



Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 11 November 2020

To the Chair and Members of the
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Education, Skills and Curriculum Recovery – Themed Report

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Cllr Nuala Fennelly Children, Young People and Schools	no	no

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Chair and Members of the Committee with an overview of developments in Education and Skills during the initial lockdown phase of Covid-19, the collaborative work across the system in preparing school for a wider opening during June and July and the subsequent developments since the full reopening of schools in September. The report will focus on three related elements, which outline the role and direction of travel for Education and Skills work. These elements are:
 - i. **The coordination and development of a place based approach to Covid-19 during the initial lockdown period of March to July 2020**
 - ii. **The planning and coordination of a wider reopening of schools in September including the response to Covid-19 positive cases**
 - iii. **The resetting of education priorities across the system including the development of a recovery curriculum and the focus on emotional health and wellbeing in schools.**
2. The report aims to capture the development of collaboration and cooperation across the system in the initial phase of lockdown to ensure that schools remained open wherever possible for vulnerable children and those children with special needs. It will then outline the partnership working that developed as schools prepared for an initial wider opening during June, leading onto the preparation of schools, supported by officers

from across the council, for a full reopening of schools in September. Reference will be made to the unprecedented difficulties caused to our young people by lockdown with particular reference to the uncertainty and distress caused by changes to the examination and assessment system in August. The report will then consider the operational challenges encountered by schools and officers when faced with an unprecedented spike in positive and suspected Covid-19 cases during the first weeks of full reopening. The report will conclude with an outline of the strategic developments in curriculum planning and the fundamental focus on emotional health and wellbeing as the school system adjusts to the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.

EXEMPT REPORT

3. There are no exemptions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. It is recommended that the committee note:
 - The efforts of school leaders, teachers, schools and officers from across the council in working collaboratively to support children and families during the period March to July 2020.
 - The cancellation of all primary assessments in 2020
 - The difficulties and uncertainty faced by young people and schools caused by the assessment arrangements for GCSE and A Levels in August 2020.
 - The depth and detail of planning produced by schools, with support from officers across the council, to prepare schools for full reopening in September 2020.
 - The unprecedented challenges currently facing schools as COVID-19 cases increase
 - The ongoing work of officers in the areas of attendance and admissions to ensure that as many children and young people as possible are accessing high quality educational opportunities.
 - The comprehensive communications plan that has been developed and shared with schools and families throughout this period.
 - The development of a recovery curriculum based on research and best practice with a focus on emotional health and wellbeing.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

5. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a notable impact on all citizens of Doncaster and has put added pressure on all aspects of people's lives from their health and livelihoods through to their relationships and childcare. In this environment it has been, and continues to be, vitally important that the Council effectively delivers services in a way that supports all its residents including its children and young people as effectively as possible.
6. Local councils play the key role in the organisation of learning provision for children and young people. A co-ordinated approach to supporting and challenging all schools will ensure that all citizens benefit from improved outcomes and experiences in Early Years, Schools, and Post 16 settings.

BACKGROUND & NATIONAL FINDINGS

7. Covid-19 has affected every aspect of people's lives with children and young people seeing this pandemic impact on the four specific areas of physical and mental wellbeing, education, safety, and economic wellbeing and poverty (Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on children, UN: 2020).
8. A group of 30 organisations, including the British Association of Social Workers, Young Minds and the National Education Unit wrote to the Prime Minister calling for a recovery plan for children and young people's mental health. They ask the Government to take urgent steps to reduce the impact of the pandemic on children and young people's mental health. This highlights the growing concern around the impacts on mental health.
9. The closing of schools in March 2020 to all pupils except the children of key workers and those classed as vulnerable has resulted in millions of children and young people missing valuable learning, potentially affecting progress and attainment for years to come. This situation will be exacerbated by large numbers of children having to self-isolate in the event of outbreaks of positive cases within schools. This disruptive pattern of education will have a further negative impact on children's physical and mental wellbeing as opportunities for physical activity and social interaction are severely curtailed.
10. The cancellation of all primary assessments in 2020 and the difficulties and uncertainty faced by young people and schools caused by the assessment arrangements for GCSE and A Levels in August 2020 have further added to the emotional pressure on children and young people nationally.

OVERVIEW IN DONCASTER

The coordination and development of a place based approach to Covid-19 March to July 2020

11. On 20 March, following a government decision, all schools were closed to all pupils except the children of critical workers and those children in the vulnerable category. The school system in Doncaster has responded in a collaborative and coordinated way to the challenges posed by this lockdown and the overwhelming majority of our schools remained open throughout this period providing childcare for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children. One of the first actions was to establish a single point of communication with schools and settings. This single channel was named Edulog. Initially, this briefing was produced daily and began in the week before the lockdown before moving to three times a week from June. The briefing is circulated to all school, education provider and early years' setting leaders, business managers and partners, including trades union representatives. The briefing provides schools with up to date information, vital updates and signposts to both local and national guidance. With the shift in activity created by the wider reopening on June 15th, this briefing reduced to three times per week. Since the full opening of schools in September, this is now a weekly newsletter. The strength of Edulog is that it is a two-way channel of communication where school leaders can ask for advice and support on a wide range of topics and are confident of receiving a timely and appropriate response. The role of Edulog has become pivotal since schools reopened in September.

Early Years Providers

12. The Council has worked with Early Years providers across Doncaster to ensure that they have been able to continue to provide their services to the people of Doncaster, in particular for the children of keyworkers and those deemed vulnerable. This has meant ensuring that the provisions remained safe and financially viable, and that there was sufficient capacity, which there was.
13. New communication channels across social media platforms were created to enable providers to ask for information, advice, and guidance and access the latest government guidance relating to Early Years providers. The established Edulog communication channel has supported Early Years in schools in clarifying guidance in the form of frequently asked questions and answering specific queries. The communication stakeholder groups for school sector colleagues, and partnership working with the Council's communication team, has been a valuable forum for seeking and sharing advice, particularly around the various transition points in Early Years and supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities in nursery and reception classes.

Wider opening of schools from June

14. In May, the government announced plans for the wider opening of schools for specific year groups in primary schools. These were Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. Additionally, nurseries and childcare settings were encouraged to open more widely to provide extra childcare capacity for parents and carers. For secondary schools, the recommendation was for wider opening to Year 10 and Year 12 students from 15 June. Doncaster adopted a place based approach to wider reopening. Schools opened in a measured and phased way during June, following regular discussion with school leaders and with due regard to the latest advice from the Director of Public Health, Dr Rupert Suckling. The principle throughout has been that schools should only open when it is considered safe to do so. This remains our position as we work closely with schools to help them to stay open in the face of ever increasing numbers of positive Covid-19 cases and the resultant pressure on staffing and resources.
15. During June and July, schools worked closely with officers from Doncaster Council and other external partners including representatives from Trade Unions on a range of critical issues. This work was aimed at enabling schools to open more widely to designated year groups in the short term and then to plan for a full reopening in September. This work included:
 - Ensuring that schools had sufficient supplies of PPE, (Personal Protective Equipment) and enhanced hygiene supplies including extra hand washing facilities, adequate supplies of anti-bacterial gel and extra cleaning products.
 - Ensuring that risk assessments were robust to ensure the safety and wellbeing of both staff and pupils.
 - Following the government's announcement of plans to open schools fully from September, the Health and Safety team, in collaboration with colleagues from Standards and Effectiveness, Learning Provision and Public Health issued a revised risk assessment matrix for schools to enable them to plan effectively for a safe reopening in September.
 - Colleagues from School Transport and Schools Catering were also an essential part of this planning phase.
 - Considering a range of approaches to enable a full September opening to happen. These approaches have included the development of a protective bubble strategy for both classes and whole year groups, staggered start and finish times to avoid large numbers of parents congregating at the school gate at start and finish times, internal and external adjustments to entrances and exits, corridors and gates.
 - Consideration was also given to contingency plans if a full reopening was not possible due to local outbreaks, large numbers of staff absences or other external factors.

