

Report of Chief Executive  
to  
People Scrutiny Committee

11<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Report prepared by:  
Fiona Abbott

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**In depth scrutiny report –  
'Alternative provision – off site education provision for children and young people'  
A Part 1 Agenda Item**

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## 1. Purpose of Report

To seek formal approval to the draft report of the scrutiny project – 'Alternative provision – off site education provision for children and young people'.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the report and the recommendations from the in depth scrutiny project, attached at **Appendix 1** be agreed.
- 2.2 That the Chairman be authorised to agree any final amendments to the draft report.
- 2.3 That in accordance with Scrutiny Procedure Rule 10 (Part 4 (e) of the Constitution), to agree that the Chairman of the Project Team present the final report to a future Cabinet meeting.

## 3. Background

- 3.1 The People Scrutiny Committee selected its topic at the meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2016 (Minute 132 refers). The project plan was agreed by the Scrutiny Committee on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2016 (Minute 356 refers).
- 3.2 The specific focus of the review was to (a) investigate the current alternative provision for permanently excluded pupils (or at risk of exclusion); (b) whether it meets the needs / discharges responsibility effectively, happens in a coordinated way and aims for securing good outcomes for every child; (c) to determine the future shape of alternative provision of the local authority to provide and make recommendations to further improve outcomes, attendance and accountability for those in alternative provision.
- 3.2 The Member Project Team, which was Chaired by Councillor James Moyies, met on 7 occasions and considered a range of evidence to inform their approach, including witness sessions and site visits. The Project Team comprised Councillors Helen Boyd, Steve Buckley, Mo Butler, Chris Walker, Margaret Borton, Cheryl Nevin and Caroline Endersby. Officer support was provided by Brin Martin, Catherine Braun and Fiona Abbott.

## 4 Recommendations

- 4.1 The scrutiny report is attached at **Appendix 1**. Draft versions of the report have been shared with the project team and will be shared with the witnesses.
- 4.2 It should be noted that approval of any recommendations with budget implications will require consideration as part of future years' budget processes prior to implementation.
- 4.3 Scrutiny is recommended to endorse the following conclusions from the review, for approval by Cabinet:

### Inclusion

1. That in the changing school landscape around academisation etc. the Deputy Chief Executive (People) write to the Regional Schools Commissioner, Mr Tim Coulson around the need for all schools to be inclusive and intervene early to address any underlying causes of disruptive behaviour, involving multi-agency assessment and support for those that demonstrate persistent disruptive behaviours thus limiting use of Alternative Provision (with the exception of for medical reasons or other exceptional circumstances).
2. That the Council contact Ofsted for there to be some appropriate recognition around how schools are supporting children who are at risk of exclusion.
3. All schools should encourage early parental engagement to undertake preventative work to provide support for pupils at risk of referral to Alternative Provision and / or exclusion. The project team is keen that early interventions, including early help assessments, assessments for special educational needs including autism spectrum functions, assessments around the child's health and where appropriate adult service interventions, ensuring support focuses on the child and family. Where relevant these interventions should begin as early as possible within primary schools and early years providers and professionals. (The support needs to focus on the child and family).<sup>1</sup>
4. Urge schools to work together to spread knowledge. Some schools are doing excellent work and need opportunities for shared learning to increase standards in mainstream / Alternative Provision settings across the board.
5. Southend has the expectations that Alternative Provision should only be the 'last resort' and need to ensure that where all preventative measures have been exhausted and the young person remains at risk of permanent exclusion, that schools look to meet their needs through registered Alternative Provision rather than permanently exclude.
6. Linking to the Recommendations above, there is a key role for the newly created Education Board to be an important, key driver for improvements.

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<sup>1</sup> The role of the school nursing service is also something that should be explored further.

## Outcomes

7. Recognition that every learner should make good progress, regardless of the educational setting (link to Recommendation 1 above).
8. That the Deputy Chief Executive (People) lobby the LGA to raise with the DfE for a change in policy and clarification about the registration of Alternative Providers.
9. Consideration be given to explore the best way to look at creating an 'index of regulated Alternative Provision'.
10. To continue to review the emotional and mental health commissioning and consider whether it meets the increasing need of pupil mental health and emotional wellbeing needs, linking to the Essex HOSC review undertaken in 2016/17 (see [Essex HOSC Task & Finish Group Report](#)).
11. Have high aspirations for all young people in schools and need balanced, broad and appropriate curriculum (vocational qualifications at KS4 and do not want to increase demand for Alternative Provision) with the clear expectation for high attendance and for full time education.

## Post 16

12. Consideration be given to improved pathways for the provision of post 16 education, training and employment, for those pupils who have accessed Alternative Provision and have not been able to return to mainstream schools (& development of appropriate KPI's).

## **5. Other Options**

Not applicable.

## **6. Corporate Implications**

- 6.1 Contribution to Council's Vision and Critical Priorities – Becoming an excellent and high performing organisation; prosperous - ensure residents have access to high quality education to enable them to be lifelong learners and have fulfilling employment.
- 6.2 Financial Implications – there are financial implications to some recommendations but as yet they are unquantifiable. However, any recommendations progressing with associated financial implications will need to go through the annual budgetary process before implementation, as currently no revenue or capital budgets exist for the proposals.
- 6.3 Legal Implications – none.
- 6.4 People Implications – none.
- 6.5 Property Implications – none.
- 6.6 Consultation – as described in report.

6.7 Equalities Impact Assessment – none.

6.8 Risk Assssment – none.

**7. Background Papers –**

- Project team meeting notes – meetings held on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016, 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2016, 30<sup>th</sup> January 2017, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017.
- Notes from witness sessions.
- Updates to Scrutiny Cttee – 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016 and 24<sup>th</sup> January 2017
- Other evidence as described in the report.

**8. Appendix**

**Appendix 1 – in depth scrutiny project - draft report**