

# North Tyneside Council

## Report to Cabinet

### Date: 25 January 2021

#### Title: Ambition for Education – Education Strategy for North Tyneside 2020 - 2024

<b>Portfolio:</b>	<b>Children, Young People and Learning</b>	<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	<b>Councillor Peter Earley</b>
<b>Report from Service Area:</b>	<b>Health, Education and Safeguarding</b>		
<b>Responsible Officers:</b>	<b>Jacqui Old, Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding</b>	<b>Tel: 0191 643 7317</b>	
	<b>Mark Longstaff, Head of Commissioning and Asset Management</b>	<b>Tel: 0191 643 8089</b>	
	<b>Janice Gillespie, Head of Resources</b>	<b>Tel: 0191 643 5701</b>	
<b>Wards affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

## PART 1

### 1.1 Executive Summary:

North Tyneside has an Education system to be proud of. A strong performer regionally and nationally, this reflects the hard work of our Head Teachers and their teams, governing bodies, Elected Members, Authority staff and our fantastic children and young people.

The Authority believes that education is the catalyst for social mobility and the mitigation of deprivation; championing the learner continues to sit at the heart of our decision making.

Our North Tyneside Plan details our commitment for our people to be ready for school, ready for employment and our economy will be supported by our people having the right skills for the world of work.

As schools continue to remain at the centre of government's response to the global pandemic, it has cemented the need to build on our partnerships to transform lives, uncap the potential of our children and young people, and mitigate against the longer-term impact of COVID-19. In difficult times our schools have remained open and offered continuous support to our children, young people and the wider communities they serve.

Notwithstanding the current challenges, the purpose of this report is to outline the expectations and priorities of our Elected Members and the mechanisms with which the Authority will undertake its work, in partnership with our educational settings, in terms of:

- the 'Ambition' for Education strategy document which outlines the current priorities the Authority believes to be most important to our children and young people;

- the aims of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Inclusion strategy;
- scope of the Post 16 Review of provision across the borough; and
- the current financial position of our schools, including some of the pressures and challenges faced.

## **1.2 Recommendation(s):**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (1) agree the priorities set out within the Ambition for Education, which will be important to secure future success for our children and young people;
- (2) note the Post 16 Review which the Authority is leading on;
- (3) note the work undertaken with the partnership in producing the SEND Inclusion strategy;
- (4) note the work undertaken with schools in relation to SEND provision and agree to enter pre-publication consultation with schools, parents and other interested parties in relation to the amendment of the structure of provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs;
- (5) note the continued financial challenges faced by schools and the joint work to deal with those challenges;
- (6) agree to continue to support the work of the North of Tyne Education Challenge; and
- (7) agree to receive further reports as required.

## **1.3 Forward Plan:**

Twenty-eight days' notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 4 December 2020.

## **1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework**

This report relates to the following theme in the Authority's Our North Tyneside Plan 2020-2024:

- "Our People will be ready for school"
- "Our People will be ready for work and life; and
- "Our Economy will be business friendly, ensuring the right skills and conditions are in place to support investment."

## **1.5 Information:**

### **1.5.1 Background**

Over time, North Tyneside has established and sustained an Education system to be proud of, but the Authority is not complacent.

Historically, our schools and colleges have performed well in public examinations and against inspection frameworks with 91% judged to be good or better by Ofsted, but the

Authority also recognises that for our disadvantaged pupils there is more to do. At the end of the academic year 2019, performance data showed that despite pupils' overall outcomes comparing favourably with national outcomes, those of disadvantaged pupils continue to lag those of their non-disadvantaged peers and remain stubbornly below the national average.

Indeed, gaps in disadvantaged pupils' attainment widen as they move through the education system. The Authority are still to capture the full impact of extended school closure on the learning and achievement of children and young people. The abandonment of public examinations in 2020 means the longer-term impact of COVID-19 will only begin to be seen in 2021 and beyond. This remains a continuing priority for the Authority.

