

DECISION-MAKER:	AUDIT COMMITTEE		
SUBJECT:	IMPROVEMENT IN SCHOOL PERFORMANCE		
DATE OF DECISION:	25 JANUARY 2010		
REPORT OF:	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LEARNING		
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY
None

SUMMARY

Southampton City council is one of twelve authorities identified by the Department Children Schools and Family with a high proportion of schools below the of 55% floor target of pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at Key Stage 2. The council has to submit its improvement plan by 29th January 2010. Audit Committee previously requested that with regard to Key Messages Section 8 page 4 – Actions contained in the Annual Audit Letter the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Executive Director of Children's Services and Learning be requested to attend the January, 2010 meeting to discuss the action being taken and proposed to address education performance and attainment in the City's schools. This report recommends how this recommendation is most appropriately addressed in line with Southampton City Council's Constitution and the proper review and scrutiny of performance related issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) That the Committee request Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to commission and consider a report from the Executive Director and Cabinet member for Children's Services on the Council's performance in relation to the target of pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 2 and performance and attainment in the City's schools more generally.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In order to ensure that the City's performance in relation to key service delivery in relation to educational attainment is reviewed and scrutinised and the performance of the Council encouraged and challenged in the most appropriate manner provided for under the Constitution via the role of Overview and Scrutiny in holding the Executive to account for the delivery of services within the City and to avoid duplication of Committee business across the Council and the inefficient use of resources in that regard.

CONSULTATION

2. Solicitor to the Council, Executive Director of Resources, Executive Director of Children's Services, Chair of the Audit Committee, Chair of the Standards

and Governance Committee.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

3. None – alternative options would run contrary to the role of OSMC as set out in the Constitution and require an avoidable duplication of resources.

DETAIL

4. Ed Balls, MP and Secretary of State wrote to all lead members and directors of children's services on 4th December 2009 reminding them of the need to maintain their focus on attainment at Key Stage 2. This letter stated that a fresh approach will be needed to raise standards in primary schools and introduced the World Class Primary Programme. All authorities were asked to submit plans to him by 31st March 2010 that set out how they planned to support their primary schools to improve
5. Southampton City council is one of twelve authorities that received a second letter expressing concern about the persistence of low attainment and the apparent lack of progress in those authorities, which had a high proportion of their schools below the of 55% floor target of pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at Key Stage 2. These authorities have been asked to submit their improvement plans by 29th January 2010. These plans will be considered by National Strategies and DCSF primary advisors, who have been asked to visit the authority to consider the plan. Funding for improving primary schools will be released when the plans have been judged to be robust and realistic. The support package available to schools will include funding for school improvement to help outstanding schools become part of supportive partnerships
6. The Head of School Standards is drafting the Improvement Plan for submission on 29th January 2010 and is scheduled to consider this with OSMC at its meeting of 21st January.
7. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee requested, at it's meeting on 17th December 2009, to scrutinise the Council's Improvement Plan referred to above and it is therefore considered appropriate to report to OSMC on the issues around attainment in the City generally and in relation to Key Stage 2 more specifically, what the council has already done to improve the City's performance in this regard and what it proposes to do in order to further meet the targets set both locally and nationally and to improve the quality and focus of education for residents of Southampton in accordance with the executive's approved priorities in this regard and the commitment in the Policy Framework to support and stretch educational attainment within the locality. It is the role of OSMC to hold the Executive to account for their performance in this regard, to offer advice and recommendations to the Executive for the improvement of service delivery in the City and to challenge the Authority in relation to the outcomes it delivers for the benefit of residents.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital

8. None

Revenue

9. N/A for this report. These will be detailed in the Improvement Plan and the report to OSMC.

Property

10. These will be detailed in the Improvement Plan.

Other

11. These will be detailed in the Improvement Plan.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

12. These will be detailed in the Improvement Plan.

Other Legal Implications:

13. These will be detailed in the Improvement Plan.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

14. These will be detailed in the Improvement Plan.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1.	None
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Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None
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Background Documents

Title of Background Paper(s)

Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)

1.	None	
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Background documents available for inspection at: None

KEY DECISION? No

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
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