

26 March 2014	ITEM: 12
Council	
Education Commission	
Report of: Carmel Littleton - Director of Children's Services and Cllr John Kent - Leader of the Council / Portfolio Holder for Finance and Education.	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Accountable Head of Service: Michael Peters – Interim Strategic Leader School Improvement, Learning and Skills	
Accountable Director: Carmel Littleton – Director of Children's Services	
This report is Public	
Purpose of Report: The purpose of the report is to update members on the Thurrock Education Commission.	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the action plan for the Education Commission and asks Council to approve formally the allocation of the resource to support the recommendations over the next three years. Council is also asked to approve the role and make up of the Thurrock Education Alliance and its function to act as the accountable group for overseeing the effective use of the resource allocated to deliver the Education Commission recommendations.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Council is asked to:

- 1. Note and comment on the action plan to date (as set out in the appendix).**
- 2. Agree the Thurrock Education Alliance membership and role, and notes that a shadow Education Alliance is established as soon as possible.**
- 3. Approve the allocation of the resource to support the Education Commission recommendations and agrees that accountability for its oversight is given to the Thurrock Education Alliance.**

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 2.1 The Commission made six core recommendations. These were reported at the Children's Overview and Scrutiny meeting in October and January 2014. Scrutiny supported the recommendations and the action plan as it has been developed. Implementation of the recommendations will involve the Directorate and Council as a whole, schools, academies settings and many partners across Thurrock. Following publication, the report was sent to Head teachers, chairs of governors of academies, schools and the free school, the colleges and other partners across the borough. They have been asked to respond to the Commission's findings, indicating priorities and actions that need to be taken. Discussions have been held with the Governors Forum, the Thurrock Primary Heads Association (TPHA) and Thurrock Association of Secondary Heads (TASS).
- 2.2 Cabinet approved the recommendations at its meeting in December 2013. Schools, governors and others have welcomed and support the recommendations of the Education Commission and are keen to be part of their implementation. Head teachers began considering its implementation at their briefing meeting that took place on 21 January 2014.
- 2.3 The action plan, which includes adopting the recommendations, will be developed following discussion with schools and other partners. Consideration has been given to the following:

Thurrock Education Alliance

- 2.4 The Alliance is the one of the key initiatives that serve to build a strong partnership that will build the vision and case for change across Thurrock. The Commission indicated that the Thurrock Education Alliance will include key partners in the borough.
- 2.5 Thurrock has a successful Schools Forum which reflects the diversity of schools. The Economic Development Forum and Community Skills Forum also have strong representation that contributes towards learning and skills in Thurrock.
- 2.6 The proposed membership of the Thurrock Education Alliance is influenced by the membership of these groups:

Thurrock Association of Secondary Heads
Thurrock Primary Heads Association
Thurrock Governors
Primary Academies/PRU
Primary Maintained Schools
Secondary Academies/PRU
Secondary Maintained Schools
Special Maintained Schools
Special Academy
Church Dioceses

Education Strategy Groups 0-11 & 11 -19
Post 16 /Further Education
Elected Members (including the Leader as the chair of the Alliance)
Director of Children's Services
Employers in Thurrock
Cultural organisations

- 2.7 It is proposed to establish the Education Alliance in shadow form with immediate effect and during this phase determine the number of members from each group and whether others should be involved.
- 2.8 The Thurrock Education Alliance role would be to accelerate and sustain transformation in education in Thurrock by:
- Defining and refining the need for change;
 - Producing and advocating a compelling and actionable vision for the future of education in Thurrock
 - Facilitating widespread engagement and interaction between those involved or interested in education in Thurrock, not just those working in schools but parents and partners in the arts and creative partnerships, in business and higher education.
 - Overseeing and providing governance for the delivery of the Education Commission report action plan and commissioning the outcomes it wishes to secure.
 - Holding the Thurrock Excellence Network Group to account
- 2.9 Thurrock Education Alliance would meet formally and that the Alliance will then meet at least three times a year. It will serve as the main forum to reflect on progress, to share challenges and breakthroughs and to generate new ideas and plans and commission outcomes.
- 2.10. The Thurrock Excellence Network will be a school led partnership, which will drive school improvement in Thurrock and will include all schools. It will have a steering group made up predominantly of head teachers and should include all the teaching schools and will include the Director of Children's Services. The excellence Network is accountable to the Education Alliance and will be responsible for detailed commissioning and delivery against the outcomes set by the Thurrock Education Alliance.

