

Local Members' Interest
N/A

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee - Friday 14 December 2018

Education and Skills Strategy: A Partnership Framework for Staffordshire

Recommendations

- a. That the Select Committee scrutinises the content of the Education and Skills Strategy: a partnership framework for Staffordshire including the role that the county council will be committing to.
- b. That the Select Committee provides comment and responses regarding the vision, principles and approach set out in the partnership framework.

Report of Councillor Philip White, Cabinet Member for Learning and Employability

Summary

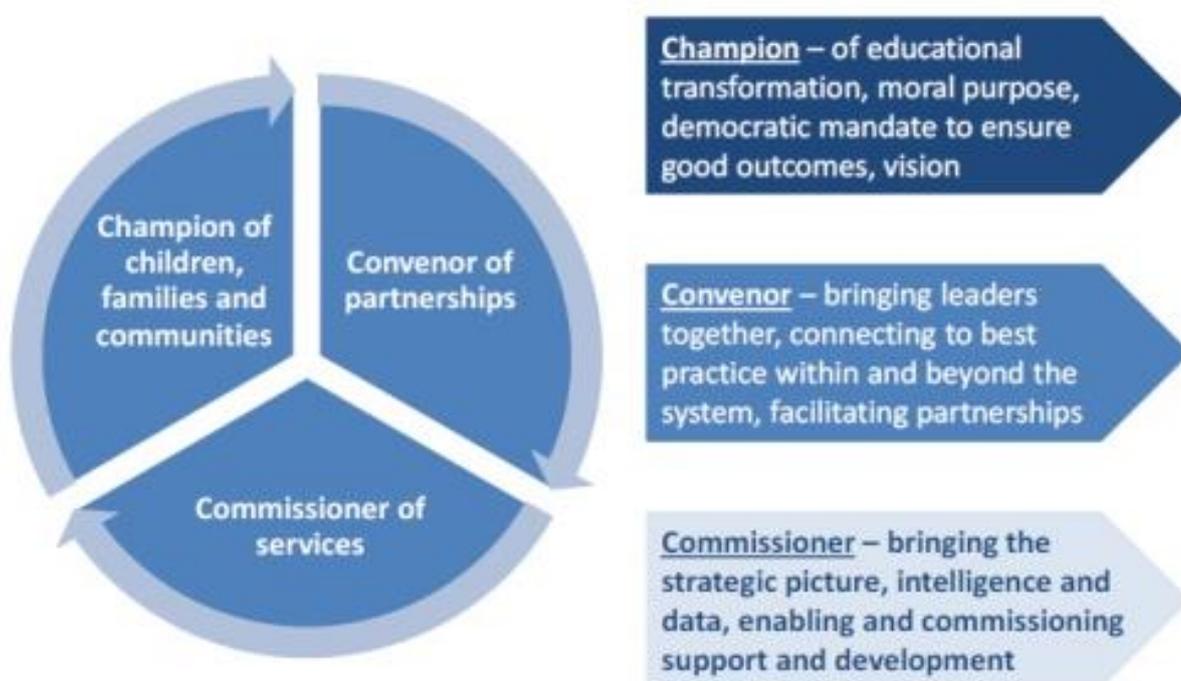
1. OFSTED have judged that 84% of schools in Staffordshire are good or outstanding. Yet overall outcomes for Staffordshire's young people remain below average, particularly at Key Stage 4 and 5.
2. There are very many examples of good practice, however, there is too much variation between schools. Appendix A is technical - and small – but it shows too many bottom quartile performance measures (in red) for schools. When we look at our statistical neighbours, we want outcomes to be near the top not the bottom.
3. Improving Education and Skills “so that more people gain the training and qualifications they need to succeed” is one of the county council's strategic priorities (see Appendix B).
4. However, the county council's statutory role (see Appendix C) has diminished as the autonomy and accountability of individual schools and trusts and the Regional Schools Commissioner have increased.
5. There is now a complex mix of relationships and accountabilities which means that no single institution or organisation can impose or affect significant, system-wide change on its own. The county council champions better outcomes for children and young people but does not have the authority, responsibility, control or resources to determine those outcomes.
6. This draft Education and Skills Strategy is a “partnership framework” developed by a reference group of education and skills providers and partners from across Staffordshire (see Appendix D). It proposes a shared leadership approach, that is evidence based, outcomes-focussed and underpinned by peer support and challenge.
7. It is a strategy for Staffordshire, not a county council strategy, and requires the support of the county council and from across the education and skills sector.

