

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 11 MAY 2016

MONITORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT SERVICES COMMISSIONED TO BABCOCK PRIME

Summary

1. The Strategic Commissioner – Education and Skills has been invited to the meeting to discuss the measures and resources in place within the Council's Education & Skills Intelligent Client Unit (E&S ICU) to monitor and manage the delivery of the education services commissioned to Babcock Prime.

Background

2. The majority of the Council's Learning and Achievement Services were commissioned to Babcock Prime on 1 October 2015. The services transferred to Babcock Prime from the Council were:

- School Admissions
- Children Missing in Education (CME)
- Elective Home Education (EHE)
- Exclusions
- Post-16
- Specialist Inclusion Services
- The Virtual School (not the Headteacher role)
- School Improvement
- Governor Services
- Early Years & Childcare
- Education Investigation Service/Children in Entertainment & Employment
- Education Welfare Service
- Workforce Development

3. The Council retained some services which were previously within the Learning and Achievement Service:

- Place planning and provision remains within the Council, as does the role of the Virtual Headteacher
- The strategic lead for services for learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

4. The central core now also includes a team of commissioners, with the specific role of monitoring the contract with Babcock Prime.

Current situation

5. The Council's role is now to act as the Commissioner and Intelligent Client for services commissioned to Babcock Prime, in addition to the strategic lead for services retained in the core.
6. The E&S ICU is now in place and comprises the:
 - Lead Commissioner
 - Commissioning Manager
 - Commissioning Officer
7. This Team provides robust contract monitoring and service-led experience to provide appropriate challenge to Babcock.
8. A full suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) is in place with regular monitoring on a weekly, monthly and quarterly basis. These KPI's are attached as Appendix 1.
9. The Commissioning Team co-ordinates and quality assures all data used to monitor the KPIs and each KPI is accompanied by a narrative giving detailed background on each indicator.
10. The contract is monitored under a strict and robust governance structure:
 - Weekly commissioning meeting with Babcock Regional Manager
 - Monthly Review Meeting with Council and Babcock senior managers, which includes Council commissioners and Babcock leads
 - Quarterly Review Meeting with senior Council officers and Cabinet Member, and senior Babcock Prime staff
 - The Monthly and Quarterly Review Meetings have agreed Terms of Reference in place
 - A suite of programme processes have been introduced to ensure robust contract monitoring:
 - Reporting and contract monitoring tools
 - Issues log and Early Warning Register
 - Data management protocols
 - Evidence of continued measurable improvements in standards e.g. Ofsted inspections

Future benefits

11. We are working towards a number of tangible benefits since the contract went live:
 - Financial savings of approx £1.8m by 2017/2018
 - Generating efficiencies in staffing and resource in the core Council team of £300k
 - Reducing operational (delivery) involvement from the Council
 - Close partnership working between the two organisations to generate optimal service delivery
 - Continuity of service to stakeholders/users e.g. School Improvement Project Boards
 - Evidence of continued measurable improvements in standards - since October 2015, the proportion of schools judged by Ofsted to be good or

outstanding has increased under a new and more challenging framework from 87% to 89%

- Close engagement with Directorates and colleagues to monitor contract
- Commissioning function within Education and Skills now in place providing challenge to Babcock Prime and strategic oversight of commissioning activity within Education and Skills.

Next Steps

12. Continuing to embed agreed governance and monitoring processes.
13. Ensuring Provider delivery against KPI's through Governance process.
14. Undertaking appropriate remedial action for Babcock Prime non-compliance with service delivery.
15. Strengthening commissioning-led outcomes within Education and Skills.
16. Continuing to monitor all issues and logging all key risks.
17. Ensuring robust programme management of contract.

Purpose of the Meeting

18. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- consider the information in the report
- determine whether it would wish to carry out any further scrutiny, and
- agree whether it would wish to send any comments to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children, Families and Communities.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Worcestershire Key Performance Indicators

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 Minutes of Cabinet on 18 June 2015

Minutes and Agendas for all County Council meetings are available [here](#).