Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee - 14 December 2018

Elective Home Education - Executive Response

Recommendation

a. That the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee considers the Executive response to the final report and recommendations of its Review of Elective Home Education.

Report of Scrutiny and Support Officer

Reason for recommendation

1. The investigation by the Review Group considering Elective Home Education was completed in May. Its final report and recommendations were considered by the Select Committee at its meeting of 19 July 2018. At that meeting Members agreed the report and recommendations and endorsed their submission to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People for his Executive response. The Executive response is now attached (appendix A).

Report

Background

2. The Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) made a referral to both the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee and the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee in respect of its concerns over the potential vulnerability of Elective Home Education (EHE) pupils in Staffordshire. Following this referral, the Chairman and Vice Chairman of both Select Committees gave consideration to whether there was value in considering this issue again after elements of EHE had been considered as part of the Children Missing Out On Education Working Group in 2014. As a result of the significant increase in EHE numbers, changes to many of the reasons for pupils becoming EHE and changes to the EHE Policy they felt a review would be beneficial.

Summary

3. The Review Group held an inquiry session where it met with a range of Staffordshire parents who had elected to home educate their children, as well as head teachers and officers, to help establish the level of EHE in Staffordshire and the reasons for becoming EHE, specifically why the number of those becoming EHE had risen so significantly.

4. The most significant rise in EHE numbers was around poor school attendance and avoiding prosecution/exclusion. The Review Group has concerns over the reasons behind this rise, which is mirrored nationally, and hopes that this report highlights their concerns whilst suggesting ways to mitigate them.

5. Its report and recommendations were considered by the Select Committee at its meeting of 8 June 2018, where Members agreed the report and its recommendations for submission to the Cabinet Member.

6. Data below in table 1 from this academic year 2017/18 demonstrates that the trends previously identified are continuing, however, it is noted that so far this year there are low numbers of parents choosing to EHE due to a risk of permanent exclusion. It is also noted in table 2 that the highest numbers of students going EHE remains in key stages 3 and 4.

TABLE 1 Reason for EHE	New EHE learners 2018/19
Alleged bullying	4
Attendance issues	26
Awaiting information	15
Dissatisfaction with School Provision	14
Parental Medical issue	3
No Satisfactory School Place	3
Philosophical	8
Physical or Medical need of Child	1
Problems SEN Provision	3
Risk Exclusion	2
Social/Emotional/Mental Health	15
Grand Total	**94**

TABLE 2	Count of Stud ID
Early Years	4
Key Stage 1	4
Key Stage 2	24
Key stage 3	32
Key stage 4	30
Grand Total	**94**

Next Steps

7. The Select Committee needs to consider the Cabinet Member's response to the Inquiry report and recommendations and how it will monitor the agreed actions.

Link to the Strategic Plan

8. Ensuring that Staffordshire's children and young people feel safer, happier and more supported in and by their community.

Implications

9. The equalities and legal; resource and value for money; and risk implications are set out in the Review Group report.

Contact Officer

Name: Helen Phillips
Job Title: Scrutiny and Support Officer
Telephone No: 01785 276143
E-mail: helen.phillips@staffordshire.gov.uk

Appendices:

Appendix A: Review of Elective Home Education – Executive Response Action Plan

Background papers:

- Final Report of the Review Group on Elective Home Education
- Minutes of the 19 July 2018 Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee