

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provided within two months from the date on which it is requested¹ and, if the report or recommendations in questions were published, the response also must be so.

This template provides a structure which respondents are encouraged to use. However, respondents are welcome to depart from the suggested structure provided the same information is included in a response. The usual way to publish a response is to include it in the agenda of a meeting of the body to which the report or recommendations were addressed.

Issue: **The Virtual School**

Lead Cabinet Member(s): **Cllr Sean Gaul, Cabinet member for Children and Young People**

Date response requested:² **17 June 2025**

Response to report:

As Acting Head of the Virtual School and author of the presented report, I welcome the Committee's engagement and thoughtful recommendations. Thank you for the opportunity to respond. I look forward to continuing our shared commitment to improving outcomes for children in our care.

My response to the two recommendations is outlined below:

¹ Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

² Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

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Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
1. That the Council should continue to highlight the work of the virtual school with governing boards and social workers to ensure they are well-informed and engaged in supporting the education of children in care.	Accepted	I fully support this recommendation. The Virtual School will continue to work closely with governance leads and social care colleagues to ensure that governors and social workers are well-informed about their responsibilities as corporate parents. We will strengthen our training offer and communication channels to promote the role of the Virtual School and the importance of educational outcomes for children in our care.
2. That the Council, in subsequent annual reports of the Virtual School, should report in more detail on exclusions including informal internal processes.	Partially accepted	I acknowledge the Committee's concern and agree that greater transparency is essential. While data on unlawful exclusions is not collected through statutory data returns, the Virtual School will work with schools and performance data colleagues to improve the granularity of reporting on exclusions, where possible. We are committed to working collaboratively with colleagues across the school system to challenge unlawful practices, promote best practice and ensure that every child - wherever they reside - feels a sense of belonging and is supported to thrive in school.