
EDUCATION GOVERNANCE REVIEW: NEXT STEPS

Report by Service Director, Children and Young People

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

25 January 2018

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides Elected Members with an update on the position of the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (Appendix 1) in response to the "Governance Review: Next Steps" paper (Appendix 2) published in June 2017 by the Scottish Government. It also provides a proposal regarding Regional Collaboration that has been produced by the South East Alliance in response to the Next Steps paper "South East Alliance: South East Improvement Collaborative: Collaboration to Deliver Excellence and Equity" (Appendix 3).
- 1.2 The Scottish Government published its Education Governance: Next Steps paper in June 2017 in response to the Delivery Plan and Consultation document "Empowering Teachers, Parents and Communities to Achieve Excellence and Equity in Education". Scottish Borders Council submitted an extensive response to this consultation (Appendix 4). At the heart of this response was a clear statement of the Borders' identity as a region in its own right, the importance of local partnership working in delivering education and the statutory responsibility of Scottish Borders Council to provide education and be accountable for the outcomes delivered for children and young people. This response also highlighted the importance of the partnership agenda in localities and communities and highlighted why services for children and young people must be part of local government governance, as the school exists within a wider concept of service delivery and cannot be separated out from the range of service provision and partnerships available locally if the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) principles are to be realised. This submission was very much in accordance with the submissions made by Headteachers through their local Associations and Trade Unions, who all declared nationally that improving the quality of education was not about new structures and the centralising of education.
- 1.3 The draft position statement by ADES (Appendix 1) listed (in Section B) the key issues. The South East Improvement Collaborative paper has addressed these issues by making clear statements on page 8 "The South East Improvement Collaborative Governance Arrangements", stating that

“Importantly the work of each local education authority will continue to be overseen through existing governance arrangements, maintaining local government accountability for the delivery of education services to each community and local area.”

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Council notes the South East Improvement Collaborative proposal as detailed in Appendix 3 and Scottish Borders Council’s continued role in the South East Improvement Collaborative.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Scottish Borders Council Education Service operates within a Children's Service (Education, Social Work and Community, Learning and Development), which is enhanced by a partnership approach with the NHS, Police Scotland, third sector and voluntary sector in delivering excellence and equity in the four priorities set out in the National Improvement Framework:
- i. Improving attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
 - ii. Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people;
 - iii. Improving children and young people's health and wellbeing; and
 - iv. Improving employability skills and sustained positive school leaver destinations for all young people.
- 3.2 It is the view of the Council that the drive on improvement must start at local level with local accountability and governance and in simple terms the Council views regional collaboration as activity, in addition to what is happening locally. Indeed regional collaboration is not new and Appendix 5 highlights the regional collaborative work that has been ongoing in the last eighteen months involving Scottish Borders, City of Edinburgh, East Lothian and Midlothian, with West Lothian partaking in some regional collaborative activity and Fife joining in with some of the work in the last six months. The Council recognises the importance and advantages of regional collaboration, but is quite clear that there are some concerns in the information and interpretation of the contents within the Next Steps Paper.
- 3.3 Scottish Borders Council has participated in discussions within the South East Alliance and is comfortable with the contents and proposals within the South East Improvement Collaborative Proposal document (Appendix 3). Officers are currently involved in the creation of plans and workstreams to support the work of the Collaborative. Clearly there are links with the Regional Collaboratives and the Consultation on the Education (Scotland) Bill 2018. A separate report (being considered as a separate item on this Agenda) provides the Council's responses to the Consultation.
- 3.4 The fundamental assurance the Council is seeking from Elected Members is the recognition that the heart of collaboration to improve outcomes for children and young people lies in the Scottish Borders. It is important to recognise that our staff at school, Council and partner level collaborate in a wide range of ways and have a broad range of roles, remits and responsibilities that sit outwith the scope of the Next Steps Paper and are key to delivering education provision for children and young people in the Scottish Borders, ie that the regional collaboration is in addition to all of this activity and responsibility and that governance of outcomes for children and young people, including educational outcomes, lies with the

Elected Members of Scottish Borders Council and not with a regional body. The Council has the legal responsibility for education provision and is held to account by parents locally for outcomes for children and young people. The Council's response to the Education Bill consultation highlights the vital partnership work between locality partners, community, the Local Authority and schools. Notwithstanding all of this, the Council also recognises the importance of collaboration at regional level where appropriate; it is the view of the Council that the South East Improvement Collaborative sets out appropriate next steps in response to the Next Steps Paper and recognises the journey of collaboration that was embarked upon eighteen months ago by the South East Alliance partners.

3.5 Conclusion

It is recommended that the Council approves the South East Improvement Collaborative proposal and Scottish Borders Council's participation in the South East Improvement Collaborative.

4 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

4.2 Risk and Mitigations

There are risks within the Governance Review that could affect the outcomes for children and young people in the Scottish Borders if some of the suggested steps are taken by National Government. The Council has outlined these risks in a separate paper being considered on this Agenda.

4.3 Equalities

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on this proposal and it is anticipated that there are no adverse equality implications at this stage as it is a consultation.

4.4 Acting Sustainably

There could be significant sustainability issues if elements of the Governance Review proceed as indicated in the Education Bill (considered in a separate report on this Agenda).

4.5 Carbon Management

No effects on carbon omissions.

4.6 Rural Proofing

There is no change to any strategy linked to rural proofing.

4.7 Change to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes to either the Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in this report.

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR, and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and their comments have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Donna Manson **Signature**

Service Director, Children and Young People

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Donna Manson	Service Director, Children and Young People

Background Papers:

Previous Minute Reference:

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Education Governance Review – Draft ADES Position Statement

Appendix 2 – Governance Review Next Steps – Scottish Government

Appendix 3 – South East Improvement Collaborative

Appendix 4 – Education Governance Review Consultation Response

Appendix 5 – South East Alliance Key Priorities

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Donna Manson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose TD6 0SA.