- These contingency plans include a blended model of learning that combines face to face teaching with remote learning, phased classes and year groups, late opening and early finishing to mitigate potential staff shortages and to allow more time for enhanced cleaning when necessary.

Outbreak Planning

16. In parallel with the direct work with schools, colleagues in Public Health developed a comprehensive Outbreak Planning framework to cover all elements of potential risk across the borough. Within this framework, a specific template for schools specified in detail the steps to follow in the event of a positive COVID-19 case within a school. This template covers prevention, suspected or positive case response, coordinated support, outbreak control measures including test and trace and infection prevention and control. This template has been shared with schools along with further documentation.
17. Schools were asked to acknowledge receipt of these documents and to confirm that they have appropriate procedures in place to deal with any potential cases or outbreak of COVID-19. This provides reassurance that robust procedures are in place and that schools have a good understanding of the process to follow. The EDULOG team send out regular updates to schools with the latest guidance and information. There is very close partnership working with the Public Health team now that schools are fully open. There is further detail on the current situation in the final part of this report.

Pupil Welfare

18. The council have been undertaking welfare calls to all young people identified as vulnerable since the commencement of lockdown in March 2020. The definition of vulnerable pupils was widened to include those who became more susceptible as a direct result of the Coronavirus pandemic and the national lockdown. This list comprised of children and young people who had to shield or who came from a home where another person was shielding. This was not only those officially identified but also those who electively shielded through personal choice. Other children and young people acknowledged as vulnerable were those where households became affected by consequential situations including increased domestic violence, financial hardship and or the impact of mental health issues. In normal circumstances, these children and young people would have been identified and supported by school staff. With that opportunity significantly reduced, the role of the Welfare calls became very important. Between 29th March and 31st August, the Council made 10,425 calls to vulnerable families. This does not include the Summer Welfare calls made on behalf of schools.
19. The authority recognised that the capacity of schools to conduct their own welfare calls would be unsustainable over the summer holidays, and

offered to support schools by making these calls on their behalf to those families they deemed most in need. To ensure care and continuity over the summer holidays, officers worked with schools to identify priority families for further calls and planned the content of these calls with schools. A team of officers continued to make these calls over the summer and have continued to work with schools to ensure further continuity throughout September.

20. DCST, (Doncaster Children's Services Trust) have continued their weekly calls and face to face meetings where necessary over the Summer. Interventions have been prioritised following multi-agency triage and a joint RAG, (Red, Amber, Green) rating process with schools and agencies.
21. Vulnerable children continue to be seen by Health Visitors and Social Workers in Family Hubs as required and CAMHS,(Children's and Adolescents' Mental Health Services) have continued to offer a blended offer where needed.
22. Where there have been acute concerns around health and wellbeing over the summer, these cases have been a priority for the senior Education Welfare Officer to work on with schools from the start of September.

Attendance

23. Overall absence rates in Doncaster's primary schools had decreased during 2018-2019 but remains higher than national average by around +0.2%. Overall absence in secondary schools remains above national average by +1.0%, an improvement of 0.4% from the previous year. Persistent absence in secondary schools reduced by 1.7% over the same period. Absence reduced by 0.4% in Doncaster primary schools during this period and is now broadly in line with National Average. The Persistent Absence figures reduced over this time in primary schools also from 11.1% to 9.6%. The attendance of our most vulnerable young people, those with an Education, Health and Care Plan and those open to social care is currently in line with National Average.
24. Since the start of lockdown, officers have worked to support schools with building and maintaining attendance, co-operating with settings, schools and DFE to ensure a clear local picture. This work was supported by the provision of welfare calls during the lockdown period and over the summer holidays alongside dedicated time from a variety of support services. This has been as a consequence of improving joint working with wider school system and the impact of our attendance strategy. Much work was done during the period post-lockdown to ensure that schools, the LA and wider agencies worked together to encourage wider attendance and protect vulnerable children. A hotline has been available to schools and families. Education welfare officers have been deployed to work with all schools and families and are supporting both with any cases that require additional help. Attendance from September 2020 and the wider reopening of schools has been broadly in line with the National Average and vulnerable

groups have enjoyed a good level of attendance, relative to the National Average.

