

REPORT FOR DECISION

DECISION OF:	Cabinet
DATE:	27 June 2018
SUBJECT:	The Changing Educational Landscape
REPORT FROM:	Councillor Sharon Briggs Cabinet Member For Children And Families
CONTACT OFFICER:	Paul Cooke Interim Assistant Director (Learning)
TYPE OF DECISION:	Non Executive
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/STATUS:	Open
SUMMARY:	<p>The purpose of the report is to describe the changing context of the educational landscape, with the evolving role of schools and the local authority in an increasingly school-led model of school improvement.</p> <p>The report sets out the model of governance adopted at a strategic level in respect of the school-led system, describing how this brings together all key stakeholders to contribute to school improvement across the borough, and, on the development of alternative forms of governance at school level, and a set of principles that all schools will be expected to commit too in the interests of the local system.</p> <p>In order to fulfil its role as a key partner in the school-led system, the report describes the role of the local authority in the system.</p> <p>Cabinet is asked to consider requirements for performance monitoring through appropriate scrutiny and overview arrangements.</p>

Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet/Committee	Council	

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Education Act 2010 'The Importance of Teaching' laid out the Government's ambition for a self-improving education system, with an expectation that schools be actively involved in school to school support.
- 1.2 The Government published its Education White Paper, 'Education Excellence Everywhere', in March 2016, building on the ambitions of the 2010 Act. This set out a range of measures on which the Government was consulting, including:
- 1.2.1 A proposal to remove some of the statutory powers of local authorities in respect of school improvement;
- 1.2.2 An expectation that school improvement would be increasingly led by schools themselves, with an increasing role for teaching schools;
- 1.2.3 The introduction of a national funding formula for schools, providing greater equity in how schools are funded, but importantly, with all schools being funded directly by Government, rather than the funding being routed through local authorities, as at present.
- 1.2.4 The expectation that all schools to convert to become Academies by 2022.
- 1.3 Much has changed since the publication of the White Paper, and the Government is no longer planning to bring forward specific legislative changes that would have been required to implement the White Paper proposals in full. However, a number of key elements in the White Paper have continued to be developed and implemented and these are fundamentally changing the educational landscape, affecting all schools and all local authorities.
- 1.4 This report sets out how the Local Authority, working with all key stakeholders, is developing a response that is appropriate to Bury.
- 1.5 The key elements of the school-led system going forward are:
- 1.5.1 School improvement is increasingly school led, with peer challenge and school to school support being central.
- 1.5.2 Intervention and support to schools requiring such support is increasingly provided through teaching schools.
- 1.5.3 Resources for school improvement activity will be directed through teaching schools and/or national support schools, and use of funding will be determined largely by schools rather than the Local Authority.