Despite the many difficulties for pupils in Y11 and Y13 in 2019/2020, most of the Authority's young people accessed their first-choice destination, and the proportion of pupils deemed as not in education employment or training (NEET) remained in line with national figures at 2.6% (national 2.4%). This is testimony to the determination of both school staff and Authority Officers and their work with our young people.

Central to the Authority's ambition for education is a desire to equip all students with the knowledge, skills and resilience needed to contribute to an unknown future and the world of work which may not be fully understood.

The body of this report covers the following areas:

- A recap and update on the work associated with the Education Review;
- A summary of the 'Ambition' for Education strategy document which outlines the current priorities the Authority believes to be most important to its children and young people;
- The scope of the Post 16 Review of provision across the borough;
- A summary of the aims of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Inclusion strategy; and
- the current financial position of our schools, including some of the pressures and challenges faced.

## **1.5.2 What matters most to children, young people, their families and carers**

Before discussing the policy and technical matters, Cabinet will wish to be assured the absolute focus of everyone involved is what matters most to children, young people, their families and carers. In particular:

### **1.5.2.1 Attainment and Progress**

The following provides some headline information around pupils' achievement:

- 72% of children reached a Good Level of Development at the end of the Reception year in 2019, improved by 49% since 2013 and in line with national average (71.5%).
- 83% of pupils in year 1 reached the threshold score in the phonics test. This is in line with the national figure.

- At Key Stage 1 across reading, writing, maths and the combined measure, North Tyneside has performed significantly better than the national figure at both the expected level and at the higher, greater depth standard.
- 67% of pupils achieved at least the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics (combined) at key stage 2. This is 2% above the national figure although a one percentage point decrease from 2018. However, at the expected standard at key stage 2 the local authority performance is significantly above the national level.
- At key stage 4 attainment in 2019 is lower than the national average: 64.1% of students achieved 4 or above in English and maths compared to the national average of 64.9%.
- Attainment 8 (the attainment of students across 8 qualifications) is 45.9 points which is below the national average of 46.8 points.
- 22% of pupils in North Tyneside achieved the English Baccalaureate in 2019; this is below the national average (all schools 25%). The Government's target, however, is for 75% of pupils to achieve the English Baccalaureate.
- At key stage 5:
  - The point score per academic entry is 33.5 which is above the England state-funded schools but below all schools and colleges. When expressed as a grade this is grade C+.
  - The average point score per vocational entry is 31.86 (distinction-). This is well-above the national average of 28.9 points (merit+).
- 91.9% of children go to a good or outstanding school. The National percentage of pupils in good or outstanding schools is 85%.
- 92% of parents and carers received their first choice Primary School compared to 90% nationally.
- 89% of parents and carers received their first choice Secondary School compared to 82% nationally.

### 1.5.2.2 Additional Needs

The following provides an overview pertaining to the presentation of SEND in North Tyneside:

- Just under 5,000 children and young people in North Tyneside schools have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), with 3,792 (12% of the overall school-age population) supported through a SEN Support Plan and 1,827 (3.6%) with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This is high when compared to national averages.
- For children and young people with an EHCP, the Authority has seen a 32% increase between January 2019 and January 2020. Again, this is high when compared to national averages. The Authority also place a higher proportion of our children and young people in specialist provisions than is seen nationally.

- The most prevalent need recorded by schools for SEND pupils in North Tyneside is Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), at 30%, which is higher than the national average. This is followed by Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH). The Authority is aware that the proportion of different primary needs is changing over time.

When it comes to pupils' achievements, the Authority's schools continue to perform well overall, comparing favourably to national averages in all public examinations in both attainment and progress. However, despite this positive picture, the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers remains wider than that seen nationally. This remains the Authority's greatest challenge as it navigates the additional challenges presented by the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on schools and wider communities.

### 1.5.3 A further update on the work associated with the Education Review

Before looking forward it is worth reflecting on some further updates on some of the recommendations identified in the Education Review.

#### **The delivery of major investment projects to improve the education estate**

2016/17 saw the successful completion of 4 schools in the Government's Priority Schools Building Programme Phase 1:

- Whitehouse Primary School;
- Longbenton Community High School;
- John Spence Community High School; and
- Marden High School.