Elective Home Education

25. During the lockdown period, officers conducted safe and well checks on young people who are Electively Home Educated and supported families with calls and advice. Officers have built on these relationships and have been working pro-actively in order to ensure that there are clear pathways of support for young people where elective home education is not suitable and this work continues, with some input from wider teams. Reflecting the national pattern, Elective Home Education has increased significantly since the start of the Autumn term (118 notifications as compared to 42 for comparative period last year) and officers are working with all cases to ensure parents are making informed decisions to electively home educate their children. Attendance officers are working on each case, with children, families and schools.
26. Where young people are returning to school from elective home education, this will be supported by officer time and in a number of cases additional expertise and advocacy. We have adapted a strategic approach to this area so that we are intervening earlier, whilst delivering the statutory process. We are working with each family in order to provide mediation and to explore the reasons for the decision and establishing future options, whilst also ensuring that parents are aware of the expectation that an appropriate education is delivered. We are maintaining welfare calls wherever we have concerns around safety and are working with other agencies where necessary. Where an appropriate education is not in place then further processes are enacted quickly to support a return to school. We are utilising centrally commissioned alternative provision through Big Picture Learning to ensure a secure return to school, supported by the behaviour and transition teams alongside welfare officers.

Exclusions

27. We have continued to see a rise in Permanent Exclusions over the 18 months prior to lockdown and have worked with schools to minimise the impact of this over the lockdown period, with very few schools calling in any exclusions. A cross-borough behaviour group has worked to produce advice and guidance to support schools to prevent exclusion and work with the wider system. We have optimised the Alternative Provision and decision making process to ensure that the right support can be accessed quickly and have had much interest around trauma informed approaches from the whole school system. This work has helped us to address more effectively wider local challenges including addressing key priorities from our local authority SEND inspection. These are establishing a local graduated approach, developing partnership working and supporting and challenging schools to provide a more inclusive curriculum. There has been much work done to ensure that this now reduces exclusions. This includes a written agreement with secondary schools around reducing the

overall number of exclusions and newly developed decision-making agreements to ensure that high excluding schools are not rewarded.

28. For this academic year, whilst no Fixed Term exclusion data is available to us, we can see a 50% reduction in permanent exclusions from this point in the previous year (six this year as opposed to 12 at this point last year) although we are aware that this number is rising quickly across the country. We are working with schools to prevent exclusions, with four having been prevented over the lockdown period.

Free School Meals

29. Throughout the lockdown period, we supported our school leaders to provide school meals for our most vulnerable children and families. This included vigorous lobbying of DFE on schools' behalf to ensure that vouchers were provided throughout lockdown and especially over the summer holiday period. As a Council, we were committed to fund free school meals over the Summer period in advance of the government's decision. We will continue to lobby the DFE to support the extension of free school meal provision.

Assessments and Examinations 2020

30. Primary Assessments

On 20 March, following a government decision, all schools were closed to all except the children of critical workers and those children in the vulnerable category.

There was then a further announcement from the Standards and Testing Agency on 27 March that all statutory tests and assessments for primary children were cancelled for 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. These statutory assessments were:

- end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 assessments (including tests and teacher assessment)
 - phonics screening check for Y1 and Y2 resits
 - multiplication tables check
 - science sampling tests
 - all statutory testing trials
 - Reception age assessments of Good Level of Development.
31. As a result of this cancellation, primary school performance measures will not be published for the 2019/20 academic year. Schools have continued with their own internal assessments to help with transition at all stages both within school and when moving to another school at the end of a key stage.

