

CABINET	Paper No. 13(2)
Meeting date: 8th December 2009	
From: Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Corporate Director – Children's Services	

A STRATEGY FOR LEARNING IN CUMBRIA

PART A - RECOMMENDATION OF CABINET MEMBER

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 *This report is to update Members on the development of an overarching Strategy for Learning, outlining the strategic proposals and vision for Cumbria to transform learning in Cumbria across all phases of schools and centres for learning. The Strategy identifies the core principles agreed by stakeholders in communities and possible models for the delivery of learning which are flexible and adaptable, able to meet the needs of children and young people appropriate to the diverse geographical contexts within Cumbria.*

2.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

2.1 *It is intended that the Strategy for Learning will promote centres of learning that are based at the hearts of communities through a hub and spoke arrangement. They will link up to wider and extended services from within and beyond the directorate, as well as through partner agency provision, giving access to opportunity and support and raising the attainment and aspirations of entire communities.*

2.2 *Through the range of provision it makes, the Children's Services Directorate seeks to support inclusion, promote equality of opportunity and address inequalities wherever they exist.*

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 *That Cabinet support and endorse the strategy in order to progress the transformation of learning in Cumbria's schools.*

Cllr Duncan Fairbairn – Portfolio Holder for Children's Services

PART B – ADVICE OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR – CHILDREN’S SERVICES

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Strategy, which is attached as an appendix, has been developed to support and underpin a comprehensive review of provision for learning in the county. In an earlier form it informed the preparation of the Primary Capital bid that was submitted to the DCSF. More recently it has been used as the basis of the Strategic Education Plan which accompanied the revised Expression of Interest for entry into the BSF initiative.
- 4.2 The school estate in Cumbria will be subject to review as the strategy is delivered with a view to enhancing existing provision as funding becomes available to improve facilities and ICT infrastructure. This will be planned through full consultation with stakeholders in geographical areas.
- 4.3 The Strategy for Learning attempts to provide a framework of principles, models and options that address how transformational learning can be delivered across Cumbria to meet community needs. The underpinning principles are key to helping inform decision making in the future. The principles support and are in line with the latest education white paper set to become legislation and focussed on providing 21st century learning opportunities for children, young people and families through the strategic development of provision at the heart of communities.
- 4.4 Schools will play a key role within communities acting as a focal point in communities, not only to provide learning but offering a wide range of services appropriate to the needs of the local population.
- 4.5 Co-location of wider children’s and other services with schools, through an integrated and co-ordinated approach, can be adopted wherever possible
- 4.6 Demographic changes need to be managed and carefully planned, as far ahead as possible, with consideration given to parental choice which can also have an impact. Cumbria needs to ensure that all schools are excellent and provide world class learning within communities, eliminating the need for young people to travel to learn.
- 4.7 Collaborations, Partnerships, Federations and Trusts (formal and informal, soft and hard) are encouraged to provide maximum benefit for young people, with alternative leadership models also being promoted. These innovative working arrangements between schools can enhance provision in respect of curriculum offer, the sharing of resources and expertise giving mutual benefit and efficiencies to all parties.
- 4.8 Education transformation delivered through advanced technologies fit for a 21st Century society is vital to provide young people with the skills required to flourish in the workforce of the future. Personalised learning, tailored to the individual needs, gifts and talents in centres of learning excellence is an entitlement for Cumbria’s future generations.

4.9 The rurality and isolation of some communities within Cumbria has sometimes disadvantaged children and young people. Through a flexible approach to adoption of the models this can be addressed. It is recognised that a “one size fits all” solution is not appropriate for our diverse county.

4.10 **THE PRINCIPLES**

The strategy has eight key principles at its heart:

- ‘Giving Priority to Learners’ promoting personalisation, further developing strategic resourced provision and access to the highest quality ‘state of the art’ technologies
- Organising schools in the context of wider services meeting the individual needs of learners
- Maintaining learning at the heart of communities including remote areas, enabling schools to work together, enriching provision within extended clusters
- Building on the existing diverse provision, in line with parental preferences, working with communities and other partners to plan and deliver school organisation
- Developing buildings, facilities and environments that are ‘fit for purpose’, flexible, adaptable, sustainable and suitable for the 21st century
- Delivering efficiency and viability, promoting community cohesion through new ways of working including federations and trusts
- Increasing connectivity and access to effective ICT, promoting anytime anyplace learning
- Enhancing the strong partnerships between the Local Authority, universities, colleges and schools supporting highly skilled school leaders and the wider workforce through excellent quality training and professional development opportunities.