Since then, a project to relocate and expand Backworth Park Primary School was completed in September 2018. The school has completed the transition into their new accommodation and has seen an increase in popularity and rising pupil numbers.

Work has recently concluded in relation to Cullercoats Primary School which has seen an extensive refurbishment project. The works are centrally funded as part of the Government's Priority Schools Building Programme, Phase 2.

#### **Planned Admission Numbers and Catchment Areas**

Following consultation, changes to catchment areas associated with New Build School at Backworth Park were agreed at Cabinet in February 2020. Catchment areas and Admission arrangements continue to be kept under review.

#### **Reviewing the Post-16 Offer**

In light of the pressures from COVID-19 and following the re-location of Queen Alexandra sixth form college from their North Shields campus to the Tyne Met campus at Wallsend, Lead Members and the Authority sought this opportunity to review the provision for Post 16 students across the borough.

The overriding ambition within this review, which will commence in Autumn 2020 and conclude in Summer 2021, is to ensure that children and young people have access to the best Post 16 provision that is based on the following proposed principles:

- All students, including those who are disadvantaged and with special educational needs and/or disabilities, can access well considered curriculum that are responsive to their needs and interests and those of employers;
- All students, no matter what their need are in receipt of high-quality teaching and learning experiences that build students' knowledge and skills progressively and prepare them well for the next steps in their education, employment or training;
- Students have flexibility and inclusivity of choice, with access to a broad range of academic, vocational and/or technical pathways; and
- There is longer term sustainability and suitability of any Post 16 offer.

#### 1.5.4 **Ambition for Education Strategy**

North Tyneside has an Education system to be proud of. A strong performer regionally and nationally, this reflects the hard work done by our Head Teachers and their teams, governing bodies, Elected Members, Authority staff and our fantastic children and young people.

Whilst there are some areas of North Tyneside in the 10% least deprived areas nationally, there are other areas of significant deprivation. Although the Authority's overall outcomes remain favourable compared to national averages, the learning and progress gaps between many disadvantaged students and their peers are wider than those seen nationally. Such gaps are forecast to have increased significantly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Tackling this and mitigating effects will be the overriding priority for all services who support education in North Tyneside.

The success of the partnership to date is evident in improved indicators, including overall attainment figures versus national averages, Ofsted judgements, reductions in exclusions and reductions in financial deficits; however, there is a great deal of work still to do to work towards our ambition of:

*'Making North Tyneside an even greater place for children and young people to thrive; where all can access a high-class education with a culture of inclusion and achievement.'*

Our 'Ambition for Education in North Tyneside' document sets out the priorities and targets for education from 2020 to 2024. It builds on the vision provided by 'Our North Tyneside Plan' and the 'Children's and Young People's Plan' Our targets align with the 'North of Tyne Education Challenge' and 'Joint School Improvement Strategy'

The priorities for our Ambition for Education are:

- 1.5.4.1 **Ready for School and Learning:** Focusing upon the importance of early language development and the continued focus upon developing key reading and speaking skills. In North Tyneside, statistics for reading in the primary phase compare favourably to national averages. However, gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged counterparts vary markedly.

The Authority will work collaboratively to improve early language acquisition and reading attainment across the borough. By 2024, through targeted solutions, gaps in speech, language and communication attainment at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) will be reduced, gaps in reading achievement will be closing and the Authority aims to see significant and sustained improvement in reading attainment. In Reception, 10% of pupils are very overweight and 25% have excess weight. By Year 6, these figures increase, so that 21% of pupils are very overweight and 35% have excess

weight. The Authority will work to reduce the increase in the proportion of pupils who are classed as very overweight or who have excess weight by the end of Year 6.

- 1.5.4.2 **Achievement for All:** Working together to develop a culture of inclusion where the achievement of our most vulnerable children and young people is prioritised to level up outcomes and work tirelessly and determinedly to close achievement gaps.

