

CABINET
26 SEPTEMBER 2019**WORCESTERSHIRE EDUCATION AND SKILLS STRATEGY**
2019-2024

Relevant Cabinet Member

Mr M J Hart

Relevant Chief Officer

Director of Children, Families and Communities

Recommendation

- 1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills recommends that Cabinet:**
 - (a) approves the Education and Skills Strategy 2019-2024 on behalf of the Council; and**
 - (b) notes that a progress update will be provided in 12 months as part of the annual report from Worcestershire Children First.**

Background

2. The development of the Education and Skills Strategy began in August 2018 with the creation of the Education and Skills Strategic Group, whose purpose was to co-produce the Strategy. The Group included headteachers from Worcestershire's first/primary, middle, secondary and special schools, representatives from further education colleges, the University of Worcester and Worcestershire's Local Enterprise Partnership and the Council.

3. Engagement with the wider community of Worcestershire will continue as Worcestershire Children First (WCF), acting as agent of the Council, prepare to work further with a wider range of educational leaders and with parents/carers on plans to deliver and implement the Strategy in the next phase of the project. WCF working as the agent of the Council will instruct and monitor Babcock to support implementation of the Strategy.

Local Context

4. According to ONS trend-based projections, the numbers of people in the county aged 0-17 is projected to increase by 3.1% in the next five years, and by 3.6% in the next ten years. The total population is projected to increase more uniformly, by 2.5% and 4.6 % over the same time periods.

5. There are 226 schools in the county (Local Authority and Academy schools combined). 115 operate as a 2-tier system (Mainstream Primary and Secondary) and

111 as a 3-tier system (First, Middle and High). In addition to the Mainstream schools there are 9 Special Schools, 4 Pupil Referral Units and 2 Alternative Provision settings and 1 Nursery School. For the Early Years sector there are 408 settings providing funded places for children age 2, 3 and 4 plus 60 Maintained Nurseries attached to Mainstream and Special Schools. (Source: Early Years Census 2019 and January 2019 School Census).

6. According to the October School Census 2018, there were 80,215 attending school in Worcestershire, of which 78,381 are in Mainstream schools, 1,491 in Special Schools, 104 in Pupil Referral Units, 138 in Alternative Provision, and 101 in Nursery School. 64% of pupils in a Worcestershire school were living in the catchment area and 4.8% of pupils are from out of county.

7. In terms of education quality, 85.6% of pupils are in a Good or Outstanding school overall. Of this figure, 85.3% of children and young people are attending good or outstanding mainstream provision. For pupils in Alternative Provision or attending Special Schools, 100% had places with good or outstanding providers. Finally, for Pupil Referral Units, 64.4% of children and young people are in good or outstanding provision.

A New Strategic Approach

8. Due to the fragmented nature of the education system nationally and in Worcestershire there is a need for an overarching vision to support improvements in educational outcomes. The Education and Skills Strategic Group has been instrumental in engaging with networks of professionals and providers to develop this vision underpinned by new ways of collaborative working.

9. The intention of the Strategy is to foster an environment of support and trust which enables professionals and front-line staff to take ownership and ensure all agencies and professionals are working together to improve educational outcomes for all children and young people.

10. Locality arrangements and thematic groups will be used for local and targeted improvement activity and the Education and Skills Strategic Group will oversee the delivery of the Strategy.

Benefits of Adopting the Strategy

11. Adopting this Strategy will benefit children and young people by:

- developing plans to improve services
- fostering a new ethos of collaborative and partnership working
- generating a drive for continuous improvement
- building skills to provide an effective workforce for Worcestershire businesses, and
- provide a more effective and responsive education system for Worcestershire, offering the Council the opportunity to become an example for other local authorities.

Strategy Objectives

12. The Education and Skills Strategy has seven objectives for improvement, each with specific activity/drivers to improve outcomes for children and young people. These are:

Objective 1: Highly motivated, well performing and ambitious schools, colleges and other education providers¹

- Education providers to be involved in sector-led, local improvement collaboratives
- Research/teaching schools will act as hubs for developing and sharing best practice.

Objective 2: A Curriculum and approach that inspires

- Education providers to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum
- Enable a wider development of skills and knowledge relevant to children and young people and specific to each district.

