

14 July 2015		ITEM: 6
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Education Commission Update		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non key	
Report of: Carmel Littleton, Director of Children's Services Roger Edwardson, Interim Strategic Leader School Improvement, Learning and Skills		
Accountable Head of Service: Roger Edwardson – Interim Strategic Leader School Improvement, Learning and Skills		
Accountable Director: Carmel Littleton, Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report outlines the outcomes of the Education Commission this year and provides an update on projects approved to date.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- **Comment on the progress and achievements of Thurrock schools and partners (see 2.3), and**
- **Comment on currently funded activity and suggest further developments that it would wish to be taken to further the education standards for all children and young people in Thurrock.**

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The Education Commission was established in 2013 and reported to Children's Overview and Scrutiny in July 2014 on the six core recommendations. Following extensive consultation with schools, governors and others the Council fully adopted the recommendations and is taking forward each of the recommendations as shown in Appendix 1.

2.2 The 6 Key Recommendations are:-

1. Build and communicate 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.
2. Redefine the role of the local authority, agree with partners what change means in practice and make sure services are provided efficiently.
3. Grow the role of schools themselves as the leaders in supporting other schools to improve.
4. Recruit and retain the best teachers and leaders by establishing greater pride in Thurrock.
5. Use Governors as key agents of support for improvement both within their own schools and across the school system in Thurrock.
6. Recognise and celebrate education in Thurrock.

2.3 There has been good progress since then:

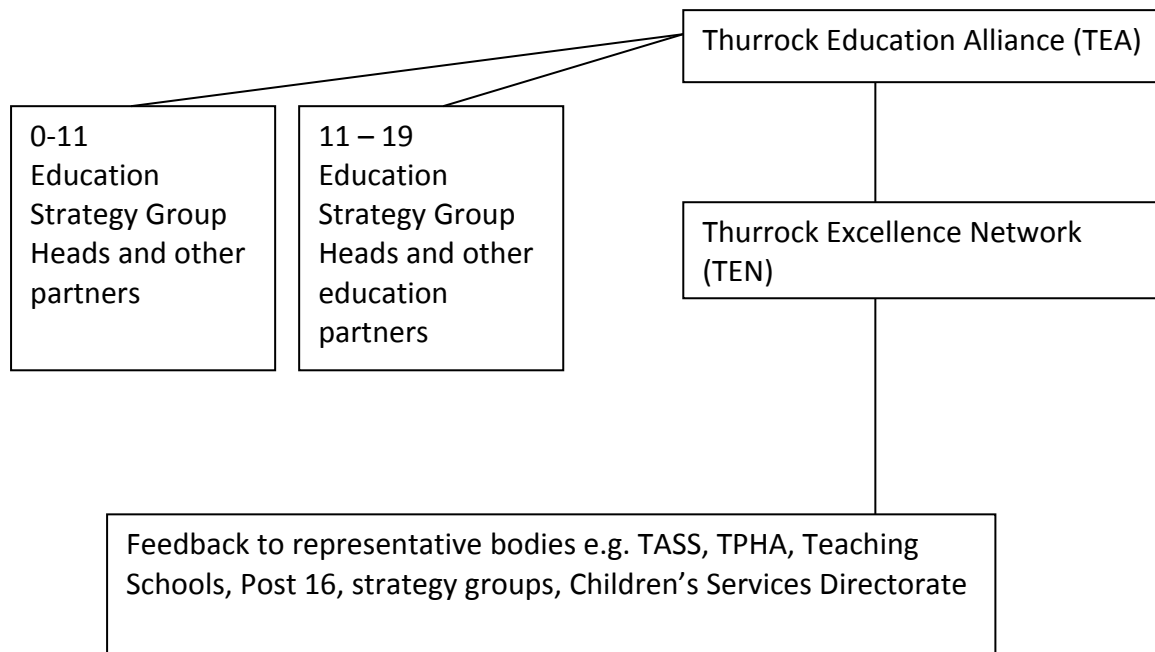
- Head teachers and governing bodies report good progress and strong relationships with the local authority leadership.
- Data on school attainment and progress continues to be a strength and that this is the basis of effective school led school improvement.
- Governance continues to strengthen Governor training on key areas of pupil achievement; safeguarding and financial management is effective.
- The focus on recruitment of high quality senior leadership in schools is effective and through delivering the Commission recommendations will be strengthened further.
- Supporting school sustained school improvement through Progress Boards and detailed Accountability Meetings with specific school leaders and governors is effective in challenging schools to improve achievement.
- Self-initiated and brokered school to school support is showing impact in terms of improving quality of leadership, teaching and learning and pupil progress.
- Acknowledged support for schools requiring improvement and schools in categories through clarity of provision and commissioning Thurrock Improvement Consultants for these schools as part of the school improvement strategy continues to demonstrate impact.
- The proportion of pupils attending good and outstanding secondary schools is in the top 10% of schools nationally and the number attending good or better primary schools is increasing. Together 81% of pupils are attending good or better schools and academies in Thurrock which is about one percentage point above the national average.
- The partnerships with maintained schools, academy chains, free standing academies and free schools are very productive and positive and now form a system wide approach for school driven school improvement.