To facilitate a culture of 'Achievement for All' across North Tyneside through ambitious expectations for student progress, work to improve academic transition practices and continued work on the 'keeping children in school agenda.' The Authority aims to see a reduction in the spike of exclusions seen at Year 7 and Year 8 across the borough following transition from primary to secondary school, the Authority will see improvements to the progress of key stage 2 pupils within the middle school system and despite more recent inspections against the new inspection frameworks, a high proportion of schools will remain rated Good or better by Ofsted by 2024.

- 1.5.4.3 **Ambition and Employability Skills:** The Authority will continue to reduce the proportion of young people who are NEET, including minimising the impact of COVID-19 on these statistics.

The Authority will ensure there are an appropriate range and quality of progression pathways for young people leaving school and further education, an increased entry to EBacc and strength and depth across a suite of subjects and qualifications.

Working closely with North of Tyne and local business forum to create pathways appropriate to pupils needs and interests. This includes a review of Post 16 provision across the borough.

- 1.5.4.4 **Leadership, Recruitment and Retention:** The Authority will utilise the economy of scale across the North of Tyne Combined Authority footprint to ensure access to high quality, cost effective skills training for current and aspiring school leaders.

School leaders will be confident and competent to manage change and manage the impact of extended school closure, and any future surge of COVID-19 and there will be clear well supported and well signposted pathways for future leaders to become exceptional, inclusive leaders of the future.

- 1.5.4.5 **Emotionally Healthy Schools:** Identifying the Authority commitment to working with schools and colleges to tackle the increase in mental health and wellbeing issues and to promote positive mental health and wellbeing support for all.

Mental health conditions affect about 1 in 10 children and young people and it is estimated that 75% of mental health problems in adult life, excluding dementia, start before the age of eighteen. Pre-COVID-19 saw an increase in Education Health and Care Plans, approximately a quarter of which are accountable to Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.

Therefore, the Authority will work to develop resilience, confidence and independence, and reduce the level of mental ill-health in our children and young people. There will be strong commitment from all stakeholders to embed a strong emotionally healthy culture and to provide robust support for school communities of North Tyneside post-COVID-19.

#### 1.5.4.6 Recovery from the impact of COVID-19:

At the forefront of the development of our 'Ambition for Education' is recovery from the impact of COVID-19, this is instilled within the priorities and targets of our strategy. The Authority must adapt its practices to respond to the ongoing presence of COVID-19 within the community and work with schools to recover from the potential impact of an extended period of school closure.

The Authority aims to continue to have all North Tyneside schools open, to ensure the continuity of learning throughout the remainder of this period despite any further partial or full closures. The Authority will have effective procedures in place to control infection and manage any localised COVID-19 outbreaks. Schools will have a secure understanding of the term 'blended curriculum' and of the impact of extended school closure on pupils attainment levels, allowing the Authority to work collaboratively to target intervention and catch up programmes, particularly in specific groups of pupils who have been greatly impacted by school closures and periods of self-isolation.

#### 1.5.4.7 The Ambition for Education Implementation Plan

Sitting alongside the Ambition for Education strategy document will be the implementation plan.

Each priority will have several associated workstreams, which are designed to contribute to our success. They will change and evolve to reflect the educational landscape, and to respond to emerging issues and challenges as they occur. All workstreams will detail the actions taken. We have used the local and national data comparatives to produce a detailed performance matrix against which we will measure our success.

Many of our workstreams are already in flight. For example, we have detailed a transition workstream to address the disparity between the progress pupils make across Key Stage 2 within the three- and two-tier system. In reading there is a significant gap for our disadvantaged pupils of – 2.37. (based upon 2019 outcomes) Minimising this gap is vital to their long-term success. Likewise, we know we have rising numbers of pupils presenting with SEMH needs. We have a pilot programme already ongoing which looks to train all staff working within North Tyneside Schools to be mental health champions and have the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to support children and young people at the point of need. This is well in advance of the Children's Commissioners ambition of having at least one member of staff trained at the same level.