3. ISSUES, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS:

- 3.1 Thurrock Council commissioned the independent review. The work was completed and reported in October 2013. Council has decided to adopt the recommendations in full and, in adopting recommendations, Council is agreeing to support implementation through earmarking £1m of Council Reserves.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

- 4.1 The reason for the recommendations are to be consistent with the Education Commission report.

5. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 The Education Commission has been consulted on with governors, schools, academies, the free school, colleges and other partners for Consultation. Children's Overview and Scrutiny has considered the Commission report and have welcomed its publication and supports the recommendations.

6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 6.1 This report relates to the council priority to improve the education and skills of local people and make Thurrock a great place for learning and opportunity.

7. IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Kay Goodacre**
Telephone and email: **01376 652466**
kgoodacre@thurrock.gov.uk

In establishing the Thurrock Education Commission, the Council has earmarked £1,000,000 of Reserves to take forward the recommendations of the Commission. The desired outcomes and overall allocation of resources will be agreed by the Thurrock Education Alliance when established. Their action plan is attached as the appendix to this report. It is against this that resource allocations will be made and approved by the Education Alliance. The Director of Children's Services is the accountable Director.

Resources to deliver educational improvement are held by:

- The schools, academies and free schools budgets
- The designated Teaching Schools in Thurrock to deliver their key priorities for training new entrants to the profession, leading peer-to-peer professional development, developing leadership potential, providing support for other schools, organising specialist leaders of education and research
- School improvement budget for staff, consultants for schools and early years settings causing concern, training and development
- Support for Governance in schools
- Educational provision for children with high needs including special education needs, inclusion and pupil support and the Virtual School for Looked After Children

The intention of the Commission is to use the resource allocated to address the recommendations to support development which is then sustained by schools and academies and available LA resource for school improvement

7.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**
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The Council has various legal duties such as promoting high standards in maintained schools and providing training and support for governors. The Council is empowered to take the steps described in this report using its general power of competence, under s1 of the Localism Act 2011, and/or by virtue of s111 of the Local Government Act 1972. The relevant power must be exercised lawfully and in a reasonable manner.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Teresa Evans**
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tevens@thurrock.gov.uk

The Education Commission was established to raise standards of achievement and aspiration in Thurrock. Delivery of its recommendations will impact upon the achievement of all groups in the borough. Where appropriate, actions will be monitored to ensure achievement is improved for all protective characteristics (equality groups).

7.4 **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Thurrock Education Commission Report

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

- Appendix 1: Thurrock Education Commission - Action Plan

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APPENDIX 1

THURROCK EDUCATION COMMISSION – ACTION PLAN

Recommendation 1:

Build a compelling case for change and a powerful vision for education across the community in Thurrock that increases pride in what is being achieved and ambition for achieving even more

Action	Intended outcome	Who	Progress to date	When	RAG
Produce a draft vision and ambition through an Achievement and Aspiration Strategy which sets out achievements, performance improvement priorities, goals and ambitions.	Single document that all key parties agree and sign up to	Children's Services, Schools Key partners	The Commission Recommendations have been agreed. Headteachers have been engaged in agreeing the recommendations and thinking about the vision. A conference to develop and agree the vision has been organised for Heads and senior staff on 26 February. Over half the schools will be represented	Feb to March 2014	
			Draft achievement, ambition and aspiration strategy for consultation during autumn term Consult with Council members and staff, businesses and governors and other education partners	April 2014 April to May 2014	
Establish the Thurrock Education Alliance	Creating a powerful cross Thurrock alliance committed to a world class education system for Thurrock	Members Schools Colleges Businesses/Employers Cultural partners	Agreement to establish the Alliance, agreement to support the recommendations financially over three years	From March 2014	
Establish Thurrock Excellence Network	Schools and LA partnership that leads school improvement to	Maintained non denominational schools, church schools, academies,	Meetings with the three teaching schools alliances in Thurrock to develop role and purpose. Considering name – Thurrock Challenge Network. Briefing for primary and secondary heads	From January 2014	

