

Subject:	Educational Partnerships in Brighton & Hove: Looking Ahead v8		
Date of Meeting:	Children and Young People's Committee 6 June 2016		
Report of:	Executive Director Families, Children and Learning		
Contact Officer:	Hilary Ferries		
	Name:	(Head of Standards and Achievement)	Tel: 293738
	Email:	Hilary.ferries@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE/ NOT FOR PUBLICATION**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 This report outlines the strong partnership working that exists in the city schools, refers to some of the government's recent proposals for education and the implications for schools and requests authority to commence engagement with interested stakeholders to develop a partnership model that will secure the best opportunities for the education of children and young people in the city.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee authorises the Executive Director Families, Children and Learning to commence engagement with stakeholders in Brighton & Hove regarding the proposal to establish a more formal partnership between schools and the Local Authority.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**3.1 The National Context**

There have been several national consultations and publications on education policy in the last six months. These include:

- The proposed Schools National Funding Formula,
- The White Paper, 'Educational Excellence Everywhere'
- The Education and Adoption Bill – in particular the paper, 'Schools causing concern: Intervening in failing, underperforming and coasting schools, Guidance for local authorities and Regional Schools Commissioners' (RSC).

- 3.1.1 Within these papers and proposals is the view that the role of the Local Authority (LA) in relation to education and school improvement will change, that all schools will be encouraged to become academies, either as standalone or through the formation of Multi Academy Trusts (for those schools judged to be good and outstanding) or as

sponsored academies (for those schools deemed underperforming) and the benefits that academies bring will lead to higher standards and achievement for pupils.

3.1.2 It is important to note that at the time of writing, these are proposals and this is a rapidly moving landscape.

3.2 The Local Context

3.2.1 Outcomes for Brighton & Hove schools are positive. Attainment at all key stages is in the top quartile nationally and progress is improving and as a result we are currently judged to be a 'light touch' Local Authority by Ofsted. 83% of schools are currently judged to be good or outstanding and this is a result of the successful LA support and challenge and effective school partnership working. There is still much to do to ensure that every child in the city makes good progress and can attend a school judged to be at least good, but this is improving rapidly.

3.2.2 The Local Authority currently has statutory duties to:

- Promote high standards
- Know schools well
- Intervene in schools causing concern.

3.2.3 The Education and Inclusion Team work closely with schools to fulfil these duties, outlined in the School Improvement Strategy. There is a rigorous categorisation / prioritisation process that ensures the LA knows schools well and can intervene at an early stage when performance is falling. Intervention is carried out through School Partnership Advisers and members of the Education and Skills Team and through school to school support.

3.3 Current Partnerships in Brighton and Hove

3.3.1 The LA goes beyond its statutory duties to improve outcomes for pupils through promoting and developing partnership working and is keen to continue this role. In line with national policy from the 2010 White Paper and the vision for the city, the LA is working with school leaders to develop a school led self-improving system, where partnership working and school to school support ensures that all schools are successful and schools work together to build capacity. Strategically this is led by the Learning, Skills & Employment Partnership Board. The board resulted from the merger of the Learning Partnership and the City Economic Board. This reflects the move to join thinking on all phases of education & training with the skills and economic needs of the city.

3.3.2 The Learning Skills and Employment Partnership has led on the development of a citywide vision, '**Brighton and Hove: Achieving Excellence Together**'.