Our ambitions are bold and it is our intention that by 2024 the Authority will:

- Have mitigated the impact of COVID-19 on all children and young people's achievement, particularly those who are disadvantaged.
- Improve the health and communication of the Authority's youngest learners to make sure that they are ready to thrive in school and achieve their full potential.
- Work in partnership to maintain vulnerable children and young people in their local communities accessing their local mainstream schools wherever that is possible.
- Champion the learner, so that every young person has access to appropriate and engaging education, employment or training.

- Commit to transforming the lives and wellbeing of children and young people in the borough, ensuring every school has the resources to support them to be emotionally healthy and resilient.

The Authority will work in line with the pledges adopted across North Tyneside Children, Young People and Learning to achieve its ambitions with transparency and integrity. Safeguarding, a strong determination to closing the gaps for disadvantaged children and young people, vulnerable groups and financial and pupil place planning and management are inherent principles within each of the Authority's priorities and objectives.

In developing the Authority's ambition, priorities will be aligned to those already identified by the North of Tyne Combined Authority. The Authority have consulted extensively with headteachers and principals and referenced their input into the development of the Ambition for Education. Colleagues from across the Authority contributed to the document and endorse the priorities and associated workstreams.

For full detail of the Ambition for Education Strategy. (See Appendix 1)

### 1.5.5 **SEND Inclusion Strategy**

A borough which is inclusive for all children and young people with SEND and which enables them to thrive is a priority for them, their parents and carers, and partners across education, health and social care, Elected Members and wider stakeholders. There is already significant strategic investment in building and delivering inclusive services across education, health and care which meet the needs of children and young people 0-25 with SEND.

The Authority's SEND Inclusion Strategy will describe these priorities and those further identified through co-design and engagement with children, young people, their parents and carers, and the wider partnership, in developing the strategy.

All partners are committed to launching a joint, multi-agency SEND Inclusion Strategy which drives forward our collective ambition to:

*Make North Tyneside a 'great place to thrive'; where our children and young people with SEND, including those who may need support, to have a 'gloriously ordinary' life.*

The partnership has strong and effective working relationships, and this has resulted in strong evidence of high support and high challenge across education, health and care. The SEND Inclusion Strategy will further build and draw on the strengths of these strong foundations and shared commitment, so that the Authority can work in partnership and coproduction in addressing areas for development.

This Authority is ambitious and accountable in its aspiration for all children and young people with SEND and aim to ensure the joint offer facilitates this ambition and that of children, young people and their families.

Early engagement with children, young people and their families, and wider stakeholders, was impacted upon by the national lockdown. Engagement and co-production are central tenors and this work will inform the priorities set and launch of the SEND Inclusion Strategy to be launched in January 2021. (See Appendix 2)

## 1.5.6 Emerging Issues regarding SEN provision and resources

### National Context

The Local Government Association (LGA) Education Funding Report (June 2019) highlighted the significant national increase since 2014 in the number of children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and the proportion educated in special schools. Local authorities continue to be concerned about the level of High Needs funding to meet this increasing need.

### SEND in North Tyneside

North Tyneside, like many local authorities both regionally and nationally, is experiencing an increase in the number of children with SEND. There has been a notable increase locally in the number of children with: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and/or Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties; and profound Multiple Learning Difficulties (MLD).

All authorities are required to keep High Needs SEND provision under review. In North Tyneside, strategic work is on-going to strengthen early identification of need and place planning. This includes improving data and intelligence to inform the future pattern of educational provision and the nature of services commissioned. This work involves the SEND support service, the Special School Heads, the Clinical Commissioning Group, therapeutic services and other stakeholders on the SEND Strategic Board.

The Parent Carer Forum will continue to play a key role in co-production of educational provision and services for children and young people aged up to 25. The views of children and young people with SEND will also be important and plans are in place to inform, consult, involve and collaborate on changes to provision.

Notwithstanding the budget pressures, work has continued with schools and partners to increase the capacity of educational provision. DfE SEND capital was deployed during the last academic year to create additional places at Beacon Hill School, Silverdale School and changes to Additional Resourced Provisions (ARPs).

