

Children and Young People Select Committee		
Report Title	Lewisham Education Commission Progress Report	
Key Decision	No	Item No. 4
Ward	All	
Contributors	Executive Director for Children and Young People	
Class	Part 1	Date: 8 th June 2016

1 Summary

- 1.1. A proposal for the establishment of an Education Commission was agreed at Mayor and Cabinet on 9th December 2015.
- 1.2. This paper accompanies the Lewisham Education Commission Report which details the findings of the Commission and makes recommendations for the future of education in the London Borough of Lewisham.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that Children and Young Select Committee consider and note the report its recommendations.

3 Policy Context

- 3.1. A key priority within the Children and Young People's Plan 2015 – 2018 is "Raising the attainment of all Lewisham children and young people" and this has a number of specific outcome areas:
 - AA1: Ensuring there are sufficient good quality school places for every Lewisham child.
 - AA2: Ensuring all our children are ready to participate fully in school.
 - AA3: Improving and maintaining attendance and engagement in school at all key stages, including at transition points.
 - AA4: Raising participation in education and training, reducing the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) at 16-19.

- AA5: Raising achievement and progress for all our children at Key Stages 1 – 4 and closing the gaps between underachieving groups at primary and secondary school.
 - AA6: Raising achievement and progress for all our children and closing the gaps between under-achieving groups at Key Stage 5 and Post 16 so that all our young people are well prepared to access the best education and employment opportunities for them.
 - AA7: Raising achievement and attainment for our Looked After Children at all Key Stages and Post 16.
- 3.2. In March 2016, the Secretary of State for Education published the White Paper, *Educational Excellence Everywhere*. The White Paper signalled the Government's intentions relating to academisation and a drive towards a school-led system which would mean that local authorities would step back from running school improvement from the end of the 2016/17 academic year.

4 Background

- 4.1. At the Mayor and Cabinet meeting on 9th December 2015, it was resolved that:
- Having considered an officer report, and a presentation by the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, Councillor Paul Maslin, the Mayor agreed that the establishment of an education commission to support the development of a future vision for education in Lewisham to report in April 2016 as set out be approved.

5 Key Questions

- 5.1. The Lewisham Education Commission has considered the following key questions:
- Given the national and regional context, what is the best form of organisation for Lewisham's schools going forward?
 - Is there a school-led model of school improvement which would put Lewisham's work on a more sustainable footing, given the council's financial constraints?
 - Lewisham needs additional secondary and SEND places. What are the best means to achieve this, alongside ensuring all our existing schools are schools of choice?

- Given Lewisham's strong commitment to improving outcomes at KS4 and KS5, are any more radical or leading edge models or approaches that Lewisham could adopt at borough level?
- Underpinning all these questions is the central theme of how Lewisham's system serves the most vulnerable.

6 Process

- 6.1. A team of three national experts was established to support the work of the Education Commission in Lewisham, supported by a fourth member to provide operational support. A biography for each member of the team is set out below:
- Christine Gilbert is chair of the Commission. She is currently visiting professor at the Institute of Education, UCL. Christine was previously a head teacher, director of education, local authority chief executive and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector at Ofsted.
 - Robert Hill, a visiting senior research fellow at King's College London, is an educational consultant, researcher and writer. He was a senior policy adviser to the Labour government.
 - David Woods is a visiting professor at Warwick University and chair of the London Leadership Strategy. Formerly, David was a senior education adviser at the Department for Education and chief adviser for London Schools and the London Challenge.
 - Michael Pain is Director of Forum Education. He was previously at the National College and is supporting the work of the Commission.
- 6.2. Particularly over the first two weeks of the Commission, significant desktop analysis was undertaken. Commissioners conducted an analysis of recent school Ofsted reports, with particular focus on the secondary sector, in order to identify strengths and weaknesses, themes and issues.
- 6.3. Throughout the course of the Education Commission, Commissioners attended a number of existing fora and hosted a number of bespoke events as part of a comprehensive programme of stakeholder engagement.
- 6.4. Commissioners attended a number of existing meetings, including Children and Young People Select Committee, the System Leaders' Breakfast and meetings of primary, secondary and special school head teachers.
- 6.5. Christine Gilbert met with the Mayor and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People to ascertain their vision for Education for Lewisham.