The partnership has agreed aims for the city;

- Encourage all children, young people and adults to have ambition: be confident, flexible, resourceful and resilient
- Support all children, young people and adults to overcome any barriers to success in learning
- Celebrate diversity and promote equality

- Promote a dynamic, exciting, creative and relevant curriculum in successful settings
- Enable children, young people and adults to have the skills, knowledge and understanding in order to be able to make choices about their futures
- Prepare children, young people and adults to be economically active in the world of work

3.3.3 There are currently seven school led partnerships or clusters of schools in the city. Some of these originated and have developed from the Extended Schools clusters, others have developed through transition or interest. These partnerships are:

- Deans Partnership
- City Partnership for Education
- Partnership for Leading and Learning
- Portslade Partnership
- Unity Partnership (formerly known as the Moulsecoomb Cluster)
- Preston and Patcham Partnership
- Hove Partnership

3.3.4 Full membership details are in appendix four.

3.3.5 There are also phase specific partnerships;

- Secondary Schools Partnership
- Special Schools Partnership
- Infant Schools Partnership
- Junior Schools Partnership
- The Accord of sixth form college principals
- Faith schools work in Deanery Partnerships

3.3.6 There are also networks of groups which collaborate on key issues.

- 16-19 Curriculum & Quality Group
- 11-16 Curriculum Deputies,
- IAG (information advice and guidance) and the
- Secondary Strategic Data Group.
- Joint meetings are planned on Y11 destinations for the 11-16 and 16-19 groups
- Curriculum reform and assessment for the 11-16
- Strategic data leads group.
- The Secondary Schools Partnership headteachers are members of 'Challenge Partners', a national organisation that organises peer review and development

3.3.7 These school-led partnerships have been developing and growing. They are in different stages of development and several subgroups have developed within some of the partnerships such as;

- Early years groups,
- Special Educational Needs groups,
- Groups for subject leaders,
- Teacher development / lesson study

- Governing bodies working together

3.3.8 The majority of the partnerships have organised conferences, inset days and away days for staff to focus on priorities and develop practice. Another developing practice is that head teachers work together in groups of three (triads) to visit each other's schools to challenge and review practice. As well as supporting schools that are in challenging circumstances, this also promotes professional debate and enables all school leaders to reflect on their practice and improve outcomes for pupils. Some of the partnerships have developed strong governance groups that share practice such as head teacher reports, data and pupil premium spending. These are all designed to focus on raising standards and raising quality

3.3.9 Through this commitment to partnership working, a strong track record is developing for school to school support for schools in challenging circumstances. These support arrangements have been both school initiated and LA commissioned. Examples of this include;

- Hangleton Infants (now Primary) supported Benfield from special measures to a judgement of good,
- Hove Park worked with West Blatchington to take the school from satisfactory to good
- Middle Street Primary and the City Partnership supported St Mark's CE Primary to good from Requires Improvement
- Coldean is supporting Coombe Road on their journey from Requires Improvement to Good.
- In some cases the head teacher of one school has become executive head and worked across both schools, sometimes there is a sharing of teachers or a partnership of governors.

3.4 Governance

3.4.1 The Learning, Skills & Employment Partnership Board scrutinises performance data and identifies strategic priorities for education in the city. Each partnership identified is represented on this group.

3.4.2 The chairs of each partnership / cluster and representatives from the phase groups meet half termly with the Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion and the Head of Standards and Achievement as the Citywide School Improvement Partnership Board. This group exists to improve educational outcomes for the city and members share best practice and call each other to account. One of the aims of the group is to develop as consistency of effective partnership practice across the city without losing the uniqueness of each partnership. This work is ongoing and members of the group have stated the growing challenge to each other. This group has met to discuss potential possibilities for the city for the way ahead for partnerships to improve consistency.

3.4.3 Each partnership has been assigned a School Partnership Adviser who has the remit to work with the partnership to help them develop. This group has drawn on research about effective partnership working to create an audit tool for partnerships which will support and challenge partnerships to reflect on next steps in their development. The continuation of this work is a priority and will continue, as all models in the current

landscape suggest that schools', working in partnership, is the best way forward to secure good outcomes for all pupils.