Work continues to consider all of the ARPs in mainstream schools. Many of the ARPs were established in 2004/05 to meet needs of children with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) which was then more prevalent. The continued review will inform changes required to enable the needs of children to be met more effectively in mainstream schools, highlight where places could be decommissioned in light of changing needs and identify action to ensure smooth transition routes from primary to secondary schools. The Authority's work around reviewing ARPs is consistent with the ambition of the SEND Inclusion Strategy.

## 1.5.7 An updated financial picture

Cabinet will be aware that school funding is a matter for the Department for Education; either by direct funding agreements with Academy Sponsors or delegated by local authorities to schools where budget management is the delegated responsibility of each Governing Body. Cabinet will also be aware that, while some funding is retained by the Authority the vast majority of North Tyneside funding for services to schools comes from schools themselves, who continue to pay in the order of £8m per annum for a full range of support services.

Governing Bodies, Head Teachers and their teams, the members of the Schools Forum and the Officer team have continued to work hard to handle the financial challenges. At the end of the financial year 2019/20 the position was: -

- The overall level of School Balances at the end of March 2020 was £0.165m compared to £1.599m as at March 2019. A reduction of £1.434m. This position is significantly better than the forecast at the start of the year when the outturn was expected to be an overall deficit of £4.661m - a £6.095m improvement;
- The total initial deficit approval requested at the start of 2019/20 was £10.052m. The outturn position for those schools in deficit was £9.289m which was an improvement of £0.763m from initial forecasts; and
- Of the eleven schools who requested deficit approval in 2019/20 four schools have reported an improved forecast position for the 2020/21 financial year and are no longer in deficit.

The 3-year budget planning submissions received from Schools in June 2018 relating to the period 2018-2021 indicated that 52 schools would require deficit approval in 2020/21. Revised 3-year budget plans received in June 2020 have seen this position improve significantly.

Despite this improvement the emerging position for 2020/21 is one of continued financial challenge for a number of schools, both in terms of deficit approvals and reduced surplus balances held by schools. In 2020/21, 12 Schools (4 Secondary, 6 Primary, 1 middle and 1 Special) have sought deficit approval to the value of £12.748m.

It is important to note that this position is based on two sets of issues. In the first instance, the pressure in some parts of the Secondary School system is a direct consequence of the current surplus capacity. This has dropped from the peak of 20% explained during the Education Review to 15%, and is expected to reduce further, to less than 10%, by 2022/23.

It is also the case, as a consequence of parental choice, settlement patterns and individual school choices, that surplus is concentrated in three Secondary Schools and specifically causes the challenges at Norham High School and Monkseaton High School.

However, as has been widely publicised, school budgets are also under pressure as a consequence of national policy and, while the move to the full implementation of the National Funding Formula has once more been postponed until 2022 Head Teachers in all of our schools are facing rising costs, with COVID-19 also causing financial pressure.

Work continues with schools to manage the situation and establish longer term sustainable solutions. The proposed next steps are described below as part of an update on work with specific schools and localities.

### 1.5.8 School Funding

In September 2017 the Department for Education (DfE) laid out plans to move to a separate National Funding Formula (NFF), covering Schools, High Needs and Central School Services. The DfE initially proposed a two-year transition period to implement the NFF for the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), where local authorities would continue to set a local formula to distribute funding to individual schools. However, in July 2019, the Government confirmed that, as many local authorities had already made

significant progress towards implementing the NFF in the first year, and to continue to support a smooth transition, local authorities would continue to determine local formulae in 2020/21.

For the financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20, in consultation with Schools Forum and the Authority's maintained schools, the Authority made the decision to maintain the existing Local Funding Formula (LFF) in full. This was, in the main, to afford Secondary schools in North Tyneside sufficient time to plan for any reduction in funding and to give those schools added stability for a further 2 years until the 'hard' NFF was anticipated to be implemented. The ratio of funding for 2018/19 and 2019/20 was 1:1.42 (42% higher) in favour of Secondary schools. In 2020/21, in consultation with Schools Forum and the Authority's maintained schools, the Authority made the decision to move the LFF 50% towards the NFF.