	achieve every school being good or better by 2016	free schools, Teaching Schools, Teachers' representatives			
Communication programme	Ensure that schools, colleges, educational partners, council staff are fully engaged with education priorities	Corporate communications Children's services staff Schools Colleges FE/HE Teachers reps Sector specialists	Activities to date delivered or planned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft communications programme developed • Headteachers Briefing • Governors Briefing & conference • Vision conference • Leader and Director of Children's Services visits to schools • Staff conference • TU meetings 	From January 2014	

Recommendation 2:

Redefine the role of the local authority, agree with partners what change means in practice and make sure services are provided efficiently.

Action	Intended outcome	Who	Progress to date	When	RAG
Set out the core education functions of the Thurrock local authority	Clarity of role in one document that is updated annually	Thurrock Children's Services	Setting these out for schools during Heads briefing	April 2014	
Work with primary heads (through TPHAs) and secondary heads (through TASS) to establish the supporting functions that are wanted by schools and how the core and supporting functions are monitored	Clarity of the services that are wanted by schools and the quality of provision	Thurrock Council Directorates providing services for schools Thurrock Primary Heads Association Thurrock Association of Secondary Heads	Initial work developing from Thurrock Services for Schools 2013/14 to understand service quality Establishing independent service quality review from September 2014	April 2014 July 2014	

Produce Annual Report on services provided by the Council to the Thurrock Education Alliance	Widespread understanding of the quality of education core and support service provision in Thurrock	Thurrock Council	Initial work developing from Thurrock Services for Schools 2013/14 to understand service quality	June 2014	
Consult with Members, schools, academies, free schools, education partners, businesses/employers	Clear understanding of the role of the LA in terms of its core and supporting functions across partnerships in Thurrock	Thurrock Council		April to May 2014	

Note: The following sets out the range of statutory responsibilities for education of the local authority

- The drive for high educational standards for all children and young people, paying particular attention to the most disadvantaged groups.
- Listening to parents, carers, children and young people.
- Working with head teachers, school governors and academy sponsors and principals, local authorities should promote educational excellence for all children and young people and be ambitious in tackling underperformance.
- Taking rapid and decisive action in relation to poorly performing schools, including using their intervention powers with regard to maintained schools and considering alternative structural and operational solutions.
- Developing robust school improvement strategies.
- Supporting effective school to school collaboration and providing local leadership for tackling issues needing attention which cut across more than one school, such as poor performance in a particular subject area across a cluster of schools.
- Supporting maintained schools in delivering an appropriate National Curriculum and early years providers in meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (as outlined in the EYFS Statutory Framework).
- Establishing and maintaining the schools forum and maintaining a scheme for financing maintained schools and provide financial information.
- Undertaking specified responsibilities in relation to staffing and governance of maintained schools.
- Running School Admissions and School Admissions Appeal Codes and ensure appropriate information is provided to parents.
- Ensuring provision for suitable home to school transport arrangements.
- Actively promoting a diverse supply of strong schools.
- Promoting high quality early years provision.

- Securing access for young people to sufficient educational and recreational leisure-time activities and facilities for the improvement of their well-being and personal and social development.
- Promoting children's and young people's participation in public decision-making so they can influence local commissioners.
- Promoting participation in education or training of young people, including by securing provision for young people aged 16-19 (or 25 for those with learning difficulties/disabilities).
- Securing assessment, and meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Ensuring the educational needs of Looked After Children are met.

