

Meeting: Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Date: 3 April 2017

Title: Report of the Elective Home Education Sub Group

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Service: Law and Governance

Wards affected: All

1. Purpose of Report

To consider a report produced by the Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee's Elective Home Education (EHE) Sub Group.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Consider and approve the EHE Sub Group report and its recommendations and refer it to Cabinet; and
2. To refer the matter of Elective Home Education to the NECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee and ask them to consider recommending that the Chair of the North East Leadership Board also writes 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.

3. Details

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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.

3.3 Following discussions with officers, and some consultation with elective home educating parents, the sub-group made eight recommendations. 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.

3.4 The report was submitted to the Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee on 20 March 2017 for endorsement. At the meeting the sub-committee amended recommendation 1 by adding the words 'and encourages other Leaders, Elected Mayors and Executive Members for Education at other Local Authorities to do the same'. The recommendation now reads as follows:

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.

3.5 The sub-committee considered that other local authorities would agree that children had a right to a good education and would add their voice to North Tyneside's for a change to the law.

3.6 The findings, recommendations and amended recommendation 1 can be read in the full report attached at Appendix 1.

3.7 The amended report has been submitted to the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee for its approval for submission to Cabinet, in accordance with Part 4.3 Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee Rules of Procedure in the Authority's Constitution.

3.8 The sub-committee has also recommended that Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee refers the matter of elective home education to the North East Combined Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and requests them to make a recommendation to the North East Leadership Board that the Chair writes 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.

4. Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Report of the Elective Home Education Sub Group.