Objective 3: More education places in outstanding provision/children in education provision

- Maintain clarity of forecasting and use district groups to discuss forecasting and planned changes to produce district level plans
- Offer clarity regarding funding sources and requirements for financial planning, to enable the Council and education providers to collectively:
 - lobby for national capital funding from government
 - strategically plan capital grants
 - strategically plan contributions from developers and other infrastructure projects
 - identify potential community fund-raising activity
 - identify income from land sales and rentals, and
 - identify any other sources of capital contribution
- Develop county and district-wide emphasis on fair access arrangements where places are not identified/accessed.

Objective 4: Building skills for our future workforce

- Improve skills and workforce planning
- Build better relationships between businesses and schools
- Increase employability for young people
- Reduce 16-19-year olds with NEET status
- Better understand the needs of our labour market initiative
- Increase opportunities for apprenticeships
- Enhance graduate level opportunities
- Increase private sector investment in skills
- Address youth unemployment by improving identification of opportunities
- Support local recruitment at all levels

¹ Education provider refers to schools across all phases (first, middle, primary, secondary and special schools), sixth form and further education colleges.

- Support implementation of the Gatsby benchmarks² by Careers and Enterprise College.

Objective 5: Improved capacity, skills and knowledge surrounding our vulnerable learners

- Improve the educational experience and outcomes for vulnerable learners and children with SEND across all phases of education
- Support implementation of the vulnerable learners framework and the graduated response.

Objective 6: Improved Social mobility for all children and young people

- Seek to improve social mobility in districts and localities identified for improvement by drawing upon the successes of Wychavon District Council's social mobility plan
- Apply these successes in our other districts.

Objective 7: Training and the education workforce

- Establish a workforce analysis at district and county levels to provide necessary understanding of the needs of the education workforce to deliver against the plans set out in this Strategy
- Establish a new relationship with local Higher Education Institutions and Further Education colleges
- Develop a strategic relationship with funding bodies such as the Education Endowment Foundation
- Identify the training and continuous professional development requirements to successfully deliver this Strategy.

Embedding the Strategy

13. Worcestershire Children First, as agent of the Council, will oversee the implementation of the Strategy and hold stakeholders to account, including partners such as Babcock Prime, by establishing locality groups to improve collaboration between education providers within districts and across education phases. Thematic groups will be established to address specific themes identified by need to improve educational outcomes. Each thematic group will have a clear set of measurable benefits and indicators to deliver. WCF, through the Education and Skills Strategic Group, will continue to have an active role to ensure the benefits are realised.

² There are eight Gatsby benchmarks of Good Career Guidance:

1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experiences of workplaces
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

Governance

14. A proposed governance structure has been developed which has been enclosed as Appendix 2. The Group will report to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. The governance diagram sets out the structure for reporting and monitoring of the progress of the Strategy. Reports are used to ensure a flow of information, to explain action taken and to seek decisions required.

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

15. It is expected that the resource required to deliver this Strategy can be met from within existing Council, WCF and School budgets. There is no additional resource (either recurrent or one-off) requested for implementation. This is reflected in the budget projection for WCF.

Risk Implications

16. The risks to be considered by not adopting this Strategy are:

- (a) The education sector continues to work in a fragmented way unable to realise the benefits of developing and delivering a clear vision for education and skills for Worcestershire's children and young people;
- (b) Worcestershire does not grow the skills required to support local industries and businesses;
- (c) A fragmented approach leads to unsustainable cumulative financial pressure on education providers and the education system, impacting adversely on the long-term viability of Worcestershire's education sector.

Public Health Impact Assessments

17. A Public Health Impact Screening is to be completed.

Privacy and Data Protection Impact Assessments

18. A privacy and Data Protection Impact screening has not been deemed necessary at this time but will be addressed during the planning and implementation stage.

Equality and Diversity Implications

19. An Equality Relevance Screening has been carried out in respect of these recommendations. It identified that further equality impact analysis will be required in respect of the implementation of proposals in the Strategy. A more detailed assessment will be undertaken in respect of all Strategy-linked proposals which potentially impact the education of children and young people because they have one or more of the Protected Characteristics.

Supporting Information (available electronically only)

- Appendix 1 – Education & Skills Strategy 2019-2024
- Appendix 2 – Governance structure
- Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Screening

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) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.