- There is an active Services to Schools offer available on line - of particular note is the 100% buy back of data services from the local authority. This has been built up over a number of years and is highly regarded by schools and settings.
- There continues to be effective delivery of services supporting schools such as admissions with high percentages of children being allocated first choice schools in a timely way and effective provision of music education.
- School Partnerships are working well and the TRIADs (group of three schools working together) are developing at different rates. Schools and academies are sharing information on progress and attainment of their pupils to enable Thurrock to set and achieve ambitious targets for children and young people from early years through to the age of 19 and beyond.
- The recruitment of new teachers remains a key challenge for the local authority and the family of Thurrock schools. Following concerns expressed by the key groups of Heads – the 0 to 11 Strategy Group, the 11 – 19 Strategy Group and the work of the emerging Thurrock Excellence Network; there is now a higher profile in terms of recruitment and retention strategies. This builds on the work of the teaching school alliances in Thurrock and some innovative work taken by the Gateway Learning Trust.
- A vision and strategy document has been produced, with head teachers which includes a range of entitlements and responsibilities for children and young people as well as clear targets for achievement across the system.
- An Ambition, Achievement and Aspiration Strategy was developed working with all schools and academies alongside the Teaching Schools Alliances. An LA CPD programme was also produced in conjunction with the teaching schools.
- Major initiatives are currently being delivered that will continue to raise the profile and celebrate practice in Thurrock. These include the Cultural Entitlement with the Royal Opera House. The Thurrock Education Awards which were held last year were well received and will be run again this autumn to celebrate the very best educational practice in Thurrock.

2.4 The initiatives are strongly supported by the Thurrock Education Alliance (TEA), which meets regularly to approve and monitor projects. The Thurrock Excellence Network (TEN) is leading on implementation of Recommendations. Its focus is to ensure the school led system for school improvement is well established and outcomes are sustainable over time.

3 Thurrock Education Alliance (TEA)

3.1 The Thurrock Education Alliance (TEA) now meets half-terminly and considers all bids received from the sub groups identified below:-



4 Thurrock Excellence Network (TEN)

4.1 The Thurrock Excellence Network (TEN) is the operational body of professional colleagues accountable to the overall Education Alliance and tasked with delivering the recommendations. This body was established starting with meetings with the three Teaching School Alliances in Thurrock. Teaching School Alliance designation is a national award and those with this award have specific responsibilities for system wide school improvement and teacher development. The Excellence Network encompasses all schools and academies in Thurrock and is driven by meeting the needs of every school to secure an Ofsted judgement of good or outstanding, and remaining so. The purpose of Thurrock Excellence Network is to promote school to school improvement. The TEN group is considered as the executive engine and will assume the delivery aspect of this role.

4.2 TEN is dealing with issues relating to the following priority areas submitted by the different Head teacher groups:-

- Recruitment and retention
- CPD (Continuing Professional Development)
- School to school support
- Delivering the cultural entitlement through ROH
- Monitoring school performance to identify and set out priorities for action
- Knowing the strengths and areas for development in schools and arranging programmes for improvement

- Delivering on the overall strategic aims of the 0-11 and 11-19 Strategy Groups and other professional bodies.
- Supporting the delivery of the Teaching Schools' requirements

5. Structure of the Alliance, Network and Strategy Groups

- 5.1 There are two principal head teacher led groups that are structured to ensure that the most up to date priorities are considered and sufficiently acted upon. The strategy groups are the 0-11 Early Years and Primary Strategy Group and the 11-19 Strategy Group.
- 5.2 The recommendations provided by these strategy groups arise from half termly meetings with colleagues from related provisions. Information is gathered from a wide area and various other groups and meetings to ensure that the most important priorities are considered. These groups are playing a major role in delivering the Ambition, Achievement and Aspiration Strategy for Thurrock.
- 5.3 The Alliance discusses and agrees upon the actions to be undertaken in regard to these recommendations. This information is then shared with the Thurrock Excellence Network whose priority is to agree the commissioning and delivery of appropriate services to address these actions. The Thurrock Education Alliance holds the Thurrock Excellence Network to account.