32. Primary schools will look to revisit previous learning in the first part of the autumn term whilst keeping the emotional wellbeing of pupils as their main priority.
33. The Department of Education has announced its intention to reinstate all primary age assessments in 2021. The first part of this new testing regime will take place in November when all Year 2 children will be expected to sit the Phonics Screening Test that was scheduled to take place in June.

Secondary Assessments (GCSE and A Level)

34. As with other statutory assessments, there were no GCSE or A Level exams taken in 2020. The original model for awarding pupils' grades was based on a combination of teacher assessment and predicted grades together with a statistical model that took into account schools' prior attainment and previous performance in these examinations. Following controversy surrounding the use of this model in Scotland and after the release of the A Level results in England, the government abandoned this statistical model and used teacher assessment to award final grades to students.
35. This confusion and uncertainty has caused much stress and anxiety amongst students and schools' priority at this time was to provide counselling and advice to students about future career and higher education options.
36. GCSE results were issued on 20 August, following the government's announcement to abandon the statistical model for awarding grades both for GCSE and for many vocational qualifications. This meant that teacher assessments were used to award grades for each individual student. Every student received their GCSE results on the allocated day but there was a delay in the issuing of vocational qualifications as these had to be recalculated and reissued.
37. There will be no DFE published performance tables for this year's assessments comparing individual schools performance and no regional comparisons. As a result, there will be no new Attainment 8 or Progress 8 measures published for individual schools, although the DFE are still considering publishing overall national data. The priority for schools was to ensure that students' stress and uncertainty over their results was kept to a minimum and the focus was on advice, guidance and counselling.
38. The DFE have announced a full programme of examinations for the Summer of 2021 although a number of options are being considered at this time with no final decisions made on either the timing or content of next year's GCSE and A Level examinations.

Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

39. Doncaster's combined average NEET/Not Known figure at the end of August 2020 was 5.8%. As the Y12 & Y13 cohort complete their education and training programmes, there is an increase in the number of young people registering as NEET with the Participation and Transition team. This team continues to track and monitor the 16-18 cohort, offering targeted support (impartial information, advice and guidance) to our young people, ensuring a positive transition into a destination of Education, Employment or Training. Young people in this cohort are also referred to Pathways to Progression (16-18 NEET Programme - part of Doncaster Children's Services Trust) and were invited to a virtual careers event **Your Future: Next Steps** on 27th August 2020.
40. The service continues to work closely with colleagues, partners and young people to establish the destinations of the Y12/Y13 cohort. To fulfil the service's statutory duties, robust tracking and partnership work continues on a monthly basis. This active work helps to lower the Not Knowns, identifies and offers support to the young people who are not yet in education, employment or training. These actions are designed to increase the numbers of young people in education, employment or training.
41. As per the table below, Doncaster's combined average NEET/Not Known figure at the end of August 2020 was 5.8%. This is lower than most of our statistical neighbours, lower than the Yorkshire & Humber average (16.1%) and lower than the national average (10.4%).

August 2020	Cohort (Y12/Y13)	NEET		Not Known		NEET & NK	Combined Total
		No.	%	No.	%		
Doncaster	6526	282	4.3%	98	1.5%	380	5.8%

42. The table below also highlights that Doncaster's average percentage of young people participating in learning at the end of August 2020 (91.8%) is higher than most of our statistical neighbours and higher than both the Yorkshire & Humber average (81.7%) and the national average (87.5%).

