

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET
SUBJECT:	JOINT WORK WITH THE ISLE OF WIGHT TO DELIVER EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES
DATE OF DECISION:	13 NOVEMBER 2012
REPORT OF:	CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES
STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY	
None	

BRIEF SUMMARY

This report provides information on the continuing partnership with the Isle of Wight Council and gives detail on the specific support to be provided in the area of school improvement support and challenge; the provision of statutory responsibilities in relation to those pupils with special educational needs and potentially other areas of children's services related activity.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) To agree to the continuation and further development of the working relationship with the Isle of Wight Council to provide school improvement and the provision of statutory as well as related education functions for the academic year 2012/13 and the following two academic years.
- (ii) To delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services and Learning to do anything necessary to support, plan and implement the collaborative working arrangements.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Both the Isle of Wight and Southampton City Councils are seeking greater efficiencies in their delivery. This joint working relationship, builds on the achievements of the past academic year, enabling both authorities to rationalise delivery whilst maintaining a focus on statutory duties and outcomes for children and young people.
2. The Isle of Wight Council has a number of statutory responsibilities which it is currently relying upon contractors to fulfil. This limits continuity or confidence amongst the school community. A traded services arrangement with Southampton City Council provides immediate access to a broader range of expertise than the Isle of Wight Council currently is able to secure. It gives some Southampton City Council staff the opportunity to work on a broader scale and will ease the sharing of expertise across schools in both local authorities.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

3. Not to work in partnership with the Isle of Wight Council to deliver school improvement, special educational needs and related services, would reduce the ability of both authorities to gain efficiencies in the management and delivery of services.

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

4. By the two Authorities working together, sharing expertise and combining resources and purchasing power; the level and quality of services being delivered will be sustained more efficiently and at less cost to the council taxpayer. The only changes our customers should see are improved services.
5. The Isle of Wight's schools and learning function has recently been reviewed as part of a council restructure and a number of key posts have not been filled on a permanent basis. The result is that the council does not have ongoing access to the range and breadth of skills and experience required to meet its statutory responsibilities.
6. Over the last year, Southampton City Council has retained an experienced team to support school improvement both in Southampton and on the Isle of Wight. The role and responsibilities of local authorities with regard to school improvement is changing with greater autonomy given to schools. Further changes are planned, including consideration of a national formula for school funding and an increase in the pupil premium. This is likely to further reduce the budgets that the councils will have for this area of activity. Standards on the Isle of Wight, particularly at primary school age 11, are low and the council is committed to working with schools, especially in the first few years of the new two tier school organisational structure, to address the standards issue.
7. With regard to the provision of the statutory educational psychology service on the Isle of Wight, their previous attempts to recruit qualified staff have proved unsuccessful. Over the last year Southampton has successfully recruited additional staff to enable effective delivery of services across both Local Authorities.
8. The Isle of Wight Council has rejected the option to seek a range of short term contracts with specialists from within the private sector and is looking to enter a longer term arrangement with Southampton City Council to ensure the continuation and development of the current services.
9. The Isle of Wight Council is seeking to enter a longer term arrangement with Southampton City Council to provide a range of staff with the relevant qualifications and expertise. At the same time the Isle of Wight will provide Southampton access to staff who have expertise and experience that we are able to utilise and would value.
10. This agreement will provide longer term sustainability for both Local Authorities by establishing a range of already agreed shared services and allowing for additional commissioned service to be added.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

11. A consistent schedule of charges has already been agreed and implemented to ensure that the full cost of services provided is charged. Any efficiencies made will form part of the Council's savings proposals.

Property/Other

12. There are no property/other implications.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

13. Each upper tier local authority must have a mechanism to monitor the performance of its schools (in particular, standards and finance) and the ability to provide advice to schools that are identified as failing or at risk of failing. Each Authority will maintain this duty through their Directors of Children's Services and Learning.
14. Local Authorities also have responsibilities with regard to distribution of the dedicated schools grant, school admissions, home to education transport, safeguarding, sufficiency of school places, and health and safety. These areas are not affected by this proposal and will remain the responsibility of designated chief and senior officers within the Council.

Other Legal Implications:

15. None

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

16. The proposals have implications for the Children and Young People's Plan and 14-19 Strategy

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KEY DECISION Yes

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Non-confidential appendices are in the Members' Rooms and can be accessed on-line

Appendices

1.	None
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Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None
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Equality Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out.	No
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Other Background Documents – None

Integrated Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:

Title of Background Paper(s)

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