6. Reasons for Recommendation:

- 6.1 Overview and Scrutiny is requested to comment on the contents of the report and to suggest to The Thurrock Education Alliance areas that might be the subject of more detailed further work.

7. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 7.1 The Education Commission recommendations were agreed following consultation with Schools, Governors, and Children's Overview and Scrutiny and others. They were adopted formally by cabinet and the Council.

8. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 8.1 This report relates to the council priority to improve the education and skills of local people.

9. Implications

9.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Kay Goodacre**

Finance Manager

In establishing the Thurrock Education Commission, the Council has committed up to £1,000,000 over three financial years to take forward the recommendations of the Commission. The desired outcomes are overseen by Thurrock Education Alliance. The Director of Children's Services is the accountable Director.

The Commission uses the resource allocated to address the recommendations to support development which is then sustained by schools and academies and is an LA resource for school improvement.

9.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**

Education Solicitor

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and make suggestions. The Authority has overarching duties that are relevant. These are contained in sections 13 to 15 b of the Education Act 1996. It must ensure that efficient primary, secondary and further education is available to meet the needs of the population; ensure that its education functions are exercised with a view to promoting high standards ensuring fair access to opportunity for education and learning, and promote the fulfilment of learning potential and secure that sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education are available for their area. It must also comply with the public sector equality duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010).

9.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Becky Price**

Community Development Officer

The recommendations of the Education Commission seek to improve attainment of all children in Thurrock, including those in underperforming groups.

This report is for comment and noting only. There are no diversity implications.

10. Background papers used in preparing this report (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

- See TEA updates on approved projects below. (Appendix1)

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Appendix 1

Thurrock Education Alliance (TEA) – Projects approved

Below is the current list of work commissioned by Thurrock Education Alliance (TEA). The document outlines the agreed work (and date), the intended outcome/impact of the work, dates of start and completion, key persons responsible and current work to date. This document will be updated regularly as new work is commissioned and work is delivered. For all recommendations, please see recommendation proforma for more details.

All Projects updated: 15.05.15

Title of agreed work (and group which provided the recommendation)	Date agreed by TEA	Brief description of agreed work	Costings agreed	Lead contact	Current work to date (summary)	Timescale
0-11 Strategy Group Recommendations						
EAL Early Years Advocate	6.11.14	Focus on developing the transitions of families into the borough, how they can be supported, access to services and language in Thurrock.	£23,000 Band 6 Each year for two years	Laura Fishleigh	<p>Application closing date: 30th April 2015 Shortlisting: 1st May 2015 Interviews: 7th and 15th May 2015</p> <p>We are currently in the process interviewing candidates for this role. We had 20 applicants (including two after the deadline) and we shortlisted down to 4 possible candidates.</p> <p>Unfortunately, two of the four candidates withdrew from the interview process and we are currently in the process of interviewing the remaining two candidates.</p>	Recruitment in March 2015. Position begins in September 2015.
11-19 Strategy Group Recommendations						

<p>11 – 19 Delivery Group – Professional curriculum development support to navigate current changes in qualifications.</p>	<p>5.2.15</p>	<p>Thurrock wide curriculum pathways identified for young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum research undertaken • Pathways identified for young people • Academic/vocational pathways identified • Labour market research to look at future job opportunities 	<p>£20,000</p>	<p>Barbara King Michele Lucas</p>	<p>11-19 Delivery Group will not meet until an independent chair is recruited.</p> <p>Recruitment of independent chair will be actioned by BK and ML. Initial interviews taken place and we are looking to secure this resource by mid-June '15.</p>	<p>April 2015 – End of March 2016</p>
<p>Recruitment and retention 'Growing local talent'</p>	<p>5.2.15</p>	<p>Programme developed with Prince's Trust entitled 'Get into Teaching', aimed at Year 12 students considering a career in teaching.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six week programme developed to enable Year 12 students to gain greater understanding in relation to a teaching career <p>Partnership work undertaken with Princes Trust to use methodology already identified for other key sectors e.g. construction</p>	<p>£10,000</p>	<p>Steve Munday</p>	<p>Initial meetings have taken place with Princes Trust, further planning to be undertaken to develop the programme linking closely with the Strategic work being undertaken across the LA around the recruitment of teachers in Thurrock.</p>	<p>Sept. 2015, completed by March 2016.</p>
<p>Opportunity Thurrock</p>	<p>5.2.15</p>	<p>To continue to sustain the Thurrock wide careers event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borough-wide careers event organised • All schools and colleges signed up to the event • Strong support from local and regional employers 	<p>£10,000 over two years.</p>	<p>Michele Lucas</p>	<p>Date set for 7th October 2015. ROH Backstage Production Park has been booked for venue. Transport has been booked and timetable being put together. Employers have saved the date. Currently identifying workshops to be held throughout day.</p>	<p>October 2015</p>