Additionally, Commissioners met with a number of other Councillors, including the Chair of Children and Young People Select Committee and the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- 6.6. Two bespoke evening governors' events took place, led by Christine Gilbert; these sessions provided an outline of the work of the Education Commission followed by discussion around the key questions for Commission.
- 6.7. Children and Young People were given the opportunity to present their thoughts to the Commission through the Young Advisers group in addition to a separate meeting of a smaller focus group of students who are educated within the Borough.
- 6.8. Residents and other stakeholders were offered the opportunity to meet with Christine Gilbert for a bespoke 30 minute meeting as part of the 'open sessions'; these sessions consisted of 24 separate meetings including a number of sessions held on a Saturday. The sessions were advertised on the Lewisham Council website, through the Headteachers' Weekly Bulletin, to all Councillors, and directly to other stakeholders. During the 'open sessions', Christine Gilbert met with, among others, residents groups, voluntary and community sector representatives, union representatives and individual parents.
- 6.9. Throughout the course of the Education Commission, visits have been made to 17 schools (1 nursery school, 6 maintained primary schools, 5 maintained secondary schools, 2 maintained 'all-through' schools, 1 academy, 1 special school and 1 pupil referral unit).

7 Summary of Findings and Recommendations

- 7.1. The Commission recognises that there should be no isolated school and expects the local authority to extend the good partnershipwork, making the most of the Heads' Leadership Forum and through capitalising on the new skills brought by a number of new secondary headteachers.
- 7.2. The Commission has identified that there is local interest in some schools establishing multi-academy trusts (MATs) and recommends that the local authority harnesses this positively to support weaker schools and help address the need for school places.
- 7.3. The Education Commission recommends that a 'Lewisham Secondary Challenge' is established to develop school led borough wide approach to see improvement with external support; headteachers should take on system ownership by leading on professional development across schools, engaging better with external organisations (including those outside the borough) and through listening harder to parents.

- 7.4. The Commission found that the local authority, schools and stakeholders had pride in the place and a commitment to the community, and suggests that this should be harnessed to articulate a shared local vision and a shared plan for success.
- 7.5. The local authority must continue to have an important role in education matters, regardless of the statutory position. As part of this role, the local authority must hold schools to account, help make connections and act as guardians of the most vulnerable.
- 7.6. Commissioners recommend that the local authority review planning (for place numbers and new schools) and develop and consult on a clear School Place Planning Strategy for the next 5 years. The Commission noted that Lewisham is reliant on secondary places within other boroughs, and suggested that these arrangements should be formalised.
- 7.7. The Commission recommends that an agreement between the local authority, headteachers and governors to set up a partnership to establish a school-led system of school improvement. In September, a Partnership Steering Group, with an independent chair, should be established to produce a detailed set of proposals with a view to beginning consultation in October 2016.
- 7.8. In order to ensure sufficient place planning, the Commission recommends that the local authority has close contact with the Education Funding Agency (EFA) about potential free school proposals encourage the best schools to lead trusts to set up new schools and seek out school providers with similar values.
- 7.9. The Education Commission recommends that the London Borough of Lewisham set itself the following targets to be achieved by 2020:
 - All schools will be judged good or better by Ofsted.
 - Performance at 16+ and 18+ will be at least the London average.
 - The most vulnerable will be served better than most other LAs.
 - The vast majority of parents have confidence in their choice of school.
 - Young people will have huge pride in their school.
 - Teachers will be proud to work in an ambitious and successful system.
 - The council will be considered to have done a good job.

8 Next Steps

- 8.1. The Education Commission report will be presented to Mayor and Cabinet on 29th June to agree the direction of travel and will be published on the Lewisham Council website.
- 8.2. Officers will continue the dialogue with partners and return to Children and Young People Select Committee as more specific proposals are developed to implement the Commission's recommendations in Lewisham.

9 Financial Implications

- 9.1. There are no immediate financial implications which arise from agreeing the recommendations to this report. However, there will be a cost to developing any future partnership arrangement and as part of the early stages of that process, an initial financial business case will need to be undertaken. This business case will be used to consider the future financial viability of such a partnership organisation being established. Officers will update members in due course of how available resources will be deployed to fund the establishment of the partnership organisation.

10 Legal Implications

- 10.1. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

11 Equalities Implications

- 11.1. The Commission has made every effort to draw views and ideas from across the community, including black and ethnic minority groups and parents of children with disabilities. The Commission has visited many different schools throughout the course of their work, including a special schools and specialist resource provision.

12 Environmental Implications

- 12.1. No specific environmental implications have been identified as arising from this report.

13 Crime and Disorder Implications

- 13.1. No specific crime and disorder implications have been identified as arising from this report.

14 Background Documents and Report Author

- 14.1. Appendix A: Lewisham Education Commission Report (April 2016).
- 14.2. If you require further information about this report please contact Sara Williams (sara.williams@lewisham.gov.uk).