



Performance and Contract Management Committee

5th January 2017

Title	Progress report on the Barnet with Cambridge Education partnership
Report of	Commissioning Director, Children and Young People Commercial Director
Wards	All
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Urgent	No
Key	No
Enclosures	None
Officer Contact Details	<p>Chris Munday, Commissioning Director, Children and Young People and the Director of Children's Services Chris.munday@Barnet.gov.uk 0208 359 2858</p> <p>Caroline Woolf, Commercial Director Caroline.woolf@barnet.gov.uk</p> <p>Ian Harrison, Education and Skills Director Ian.j.harrison@Barnet.gov.uk; 0208 359 7692</p>

Summary

In April 2016, Barnet entered into a new seven year strategic partnership with Cambridge Education to provide the council's education services. This report provides information on activity and progress during the first six months of this new delivery arrangement and in particular, reports on the outcome of a contractual commitment by Cambridge Education to review services within the first 100 days of the contract.

Recommendations

- 1. That the Performance and Contract Monitoring Committee consider and note the progress and performance of the strategic partnership with Cambridge Education since commencement on the 1st April 2016.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 In April 2016, Barnet entered into a new seven year strategic partnership with Cambridge Education (CE) to provide the council's education services. The partnership was established in consultation with Barnet schools following a detailed options appraisal and procurement process as set out in the report approved by the Council on 8th December 2015. The aim of establishing the partnership was to
 - Maintain Barnet's excellent education offer;
 - Maintain an excellent relationship between the Council and schools
 - Achieve the budget savings target for the service up to 2020.
- 1.2 The partnership is governed by a series of boards on which schools are represented that steer the strategic direction of the partnership in delivering school improvement, services for children with special educational needs and school place planning.
- 1.3 The contractual arrangements are overseen by a Contract Monitoring Board, chaired by the Commercial Director. The contract contains a schedule of performance indicators comprising key strategic and operational performance indicators that shape the payment mechanism. As with all services, performance indicators that are contained in the council's corporate performance monitor are reported quarterly to PCM Committee. The purpose of this report is to provide more detail on the performance of the arrangement in its first six months and in particular to report on the outcomes of a contractual commitment of CE to conduct '100 day' reviews of services within the contract.

A. Progress since commencement of contract

- 1.4 The key objectives in the first year of the new strategic partnership were:
 - The seamless transition of services at the start of the contract
 - Business as usual – delivery in accordance with service specifications, including existing traded services
 - Completion of detailed service reviews in the first 100 working days of the contract, then implementation of agreed actions
- 1.5 There was a successful TUPE transfer of staff from the council's Education and Skills service to Cambridge Education and from its catering service to Cambridge Education's catering sub-contractor, ISS, on 1st April. There was

a smooth transfer of all services previously provided to schools and the council, and new governance and performance monitoring regimes have been put in place.

- 1.6 Between May and August Cambridge Education established a number of service reviews and all of these '100-day' reviews were completed by September. Each review was led by an external adviser with specialist knowledge and experience in the service area. The reviews were undertaken to provide a clear understanding of current delivery and performance of the service area and to identify opportunities for service improvement, business development and efficiency savings within the context of national and local requirements over the period of the contract.
- 1.7 The reviews involved:
 - Scrutiny of a range of documentation across the service areas
 - Meetings/interviews with Heads of Service and team leaders
 - Discussions with staff
 - Stakeholder meetings
 - Desktop analysis of current performance data.
- 1.8 Overall the key findings were very positive with most services reported to be effective and well-regarded by schools. Relationships between services and schools were found to be good and a sound basis for an ongoing tri-partite partnership between Cambridge Education, the council and schools.
- 1.9 However, some aspects of statutory SEN service provision were performing less well. The council had alerted Cambridge Education to weaknesses in this area during the procurement process. In some cases, assessments were taking longer than required and some schools reported difficulties in liaising and communicating with the service. The review also identified that more could be done to communicate effectively with parents and families. As a result of the review, changes were introduced in June and July and performance has improved significantly, as indicated in section B5 below.
- 1.10 Traded services with schools were found to be of good quality with some having potential for expansion. One area of concern, however, was the traded Governing Body clerking service, which is relatively expensive and expenditure is exceeding income.
- 1.11 **Catering:** Cambridge Education's catering sub-contractor, ISS, carried out a similar baseline assessment of catering services. Since contract commencement they have worked closely with schools to ensure that catering staff in their kitchens receive training appropriate to their roles and that school kitchens meet the highest health and safety standards. Over the summer all school kitchens were wi-fi enabled to ensure access to CYPAD, an online kitchen management system that allows kitchen managers to order supplies, manage staff pay, etc. CYPAD also allows parents to pre-select and order meals for their children from their homes. A programme of visits to schools is currently being delivered by the ISS development manager to enable discussion about service delivery and the opportunities for schools to attract

investment from ISS in their kitchens. A separate Catering Contract Management Board has been established to discuss and resolve issues as they arise and to monitor the performance of ISS against the agreed KPIs.