Thurrock's Next Top Boss	5.2.15	<p>To support business engagement and entrepreneurial activity with young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project supports business and educational engagement • Green solution challenge undertaken in partnership with Essex and Suffolk Water • Business challenge undertaken with linked business partner 	£10,000 over two years.	Michele Lucas	Date set for 17 th March 2016 for Celebration Awards and Networking evening. Venue to be confirmed. TNTB Strategy Board meeting booked for 9 th September 2015.	2014-15 & 2015-16
Child Poverty	5.2.15	<p>To host a workshop event with young people to identify ways in which to address child poverty in Thurrock.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refreshed strategy due to be launched in the Spring 2015 • Looking at geographical areas that indicate higher levels of child poverty <p>Multi agency support to address inequalities across Thurrock</p>	£8,000	Wendy Warman Dave Petrie	Initial discussions have taken place and a plan is currently being developed.	Completed Sept. 2015
Information, Advice and Guidance	5.2.15	<p>Develop model for Thurrock wide IAG entitlement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research undertaken around models of IAG • Curriculum framework developed to support impartial information advice and guidance across Thurrock. 	£10,000	Kate Kozlova-Boran	<p>This work has begun. Update at next meeting on 15/7/15</p> <p>This work will be overseen by the newly constituted 11-19 Deputy's Group.</p>	April 2015, completed by October 2015.

Higher Education Event	5.2.15	<p>To host an event around HE for Thurrock residents (including young people and mature students).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher education fair developed to support life-long learning agenda across Thurrock. <p>This will include both academic and vocational pathways (e.g. Level 4+ apprenticeship opportunities)</p>	£8,000	<p>Wendy Barnes (SEC)</p> <p>Gail May (UEL)</p> <p>Sharon Walsh (TACC)</p>	Discussion took place at 11-19 Strategy Group meeting (6/5/15), colleagues agreed to meet and submit briefing paper for event.	May 2015
TAG Recommendations						
TPHA Recommendations						
TASS Recommendations						
<p>External consultant/s to lead a Recruitment & Retention Commission</p> <p>Produce a 'Teach Thurrock' strategy document that sets out clear recommendations for the Short, medium and long term</p>	5.2.15	<p>Attracting the best Graduates to Thurrock. Produce a 'Teach Thurrock' strategy to include: Short, medium and long term objectives to secure and retain the best teachers in Thurrock.</p>			<p>Roger Edwardson, Interim Strategic Lead for School Improvement and Learning and Skills met with John King on Friday 15th May to discuss this position. John King has been commissioned to undertake this work, most of which will now occur in the new academic year as he is already committed to other projects in the meantime. John has agreed to develop a cross-phase recruitment and retention strategy no later than October 2015. John will approach academies and trusts as well as maintained schools to explore current activities which will support this project. It should be noted that Emma Field has decided to halt her current work until it is clarified what her role might be within the project brief in the future.</p>	Feb/March 2015

