

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>10 MAY 2012</b>
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE HEREFORDSHIRE LEARNING COMMUNITY</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO AREA:</b>	<b>CORPORATE SERVICES AND EDUCATION</b>

CLASSIFICATION: Open –

## **Wards Affected**

County-wide

## **Purpose**

To seek Cabinet endorsement of the guiding principles for the Herefordshire learning community on behalf of the Council.

To adopt their use in policy-making and decisions for all business affecting the education and development of children and young people including the Council's root and branch reviews covering living, learning and working in Herefordshire.

## **Key Decision**

This is not a Key Decision.

## **Recommendation**

**THAT Cabinet:**

- (a) Endorse and adopt the guiding principles for the Herefordshire learning community on behalf of the Council.**
- (b) Ensures that the Council uses the guiding principles in policy making and decisions in all business affecting the education and development of children and young people.**

## **Key Points Summary**

- The 'Herefordshire learning community' is a collective term for all those who commission or provide education and training for children and young people between the ages of 0 and 19, or up to age 25 for young people with lifelong learning difficulties or disabilities.
- A commonly accepted and adopted set of guiding principles will challenge all Herefordshire learning community institutions and representative groups. It will challenge them to focus on what the guiding principles mean in terms of their respective roles and

responsibilities. It will also challenge them to be able to demonstrate the tangible actions they will deliver to make Herefordshire a place that gives every child and young person, no matter how advantaged or disadvantaged, the best possible opportunity to reach their full potential.

- Herefordshire aspires to be in the top quartile of performance for early years and education. There are some outstanding individual achievements, and some outstanding performance at individual early years settings, schools and colleges. However, with the exception of Key Stage 1, 2011 saw Herefordshire perform at below national average in all other Key Stages, although performance at post-16 is good. With fewer pupils/students and therefore reduced financial resources, Herefordshire faces increasing challenges to improve education and development opportunities for all of its children and young people, from early years through to age 19 and up to 25 for young people with lifelong learning difficulties and disabilities. The context for educational provision has changed significantly in recent years, with changes in responsibilities for the Local Authority, early years' settings, schools and colleges.
- The Herefordshire learning community recognises these challenges and opportunities as key drivers for change and, through consultation, broad support has been established for the following mission statement and guiding principles for the Herefordshire learning community:

#### **Mission statement of the Herefordshire learning community:**

Our business is about educating and developing EVERY child and young person within a cost effective and sustainable learning community. We will have the highest expectation and belief in every individual's talents and abilities - we will not turn our back on anyone.

#### **Guiding Principles:**

We will be able to show that we.....

- Have the highest expectations and aspirations for every child and young person.
- Educate and develop the intellectual, physical, social and spiritual needs of every child and young person to help them achieve their best and enable them to make a positive contribution.
- Provide high quality teaching and learning, care, guidance and support.
- Have a curriculum and other learning opportunities that meet the needs of Herefordshire children and young people.
- Contribute to mutually supportive relationships with parents, carers and other agencies that put the needs and aspirations of children and young people first.
- Work with businesses to create learning experiences that are relevant to the world of work and the economic needs of Herefordshire.
- Work with partners to ensure every child and young person has barriers to their learning identified early then reduce or remove the impact.
- Implement and commission appropriate collaborative partnerships within and across education phases to deliver high quality, cost-effective, education provision.

- Ensure that all providers of education contribute to the development of their communities and to the wider community of Herefordshire.
- The Herefordshire learning community will implement these guiding principles by using and developing existing groups and partnerships where possible to deliver the following outcomes:

- **Strong and effective leadership and management within education and the community.**

Groups such as the Herefordshire Association of Governors, Herefordshire Leadership Community, Diocesan partners and the Herefordshire Business Board will be key to ensuring a ready supply of ambitious, entrepreneurial education leaders and managers.

- **A curriculum which leads to skilled, confident and knowledgeable learners.**

Headteachers' groups, further and higher education providers, the Early Years' Strategy Group, the Strategic Planning Group, 11 – 19 Partnership, Herefordshire Business Board and the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership will all use the freedoms available to develop relevant, engaging and co-ordinated curricula and learning experiences that will give the children, young people and the economy of Herefordshire an advantage over other areas. Our aim is to be in the top quartile nationally for all educational performance measures within five years. For those where we are already top quartile nationally, we will be consistently in the top 3 against statistical neighbours.