4.11 **POSSIBLE MODELS OF LEARNING**

The Strategy for Learning outlines four possible models for learning in the Cumbria which can be adapted to meet the needs of the diverse communities and geography of the county. These models are based upon hub and spoke arrangements for the delivery, not only of learning but of wider services in localities enabling easier access to a range of provisions, including both council and wider partner agencies working around a hub or ‘local delivery platform,’ with spoke provisions also augmenting the wider offer according to local need.

The strategy also supports closer partnerships between schools in consortia and collaboratives, sharing facilities, resources, leadership and responsibilities, and will maximise opportunities for young people enabling greater access to the highest quality, world-class education and provision of easily accessible wider services appropriate to the needs of the diverse communities and geographical contexts within Cumbria.

4.12 **ACHIEVING THE VISION**

Clearly the opportunities that exist for significant inward capital investment through such programmes as Building Schools for the Future and the Primary Capital Programme will enable the vision to be realised. Careful and considered planning alongside genuine, meaningful engagement to ascertain need can be carried out to address the issues based on the aforementioned principles within the parameters of the various suggested models. These encompass a range of solutions, suited to both large and small urban areas, as well as rural and semi-rural communities.

The Strategy for Learning provides a framework for the development of learning provisions at the hearts of communities which can be accessed by all generations and allows for the development of the latest technologies to support teaching and learning as well as parental / community engagement in the Learning process.

Ongoing engagement and consultation with students, parents, schools and colleges is essential to ensure that provision is responsive to the needs of learners and wider communities delivering even better standards ensuring the best for every child, young person and their families making a real difference and raising individual and community aspirations.

The 'Strategy for Learning' is an iterative document that will naturally evolve as demands change, and new requirements/legislation necessitate different approaches to the delivery of learning are adopted over time. Any significant changes will be consulted upon through engagement in communities at all levels including the full range of stakeholders.

5.0 OPTIONS

- 5.1 Members can decide either to endorse or not to endorse the Strategy for Learning.

6.0 RESOURCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct or measurable financial implications arising from the adoption of the strategy. Its implementation would be supported by and in part be reliant on, investment through initiatives such as BSF. These will inevitably have organisational and financial implications for the Council

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no legal implications arising from the Strategy for Learning although legal implications will arise as the strategy is implemented.

8.0 CONCLUSION

The development and delivery of the Strategy for Learning will improve the life chances and well-being of children and young people in Cumbria. This will be supported by significant investment from government funding through initiatives such as the Academies Programme, Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and the Primary Capital Programme.

Moira Swann – Director of Children’s Services

APPENDICES

Strategy for Learning .

Electoral Division(s): All

** Please remove whichever option is not applicable*

Executive Decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No*	
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No*	
If a Key Decision, is the proposal published in the current Forward Plan?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A*
Is the decision exempt from call-in on grounds of urgency?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes*	<input type="checkbox"/> No*	
If exempt from call-in, has the agreement of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee been sought or obtained?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No*	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A*
Has this matter been considered by Overview and Scrutiny? If so, give details below.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No*	
Has an environmental or sustainability impact assessment been undertaken?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes*	<input type="checkbox"/> No*	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A*
Has an equality impact assessment been undertaken?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes*	<input type="checkbox"/> No*	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A*

N.B. *If an executive decision is made, then a decision cannot be implemented until the expiry of the eighth working day after the date of the meeting – unless the decision is urgent and exempt from call-in and the Head of Member Services and Scrutiny has obtained the necessary approvals.*

PREVIOUS RELEVANT COUNCIL OR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS *[including Local Committees]*

“No previous relevant decisions”.

CONSIDERATION BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Considered by Overview and Scrutiny on 16th September 2009. Task & Finish Group of Children & Young People's Advisory Panel have also debated the Strategy for Learning document on 2nd November 2009, and made a series of minor recommendations relating to terminology and technical language, being explained within the text. Other recommendations relate to more direct reference to Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Post 16 Learning.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

21st Century Schools: A World Class Education for Every Child. (DCSF – 2008)

RESPONSIBLE CABINET MEMBER

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REPORT AUTHOR

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