Recommendation 3:

Grow the role of schools themselves as the leaders in supporting other schools to improve

Action	Intended outcome	Who	Progress to date	When	RAG
Publish the current school improvement strategy	Clarity across the system of what is currently in place	Thurrock Council	The school improvement strategy is produced	March 2014	
Establish the Thurrock Excellence Network	Schools led partnership to improve quality of educational provision, teaching and learning, progress and achievement of pupils from EYFS to Key Stage 5 (age 19+)	Thurrock Council Teaching Schools Alliances Primary Heads Secondary Heads Governors Teachers representatives	Meetings with Teaching School alliances to understand their roles in the development of a school led initial teacher training, peer to peer professional and leadership development. Provide support for other schools; designation and broker specialist leaders of education (SLEs); and research and development. Exploring their role in Thurrock Excellence Network Publish and share development programme for spring 2014 and summer 2014 Engage with all schools to develop the network Launch conference and work	January 2014 January Feb/March April 2014	

			Develop programme for 2014/2015 academic year (establishing priorities for LA wide development – e.g. assessment for learning and effective pupil feedback, English and Mathematics and Good to Great schools)	Summer 2014	
Develop & implementation of the new School Improvement Strategy for Thurrock	Thurrock school improvement functions become incorporated into the new schools led School Improvement Service with the Local Authority.	Thurrock Education Alliance Thurrock Excellence Network	Strategy produced Implementation	Summer 2014 From summer 2014	
Commission projects and initiatives to improve standards in schools	Improving educational outcomes for children and young people and increase the proportion of schools that are good or better	Thurrock Excellence Network with accountability to the Thurrock Education Alliance	Cultural entitlement for children and young people is being developed, and pathfinder schools have been identified to take the work forward Other projects to be developed including assessment for Learning and Good to Great schools	From summer 2014	

Recommendation 4:

Recruit and retain the best teachers and leaders by establishing greater pride in Thurrock

Action	Intended outcome	Who	Progress to date	When	RAG
Publish the recruitment strategy for Thurrock	Understanding of what currently is in place Recruitment of good	Thurrock School Improvement Service	A strategy is in place which focuses on a general application system for Thurrock primary and secondary schools, organising activities for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs), marketing through advertisements, providing recruitment advice to GBs and heads, linking	Feb 2014	

	quality teachers for schools in Thurrock		in with recruitment agencies and providing a Thurrock wide registration and assessment service for NQTs. Next steps include examination of further incentives such as leadership development for teachers from successful completion of NQT and accommodation		
Develop & implement new strategy which includes school based initial teacher training, CPD into leadership and incentives to teach in Thurrock e.g. housing, culture and enjoyment, a place to live and raise a family, access to London	Development of new teachers locally Training of new teachers in Thurrock schools Development of initiatives and incentives to attract good teachers to Thurrock	Thurrock School Improvement Thurrock Excellence Network		From March 2014	
Promote the roles of Teaching Schools throughout the borough	Understanding the roles of teaching school alliances and the national strategy for school improvement	Thurrock Excellence Network	Commission the three teaching school alliances to carry out initial teacher training work together	From Feb 2014	
Develop an arts based teacher training programme based on the cultural entitlement for children in Thurrock	Thurrock is seen as a place of innovation and excitement for teaching	Thurrock Excellence Network Royal Opera House Bridge Organisation	Cultural entitlement being established	From Sept 2014	

Recommendation 5:

Use governors as key agents of support for improvement both within their own schools and across the school system in Thurrock.

