

EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 6 FEBRUARY 2019

EVOLVING RELATIONSHIP WITH SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Report by Deputy Director Education

RECOMMENDATION

The Education Scrutiny is RECOMMENDED to note the report for discussion.

Executive Summary

1. Education has undergone significant change both nationally and locally in recent times and this has meant that the Council's relationship with schools and colleges has had to evolve from being predominantly the sole provider for schools and colleges to one where it works in collaboration with a range of partners.
2. To meet these changing needs and structures Oxfordshire County Council is realigning its ways of working with schools and colleges to reflect this complex educational landscape, whilst remaining true to its moral purpose of driving school improvement to ensure that children and young people and their families all have access to excellent schools.
3. The County Council, like schools, has undergone budget cuts which has meant that it has had to evolve its relationships with schools to be a:
 - (a) champion for all children and young people and their families by utilising its democratic mandate to ensure good outcomes for all, particularly those from vulnerable groups, and lead on educational transformation,
 - (b) convener within the Oxfordshire education system to bring leaders together, connecting best practice and facilitate partnerships,
 - (c) commissioner for all schools, to bring the strategic picture to reality, utilise its unique position in relation to local knowledge, intelligence and countywide data and facilitate school improvement support and development.
4. However, whilst the ways of working with schools and resulting budget cuts has significantly changed the statutory duties in relation to the Local Authority have remained. These centre around:
 - (a) Ensuring a sufficient supply of school places, including SEND.
 - (b) Challenging underperformance in schools and ensuring high standards.
 - (c) Supporting vulnerable children.

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5. Local strategic feedback has resulted in shifting the vision of the Council's Education service to supporting vulnerable families, as it is uniquely placed to liaise and collaborate with all partners to support schools and colleges to meet the challenges and demands they face in providing high quality education for all.
6. Schools are looking to the Council to facilitate and lead on vision that will bring all schools and colleges into a 'One Oxfordshire' educational landscape.
7. This is an exciting time for education and with a new structure and new staff, we are well placed to build on the existing relationships with schools to enhance the quality of education in Oxfordshire.

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