

REPORT FROM: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

DATE: 19TH MARCH 2019

Report Author: Sarah Astin, Localities and Policy Manager

Tel. No: Ext. 1782

E-mail: Sarah.astin@pendle.gov.uk

THE PENDLE CHALLENGE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Members with an update on the Pendle Challenge and how, as a district council, we can support its development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That Members' note the background of, and progress made, with the Pendle Challenge to date;
- (2) That Members' approve a financial contribution towards Positive Footprints Raising Aspirations Project, subject to other partner contributions.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) To raise awareness.
- (2) To carry out Pendle Council's community leadership role in supporting educational attainment and increasing aspirations for young people in Pendle.

ISSUE

Background

1. The idea to develop the Pendle Challenge arose initially from a group of Head teachers who recognised that GCSE results in Pendle have been low compared to other schools in Lancashire, and nationally.

An update report was brought to Pendle Council Executive in August 2017.

The Pendle Challenge

2. Head teachers representing Early Years, Primary and Secondary Schools, met to discuss how to tackle the attainment issue and how to involve other educators and wider partners.
3. The idea of the Pendle Challenge was based on that of the London Challenge, a project which began in 2003 to improve the performance of London schools (find out more here: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/dec/11/london-challenge-turned-poor-schools-around>)
4. A launch event took place in February 2017 at the ACE Centre, to involve education settings across the spectrum and other partner agencies to identify the key issues for Pendle in tackling attainment. About 80 people attended, along with keynote speakers.
5. Since then, the Pendle Challenge Steering Group has been meeting, including representation from the geographic clusters. The themes/projects that have taken place, or are underway, are:
 - The Pendle Reading Challenge – led by the Colne Cluster
 - Imagination Library – led by the Colne Cluster
 - A project on oracy, speech language and communication – led by the Nelson and Brierfield Cluster
 - A scheme for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and Recently Qualified Teachers (RQTs) in conjunction with Liverpool Hope University – led by Dr Paul Parkin at Park High School
 - Early Years Arts Project with Curious Minds and Manchester Metropolitan University – this was a short project, involving 2 early years settings
 - Enterprise Advisor Network – led by Pendle Council
 - Children’s University – part-funded by Pendle Council for 3 years
6. An action plan has been developed (see Appendix), with some key overarching areas of focus and a range of potential activities underneath this. These key areas of focus have directed the projects as above.
7. The Pendle Challenge has engaged the full educational spectrum in Pendle, and other partners, to work together in a number of ways with the broad aim of raising aspirations and improving attainment.

Positive Footprints

8. Aside from the Council’s support of the Pendle Challenge Project on matters such as the governance arrangements, the launch event and communications, the focus of our involvement has been on raising aspirations of children throughout each phase of schooling. Whilst it is generally anecdotal, low aspirations appear to be one of the key issues contributing to poor education outcomes of Pendle’s schools.
9. To date, the Council has provided financial support for the Children’s University (giving children access to extra-curricular activity to complement their in-school work) and Business In the Community (connecting businesses to schools), both aimed at providing school

children with the different experiences broadening their outlook, particularly with a careers-focus. This is complemented by the Enterprise Advisors Network – which is now active in all Secondary Schools in Pendle, Pendle’s participation in the Lancashire Careers Hub Pilot and activities led by the Council such as the annual Work Inspiration Event.

10. At the last Pendle Challenge Steering Group meeting in January, a presentation was received from Lesley Burrows at Positive Footprints. This outlined a proposal to work with primary schools in Pendle to support the Pendle Challenge’s broad aim of raising aspirations.
11. The specific project - ‘Raising Aspirations Primary’ – is aimed at primary school children to inspire them to identify their natural talents, believe in themselves and visualise a positive future. It builds on natural curiosity and shapes how they perceive the world in which they live and will eventually work. The project covers 3 modules consisting of four sessions and is delivered by Teachers in a way that is complementary to the national curriculum:-
 - **Module 1 – Identifying Natural Talents** – learning the difference between a quality and a skill, linking qualities and skills to future careers and recognising how to positively promote themselves;
 - **Module 2 – Looking ahead to future employment opportunities** – learning about careers and meeting businesses, knowing how to overcome barriers and understanding the important of aspirations and positive self-belief;
 - **Module 3 – Planning for the future, recognising and celebrating achievement** – learning about applying for jobs, preparing for interviews and valuing self-reflection/celebrating achievements
12. Delivery of the Project involves Positive Footprints providing all materials to each Primary School and training Teachers to deliver the sessions using the materials provided. Using this approach has proven to be sustainable as staff within the School both have the skills, knowledge and materials to deliver the sessions from one year to the next.

More details of the project can be found at <http://www.positivefootprints.co.uk/>

13. Policy and Resources Committee is asked to agree a funding contribution of £20,000 to this project, from the Gearing up for Growth funding stream. Delivery of the project would be subject to other partnership contributions (from Schools, which would equate to a total of £50,000). Such contributions are so far looking promising. This is in recognition of the clear impact that the Positive Footprints project could have on raising aspirations, alongside the role of Pendle Council as a community leader with a vested interest in working in partnership to improve the experiences and outcomes of our young people. This project would be taken forward as part of the Pendle Challenge.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy:

The Pendle Challenge and its related projects impact a number of policy areas in relation to young people, education and the wider economy.

Financial:

Other than officer time in supporting the work of the Pendle Challenge, a financial implication is the potential to contribute £20,000 towards the Positive Footprints project.

Legal:

There are no direct legal implications.

Risk Management:

Should the Pendle Challenge and its related projects not be supported, there is a risk that attainment in Pendle will continue to be lower than the Lancashire and national average and that, as a key player in Pendle, we will fail our young people.

Health and Safety:

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

Sustainability:

The work of the Pendle Challenge is to enable schools and wider partners to work collaboratively to establish sustained changes over time that will improve attainment and raise aspirations of our young people in the long term.

Community Safety:

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity:

The work of the Pendle Challenge is to benefit all young people in Pendle, whilst recognising that poorer attainment and lower aspiration can be linked to more deprived areas.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Pendle Challenge Vision and action plan

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

www.positivefootprints.co.uk