B. Changes arising from the 100-day reviews

B1: Organisational structure

- 1.12 The Education and Skills service is being re-organised to increase the efficient use of business support resources and to provide a stronger infrastructure for supporting the growth of traded services.
- 1.13 In order to ensure efficient and effective business support functions across a range of specialist areas (communications, complaints and Members' enquiries, FOIs, data, IT systems, financial administration) most of these services will now be brought together under a single Corporate Services umbrella, under the direction of an Assistant Director, School Access and Corporate Services.
- 1.14 In order to hit the aspirational growth targets that are needed to balance the budget over the period of the contract, it is necessary to develop a common approach and infrastructure for traded services by merging some traded services with BPSI and developing a Barnet Partnership infrastructure for traded services. The new Barnet Partnership team will offer a one stop shop for traded services to schools whilst also developing common systems and processes and a centralised approach to business planning, service pricing and marketing.

B2: Investment in IT systems

- 1.15 The reviews have identified that IT systems and applications in use across the service are fit for purpose and cost effective but in some cases systems or applications have not been used effectively to date or there is duplication between applications or databases, which is often wasteful in terms of staff time.
- 1.16 The main priority developments proposed as a result of the 100 day reviews are:
 - Upgrading the existing servers and creation of additional data storage space.
 - Improvements in the existing functions of the main pupil database (Synergy) and development of new workflows in line with the revised processes identified in the SEN service review. Users in the SEN team will be trained on any new functions and workflows which are added.
 - A review of scanning capability available to the SEN team and development of a short-term approach to scanning, while considering longer-term options for the implementation of an EDRMS system (Electronic Document and Records Management System) in liaison with

the council and CSG (who continue to provide the IT service to the Education and Skills service through their contract with the council).

B3: Efficiency savings

- 1.17 The main areas of potential efficiency savings identified include bringing together business support functions, reducing the cost of SEN transport and reducing the cost of printing.
- 1.18 Over time, staff savings will be possible as a result of the re-organisation of business support functions (corporate services). Future savings will be possible by not filling vacancies and by reducing agency costs.
- 1.19 Efficiency savings have already been made in 2016/17 by the Transport Brokering team through the careful management of external contracts and by securing various efficiencies through the service level agreement for the provision of SEN Transport by the council's Passenger Transport Service (PTS).
Additional savings are felt to be possible through:
- Further changes to the service level agreement with PTS
 - The re-tendering of services for external transport providers
 - Market-testing of transport services and exploration of options for future delivery in collaboration with the council's commissioning team.
- 1.20 There is a substantial amount spent on printing and the storage and retrieval of hard copy documents. It is hoped to secure significant efficiencies, partly through changing staff behaviours and moving to paperless services, but mainly through the development of the proposed electronic document and records management system.

B4: Business development and growth

- 1.21 Building on the success of the Barnet Partnership for School Improvement, the traded school improvement service, which transferred to Cambridge Education along with other services, it is proposed to develop a Barnet Partnership service that will provide a one stop shop for Barnet with Cambridge Education traded services to schools, enforcing common systems and processes across traded services and a centralised approach to business planning, service pricing and marketing.
- 1.22 Opportunities to sell to other local authorities, independent schools, Multi Academy Trusts, out of borough schools, Academy chains, etc. will be pursued.
- 1.23 CE will also explore the option of developing and marketing school performance data products – e.g. the Route MAP application that CE have developed and shared with a number of Barnet Primary schools.
- 1.24 CE are in the process of re-shaping governor support services. The current traded service offer is being revised in the light of feedback from schools and

a new model is in development. A small team of Governor Advice Officers (GAOs) will offer strategic advisory support to Governing Bodies. Schools will be given an option of paying a higher rate than they currently pay for these staff to clerk the governing bodies as well as providing the GAO role or of saving money by using the GAO for strategic advice whilst employing their own clerk or using a clerk engaged by the Governor Services team on an associate basis. Moving to this new model will require fewer permanently employed staff and every effort will be made to avoid redundancies.

- 1.25 CE are reviewing the traded offer and charging arrangements for non-statutory Educational Psychology support provided to schools. Statutory functions will continue to be carried out without charging schools. CE also plan to extend the range of traded services offered to schools by our High Incidence Support Team, with a particular focus on offering support and training to school SENCOs.
- 1.26 In collaboration with the council's commissioning team, CE have bid successfully for project funding (including ESF funds) for post-16 activities (e.g. in relation to NEETs).