4. Possible Futures

- 4.1 The documents and policy direction outlined in the documents in 3.1 above make it clear that these partnerships are encouraged to develop in a more formal structure that will enable more staff development, opportunities and challenge between schools. To continue with the current informal structure puts schools at risk of not being able to access national support available, to be left behind in the nationally developing school led system and, should a school be judged as underperforming, to be directed to join an academy trust.
- 4.2 With the rapidly changing landscape the message to schools has been, not to panic, to focus on the achievement of young people and to work with the Council as they develop proposals looking forward. The lead member for education and the Executive Director of Families, Children and Learning have written to head teachers and Chairs of Governors to give them this message and to say that the council remains committed to having a voice in education on behalf of residents as their democratically elected representatives.
- 4.3 There have been meetings with school leaders, including governors, about the national proposals and there is a view from a large number of headteachers that they would like to explore options for maintaining the family of schools with a focus on teaching and learning and achievement of all pupils. We are in contact with other Councils across the country to make sure we are tracking the direction of travel on a national scale and considering a wide range of options to find the best solution for Brighton & Hove.
- 4.4 As stated earlier, these are rapidly changing times. It was announced on May 6th that all schools will not be forced to become academies, but that this is still the aspiration of the government. Schools that are judged to be underperforming will still be directed down this route and it is expected that over time nationally, more successful schools will opt to become academies.
- 4.5 The role of Local Authorities and Councils in school improvement has yet to be clarified. The Council is committed to maintaining a voice and role in education of children and young people in the city. Feedback from school leaders suggests a lack of appetite for academisation, but a desire for schools to maintain the vision and aims for the city. There is a strong view that we can create our own future, a model that works for the city.

5. Proposed engagement period

- 5.1 This paper therefore requests that there be a period of engagement for a partnership model for the future. We propose to engage with a range of stakeholders: school and college leaders, governors, parents and wider educational partnerships on a proposal to develop a more formal partnership structure that builds on the current partnership and is underpinned by our agreed vision and values, keeping the city

family of schools and education providers together with a focus on continual improvement.

5.2 Values and Principles

Successful partnerships have clearly stated values and are based on a vision and values and principles. The following values and principles that are at the heart of these proposals were constructed by school and college leaders.

- Ensure that the diverse nature of the city is reflected
- Ambitious and aspirational for all pupils to achieve well
- Inclusive: No child left behind
- Collegiate: No school isolated and working for the good of all schools
- Flexible: A structure / arrangement that works for all
- Outward facing
- Challenge and rigour are features
- Shared and open culture based on trust, honesty, transparency
- Not for profit – everything back into the system
- Schools to retain their own identity
- Innovative
- Democratic

5.3 The model that the city chooses needs to be built upon these values and principles. This paper proposes engagement to explore a model that fits with the above, can accommodate existing schools and academies and their sponsors and can embrace the development of existing and possible new partnership arrangements.

5.4 Early research suggests that there could be an overarching structure / organisation that has representation from schools, the LA and other educational partners. Schools could be members as individuals, groups or as existing academies /free schools. It would be flexible to allow schools of all types and status to join and to operate, but under the overarching structure. It would be possible for the body to trade services within the organisation and also externally. To do this it may need to have a trading arm. This would depend on the model that arises out of the engagement phase.

5.5 We will explore the most appropriate governance arrangements that could include a board like arrangement with representation from other bodies. How this will look in terms of a legal entity could be different. Options include a company (limited by shares or by guarantee), a Charitable Interest Organisation, a Trust Corporation or an informal Unincorporated Association. These are outlined further in appendix 1. The engagement will also consider how best to future proof its terms of reference and remit.

6 Proposed Advantages of new a legal entity / more formal partnership

6.1 **Strengthening the ‘family of schools’:** The legal entity would not only be a means for deepening existing commitment to collaboration for improvement, but would also cement existing ties and ways of working as recognised through legal arrangements.

