

# Agenda Item 8



## Policy and Scrutiny

### Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes, Executive Director of Children's Services

Report to: **Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **24 April 2015**

Subject: **Strategic Priorities for 16 – 19 (25) Education and Training for 2015/16 - Action Plan**

#### **Summary:**

The strategic priorities for post 16 education and training for the academic year 2015/16 were approved by the Council Executive in November 2014 following the consideration and recommendation of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee (CYPSC) in October 2014. The CYPSC requested that an action plan be put in place. The proposed action plan is attached at Appendix 1.

#### **Actions Required:**

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider the attached action plan and to agree any additional comments or proposals to be included.

#### **1. Background**

Under sections 15ZA and 18A of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009) local authorities have a duty to secure sufficient suitable education and training opportunities to meet the reasonable needs of young people in their area, and to make available to young people age 19 and below, support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training (section 68, Education and Skills Act 2008).

The Education and Skills Act (ESA) 2008 also places a duty on all young people to participate in education and training. From 2015, they will be required to remain in learning until their 18th birthday.

The Education and Skills Act 2008 places duties on local authorities in relation to 16 and 17 year olds. These relate to Raising the Participation Age (RPA):

- A local authority in England must ensure that its functions (so far as they are capable of being so) are exercised so as to promote the effective participation in education or training of persons belonging to its areas to whom Part 1 of ESA 2008 applies, with a view to ensuring that those persons fulfil the duty to participate in education or training.

- A local authority in England must make arrangements to enable it to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of persons belonging to its area to whom Part 1 of the ESA applies but who are failing to fulfil the duty to participate in education or training.

The context in which the Local Authority is required to fulfil these duties is one where the funding for post 16 education (for all but the high cost element of education for young people with SEND) is the responsibility of the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) for Apprenticeships and Traineeships. The Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) will have an increasing influence on how some funding e.g. European funding and post 16 capital funding is allocated in the future.

The deliverers of education and training (schools, academies, GFE colleges and independent providers) are independent autonomous organisations who are free to determine their own curriculum. As such the Local Authority does not have any powers or levers to determine the education offer in Lincolnshire. However, all providers are required to take into account the priorities identified by their local authority when planning their curriculum, and are required to demonstrate how they meet the needs of the local community, including employers, when inspected by Ofsted.

The role of the Local Authority therefore is one of strategic commissioner and influencer, and the means to do this is through engaging providers and other stakeholders including employers (via the Employment and Skills Board and the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership) to take action that supports the priorities. This will require working in partnership to secure the best outcomes for young people in Lincolnshire including ensuring they are well prepared to take up employment opportunities to meet the economic growth requirements in their local area.

The draft action plan (Appendix 1) sets out the required actions and desired outcomes that will be necessary to achieve this. This includes working across service areas and directorates within the Council.

It will be the role of the 14 – 19 Commissioner to co-ordinate, facilitate and evaluate implementation of the plan.

It should be noted that whilst the Local Authority can make every effort to secure action and behaviour that supports the priorities, there will continue to be some difficulties in achieving this in some cases. These were described in detail within the paper to the Executive in November 2014.

### **The role of Lincolnshire County Council as Strategic Commissioner**

There are a number of ways the Council could potentially influence the development of opportunities for young people, in particular to address the significantly higher proportion of young people under the age of 25 making up the total unemployed population in Lincolnshire (5% higher than nationally). These include:

- Establish Lincolnshire County Council as an exemplar employer in terms of providing increasing numbers of opportunities for young people including: employment; work experience; apprenticeships; traineeships; and supported internships.
- Ensure organisations delivering services on behalf of the Council provide similar opportunities for young people through the Council's commissioning processes, including encouraging suppliers to meet their requirement to demonstrate social value through provision of opportunities for young people.
- Explore the potential benefits to develop and implement higher and degree level apprenticeships to meet developing skills shortages and recruitment and retention issues for particular roles within the Council and its strategic partners including: Registered Social workers, Qualified Teachers and Nurses. This will not only address some of the Council's own future staffing needs, but will provide a true alternative to the traditional academic route by establishing progression routes for young would-be Apprentices right through to degree level. This would increase the attractiveness of the Apprenticeship route and therefore increase participation of 16 and 17 year olds.
- Identify and use opportunities to influence key stakeholders and partners through established networks and membership of statutory and non-statutory bodies, including the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) and its Employment and Skills Board (ESB), to secure commitment to increasing opportunities for young people and reducing youth unemployment. In particular to raise awareness of the links between social inclusion and economic growth, and the costs of youth unemployment and under-employment to the public purse in terms of welfare benefits, social care and poor health. This could include increased joint working and shared objectives between Children's Services and Environment and Economy Directorates and Committees
- Identify opportunities, for example through the work with schools to develop sector led improvement, and through other links e.g. with governing bodies, to encourage schools and other providers to collaborate to ensure continuing viability of some of the smaller providers including sixth forms and to ensure a continued appropriate curriculum offer for all young people throughout the county. This should include raising awareness of the issues in Lincolnshire through dialogue with the relevant statutory agencies including the funding bodies and FE and Schools Commissioners.

## **2. Conclusion**

Failure to provide leadership in terms of setting the priorities for post 16 education in Lincolnshire would mean Lincolnshire County Council would be failing to meet its statutory duties. The action plan sets out what needs to happen to ensure that the priorities will have some impact on outcomes for young people in Lincolnshire.

### **3. Consultation**

#### **a) Policy Proofing Actions Required**

Not applicable

### **4. Appendices**

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix 1	Strategic Priorities for post 16 education 2015-16 Action Plan

### **5. Background Papers**

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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