- **A strong community role and resource.**

Education providers and multi-agency groups of statutory and third sector partners will play a leading role in their communities – with a locality focus that co-ordinates best use of facilities, assets and other resources to promote opportunities that meet local need cost effectively, including family learning, provision for 2, 3 and 4 year olds, adult learning, health, social and economic needs.

- **Removing and reducing barriers to learning.**

Multi-agency groups of statutory and third sector partners will play an increasingly vital role in the early identification of issues that prevent children and young people reaching their full potential. Actions will be delivered through a multi-agency approach to issues such as child poverty, families with multiple needs, children and young people with specific needs, parenting skills, poor housing, lack and cost of transport, language skills, bullying and disadvantage due to social identity or “protected characteristics” under equality legislation.

- **A more cost effective education system.**

Schools Forum and the development work of its Budget Working Group will play a vital role in ensuring that Herefordshire's learning community works together to ensure that it's diminishing financial resource, with falling pupil/student rolls and tough economic environment, delivers affordable best value across all sectors and age groups.

- Herefordshire's education institutions and representative groups will need to consider their roles and contributions to ensuring that the guiding principles are implemented successfully

through 'SMART' action plans. The Local Authority will use its knowledge and expertise of broader contexts to ensure education providers are able to collaborate for the greater good. Adoption of the principles by Cabinet will see the Local Authority use the principles to inform its planning, policies and to deliver its statutory duties as a commissioner of education provision and as a champion for children, young people and parents.

- The guiding principles are supported by the actions agreed by Cabinet as part of the 2012/13 Corporate Delivery Plan and will continue to shape future action plans. See Appendix B.
- The guiding principles will be taken forward by the Strategic Planning Group. This group will establish an implementation plan with agreed targets and milestones. This is not solely a Council plan, recognising the changing nature of responsibilities for education and the part a range of different organisations, including school governors, will play. An important element of this plan will be formal sign-up by individual institutions' governing bodies, management boards and their representative groups e.g. Herefordshire Association of Governors, Schools Forum, 11-19 Partnership, Early Years Forum, Headteacher groups etc. Sign-up by all will be sought and encouraged by the end of the current academic year.
- The implementation plan and progress on the adoption of the guiding principles will be monitored by the Strategic Planning Group and an annual report will be submitted to the Cabinet Member.
- The guiding principles and associated action across the Herefordshire learning community to implement them, will help to deliver the following long term outcomes of the Corporate Delivery Plan:
  - 1.1 Economic regeneration of Herefordshire
  - 1.3 Growing businesses, jobs and wage levels.
  - 1.4 Development of employment skills, including access to higher education.
  - 1.5 A reduction in health inequalities for the working age population.
  - 3.1 Sustainable education provision throughout Herefordshire.
  - 3.2 Improved intervention and support for children and young people and keeping them safe.
  - 3.3 Improved performance by early years and primary school pupils, including vulnerable groups relative to their peers.
  - 3.4 Reduced child poverty.
  - 3.5 Families and communities that are able to support all children and young people effectively.
  - 3.6 A reduction in health inequalities for children and young people.
  - 4.4 Ways of working that reflect the needs and priorities of people and place.
  - 5.2 Accessible services.
  - 5.3 A strong regional and national reputation for Herefordshire.
  - 5.5 Increased equality of opportunity.
  - 6.1 High quality assessments of need.
  - 6.3 High levels of customer and citizen satisfaction.
  - 6.4 A high quality workforce.

## **Alternative Options**

1. The guiding principles could be rejected. This would be counter to the wishes of the learning community, including academy schools, who have pressed for a vision and set of guiding principles to be explicitly stated and acted upon by the Council. There is widespread expectation that the guiding principles will be established and a consensus achieved about them.

