

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET****DATE: 26 NOVEMBER 2024****REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING****LEAD OFFICER: RACHAEL WARDELL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING****SUBJECT: EQUITY IN EDUCATION – NO LEARNER LEFT BEHIND – SURREY'S LIFETIME OF LEARNING STRATEGY****ORGANISATION STRATEGY PRIORITY AREA: NO ONE LEFT BEHIND / TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITY / EMPOWERED AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES****Purpose of the Report:**

Surrey has a diverse and vibrant education landscape and has educational outcomes at each key stage above the national average.

There are however some cohorts of children and young people who have significantly poorer outcomes than their peers in other parts of the country. A collaborative approach to establishing a common ambition for all learners in Surrey is essential to achieving equity and excellence for all learners.

Effective early years education is known to impact on how well children perform at school and research has shown that it also impacts upon their earning potential as adults.

Adults need to be able to access high quality learning opportunities to develop new skills or to secure new qualifications. In some areas of Surrey, adults are less able to secure economic well-being because of skills and qualification gaps and are therefore at greater risk of poor health outcomes. We therefore want to support the ambitions seen in the Surrey Skills Plan 2022. We also need to respond to the emerging skills gaps.

For these reasons, this strategy will embrace the opportunities for a Lifetime of Learning.

Through realisation of the strategy, the learning offer in Surrey will allow residents of all ages rich and diverse opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills they need at any time in their lives. Whether that is part of compulsory schooling, careers development, learning a new skill or even brushing up on maths and English to help children at home, we want to have a learning offer that meets the individual needs of learners at all stages of life.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approves the Surrey Lifetime of Learning Strategy and its publication.
2. Endorses the ambition of the Surrey Education Partnership that no learner is left behind, and agrees the partnership ambition, principles and priorities for children, young people and adults as outlined in the strategy for 2024-30.
3. Agrees to contribute as a key partner to the ambition, principles and priorities for children, young people and adults as outlined in the strategy for 2024-30.

Reason for Recommendations:

Whilst most of the children, young people and adults in Surrey achieve, thrive, belong and live well, this is not the case for everyone.

In Surrey, children from less-well off homes start school already educationally behind their peers, and this gap persists throughout school and into further and higher education. In many instances outcomes are weaker than similarly disadvantaged learners in other parts of the country.

In some areas of Surrey, adults are less able to secure economic well-being because of skills and qualification gaps.

We are aware that attendance is a significant factor in achieving the best outcomes, and that in Surrey exclusion from school and poor attendance is too high.

Studies have also shown direct links between education and factors such as health and life expectancy rates, with academic achievement playing a potentially significant role in reducing health inequalities by shaping life opportunities.

This strategy will ensure that we take the necessary actions across the partnership, to close the gaps in terms of educational outcomes, exclusions and attendance. It will also ensure that Surrey adults can access learning opportunities, in high quality provision, that develop new skills or secure new qualifications to help them succeed at any time they need to.

Executive Summary:

Business Case:

1. Attached is 'Educational Equity - No Learner Left Behind: Surrey's Lifetime of Learning Strategy' and the data pack which provides additional detail regarding the attainment and achievement we see in Surrey.
2. Surrey's Lifetime of Learning strategy outlines the vision for providing high-quality education to all children, young people, and adults, regardless of their background, challenges, or needs so they belong and thrive.

3. The strategy is in line with the Council's broader vision for 2030, that 'No one is left behind'. It aims to ensure that everyone in the community can thrive and contribute to society at all stages in their life.

Key Principles:

4. **Inclusive Education for all:** Ensure every individual benefits from education, overcoming inequalities, and removing barriers to participation.
5. **Respect and Fair Treatment to support positive and improved outcomes for all:** Promote an environment where all individuals, regardless of background or culture, feel respected and valued.
6. **Collaborative Partnerships:** Work with various stakeholders to improve educational outcomes and address the needs of a diverse population.

Co-production Approach:

7. The strategy emphasises a collaborative approach, involving leaders from all educational sectors, to take shared responsibility for improving educational outcomes. This includes a focus on transparency, shared accountability, and ensuring no learning setting is isolated.