In July 2020 considering the need to focus efforts on meeting the challenges of COVID-19, the DfE confirmed that it was not changing local authorities' flexibility over the distribution of school funding in 2021/22. The DfE advised that the Government will shortly put forward proposals to move to a 'hard' NFF in future, which will determine schools' budgets directly, rather than through local formulae set independently by each local authority.

The Authority will need to set a plan to move to the NFF by April 2022 which is when it is anticipated that the Government will move to a 'hard' NFF following consultation during 2021. As in previous years, the Authority will need to determine the local formula to distribute funding to mainstream schools and academies for the financial year 2021/22. The formula will apply directly to maintained schools for the financial year, and for academies it will form the basis for their funding, distributed by the Education Skills and Funding Agency, for the year starting 1 September 2021. The local formula must comply with statutory guidance, but within these confines the final decision on the formula rests with the Authority after consultation with schools and the Schools Forum.

### **1.5.9 Financial Governance**

Following a review of financial governance by the Head of Resources and the Head of Education, Care and Safeguarding in April 2019 Schools Forum approved changes to the Scheme for Financing Schools in respect of Licenced Deficit Agreements. Since the changes were made there has been significant improvement in relation to financial governance across the majority of maintained schools.

Under the revised Scheme maintained schools that are new to deficit and require a Licenced Deficit Agreement are required to return to financial balance within a maximum timescale of 3 years. Previously the maximum timescale allowed was 5 years. Those schools that are already operating under a Licenced Deficit Agreement are now required to produce robust financial recovery plans which show the school achieving an in-year balanced position within 3 years with a view to start repaying the deficit in year 4 and subsequent years.

As described earlier in this report of the 11 schools who required deficit approval in 2019/20 4 schools were no longer in a deficit position for the 2020/21 financial year and did not require a Licenced Deficit Agreement.

The Authority recognises that school budgets are under increasing pressure with rising costs relating to pay awards including the implications of the Nation Living Wage and North Tyneside Living Wage, pension contributions, apprenticeship levy and inflationary

pressures on premises, equipment and materials costs. Therefore, the Authority has introduced a Support and Challenge Framework to help schools to deliver excellent outcomes for pupils within available resources.

The Support and Challenge Framework is aimed at helping schools currently in deficit recover financial sustainability as quickly as possible, it is also intended to introduce earlier intervention and prevention measures for schools showing signs of future financial difficulties. Under the Framework the Authority will allocate an annual RAG rating to each school based on the three-year budget plan produced by 31 May each year. Additional support will then be offered appropriate to the RAG rating of the individual school.

Finally, work has also begun to develop an approach to longer term planning. In particular, helping schools and their Governing Bodies to look further into the future and plan accordingly. Officers from the Authority have visited schools to review systems and best practice with regards to forecasting. This has been crucial to allow officers to understand the complexities involved and the challenges that schools face when trying to make estimates for the future.

For further details on Schools Finance see Appendix 3.

#### 1.5.10 **North of Tyne Education Challenge**

On 24 April 2019, the North of Tyne Cabinet agreed five priorities for a Joint School Improvement Strategy, which are:

- Ready for school;
- Educational achievement for all;
- Closing the gap;
- Career pathways; and
- Leadership recruitment and retention.

Specifically, the North of Tyne Cabinet agreed its priorities for an Education Challenge proposal as Ready for School; Achievement for All; and Leadership, Recruitment and Retention. As part of this, the North of Tyne Cabinet also agreed six Ambitions, which are:

- Making sure every young person is ready for school;
- Making sure all schools North of Tyne are Good or Outstanding;
- Aiming to make sure no one is left behind;
- Developing and delivering a universal mental health offer to all schools;
- Creating a North of Tyne Teacher Deal; and
- Creating a North of Tyne Leadership Deal.

The appointment of a Strategic Lead for Education across the North of Tyne has led to the development of a Joint School Improvement Strategy that identifies key actions that the Authority, as part of a Combined Authority, will take to work collectively to improve the outcomes of children and young people across the region.