## Reasons for Recommendations

2. The context for educational provision has changed significantly in recent years, with changes in responsibilities for the Local Authority, early years' settings, schools and colleges. The introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage has placed increased expectations upon early years' providers in terms of standards and quality of provision. Successive governments have introduced legislation to give greater autonomy to schools and to make it easier for popular and successful schools to expand. The current Government is introducing further legislation aimed at making such expansion easier for schools. The effect of this for Herefordshire at a time of falling school rolls is that surplus capacity at other schools, and possibly vulnerable schools in terms of pupil numbers, is increased. The role of the local authority as a commissioner of education and training provision and as a champion for parents, children and young people is enhanced and colleges, which have enjoyed a greater degree of autonomy for almost two decades, have had to react to increased Government expectations whilst funding in recent years has reduced.
3. There is a sense by all sectors of the learning community of the need to work together as one Herefordshire learning community, irrespective of sector or status. This set of guiding principles is relevant for all partners to sign up to. They are what unify us as a Herefordshire learning community.
4. With the impact of falling pupil and student numbers and the consequent reduction in revenue and capital resources, Herefordshire faces increasing challenges to maintain and improve education and development opportunities for all of its children and young people. This may be compounded in future by a national funding formula for schools which may not improve Herefordshire's funding position as a very low funded local authority area.
5. The Herefordshire learning community, all those who commission or provide education and training for children and young people recognise the need to respond to those challenges as a whole learning community.
6. The guiding principles have been established in consultation and partnership with the county's education and training providers. They offer a framework for all education and training commissioners and providers to plan and work collaboratively to ensure Herefordshire's children and young people get every possible opportunity to achieve their best.
7. This approach will help to enhance opportunities for children and young people into adulthood by ensuring that education and training links closely with the business and wider community needs in Herefordshire now and into the future.
8. It is intended and anticipated that commissioners and providers across Herefordshire will 'sign-up' to adopt the guiding principles. Endorsement and adoption of the guiding principles by Cabinet on behalf of the Local Authority will demonstrate the Local Authority's commitment and community leadership.

## Introduction and Background

9. The Local Authority has worked with partners to provide a set of guiding principles for the Herefordshire learning community. Equally, the national direction is for governing bodies to play the pivotal role in determining, with their communities, the vision and direction for their institution. A successful learning community, including early years providers, schools, colleges, training providers and the Local Authority will be underpinned by a collective set of

principles, so that Herefordshire children and families are to be assured of equality of access, opportunity and achievement wherever they live.

## **Key Considerations**

10. The role of the Local Authority has changed, and the accountabilities for school provision have fundamentally changed with the recent Academies Act. The guiding principles, and subsequent development of a jointly owned implementation plan, overseen by the Strategic Planning Group, will enable Herefordshire to operate effectively within the new context, championing the rights of children and young people to a high quality education. Herefordshire has successfully delivered high quality education across a range of indicators over a number of years and there are some outstanding and very good individual early years settings, schools, sixth forms and colleges. However, in overall average terms, 2011 saw Herefordshire's performance below national average at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4.
11. With fewer pupils/students and therefore reduced financial resources, Herefordshire faces increasing challenges to improve education and development opportunities for all of its children and young people, from early years through to age 19 and up to 25 for young people with lifelong learning difficulties and disabilities.
12. The context for educational provision has changed significantly in recent years, with changes in responsibilities for the Local Authority, early years' settings, schools and colleges.
13. Children and young people live in a global society and need the skills and understanding to function in this context. For Herefordshire, there are some really exciting possibilities with the potential freedoms within the national curriculum, academy freedoms and opportunities afforded through high speed broadband development.
14. Early years providers, schools and colleges are responsible for determining with their communities, the vision and direction for their institutions.
15. The guiding principles have been established in consultation and partnership with, and are supported by, the county's education and training commissioners and providers.
16. To be an effective education system, partners need to be able to sign up to unifying guiding principles for Herefordshire; understand what they mean in terms of their personal contribution; and commit to undertaking their role, responsibilities and actions to fulfil those principles.
17. The Local Authority and partners are developing co-ordinated strategic action plans that will deliver the guiding principles throughout the Herefordshire learning community.
18. The Local Authority will use the principles to deliver its statutory duties.

## **Community Impact**

19. The establishment of a clear set of guiding principles will have wide ranging community impacts, benefiting children and young people and their families across Herefordshire. The principle of forming collaborative partnerships within and across education phases will help to deliver high quality, cost effective, education provision. Work with businesses will create learning experiences for children and young people that are relevant to the world of work and to the economic needs of Herefordshire. The guiding principles also recognise the role of education providers in contributing to the development of their immediate communities and more generally to the wider community of Herefordshire.