- 6.2 **Raising standards further in the city:** We want to develop a model that will lead to better and improved outcomes for pupils. By working together schools will be able to achieve more.
- 6.3 **Long-term stability of leadership and governance of schools:** The legal entity would make the governance arrangements less dependent on the good will and commitment of individuals through a set of legally recognised roles and responsibilities that can be replicated as and when individuals leave.
- 6.4 **Strategic leadership by head teachers and governors:** Creation of a legal entity would mark a further step towards system-leadership where headteachers and governors alongside the Council in its civic governance role, take collective leadership and responsibility for a whole community of pupils as members of one legal entity.
- 6.5 **A vehicle to provide ongoing civic leadership including schools, partners and the Council:** In the face of proposed legislation that may radically change local government responsibilities for education, the legal entity could help to redefine the relationship between the Council and schools and provide a means to enable continued strong civic governance from the Council and accountability for outcomes. Membership of the legal entity would enable the Council to work with other educational partners as members to support and improve outcomes for children and families in the city. This would be enhanced at least in the early years of the company, where the Council would have specific responsibilities as a result of the company's status as a schools company.
- 6.6 **Ability to enter into contracts and to employ staff:** In future, the entity could enter into contracts such as commissions from the Council and could also employ its own staff directly.

7. Engagement timeline

- 7.1 We are proposing to engage with Headteachers, governors and wider education partnerships on a proposal to develop a more formal partnership structure that builds on current partnerships and is underpinned by our agreed visions and values, keeping the city family of schools and education providers working together to continually improve.
- 7.2 Following the engagement period we will develop proposed models and bring a paper to Committee for decision in autumn 2016. The timeline is set out in the table below;

Dates	Actions	Major Tasks to be completed
26 th April	Presentation to all school heads to start initial communication	
6 th May 216	Draft paper deadline for Committee	Committee paper written
24 th May 2016	Deadline for Releasing Reports for Committee	Committee paper completed
CYPS Committee 6 th June 2016	Paper presented to committee to update with our intention to change delivery model of council services to schools	Paper will include an initial identification of options and ask for approval to begin an engagement phase
June to 6 th October 2016 (8-10 weeks of term time)	Engagement Phase	Engagement events arranged and attended
7 th October to 20 th October	Detailed scrutiny of responses from engagement period and committee paper preparation	
21 st October 2016	Deadline for paper to CYPS	Committee paper written including feedback from engagement phase
CYPS 21 st November 2016	Report to CYPS Committee to update with more detailed proposals on new delivery models	

8. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 8.1 The recommendation at this stage of the proposals is for an opportunity to consult. In the consultation questions we will be including a number of options to consider. It is at the next stage of proposals that we will consider the options for delivery and that will be presented to committee at the timeline detailed above

9. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 9.1 We are aware of strong parental views in these areas and propose to engage with parents / carers over the summer and autumn. In our approach we will be

encouraging responses from all community groups which will include Parents, residents, Head teachers etc

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 Whilst a strong informal partnership of schools in Brighton and Hove exists, to become more effective and to be forward looking, Children Young People and Skills committee should allow the local authority to explore a more formal partnership arrangement

11. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

Given the changing landscape in relationship with schools and the local authority, the relationship will need to change. Any costs for schools working together will be met from within their existing school resources. Schools will also be able to bid for school to school support funding through Teaching School Alliances and National Leaders of Education.

Any costs associated with consultation with schools will be met from within local authority existing resources. Following on from the consultation it will be for the committee to decide the level of engagement in the future and this will therefore decide how the funding of school improvement will need to change.

Finance Officer Consulted: Andy Moore

Date: 24 May 16

Legal Implications:

- 11.1 If a formal structure for the partnership model is approved, following the engagement outlined in this report, there will be legal implications in relation to identifying and implementing the most appropriate structure to meet the objectives of the partnership. This will need to be reviewed once proposals are brought forward following the engagement.

Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 23 May 2016

Equalities Implications:

- 11.2 School and College leaders support the principle that all children and young people should be included and no child is left behind.

Sustainability Implications:

- 11.3 With the national changes to education and the changing role of school improvement, it is important to ensure that schools are able to improve developing capacity from within.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendix 1 – Power point Presentation on New Delivery Models including examples from other Local Authorities

Appendix 2 – Current partnerships