Ambitions for the 4 lifetimes of learning:

8. **Foundations for Life:** Provide high-quality early education that supports children's physical, cognitive, and emotional development.
9. **Thriving in Learning:** Ensure schools offer inclusive, creative curricula that help all students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, succeed.
10. **Flourishing Young Adults:** Support young people in becoming confident lifelong learners, contributing positively to society and the economy.
11. **Economic Growth and Personal Well-being:** Provide adults with access to education that supports their ambitions and improves social inclusion and well-being.

Priorities (2024-2026):

12. **Our key priority is to improve educational outcomes for under-served groups.** We will do this through improvements to:
 - **Communication and Literacy:** Enhance language and literacy skills across all age groups, focusing on vulnerable individuals who struggle with these key skills.
 - **Attendance and Engagement:** Address issues leading to low attendance and disengagement, ensuring that all children and young people are fully involved in their education.

- **Emotional Well-being:** Support the emotional and mental health of learners by embedding well-being into the ethos and practices of educational settings.
- **Teacher and Leader Development:** Recruit, retain, and develop high-quality learning providers, providing ongoing professional development to ensure the best educational outcomes.

13. Creating better educational equity is crucial for several key reasons, all of which have significant implications for individuals, communities, and society as a whole:

14. Promotes Social Justice

- **Fairness:** Educational equity ensures that all learners, regardless of their background, have access to the resources, opportunities, and support they need to succeed. This addresses historical and systemic inequalities that have disadvantaged certain groups, particularly those based on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and disability.
- **Reduces Inequality:** By levelling the playing field, educational equity helps to reduce the disparities in outcomes that exist between different social groups. This is a step towards a more just society where everyone has a fair chance to succeed.

15. Improves Economic Outcomes

- **Workforce Readiness:** A more equitable education system ensures that all students are prepared for the workforce, leading to a more skilled and diverse labour pool. This can enhance economic productivity and innovation.
- **Economic Mobility:** Education is a key driver of economic mobility. Providing equitable educational opportunities helps individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds to improve their economic standing, breaking the cycle of poverty.

16. Enhances Social Cohesion

- **Inclusive Society:** When educational systems are equitable, they contribute to a more inclusive society where people from different backgrounds have mutual respect and understanding. This fosters social harmony and reduces the potential for conflict.
- **Civic Engagement:** Equitable education promotes active and informed citizenship. When everyone has access to quality education, they are better equipped to participate in democratic processes and contribute to the community.

17. Maximises Human Potential

- **Talent Utilisation:** Educational equity ensures that society can tap into the full range of talents and abilities of its population. When everyone can reach their potential, society benefits from a more diverse and capable workforce, leading to greater innovation and progress.
- **Personal Fulfilment:** Education is not just about economic outcomes; it also plays a crucial role in personal development and fulfilment. Equitable education enables individuals to pursue their interests and aspirations, leading to more fulfilling lives.

18. Long-Term Societal Benefits

- **Public Health:** Higher levels of education are associated with better health outcomes. By promoting educational equity, society can reduce health disparities and improve overall public health.
- **Reduction in Crime:** Studies show that educational attainment is inversely related to crime rates. By providing equitable educational opportunities, society can reduce crime and its associated social and economic costs.

19. Global Competitiveness

- **Innovation and Growth:** In an increasingly globalized world, countries that ensure equitable education for all are more likely to foster innovation and maintain competitiveness. Education fuels the skills and knowledge necessary for economic growth in the global market.
- **Sustainable Development:** Educational equity is essential for achieving sustainable development goals, as it contributes to poverty reduction, gender equality, and the empowerment of marginalized communities.