Priorities and actions within the Joint Improvement Strategy align with the Authority's 'Ambition for Education' to gain the economies of scale and synergy required for success. The Joint Improvement Strategy was agreed by the Combined Authority cabinet in July 2020. Please see appendix 4, North of Tyne 'Joint School Improvement Strategy'

## **1.6 Next steps**

- The implementation plan will detail the specific actions taken by local authority officers, partners and school colleagues to drive through improvements against each priority.
- These will be reviewed regularly to evaluate the impact of actions and reported each term to the Lead Member.
- We will be returning to Cabinet with action planning around closing the gap
- Further reports will be considered by Cabinet in particular the challenges faced in relation to Schools Finance.

## **1.7 Decision options:**

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

### Option 1

Accept the recommendations outlined in section 1.2 of this report.

### Option 2

Not to accept the recommendations outlined in section 1.2 of the report.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

## **1.8 Reasons for recommended option:**

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

It reflects the priorities agreed by the Elected Mayor, Cabinet Member, Head Teachers and Chairs of Governing Bodies.

## **1.9 Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Ambition for Education

Appendix 2: Developing a SEND Strategy

Appendix 3: Schools Finance Overview

Appendix 4: North of Tyne Joint Improvement Strategy

## **1.10 Contact officers:**

Jacqui Old, Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding, tel. 0191 643 7006

Mark Longstaff, Head of Commissioning and Asset Management, tel. 0191 643 8089

Claire Emmerson, Senior Manager Financial Strategy and Planning, tel. 0191 643 8109

## **1.11 Background information:**

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

(1) [Review of Secondary School Provision Cabinet Report 14<sup>th</sup> October 2013](#)

(2) [Education Review Cabinet Report 8<sup>th</sup> September 2014](#)

- (3) [Education Review – Feedback from Prepublication Cabinet Report 10<sup>th</sup> November 2014](#)
- (4) [Education Review – Feedback from Publication Consultation 12<sup>th</sup> January 2015](#)
- (5) [Education Review – Feedback from Publication Consultation Supplementary Report 12<sup>th</sup> January 2015](#)
- (6) [Education Review Update Report 13<sup>th</sup> July 2015](#)
- (7) [Education Review Cabinet Report 11th July 2016](#)
- (8) [Education for North Tyneside Cabinet Report 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017](#)
- (9) [Education for North Tyneside Cabinet Report 30<sup>th</sup> July 2018](#)
- (10) [LGA Education Funding Report, House of Commons, 4 June 2019](#)
- (11) [Education for North Tyneside Cabinet Report 29<sup>th</sup> July 2019](#)
- (12) Education Policy Institute – School Funding Review

## **PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING**

### **2.1 Finance and other resources**

There are no direct financial implications from this report. Schools continue to face financial challenges and the Authority is working with them to deal with those challenges. Any future proposals as a result of national policy or local decisions that have financial implications will be brought to Cabinet as appropriate.

### **2.2 Legal**

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

### **2.3 Consultation/community engagement**

#### **2.3.1 Internal Consultation**

- Discussions have been held with the Elected Mayor and Cabinet Members and with the senior team leading services for our schools.

#### **2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement**

- Discussion with all Head Teachers at Head Teacher briefing on July 2020 and September 2020
- Consultation with Schools Forum – September 2020
- Consultation with all headteachers on Ambition for Education document from September to October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- Consultation with the CEO and principal of Tyne Met
- Consultation with Young Mayor and Youth Council – October 2020
- Consultation with SEND parents forum – October 2020
- Consultation with Children and Young People’s Board – November 2020

## 2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights issues arising directly from this report

## 2.5 Equalities and diversity

Inherent within the principles of working for the Authority's Ambition for Education is a commitment to work with school colleagues to close the gaps in educational attainment and progress, between our most vulnerable pupils and their peers.

## 2.6 Risk management

There are no risk issues arising directly from this report

## 2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report.

## 2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability implications arising directly from this report.

## PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive
- Head(s) of Service
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service