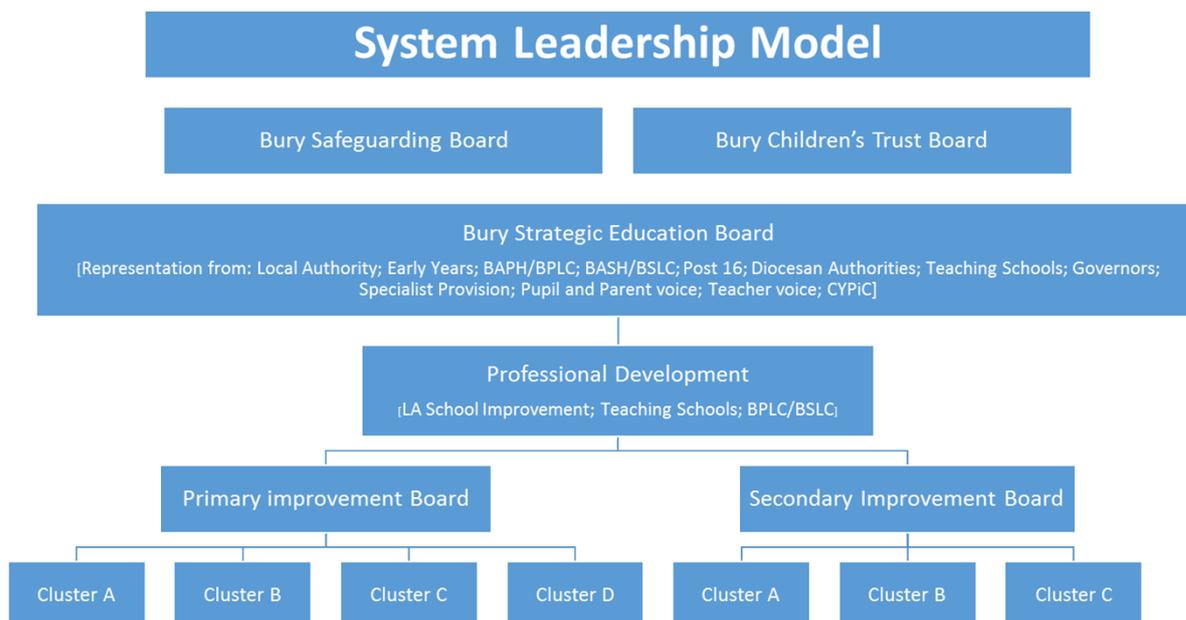
- 1.5.4 The Local Authority role will increasingly be a facilitation one, and focus on the quality assurance of the school to school support and intervention. The Local Authority does however remain statutorily responsible for overall performance of Bury schools, and specifically in relation to schools causing concern.
- 1.6 Whilst the Government has subsequently confirmed that it would not require all schools to become Academies, it continues to reiterate its ambition that, over time, all schools will convert to Academy status.
- 1.7 With the Education & Adoption Act 2016, measures were introduced enabling the Regional Schools Commissioner to intervene in poorly performing schools, requiring a school to convert to become an Academy, under the leadership of a sponsoring school. Schools that are eligible for such intervention are:
- 1.7.1 Schools deemed inadequate by Ofsted;
- 1.7.2 Schools meeting the 'coasting' definition;
- 1.7.3 Schools that fail to comply with a warning notice issued either by the local authority or the Regional Schools Commissioner.
- 1.8 In addition, good and outstanding schools can still choose to convert to become an Academy and, it is clear that some schools have, and are continuing to explore Academy status, and the establishment of Multi Academy Trust arrangements.
- 1.9 The school led system must be able to relate to the increasing autonomy provided to, and expected of schools, and the diversity of school provision that this creates.
- 1.10 For Academies, accountability for performance rests with the Regional Schools Commissioner and not the local authority. However, the Local Authority is ultimately held to account by Ofsted for the performance of all schools in its area. It is essential that the local system is able to provide the Council with the assurance about performance and, for this reason the Education Strategy contained at Appendix One is a key tool in setting out the shared aims and objectives of all stakeholders going forward.
- 1.11 It is essential that the evolving school led model builds on the strengths of the existing arrangements, whilst recognising that the local authority role is changing, increasingly taking a facilitation and quality assurance role, rather than being the primary provider of school improvement activity.
- 1.12 The system also need to recognise the growth in the number of Academies which creates an increasingly diverse and autonomous school system of which Academies will be just one type of school, that also includes existing Voluntary Aided, Voluntary Controlled, Foundation, and Community Maintained Schools.
- 1.13 The Local Authority has for many years functioned effectively with an element of school diversity, with a large number of Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools. But, to ensure the ongoing strength of the 'family of schools' it is essential that the local authority has a clear position with regards

new and emerging forms of governance and leadership, which might include schools working more collaboratively in groups and clusters, and schools establishing both informal, and more formally structured partnerships or federations with each other, but which might also involve Academy conversion.

- 1.14 Throughout this period of change, many schools are looking to the local authority not just for guidance and support with the transition and/or conversion process, but to continue to play an active role in shaping the future model of school provision across Bury.
- 1.15 The school-led model described below has been developed with all key stakeholders to provide a coherent and accountable arrangement for strategic leadership of this increasingly diverse school system across Bury.

2.0 The school-led model of school improvement

- 2.1 Key to the success of the school led model is strong and effective governance, with clear accountability at all levels, and that adequately involves all key stakeholders. The model set out below was established in shadow form in 2017/18, with all elements of the system now in place.
- 2.2 It is important to recognise that this model is not a Council imposed system, but a product of all stakeholders working together to develop something that meets their collective needs. The Council role is to facilitate the development of the model.
- 2.3 This model is illustrated below:



- 2.4 The Strategic Education Board brings together the key stakeholders to provide strategic leadership across the system, and holds the different parts of the system to account for performance. Whilst the immediate focus of the Board is in relation to school performance, over time it will assume a broader role to also provide strategic direction in relation to school organisation, SEN, inclusion and safeguarding.
- 2.5 The role of the Board is:
- 2.5.1 To provide strategic direction for education from 0-25 in Bury
 - 2.5.2 To create a vision for all education in Bury
 - 2.5.3 To ensure that the vision for all Bury children to be the best that they can be is achieved
 - 2.5.4 To have up to three strategic priorities to focus the work of the Board
 - 2.5.5 To ensure the voice of the whole system is represented
 - 2.5.6 To be open and transparent, ensuring two way communications with representative groups at all times
- 2.6 Sitting below the Board are a number of groups:
- 2.6.1 The professional development group brings together the key providers of school improvement support to enable a coherent response to both the strategic direction, as provided by the Strategic Education Board, and also respond to the emerging needs identified by the Primary and Secondary School Improvement Boards.
 - 2.6.2 The Primary Improvement Board and Secondary Improvement Board provide a mechanism to look across all clusters in the relevant phase, identifying common issues, linking these to the strategic direction from the Board, and brokering or commissioning intervention and support where appropriate at a phase level.
 - 2.6.3 The clusters have been designed to include a cross section of schools with a range of characteristics to ensure that there is sufficient capacity and strength within each cluster to enable the constituent schools to support each other. Each cluster is led by one or two head teachers. The role of the cluster is to provide a mechanism for schools to work together, identifying strengths and areas of concern, and providing support and intervention from within the cluster, enabling schools to support each other, or brokering that support from elsewhere.
- 2.7 In order to provide the Council with assurance about the effectiveness of the local system on an ongoing basis, it is proposed to present an annual report to the appropriate Scrutiny and Overview Panel of the Council, setting out the priorities and ambitions, and performance against these. The Education

Strategy contained at Appendix One provides an overview of this for the period 2018 - 2020.

3.0 Models of school governance

- 3.1 Given the increasing autonomy provided to schools there are an increasing number of schools exploring alternative models of leadership and governance, including academy status, and it is evident that a number of schools are looking to come together to form multi academy trusts (MATs), as the next step in their development.
- 3.2 Whilst the Council accepts that this may be regarded as the best option for some schools, it will not suit all schools, and the Local Authority would want this development to happen in a way which preserves the best of what Bury has to offer, and to reflect the principles which have led to our inclusive and successful system.
- 3.3 Set out below is a set of principles that should underpin the development of new forms of leadership and governance in schools across the Borough, and which schools would be expected to commit too in the interests of the wider 'family of schools'.
- 3.4 These principles provide a framework to be used to engage in open and transparent conversation with schools, when considering alternative forms of governance.
 - Schools should consider how proposed changes might impact on other local schools, to ensure they do not have an adverse impact overall;
 - Schools should provide an explicit and unambiguous commitment to inclusion of all children in their area, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those with challenging behaviours;
 - Schools should provide a clear commitment to making or procuring high quality alternative provision for any children who need it;
 - Schools should agree to maintain fair and transparent admission arrangements which include highest priority for children with SEND and those in public care;
 - There should be a clear commitment from any schools entering into alternative governance arrangements, to support each other and other schools causing concern in the area, via the school led model;
 - Schools should be able to demonstrate how the formation of different forms of governance will enhance the capacity for self-improvement within the system and help develop effective teaching and leadership for the future;
 - There should be a clear plan for how the alternative school model will be led, governed and resourced which demonstrates good value for money and transparency over the use of public funds;

- Where schools enter into partnership or collaborative arrangements with schools outside of Bury, particularly where the Regional Schools Commissioner identifies a sponsor in respect of a school that is eligible for intervention, it is important that there is a continuing commitment to ensuring strong local support for Bury schools;
- Schools are actively encouraged to demonstrate that local people form the majority of each level of governance within the model adopted, and that the local authority and parents of children, elected by their peers, should be represented at all appropriate levels of governance.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 The educational landscape is changing rapidly and the local authority role is becoming increasingly a facilitation role, working within a diverse and autonomous school system.
- 4.2 It is important that systems and processes recognise this changing landscape, particularly in order to preserve the strengths of existing arrangements.
- 4.3 The school led model has been designed by all stakeholders, taking into account what works well in Bury, and good practice elsewhere, and provides strong foundations to govern at a time of significant change.
- 4.4 The principles set out in paragraph 3.4 recognises the reality of the changing landscape that will inevitably see different forms of school governance and leadership, and provides clarity to inform consideration of different arrangements by schools, their Governing Bodies/Boards, and enable open discussion about such arrangements between schools and the local authority.
- 4.5 Cabinet is asked to note the Council's role as a key partner in the school led model, and the intention to bring an annual report on school performance to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Panel of the Council as part of its role in those arrangements.

List of Background Papers:-

Appendix One – Education Strategy 2018 – 2020
Bury Education Improvement Toolkit

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