

CABINET
13 OCTOBER 2016**EQUALITY IN SCHOOLS – NOTICE OF MOTION**

Relevant Cabinet Member

Mr M L Bayliss

Relevant Officer

Director of Children, Families and Communities

Recommendation

1. **The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families recommends that Cabinet:**
 - (a) **considers the Notice of Motion to Council on 14 July 2016 which has been referred to Cabinet for a decision; and**
 - (b) **does not adopt the Motion to take part in the Stonewall Education Equality Index, but amends it to read as follows: '*Worcestershire County Council encourages schools to take part in the Stonewall Schools Champions Programme or to use the Birmingham University-developed LGBT schools tool kit to help schools meet their own Equalities and Ofsted requirements*'.**

Background

2. The Constitution provides that if a motion relates to an executive function, it will be referred to the Cabinet for determination. The following motion was duly moved and seconded at Council on 14 July 2016 and stood referred to the Cabinet. Mr Baker and Mr McDonald (as mover and seconder) and Mr Udall (the third signatory of the Notice of Motion) have been invited to the meeting.
3. Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mr J Baker, Mr P M McDonald, Mr R M Udall and Mr R C Lunn:

"That Worcestershire County Council should take part in the Stonewall Education Equality Index and should encourage schools to take part in the Stonewall Schools Champions Programme or to use the Birmingham LGBT schools tool kit."

Stonewall Education Equality Index

4. The Stonewall Education Equality Index is a benchmarking exercise for local authorities to show how well they are celebrating difference and tackling homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in schools and supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Trans-sexual (LGBT) young people in their local communities.

5. A local authority may use the Index within its own resources, for which there is no charge. The Stonewall Schools Champions Programme provides support for authorities in undertaking the Index, for which there is a charge of £1,500 + VAT per year.

National LGBT tool kit

6. In addition to the Stonewall Index, there is also a National LGBT tool kit. This has been developed by Birmingham University and this is assumed to be the tool kit referred to in the Motion.

Further Information

7. Schools are required under the Equality Act 2010 to have Due Regard to the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty in respect of pupils and staff who may have one or more of the Protected Characteristics listed in the Act. Sexual Orientation is one of the specified Protected Characteristics. The current Ofsted inspection framework also requires schools to address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and bullying. As part of its overall effectiveness, a school is judged on the quality of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, including working hard to prevent all forms of bullying including on-line bullying and prejudice-based bullying.

8. The Council has previously used the Stonewall Equality Index. This ceased several years ago due to the cost and also the detailed amount of information required to fulfil the requirements of the Index.

9. The Council's approach to supporting and influencing local schools has evolved over time, with schools now having greater autonomy and individual accountability. Within the above context it is not recommended that the Council takes part in the Stonewall Equality Index.

10. Schools are able to purchase any training they may require. This could be from Babcock or through any other organisation which a school wishes. It is not for the Council to determine how these school duties are undertaken, but the Council may still recommend to schools the use of resources in order to fulfil their statutory and other duties.

11. The Council frequently liaises with schools to ensure they are sufficiently aware of issues such as those raised by Stonewall and to make schools aware of how they may access resources and training. It is therefore proposed that the Council encourages schools to take part in the Stonewall Schools Champion Programme or the Birmingham LGBT schools tool kit in order to help them meet the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act and Ofsted expectations. Whether they do is of course a decision for the individual schools.

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

12. None

Privacy and Public Health Impact Assessment

13. No impacts have been identified.

Equality and Diversity Implications

14. Under the 2010 Equality Act schools are required to have consideration for equality issues for their pupils. This includes LGBT pupils. It is for governing bodies to monitor provision in schools, and to have in place systems to ensure equality for all pupils. This is inspected as part of the framework of inspections by Ofsted.

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Children, Families and Communities) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda and background papers for the meeting of County Council on 14 July 2016