	Cohort (Y12/Y13)	NEET		Not Known		NEET & NK	Combined Total	In Learning
		No.	%	No.	%			
Doncaster	6,526	282	4.3%	98	1.5%	380	5.8%	91.8%
Yorks/Humber	115,393	4,130	3.6%	14,456	12.5%	18,586	16.1%	81.7%
England	1,144,805	39,057	3.4%	80,302	7.0%	119,359	10.4%	87.5%

43. The Participation & Transition Service, along with schools and partners from across the post-16 landscape worked together to ensure that there

was a comprehensive picture of the intended destinations of our Y11 leaver cohort. Any young people who had an intended destination that may have been impacted by COVID (or was still undecided) were then supported by their schools careers advisers to look at alternative options and back-up plans

44. The Participation & Transition Service then worked in partnership with all post-16 providers in Doncaster and neighbouring authorities, collecting details of the 'September Offers' that had been made to the Year 11 and Year 12 leaver cohorts. Any young people who we believed had not received a suitable offer or education or learning (to start by Sept 2020) was then targeted by letter, text and telephone, inviting them to attend the virtual boot camp that was arranged by the Opportunity Area and facilitated by Doncaster Chamber. Finally, to support GCSE results day, a triage team was pulled together, which included careers advisers from our local secondary schools, the Participation & Transition Service and also Careers Advisers from the Pathways to Progression Team (part of Doncaster Children's Services Trust). This triage team was facilitated by the Council Comms Team using social media platforms to ensure timely advice was offered to any young people who required support.
45. The Participation & Transition Service are now in the process of collecting the actual destinations of the Year 11 and Year 12 leaver cohorts, supporting our statutory destination tracking duties. Any young people who are found to be NEET will receive an offer of support (information, advice and guidance) from either the Participation and Transition Service or the Pathways to Progression Team.
46. Overall, this data clearly indicates a positive picture, which when combined with wider improvement measures will provide greater assurance for improved outcomes for the young people of Doncaster in future, as we have more young people in learning than regionally and nationally and our NEET/Not Known figure is much lower than both the Yorkshire and Humber and National Average.

System Developments since Schools reopened in September.

COVID-19 and Schools

47. Since the full reopening of schools in September, the Learning Standards and Effectiveness team together with colleagues from Public Health have been working very closely with schools to offer advice and support. This has been essential as the return to school saw a massive increase in the numbers of suspected cases being reported by schools particularly in the first two weeks of term. The volume of cases required a co-ordinated response from a range of teams across the council and a data gathering system has been developed that enables schools to report suspected and confirmed cases quickly and effectively to enable appropriate action to be taken to support schools. This system now provides a single source of reliable information, enabling timely and accurate reports to be produced for a range of audiences. The development of this system is a good

example of the close partnership working between teams within the council. Cases in schools are discussed at the Incident Management Team meeting and at the weekly Covid Control Board meeting. Daily reports are produced for senior management and the DFE.

Communication

48. Schools, parents, families and young people have received extensive support from the Council's communications team throughout this pandemic. In readiness for schools opening in September, comprehensive information was made available on the council's website. This information addresses key topics of interest and concern, including transport and travelling to school, health and safety approaches in schools, support with school attendance (particularly with guidance around children and family members displaying symptoms and testing positive for coronavirus, and quarantining following travel). There is further guidance on accessing wider school services such as after school and breakfast clubs, support for children's emotional wellbeing and changes to the curriculum. This guidance will continue to be promoted through the council's various channels as well as through a social media campaign to promote key messages for parents to address their main concerns. Schools are encouraged to promote this guidance to their parents and carers. Any concerns arising from parents will be addressed and added as new guidance emerges. The support packs sent out to schools containing comprehensive advice and guidance around Covid-19 have been particularly well received by schools.
49. Communication to schools will continue via the Edulog portal providing consistent updates and guidance. This has been essential in recent weeks, as new guidance has emerged around the identification and management of cases and outbreaks. Effective communication with parents is essential to manage anxieties and clarify correct procedures. In addition to Edulog communication, school leaders attend regular cluster meetings led by the Director of Children's Services where information is shared and key issues discussed. Additionally, The Operational Group meets regularly to discuss current issues for schools around management, Health and Safety, School Transport and any live issues that need to be discussed. These meetings have representatives from a wide range of teams and agencies including school leaders, Public Health, Health and Safety and Trade Unions. Additionally, there is a FAQ page on the Council website that is updated regularly, reflecting changes in advice and guidance.