## **Equality and Human Rights**

20. This decision pays due regard to our public sector equality duty. Specifically, the guiding principles for the Herefordshire learning community aim to reduce the impact of falling pupil and student numbers and reduced financial resources on the education and development of all children, young people and their families. They aim to remove or reduce barriers to learning for disadvantaged children and young people, be they specific to individuals or to identifiable groups such as Gypsies, Travellers and migrants from Eastern Europe.

## **Financial Implications**

21. Despite a recent marginal rise in birth rates, Herefordshire continues to experience falling school rolls as higher cohorts of pupils leave at age 16 and 19 than enter reception. A significant consequence of this is that Herefordshire's funding for schools is reduced significantly.
22. If the Herefordshire learning community is to ensure that it provides its children and young people with the best possible outcomes individually and that it meets the needs of the people and businesses of Herefordshire into the future, more financially efficient means of delivering these entitlements need to be found. Herefordshire Council has a duty to ensure that this is done in a planned way.

## **Legal Implications**

23. Herefordshire Council has a duty to commission sufficient child care places, school places, provision for children with disabilities and post 19 -25 provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. The Council also has a duty to ensure the quality of this commissioned provision.
24. Schools are responsible for determining their own collaborative arrangements with other schools.
25. The Local Authority remains responsible for school organisation in its area including decisions on school closures, where this is necessary, and determining the capacity of schools, in liaison with the DfE in the case of academies.
26. Successive governments have introduced legislation to make it easier for popular and successful schools to expand and the current Government is introducing further legislation aimed at making such expansion easier for schools. The effect of this for Herefordshire at a time of falling school rolls is that surplus capacity at other schools, and possibly vulnerable schools in terms of pupil numbers, is increased.

## **Risk Management**

27. There is a risk to outcomes for children and young people in all sectors that are affected by a market place approach to provision. This is already heightened for some providers which are struggling financially due to falling rolls. A strategic approach, by putting the guiding principles into practice with engagement from all parties to developing provision, including meaningful collaboration, will mitigate against this risk.

## **Consultees**

28. Consultation took place between November 2011 and January 2012 with a number of partners and representative groups including the Strategic Group, Schools Forum, Herefordshire Association of Secondary Headteachers, Herefordshire Primary Headteachers' Forum, 14 – 19 Partnership Group, Early Years Forum, Herefordshire Association of Governors and its Executive group, the Herefordshire Leadership Community and Trades Unions.

## **Appendices**

29. Appendix A – Background and context to the development of the mission statement and draft guiding principles for the Herefordshire learning community.

## **Background Papers**

- None identified.



## Appendix A

### Background and context to the development of the mission statement and draft guiding principles for the Herefordshire learning community.

1. The Local Authority is accountable for commissioning education providers and for ensuring that every early years, school, college and training provider plays its part in giving children and families an excellent start and preparation for life. The Local Authority also uses its knowledge and expertise of broader contexts to ensure education providers are able to collaborate for the greater good.
2. Early years providers, schools and colleges are responsible for determining with their communities, the vision and direction for their institutions.
3. Despite a recent marginal rise in birth rates, Herefordshire continues to experience falling school rolls as larger cohorts of pupils leave at ages 16 and 19 than enter reception. A significant consequence of this is that Herefordshire's overall funding for schools and early years' provision is reduced, both for Local Authority maintained schools and academies and all types of early years' providers.
4. Other than for Reception Year, Herefordshire's early years' provision is predominantly supplied by the private, voluntary and independent sector, with a small proportion being provided through 13 maintained nursery classes at schools.
5. Successive governments have introduced legislation to give greater autonomy to schools and to make it easier for popular and successful schools to expand. The current Government is introducing further legislation aimed at making such expansion easier for schools. The effect of this for schools in Herefordshire at a time of falling numbers of children in schools is that surplus capacity at other schools, and possibly vulnerable schools in terms of pupil numbers, is increased.
6. The draft guiding principles reflect the broad views expressed in partnership discussions between the Local Authority, the Herefordshire learning community, including the Strategic Planning Group, and the wider community of Herefordshire including the views of children and young people, local business and commerce.
7. For Herefordshire, there are some really exciting possibilities with the potential freedoms within the national curriculum and through academy freedoms. One such example is the opportunity that will be afforded by Herefordshire's high speed broadband development. Herefordshire is well placed to create a cutting edge ICT curriculum which focuses much more on teaching our children and young people how to make ICT work for them in their learning and through to adult life and economic wellbeing. Children and young people live in a global society and need the skills and understanding to function in this context.
8. The children and young people of Herefordshire need vibrant and effective early years' providers, schools, colleges and training providers to help them become successful adults.
9. Residents and businesses in Herefordshire need young people with the social skills, curiosity, ambition, competitiveness, ability to learn, and the right knowledge to help Herefordshire be a good place to live, work and invest.
10. The main purpose of the guiding principles is to provide challenge and stimulate a number of questions in terms of what they mean in practice for the Herefordshire learning community