B5: Special educational needs

- 1.27 Key recommendations from the service reviews included a review of business processes to remove bottlenecks, identifying particular caseworkers to focus on different tasks to build up expertise, prioritising new Education, Health and Care plans to ensure they are completed on time and developing ways to increase stakeholder participation in the assessment process.
- 1.28 A major priority identified was the improvement in performance in relation to the completion of statutory processes. Under the SEN reforms introduced under the Children and Families Act, 2014 and a revised statutory SEN Code of Practice, which took effect in September 2015, local authorities are required to follow new procedures for assessing the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. New statutory assessments, leading to the production of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) for individual pupils must now be completed within 20 weeks (previously 26 weeks) and all existing statements (approximately 2000), and learning disability assessments for college students with learning difficulties and disabilities, must be converted to EHCPs by 31 March 2018.
- 1.29 The 100-day review for the SEND and Inclusion service identified a number of weaknesses and insufficient progress with the transfers to EHCPs and the timely completion of new assessments. In the first quarter of 2016/17 the percentage of new assessments completed within 20 weeks was below 25%.
- 1.30 Following, and arising from, the review, CE has:
 - Completed a Business Process Review of SEN statutory processes
 - Developed improved use of the Synergy database and associated workflows

- Removed bottlenecks to processes (e.g. reviewed use of the Complex Needs Panel and increased delegation of decision-making)
- Established some new posts and changed reporting lines
- Revised the transfer plan to ensure that resources are matched to the need to complete all transfers by March 2018.

1.31 The rate of completions of new assessments within 20 weeks has risen each month since June:

- July 32%
- August 63%
- September 78%
- October 88%
- November 94%

1.32 Action has also been taken to improve involvement of schools and other stakeholders in designing processes and documentation, including:

- Co-production sessions held with school SENCos and parents
- A new Voice of the Child SEN forum
- Maintaining and developing SENCo networks
- Local Offer reviewed and improved
- A Strategic Advisory Group established, including a range of partners, to advise on SEN strategy.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 As a new partnership, a report has been prepared to enable Members to review progress and outcomes of the work undertaken by CE to review education services in the first six months of the partnership.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

This report has been prepared to advise Members of the progress of the strategic partnership with CE in its first six months of operation. No alternative methods of advising Members were considered.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 The activities and action required arising from the findings of the 100 day reviews described above will be implemented.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1 The quality of the education offer is at the heart of Barnet's continuing success as a place where people want to live, work and study. It plays a crucial part in making Barnet family friendly, with many families attracted to the area by the good reputation of Barnet's schools. Excellent educational outcomes and ensuring children and young people are equipped to meet the needs of employers are key to deliver the Council's vision set out in its Corporate Plan 2015-20 for:

- Barnet's schools to be amongst the best in the country, with enough places for all, and with all children achieving the best they can
- Barnet's children and young people to receive a great start in life and
- For there to be a broad offer of skills and employment programmes for all ages

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.2.1 The management fee for the current contract with Cambridge Education is £10.8m per annum. The contract is expected to deliver savings of £850k between 2016/17 and 2019/20 as part of the medium term financial strategy.

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

5.3.1 The Council's Constitution, in Part 15 Annex A, Responsibility for Functions, states the functions of the Performance and Contract Management Committee include (amongst other responsibilities):

- a) Overall responsibility for quarterly budget monitoring, including monitoring trading position and financial strategy of Council Delivery Units.
- b) Monitoring of Performance against targets by Delivery Units and Support Groups including Customer Support Group; Re: The Barnet Group(Including Barnet Homes and Your Choice Barnet); HB Public Law; NSL (Parking Contractor); Adults and Communities; Family Services; Education and Skills; Street Scene; Public Health; Commissioning Group; and Assurance.
- c) Receive and Scrutinise contract variations and change requests in respect of external delivery units.
- d) To make recommendations to Policy and Resources and Theme Committees on relevant policy and commissioning implications arising from the scrutiny of performance of Delivery Units and External Providers.
- e) Specific responsibility for the following functions within the Council:
 - a. Risk Management
 - b. Treasury Management Performance
 - f. Note the Annual Report of the Barnet Group Ltd

5.4 Risk Management

5.4.1 CE maintain a risk register in relation to the delivery of the council's objectives of the strategic partnership which is reviewed by the Contract Monitoring Board, chaired by the council's Commercial Director.

5.5 Equalities and Diversity

5.5.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups; foster good relations between people from different groups.

- 5.5.2 The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day to day business and to keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services.
- 5.5.3 School improvement monitoring, supporting and challenging arrangements ensure that the quality of education in Barnet is maintained and improved. Outcomes for all groups of children and young people are monitored including children with special educational need, children in receipt of free school meals and children looked after. Barnet's Children and Young People Plan and Barnet's Education Strategy both have a strong focus on improving outcomes for disadvantaged groups of children and young people.
- 5.5.4 The delays in completing new assessments and slow progress in transferring statements to ECH Plans will impact disproportionately on pupils with disabilities as defined under the Equality Act 2010. Steps have been taken to resolve these issues as set out in paragraphs 1.30 to 1.32 above.

5.6 **Consultation and Engagement**
None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee, Agenda Item 7, *Education and Skills, Future Delivery of Services*, 18th November 2015
<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=697&MId=8259&Ver=4>

Council, *Education and Skills, Future Delivery of Services*, 8th December 2015
<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=162&MId=8341&Ver=4>