Implementation and Monitoring:

20. Surrey's Education Partnership (SEP) has been established to support the strategy's development and implementation, focusing on collaborative working across sectors.
21. The Strategy is aimed at ensuring that all learners, regardless of their circumstances, can access high-quality education and support throughout their lives. The strategy emphasises collaboration, inclusivity, and continuous improvement to close existing gaps in learning and well-being.
22. The list of key members of the Surrey Education Partnership include:
 - Lead Member for Children, Families and Education
 - Schools Alliance for Excellence
 - Health and Wellbeing Board representative

- Surrey County Council officers (Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, Principal of Surrey Adult Learning, Assistant Director for Educational Access, Quality and Improvement, Service Manager for School Effectiveness, Head of Early Years)
- School Phase Council Leads
- Diocese representative (schools)
- Academy Trust representatives Further Education Representative
- ALPs Partnership (representing apprenticeships in south)
- 6th form college representative
- Head Teacher of the Virtual School
- Health and Wellbeing Board representative
- Department for Education
- Independent Chair

23. Further representatives are being sought from employment, voluntary, non-maintained and higher education sectors.

Consultation:

24. This Surrey Lifetime of Learning Strategy has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders: school phase councils; further education and skills providers; the local area Additional Needs and Disabilities (SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)) partnership board; Surrey's Health and Wellbeing Board; Schools Alliance for Excellence and wider Council services.

25. We are now able to learn more about what our children and young people, parents and carers and community groups want from this strategy, and this will be an area we will focus on over the coming months.

26. The original rationale for the Lifetime of Learning strategy was described to Cabinet in January 2023. The report can be found here: [Cabinet Report 03.01.23 Final.pdf \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

27. The Health and Wellbeing Board was consulted on 17 July 2024. The draft ambitions, priorities and rationale behind the strategy were shared and endorsed.

Risk Management and Implications:

28. In a diverse school education landscape, the local authority retains statutory duties which include promoting the learning potential for all children in Surrey especially those who are vulnerable. We are required to provide education until the last Friday in June for children who will be 16 by the end of the summer holiday of that year.

29. Young people aged 16-18 must do one of the following until they are 18 years old:
- stay in full-time education, for example at a college
 - start an apprenticeship
 - spend 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering, while in part-time education or training
30. There is no statutory requirement to provide education after the age of 18 years but the Council recognises the value of ongoing adult learning in maintaining and developing skills for work and life.
31. An education strategy will ensure that all settings are committed to inclusion and to working in a collaborative way to benefit every child, young person, and adult.
32. The Lifetime of Learning Strategy focusses on continuing to ensure we champion educational excellence for all learners who are encouraged to achieve outstanding outcomes. This means creating the necessary conditions and environment for success and celebrating the achievement of children and young people in education and that of their learning setting. We will provide the opportunities for adults to address skills and qualification gaps allowing them to maximise their earning potential and live healthy lives. Often, we find that the most advantaged learners in Surrey are the highest attaining and the most disadvantaged the lowest. There is a close link between education and disadvantage. In areas where there are poor educational outcomes, there is often a corresponding level of poor health, poor housing, and high levels of unemployment.

Breakdown of Key Stage 2 (end of primary phase) and Key Stage 4 (end of secondary phase) results by school type:

Key Stage 2 2023 - % of pupils achieving at least the expected level in Reading, Writing and Maths (RWM) by school type

KS2 2023	Academy %	Maintained %	Surrey All %
RWM All Group	65	64.7	64.9
Disadvantaged	39.2	36.9	38.2
Non-disadvantaged	70.9	70.6	70.8
Disadvantage Gap	31.7	33.7	32.6

source Nexus 2023

33. Outcomes for pupils who are not from a disadvantaged background are very similar between academies and maintained schools at the end of Key Stage 2. However, outcomes for pupils who are from a disadvantaged background are better for those attending academies.

Key Stage 4 2023 – Attainment 8 and Progress 8 scores by school type

KS4 2023	Academy	Maintained	Surrey All
ATT8 %	51.1	49.4	50.8
Disadvantaged %	34.2	29.8	33.3
Non-disadvantaged %	54	52.6	53.7
Disadvantage Gap	19.8	22.8	20.4
Progress 8 score	0.19	0.16	0.17
Disadvantaged	-0.69	-0.9	-0.73
Non-disadvantaged	0.33	0.34	0.03
Disadvantage Gap	1.02	0.56	-0.14
<i>source Nexus 2023</i>			

34. This pattern is repeated at the end of Key Stage 4. Please note that the maximum possible Attainment 8 score achievable is 90 (based on achieving a Grade 9 in 10 subjects). A Progress 8 score of 0 indicates that on average pupils did as well at KS4 as other pupils across England who got similar results at the end of KS2. A negative score indicates lower than average progress, whereas a positive score reflects better than average progress.

