

Report to:	EXECUTIVE
Relevant Officer:	Diane Booth, Director of Children’s Services
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Kath Benson, Cabinet Member for Schools, Education and Aspiration
Date of Meeting:	2 November 2020

2020-30 EDUCATION VISION

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 Further to the meeting on the 5 October 2020 (decision EX40/2020 refers) to present the updated 2020-30 Education Vision for Blackpool, a school lead strategy for improvement.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 That the 2020-30 Education Vision and the general direction of travel is accepted and adopted for a period until 30 September 2030 with an initial review after a period of two years, where the vision will be reviewed and re-presented.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 By accepting and supporting this vision, the Executive will be seeking to ensure improved outcomes for the children and young people of Blackpool and to ensure that the education system in Blackpool grows and adapts to be responsive to the changing needs of the children and communities that it serves.

The delivery of the vision will be through the existing Council services, reporting to existing boards such as the Children and Families Strategic Partnership Board and the Blackpool Education Improvement Board (previously Blackpool School Improvement Board).

- 3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No
- 3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council’s approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

- 4.1 There are no other options to consider, other than focusing on continuing with the current systems and not recommending any change.

This paper is the result of a closed consultation exercise with stakeholders, who were asked to express opinions about the suggested plans and direction. This resulted in the final paper, presented here.

5.0 Council priority:

- 5.1 The relevant Council priority is: “Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience”.

6.0 Background information

- 6.1 Blackpool is an outlier in the North West and England in relation to outcomes at GCSE level. Blackpool has always had a very large Pupil Referral Unit and a very large percentage of pupils who are permanently excluded. Additionally, Blackpool has a high percentage of pupils educated in special schools (in Blackpool and out of borough.) Blackpool has a statistically higher than average percentage of children who have become NEET (not in employment, education or training). This vision results from a number of years of discussions about these educational trends, after listening carefully to all stakeholders and consulting upon the proposed changes.
- 6.2 Blackpool School Improvement Board (now Blackpool Education Improvement Board) has worked in partnership with Blackpool Opportunity Area Board to improve school standards and levels of attainment and progress in Blackpool. A significant plan to improve these outcomes and to boost social mobility is in place, funded by the Department for Education’s Opportunity Area programme. Those programmes are incorporated into this vision.
- 6.3 This strategy is, therefore, the next stage of an ambitious plan to ensure that Blackpool children and families have access to an outstanding education provision in Blackpool. The vision has been presented to Councillors of the Children’s and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee for questions and comments on 24 September 2020. That meeting suggested a number of changes notably a requirement to include reference to how the strategy would address the needs of children identified as gifted and talented, how targets relating to Early Help and Place Based Working would be measured and monitored, and the more general need to ensure that the strategy was understandable to the public. In general, Members were very positive about the

aspirational nature of the Strategy and subject to the above amendments supported the vision of the strategy. The Executive at its meeting on the 5 October 2020 agreed, given the changes identified, to defer approval of the report until the updated revised strategy could be seen and approved by members of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee before the Executive approved the strategy. Work has now been completed and an updated strategy has now been attached at Appendix 3a. A further meeting took place with the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the 21 October 2020 which approved the updated document. The document includes some notes and highlighted amendments in it, the annotations will not be included in the final published but are included to give clarity to the Executive as to the amendments made.

- 6.4 The vision will be monitored internally with Children's services through the existing governance structure, reporting to the Children and Families Partnership and Blackpool Education Improvement Board and also through review by the relevant Scrutiny Committee.
- 6.5 The success of this vision will be measured through increased outcomes for children, at all stages of their education, incorporating attendance, exclusions, GCSE and A-Level equivalent outcomes and the numbers of children who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- 6.6 Consideration has been applied to possible re-structures of staff who work in existing provisions in the Primary SERF (Special Education Resource Facilities) and in the Council inclusions teams (within SEND and Educational Diversity (PRU). Staff have been made aware of the possibilities and key HR staff are involved and have been fully briefed. The strategy at Appendix 2a includes the broad principles of rationalising the existing offer and that Council officers will consult with all stakeholders about any possible changes and impact. Any changes to service will be undertaken after further decisions (Published Officer, Cabinet Member or Executive) are made.
- 6.7 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

- 7.1 Appendix 3a: 2020-30 Education Vision, annotated version.

8.0 Financial considerations:

- 8.1 A key aim of the vision and strategy is to reduce the forecast deficit position of the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. This will be reduced to a negligible level of deficit by 2025-6 financial year. It is considered this action, the deficit position will be well-over £5 million pound by 2025-6.

8.2 The financial position will continue to be monitored through the Schools Forum and the monthly Financial Performance Monitoring report presented to the Executive.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None applicable.

10.0 Risk management considerations

10.1 If the vision and the resultant plans are not implemented, the stability of the school funding system and the future outcomes of children in Blackpool will be at risk. Blackpool would remain static as a town in terms of educational performance and provision. The High Needs Block element of the Dedicated Schools Grant would remain over-spent, reducing the available budget for all schools.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 Equalities Act 2010 applies in relation to the fair and effective provision of education for all and breaking down barriers to education in Blackpool schools.

11.2 An equalities impact assessment has not been produced and it is not considered relevant.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None directly from the report.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 A consultation has occurred with schools and school leaders in Blackpool. This consultation occurred in June 2020.

13.2 Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee were consulted on 24 September 2020, the Chairman of that Committee has been invited to the Executive and a summary of the comments included in the report at paragraph 6.3.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

15.0 Key decision information:

15.1 Is this a key decision? Yes

- 15.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number: 7/2020
- 15.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No
- 15.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

16.0 Call-in information:

- 16.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No
- 16.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

17.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed: 23 October 2020 Date approved:

18.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

18.1

19.0 Executive decision:

19.1

20.0 Date of Decision:

20.1

21.0 Reason(s) for decision:

21.1

22.0 Date Decision published:

22.1

23.0 Executive Members in attendance:

23.1

24.0 Call-in:

24.1

25.0 Notes:

25.1