

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 10 April 2017

ITEM 5 (b)
Title: Elective Home Education. An Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee Sub Group Report

Portfolio(s): Children, Young People and Learning

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr I Grayson

Report from: Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to present the recommendations of the Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee's study, on behalf of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee, into Elective Home Education (EHE).

The recommendations are set out in paragraph 1.5.3 below.

In accordance with section 9F of Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000, Cabinet is required to provide a response to the recommendations of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee within two months. In providing this response Cabinet is asked to state whether or not it accepts each recommendation and the reasons for this decision. Cabinet must also indicate what action, if any, it proposes to take.

1.2 Recommendation:

It is recommended that Cabinet consider and formulate a response to the recommendations presented to them as a result of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee's study into Elective Home Education.

1.3 Forward plan:

The report was included in the Forward Plan published on 3 January 2017 for the period 3 January 2017 – 30 April 2017 under the heading 'matters arising from Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee and its sub committees'.

1.4 Council plan and policy framework:

The report supported the Our People theme in the Our North Tyneside Plan, in particular 'Be supported to achieve their full potential, especially our children and young people'.

1.5 Information:

- 1.5.1 At its meeting in July 2016, Children, Education and Skills sub-committee received a report relating to Elective Home Education. Following consideration of the information, Members expressed concern at the lack of powers held by the local authority to check the quality of education being provided to those children outside of the school setting. At this meeting it was decided that a sub group be established to carry out a review in this area during the 2016/17 municipal year.
- 1.5.2 Following consideration of background information in relation to Elective Home Education, the sub-group agreed the following remit at the beginning of the study:
- What are the key motivations for parents wanting to home educate their parents?
 - Is the increased demand on school places impacting on the number of parents that choose to home school?
 - Do parents feel supported by the local authority in their choice? Do they require additional assistance?
 - Should the government be lobbied to change the law to permit local authorities access to elective home educated children?
 - To advise the officer team on the authorities policy statement on home education and what networks could be established to reassure Members that all children being home educated were known about.
- 1.5.3 Following discussions with officers, and some consultation with elective home educating parents, the sub-group made the following eight recommendations:
1. The Mayor write to the Minister for Education asking for a change to the law which would give local authorities guaranteed access to children being home educated and provide a clear definition of a 'suitable' and 'efficient' education, along with some minimum educational standards and also encourages other Leaders, Elected Mayors and Executive Members for Education at other Local Authorities to do the same.
 2. Cabinet ask officers in the Attendance and Placement Team to establish a 'notice board' page on the relevant section of the Council's website to allow parents to share advice and tips in relation to elective home education.
 3. Officers in the Attendance and Placement Team liaise with schools to explore the possibility of offering, for a small cost, surplus text books and equipment to electively home educating parents.
 4. Cabinet ask officers in the Attendance and Placement Team to review (and establish a continuous review process) all forms of written correspondence with parents electively home educating to ensure that material is clear, jargon free and demonstrates mutual respect.
 5. Cabinet ask officers in the Attendance and Placement Team to review the consultation processes currently in place, with a view to increasing the feedback the authority gets from electively home educating parents.
 6. Cabinet ask officers in the Attendance and Placement Team to arrange for information on inoculations to be sent to all electively home educating parents on an annual basis.

7. Cabinet ask officers in the Attendance and Placement Team to liaise with colleagues in Public Health to ensure that all public health messages sent out via schools are also circulated to families that are home educating.
8. Cabinet ask officers in the Attendance and Placement Team to write to all schools in the borough to establish whether a buddying system is already in place and if not to enquire if schools would consider such a system in future especially in circumstances of home educated young people returning to school.

1.5.4 These recommendations aim to try and change the powers of local authorities in relation to accessing electively home educated children and also to make some small changes to the way the authority currently engages with parents to provide more efficient and effective support.

1.5.5 The full report which outlines the key findings, conclusions and recommendations of the review is attached at Appendix 1.

1.5.6 The Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee received the report on 3 April 2017 and approved the recommendations for submission to Cabinet.

1.5.7 Cabinet has a statutory duty to respond to the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee's recommendations within 2 months of receiving them. In providing its response Cabinet is asked to provide reasons for any recommendations which are not approved.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

Cabinet accepts the recommendation set out in paragraph 1.2 above.

Option 2

Cabinet does not accept the recommendation set out in paragraph 1.2 above and provides a response to the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee at the meeting.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Cabinet has a statutory duty to respond to the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee's recommendations within 2 months of receiving them. Option 1 is recommended as this option allows Cabinet time to consider and formulate a response to the recommendations.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee Report: Elective Home Education.

1.9 Contact officers:

Emma Fagan, Democratic Services Officer Tel: (0191) 643 5313
Robin Moffat, Operations Manger: Attendance and Placement Services Tel: (0191) 643 8387
Barbara Patterson, Senior Manager Facilities and Fair Access Tel: (0191) 643 8340

1.10 Background information:

- [North Tyneside Council Constitution](#)
- [Minutes of Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee meetings held on 18 July 2016 and 20 March 2017.](#)
- [Minutes of Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee meeting held on 3 April 2017.](#)
- [Background information used in the compilation of the EHE report can be found on page 9 of the report.](#)

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The financial implications associated with each recommendation will be included in Cabinet's response to the Sub Group's report.

2.2 Legal

The legal implications associated with each recommendation will be included in Cabinet's response to the Sub Group's report.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

The Sub Group which undertook this work on behalf of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee met with officers from the Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding Service and also met with parents who had chosen to home educate their children.

Full details are listed in the Sub Group's report attached at appendix 1.

2.4 Human rights

There are no direct issues relating to human rights arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no direct issues relating to equalities and diversity arising from this report.

2.6 Risk management

There are no direct issues relating to risk arising from this report.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no direct issues relating to crime and disorder arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no direct issues relating to environment and sustainability arising from this report.

PART 3

The following officers and Members have been sent a copy of the report for their information:

- Deputy Chief Executive
- Mayor/Cabinet Member
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Head of Corporate Strategy