Action	Intended outcome	Who	Progress to date	When	RAG
Ensure that there are resources for governor development across Thurrock	Governance is recognised as priority and essential for effective schools Governance rated good or better in every school by 2016	Thurrock Governance Service Thurrock School Improvement	The governance service is in place, schools are supported through training, briefings, bulletins and an annual conference Targeted support through Interim Executive Boards and Progress Boards Services provided for academies and free schools as well as maintained schools Standards for good governance produced in Thurrock		
Support for Chairs and vice chairs	Governance rated good or better in every school by 2016	Thurrock Governance Service Thurrock School Improvement Service Thurrock Performance & Quality Team	Advice on changes nationally and locally produced on a regular basis including short updates of key educational issues, as well as clear data that enables the governing body to benchmark its school locally against London and the national context. Targeted services for new chairs and vice chairs – training, meetings agendas, clerking etc	From April 2014	
School Reviews	Commissioned reviews of schools are published by Governors, open to the public especially parents			From April 2015	

Annual Reports	Each school, academy and free school publishes an annual report	School Governing Bodies Academy Trusts Academy chains	Consultation with schools and their governance	From Sept 2014 for first publications from April 2015	
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Recommendation 6:

Recognise and celebrate education and achievements in Thurrock

Action	Intended outcome	Who	Progress to date	When	RAG
Establishing a communications plan for the Education Commission recommendations	Raise the profile of Thurrock	Thurrock Council with schools, academies, businesses and cultural organisations		March 2014	
Publish achievements of individual schools	Raise the profile of schools	Thurrock Council with schools, academies,	Regular features about schools on the Thurrock website and in local press	On going	
Create a website and social media presence of good practice in education	Good practice exemplars easily accessible Profile raised of Thurrock as a place to teach and live	Thurrock Excellence Network (Thurrock schools and academies with Thurrock Council)	Initial meetings with Teaching schools and schools and academies to start work of the Thurrock Excellence Network Possible deliverables identified: CREATE A NEW PLAIN ENGLISH 'How education is changing' WEBSITE SECTION TO INCLUDE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> customer-focused context and background to local education transformation, including the Education Commission report information on the role of the Thurrock Education Alliance information on the role of the Thurrock Excellence Network an annual report on the quality of local education provision short, clear updates on key changes in education as they are announced 	From September 2014	

			<p>REDEVELOP THE CURRENT Information for schools SECTION TO INCLUDE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an overview of the education system in Thurrock, with links to national resources • short, clear updates on key changes in education as they are announced (shared with 'How education is changing') • exemplar good/effective practice (local and national) • exemplar case studies of good practice (local), initiatives and projects • performance management framework and reports • provide plain English documentation for schools and school governors <p>CREATE A NEW 'Discover Thurrock' SECTION IN 'Jobs and careers' TO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present Thurrock as an interesting and vibrant place in which to live and work • support any Thurrock recruitment drive where there is a local skills shortage; for example, specialist teaching and social work • link with the Teaching in Thurrock section for school job vacancies and NQT recruitment <p>CREATE A 'Thurrock Schools' FACEBOOK PAGE AS A FORUM FOR SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS TO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • celebrate good practice and performance in Thurrock schools • celebrate key achievements • encourage school-to-school collaboration • share outcomes from the work of the Thurrock Education Alliance and Thurrock Excellence Network publish links to 'good news' press releases 		
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Publish case studies & hold an annual showcase of Thurrock excellence and innovation	Raise profile of Thurrock as an exciting place for education	Thurrock Excellence Network (Thurrock schools and academies with Thurrock Council) with businesses and employers		TBC	
Establish and maintain the Thurrock annual awards	Raise profile of Thurrock as an exciting place for education	Thurrock Excellence Network (Thurrock schools and academies with Thurrock Council) with businesses and employers		Spring 2015	
Establish the Thurrock alumni club	Raise profile of Thurrock as an exciting place for education	Thurrock Excellence Network (Thurrock schools and academies with Thurrock Council) with businesses and employers		From Sept 2014	
Publicise landmark events for children and young people e.g. Music events, the cultural entitlement, apprenticeships	Raise profile of Thurrock as an exciting place for education	Thurrock Excellence Network (Thurrock schools and academies with Thurrock Council) with businesses and employers	Active Thurrock Music Education Hub http://thurrockmusic.co.uk/ Thurrock Cultural entitlement being developed with 19 schools forming the pathfinder Schools actively engaged with cultural activities with major organisations such as the National Skills Academy and the Royal Opera House	On going	