Attendance

50. Since the full reopening of schools in September, attendance at all school phases has been affected by a range of factors. These include:
 - An increase in numbers of suspected and confirmed cases amongst both staff and children. This has led to daily fluctuations in attendance

levels particularly for secondary schools where large numbers of students have to self-isolate following a confirmed case.

- Anxiety amongst parents about children returning to school. This is being addressed through the communication channels described above, through welfare calls at an individual school level and the work of the Education Welfare Officers who are in regular contact with families of children who are not attending school.
- Increases in the numbers of families choosing Elective Home Education. This is a national trend and the Attendance Service are monitoring this situation closely and maintaining contact with these families.

51. Despite the factors outlined above, attendance across Doncaster's primary schools has remained around national average during September, whilst secondary attendance has been affected by significant numbers of students having to self-isolate. Current attendance figures stand at 86% overall with primary attendance at 91% and secondary attendance at 80%.
52. We continue to monitor attendance daily and have weekly meetings with DFE. The attendance of vulnerable groups has improved during September and is broadly in line with national averages. The admissions team continues to work to ensure that children are allocated an appropriate school place to support good attendance. This team have continued to work remotely through the pandemic, meeting all statutory deadlines.

Wellbeing and Curriculum

53. A research informed approach to a well-being recovery curriculum model has been established in partnership with the Council's Learning Standards and Effectiveness team, Educational Psychology team and other local partners. It capitalises upon and is underpinned by effective practice and principles from Early Years. The aim is to provide a reformed local cross-phase education system that aims to create 21st Century citizens that equips local people with relevant skills, competencies and attributes for future society. This approach is centred on the perspective of the learner where educators provide meaningful learning opportunities that connect to the real world. This plan represents genuine collaboration between all phases of education in partnership with local communities, employers and organisations. This work aligns with the revised priorities of the Education and Skills 2030 strategy.
54. Leadership networks have already been established. These are planned to take place half termly. The first very successful event was held virtually on 18 September and was very well received and attended.
55. There are three sub groups each with a different remit:
 - **Health and Wellbeing.** This group is focused on the promotion of emotional health and wellbeing, bringing all support services together and planning for the leadership seminar in November.

- **Teaching and Learning.** This group is developing new inclusive approaches to the curriculum taking into account the best local and international research.
- **Equity and Diversity.** The focus for this group is to develop a medium and long range strategy that engages all school leaders to develop new approaches and makes equity and diversity a priority in the development of any future curriculum.

Learning Provision Organisation Strategy

56. This revised strategy acknowledges the impact of the current pandemic on schools and settings and sets out the mechanism for identifying current and future demand. It then sets out strategies for meeting that demand by ensuring there are sufficient places in the borough. Furthermore, it recognises the need to support learners with individual needs including those children and young people with additional learning needs.

Standards and Effectiveness

57. The Learning Standards and Effectiveness Team have been supporting schools with the wide range of challenges faced by schools since fully reopening in September.
 - The team together with colleagues from Public Health have been supporting schools with the identification and management of suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases. This is achieved through the Edulog channel that has become the single trusted form of communication between the local authority and schools.
 - Following the government's announcement of their intention to open schools fully from September, the Health and Safety team, in collaboration with colleagues from Standards and Effectiveness and Learning Provision, have issued revised risk assessment matrices for schools to enable them to plan for a safe reopening in September, revising and developing risk assessments as necessary.
 - The team has also completely revised the three tier risk assessment model for the effectiveness of schools, tailoring this to the new priorities and challenges all schools are now facing. This has been extremely well received by schools and is a helpful tool in formulating self evaluation as well as providing the team with invaluable information about schools.
 - Members of the team are leading on the development of the Wellbeing and Curriculum work and are currently compiling best practice guidance on blended and remote learning in the event of partial closures and pupils having to self –isolate.
 - The team has also developed a comprehensive learning offer through the Buy Doncaster portal, Learning Futures.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

58. This section is not applicable.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

59. This section is not applicable.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

60.

