocols agreed with representatives from all Nottinghamshire schools, academies and academy sponsors and which incorporate key actions that remain on-going.

Information and Advice

3. The Policy Statement for Schools 2010 has been a key document that has underpinned the development of new partnerships with schools around both admissions and school improvement. Whilst the revised policy, September 2012, remains broadly the same, it now reflects the responsibilities for place planning and admissions. The Local Authority retains a statutory duty to ensure both sufficiency of places as well as the coordination of the admissions process and protocols, particularly around the admission of vulnerable pupils.
4. It should be noted that the Policy Statement for Schools 2010 has successfully provided the underpinning principles and rationale to ensure that governing bodies have been able to make the decisions around governance and leadership that are in the best interests of children and parents. Whilst national data for 2012 remains unvalidated, it is to be acknowledged that the outcomes in relation to 5 good GCSEs including English and mathematics has increased by 2.7% to 60.3% against a national drop of 0.4%. At Key Stage 4, Nottinghamshire is now 1.7% above the national average of 58.6% with its national rankings improving from being 79th in 2011 to now being 51st.

5. The amended Policy Statement for Schools now incorporates the responsibilities of the Local Authority to ensure sufficiency of school places, with increased diversity of provision through academies; free schools and studio schools are anticipated in Nottinghamshire in the foreseeable future. The policy also now acknowledges the Local Authority's responsibility to ensure that the Admissions Code 2012 is implemented consistently across the County with particular attention focussed on securing school places for the most vulnerable, including looked after children, children with special educational needs and disabilities and other 'fair access' vulnerable pupils which includes those excluded or at risk of exclusion.

Other Options Considered

6. As the Policy Statement for Schools 2010 has supported accelerated school improvement, particularly within the secondary phase, and reflects both national and local educational policy, it is not appropriate to consider any other options at this time.

Reasons for Recommendations

7. The revised Policy Statement (Appendix 1) and principles and protocols (Appendix 2) should be recommended to the Policy Committee for approval on 12 December 2012.
8. The current Policy Statement for Schools 2010 has supported the creation and maintenance of new relationships with schools that have been, and continue to be, focussed on ensuring the provision of good and outstanding schools across the County.
9. The revised Policy Statement for Schools 2012 now reflects the core responsibilities of the restructured 'Support to Schools Service' for place planning, the admissions process and for school improvement in maintained schools that may cause concern.
10. The revised Policy Statement for Schools 2012 reflects the statutory duties of the Local Authority but underpins these statutory responsibilities within the context of partnership working with all schools attended by Nottinghamshire pupils.
11. The revised policy also acknowledges the principles and protocols agreed with all Nottinghamshire schools, academies and academy sponsors following consultation and is attached as **Appendix 2**.

Statutory and Policy Implications

11. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, 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 the Committee:

- 1) notes and endorses the report
- 2) recommends that the revised Policy Statement for Schools should be approved by the Policy Committee on 12 December 2012.

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Constitutional Comments (LM 20/11/12)

12. The Children and Young People's Committee has delegated authority to note and endorse the report and may recommend that the Revised Policy Statement for Schools be approved by Policy Committee.

Financial Comments (NDR 15/11/12)

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

Background Papers

Policy Statement for Schools 2010

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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