and individual institutions. It is this thinking process which will help all partners to focus on what the guiding principles mean in terms of their respective roles, responsibilities, contributions and the actions they will deliver in educating and developing the children and young people of Herefordshire now and into the future.

11. To be an effective education system, partners need to be able to sign up to guiding principles for Herefordshire; understand what they mean in terms of their personal contribution; and commit to undertaking their role, responsibilities and actions to fulfil those principles.
12. Herefordshire has successfully delivered high quality education across a range of indicators over a number of years. The performance of young people by the age of 16 and those in full time education up to 19 has been strong in Herefordshire's schools and colleges, particularly in relation to level 2 (GCSE, vocational and applied learning programmes) and level 3 (A level and vocational and applied learning programmes). Performance has consistently been in or close to the upper quartile nationally on key A level measures with the largest provider of education in the county for 16-18 learners, Herefordshire Sixth Form College, having a 99.4% A level (or equivalent) pass rate and two of the four maintained school sixth forms achieving a 100% pass rate. Herefordshire's GCSE pass rates at Key Stage 4 are now just below the national average, with variation in the performance of High Schools. Although the performance of boys improved in 2011, and the gap between boys and girls achievement narrowed, there remains the need to raise boys' performance in some schools where the difference is too great.
13. The performance of children by the end of the early years foundation stage and across primary schools has not been as strong and as a result the Herefordshire Public Services Vision and Corporate Delivery Plan has set the raising of educational achievement and outcomes of children in early years settings and primary schools as a key corporate priority.
14. There were significant improvements in performance measures in 2011 in both early years and primary outcomes. The proportion of children reaching nationally expected levels of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage improved from 44.6% in 2010 to 56% in 2011. This is one of the biggest improvements in the country and moves early years performance from one of the worst nationally in 2010 to the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in 2011. There is still much to be done to build on this strong improvement and move performance into the upper quartile.
15. In primary schools the overall achievement of children by the ages of 7 and 11 also improved in 2011. The proportion of children reaching expected levels of attainment (level 2c+) in reading, writing and mathematics by the age of 7 improved and we are now above the national average for reading and writing. At the age of 11, we have also seen improvement in the proportion of children attaining expected levels of attainment (level 4+) in English and in mathematics and in English and mathematics combined. Overall 80.9% of children reached the expected level in English and 78.6% in mathematics and the proportion attaining level 4 in both increased from 71.4% in 2010 to 72.5% in 2011. Although still below the national average, these figures indicate an upward trend which, if continued, will move Herefordshire primary schools into the upper quartile of performance nationally within the medium term.
16. Governing bodies and management boards etc. will play the lead role in determining, with their communities, the vision and direction for their institution. The Local Authority, as part of Herefordshire's learning community, will use the principles to deliver its statutory duties. These include the commissioning of school places and school organisation. In this regard the Local Authority will work firstly in a facilitative way with individual or groups of schools to address long term issues of surplus places and falling roles. Where the principles of Herefordshire's learning community are not going to be achieved, the Local Authority will then take a more formal role in coordinating and leading reviews of local provision. This will include

consideration of alternative modes of delivery such as academy status and may, through due process, lead to some closures.