Tribal Inspection Skills course funding	5.2.15	All schools to send two leaders onto Tribal Inspection Skills course			<p>Further to TEA agreement, funding was secured for two senior members of staff from each secondary school in Thurrock to attend the Tribal Inspection Skills Course – Reviewing Your School. Course is run in two parts (over four days) and has taken place at Harris Academy Chafford Hundred on 28th & 29th April and 19th & 20th May. Delegates are required to attend all four days. As of 18/5/15 we are yet to complete days three and four of the course.</p> <p>The course is priced at £1200 per delegate. Beacon Hill is only able to release one member of staff for these course dates but would like to have a second member of staff attend a future course. Therefore the total cost for delivery to all schools (2 delegates per school) = £31200.</p>	Feb – April 2015
Reignite DHT forum	5.2.15	With LA involvement but chaired by an independent professional officer			Professional Officer to be commissioned. Lynette Carr is due to be approached. TASS and 11-19 group have worked together to set agenda and formulate terms of reference.	To start after Easter 2015
Teaching Schools						
Ensuring the schools are confident with their approach to assessment as we assess under the new curriculum and life after levels.		<p>Thurrock Primary Assessment Tool (TPAT)</p> <p>A working party has been formed to work towards ensuring that the assessment of children against age related expectations in the new curriculum is consistent and simplified, by providing easily accessible resources and exemplification materials. To aid the project, some funding has already been set aside by the Dilkes Primary Teaching School Alliance. (DPTSA)</p> <p>The project intends to create free online</p>	£10,000	Dilkes Teaching School	<p>Moderators from Thurrock have met on a number of occasions and developed the vision for Thurrock Primary Assessment Tool.</p> <p>Following a request to all Primary Schools in Thurrock for a selection of writing, the moderators selected a range of pieces of work which demonstrated national expectations for each year group. Using the Performance Descriptors from the Department of Education, we grouped year group examples into working towards, working at, working above, and Mastery in Year 2 and Year 6. Currently the website is under construction awaiting scanned work to be uploaded. Website</p>	January 2015 – On-going

		access for all Thurrock schools who agree to join the project.			contains personalised logo for TPAT. Project currently focusing on writing standards but will develop further to all curriculum areas. The number of schools involved has increased as the project has developed. It is hoped that all Thurrock Primary schools contribute.	
Schools, Standards and Progress Boards (SSPB)						
Additional recommendations agreed prior to TEA/TEN structure being in place						
Trailblazer Project (Cultural Entitlement)		Cultural Entitlement project for 21 Thurrock schools and academies. Schools engaged in cultural activities with children and CPD developments for teachers.	£60,000	Matt Lane, Gabrielle Forster-Still	Three CPD strands developments continuing across schools. Cultural Champions development continuing with workshops and monthly meetings. FUSED and In-Fused events in July planned for peer learning and learning new skills through workshops. To put forward bid for second year of the project.	2014-
Recruitment and Retention (Emma Field)		<p>The Vision: To attract, develop and retain a highly motivated, aspirational, diverse workforce, which is responsive to the needs of children, young people, their families and carers and shares our pride in Thurrock.</p> <p>The Aims: Ensure top quality teachers are recruited, appointed, supported and retained in Thurrock schools.</p> <p>To maintain and raise standards through good teaching appointments and effective recruitment practices.</p>	£60,000	Supported by Emma Field, Sue Lamkin,	<p>Continued to work with Teach Thurrock Primary Partnership to recruit and interview prospective students for salaried and PGCE training places. This has been successful with enough applicants and schools willing to take them that we have applied to the University for a further two salaried placements.</p> <p>From university visits for NQT's there were 25 applicants, 14 primary and 11 secondary. Of the 14 primary all but one were invited to interview with 6 turning up on the day. From this 3 were recommended and have since been offered jobs in Thurrock schools.</p> <p>Planned recruitment event for 18th May now cancelled due to low number of applicants which</p>	2014-2016

					<p>were not suitable for interview. There was a large interest in the event from schools, with 12 schools declaring interest and a total of 31 teachers which highlights how desperate the recruitment situation is.</p> <p>Unless instructed otherwise, Emma Field ends her role as Recruitment Strategy lead for Thurrock from May 11th onwards.</p>	
Expansive Education		<p>Intended Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To allow Thurrock schools to become part of a growing movement of teachers who want to do more for their students than just coach them for exams • Access the latest research and thinking in teaching practice • Train to use Action Research in classroom practice • See Thurrock Action Research published and shared with colleagues • Rediscover the spirit that made you choose to teach in the first place 	£10,000	<p>eedNET at Winchester University Dilkes Academy</p>	<p>Ruth Brock recently presented a Thomas Tallis event where the influence this project has had was shared.</p> <p>Reports for all participating schools are to be completed by 1st May. Bill will give individual feedback to schools before final hand in, and the creation of the first 'Thurrock Journal of Teacher Enquiry'.</p> <p>Celebration event on 25th June where all participating schools give presentations to show their key findings from their action research projects.</p>	2014- 2015