8. The consultation runs until 21 December 2018, after which the reference group will review the responses and we anticipate that the final strategy would launch by April 2019.

Report

Background

9. The county council has determined its Strategic Plan for the next four years which has identified education and skills as one of its five strategic priorities.
10. Within Staffordshire, there is a diverse range of education and skills providers, with over 1,000 early years providers, 400 schools, 60 colleges and learning providers and two universities.
11. The role of local authorities is reducing as the education landscape continues to change. In Staffordshire, for example, we expect 50% of Staffordshire's 400 schools will be academies by January 2019 and accountable direct to the West Midlands Regional Schools Commissioner.
12. The role of local authorities in education has been evolving to focus on three key areas of responsibility: as a convenor of partnerships; as a champion of children, families and communities; and as a maker and shaper of effective commissioning as set out below:



13. So, as the roles and responsibilities of the county council and education providers and partners change, we need to create a different way of engaging and working with system leaders.
14. Our aspiration is to be near the top of the table of our statistical neighbours not the bottom. We want a partnership that champions high aspiration and ambition for every learner, collective accountability for achieving better outcomes, peer challenge and peer support, greater visibility of institutional performance and more parental engagement.
15. Clearly setting out how we will all work together to champion the interests of all children and young people will enable us to keep a clear focus on providing the very best outcomes for Staffordshire's children and young people in an outcomes-focused and highly inclusive environment.

Purpose

16. This draft strategy proposes a partnership framework to support the delivery of the county council's strategic priority to improve education and skills outcomes. It is not a county council strategy: it is a strategy for all providers and partners, including the county council.
17. The Select Committee are invited to provide comment and feedback in response to consultation to further shape our way forward. The key questions the select committee should consider are:
 - a. Do you agree with the vision?
 - b. Do you agree with our principles?
 - c. Do you agree with the function of the strategic group?
 - d. Do you agree with the membership of the strategic group?
 - e. Do you agree with the outcome measures?

Education and Skills Strategy: a partnership framework for Staffordshire

18. In April 2018 the county council convened a reference group of headteacher, governor, trust and early years representatives to develop an Education and Skills Strategy for Staffordshire
19. The reference group worked together to develop a strategy that proposes a partnership framework to:
 - a. establish a Staffordshire-wide education culture based on a clear moral purpose where the conditions are such that providers are prepared to challenge and support each other
 - b. take decisions that are in the collective interest of children and young people in the wider community, as well as the interests of students, pupils and parents at their own institution.
20. We agreed a draft vision:

Vision: Every Staffordshire child deserves the best possible education and to leave school or college equipped with the learning, skills, aspirations and opportunities they

need to continue lifelong learning and forge their successful career, with fulfilled healthy lives, as responsible adults.

21. A set of three principles to achieve our vision was proposed:

Principle 1: A sustainable education and skills landscape with leadership that is built on morals, ethics and trust, is underpinned by transparency and is accountable for the outcomes for all Staffordshire learners.

Principle 2: All children get the best start in life from birth, helping children build strong foundations so they can continue to grow, learn and succeed in education.

Principle 3: Every child and young person has an equal opportunity to achieve and is equipped with the values, skills and knowledge necessary to progress into adulthood with a fulfilled life, to build their rewarding career and to continue their learning journey.

22. This framework will steer our combined efforts and resources. Through working together, we know that we can make a real difference to the life chances of children and young people and to Staffordshire's future economy, providing we collectively aspire to help all children and young people to succeed in their education and ensure that no one is left behind.

Link to Strategic Plan – Staffordshire County Council Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022

Appendices

Appendix A – Current education and skills context in Staffordshire: performance data

Appendix B – Staffordshire County Council Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022

Appendix C – SCC's statutory role in education and skills

Appendix D – Education and Skills Strategy: A partnership framework for Staffordshire

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