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	<p>The continued availability of education during the Covid-19 pandemic has enabled key workers to access childcare to continue with their vital roles in Doncaster's key services.</p> <p>The recovery curriculum approach aims to provide local children and young people with the skills and competencies to access local employment and/or ignite interests that allow them to access further education locally.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	<p>Improved outcomes help all children and young people to make the most of the opportunities offered by the borough.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling:</p>	<p>The recovery curriculum approach aims to ensure children access meaningful education opportunities that exercises and promotes life-</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	<p>long learning. The further development of The Education and Skills Strategy 2030 will ensure that every child and young person is well prepared to meet future challenges.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	<p>Improved outcomes help children to make the best possible start in life. The emphasis on equity and diversity will ensure that no section of the borough's population is left behind</p>
	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	<p>The work contained within this report relating to Education and Skills will enable all our children and young people to benefit from improved outcomes and opportunities.</p>

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

61. Reputational Risk: There is a risk to the council that not achieving improved outcomes would result in a lack of future employment opportunities for young people. Children and young people with low educational outcomes increase the risk of being unable to reach their full potential. The added pressures on schools and settings caused by the current Covid- 19 Pandemic further compound this risk.
62. Financial Risk: There is a risk of increasing pressure on other council

resources due to limited educational opportunities for children and young people with low educational outcomes

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [HMP 21/10/20]

63. This reports sets out the council's response to assist schools and children in unprecedented times. A local authority has a number of specific statutory duties to children and young people. S17 of the Children Act 1989 provides that it shall be the general duty of every local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and so far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs. Under the Education Act 1996 the Council as an education authority has a duty to promote high standards of education and fair access to education. It also has a general duty to secure sufficient schools in their area, and to consider the need to secure provision for children with SEN. The Local Authority and schools have duties toward employees and children under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and related legislation

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [SB 21/10/20]

64. There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. The impact of COVID on the council's finances has been reported through the monthly revenue monitoring reports. All schools have had the opportunity to claim exceptional costs from DFE associated with Coronavirus (COVID-19) whilst continuing to receive their core funding allocations.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [JC 27/10/2020]

65. There are no specific HR implications in relation to this report

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [PW Date 20/10/20]

66. There are no specific technology implications in relation to this report.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [CW Date 22/10/20]

67. The links between health, wellbeing and educational attainment is well documented. The impacts of the COVID pandemic on the health and wellbeing of children and young people may not be fully realised for years to come, but early indications are that poor mental and emotional health has increased during the pandemic; the opportunities for movement and physical activity have been reduced; and for some children the option of a balanced school meal ceased when schools were closed.
68. The psychological effects of the COVID pandemic and lockdown on children and young people must not be underestimated. Loss of social

interactions, uncertainty over exam results, and changes to routines will have affected most children. Efforts to mitigate these effects and ensure children have the resilience to cope with these uncertainties must be considered. Pupils with vulnerabilities can often place them at a disadvantage with both educational and health outcomes. Previous, existing and emerging safeguarding issues are of particular concern for our most vulnerable children. The report describes how vulnerable children have been supported throughout the pandemic with well fair calls and support with free school meals. Support to return to education settings since the lifting of restrictions is also described. Improving accessibility and attendance to education is likely to have a protective effect and support the educational attainment and health and wellbeing outcomes of these children.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [PR Date 23/10/20]

69. Improved provision in all phases will ensure that all children's education and development continues to benefit; this will increase and strengthen our Local Offer and support our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
70. The Council's duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 when exercising its functions to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not share that protected characteristic, ensure fair access to learning and opportunities for all Doncaster's children and young people.

CONSULTATION

71. This section is not applicable.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

72. This section is not applicable.

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