Breakdown of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 results by district/ borough:

Key Stage 2 2023 - % of pupils achieving at least the expected level in Reading, Writing and Maths (RWM) by locality

KS2 2023	Elmbridge %	Epsom & Ewell %	Guildford %	Mole Valley %	Reigate & Banstead %	Runnymede %	Spelthorne %	Surrey Heath %	Tandridge %	Waverley %	Woking %
RWM All Group	74.2	59.6	63.2	63.8	64.4	60.3	61.4	62.2	62.6	70.1	64.8
Disadvantaged	44.5	28.6	33	33.8	43.8	33.3	41.1	37.3	36.2	36.2	42.6
Non-disadvantaged	79.6	65	70.1	70	69	69.2	67.8	67.7	69.7	74.9	69.9
Disadvantage Gap	35.1	36.4	37.1	36.2	25.2	35.9	26.7	30.4	33.5	38.7	27.3
<i>source Nexus 2023</i>											

35. Outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2 vary considerably between localities in Surrey. The proportion of children from a disadvantaged background who achieved at least the expected level in RWM at the end of Key Stage 2 ranges from 28.6% in Epsom & Ewell to 44.5% in Elmbridge.

36. For those from a non-disadvantaged background it ranges from 65% in Epsom & Ewell to 79.6% in Elmbridge.

37. The smallest disadvantaged gap (in favour of pupils from a non-disadvantaged background) is seen in Reigate & Banstead (25.2 percentage points), with the largest in Waverley (38.7 percentage points). In all localities, pupils from a non-disadvantaged background achieve better outcomes than their peers.

Key Stage 4 2023 – Attainment 8 and Progress 8 scores by locality

KS4 2023	Elmbridge	Epsom & Ewell	Guildford	Mole Valley	Reigate & Banstead	Runnymede	Spelthorne	Surrey Heath	Tandridge	Waverley	Woking
ATT8 %	53.7	52.3	54.1	52.3	47.5	52.8	47.8	50.8	42.7	52.4	49.9
Disadvantaged %	35.8	37.5	33.3	31.4	30.8	37.6	34.7	29.2	31.4	33.2	32.3
Non-disadvantaged %	56.4	54.2	57.3	55.8	51	55.1	50.4	54.7	45.3	55	53
Disadvantage Gap	20.6	16.7	24	24.4	20.2	17.5	15.7	25.5	13.9	21.8	20.7
Progress 8 score	0.31	0.29	0.44	0.31	-0.02	0.24	0	0.19	-0.3	0.22	0.17
Disadvantaged	-0.73	-0.35	-0.57	-0.99	-0.99	-0.4	-0.69	-0.82	-0.96	-0.74	-0.77
Non-disadvantaged	0.47	0.37	0.59	0.53	0.19	0.34	0.14	0.37	-0.14	0.35	0.34
Disadvantage Gap	1.2	0.72	1.16	1.52	1.18	0.74	0.83	1.19	0.82	1.09	1.11

source Nexus 2023

38. Once again, the picture is very similar at the end of Key Stage 4 in terms of variability between localities. However, the highest Attainment 8 outcomes for disadvantaged pupils at this stage are seen in Runnymede (34.7) and the lowest in Surrey Heath (29.2).

39. The highest Progress 8 score for these pupils is in Epsom & Ewell (-0.35, so still representing lower progress than national average) and the lowest jointly in Mole Valley and Reigate & Banstead (both -0.99). In terms of both the attainment and progress measures, once again pupils from a non-disadvantaged background achieve better outcomes than their peers in all localities.

Financial and Value for Money Implications:

40. There is not an additional cost of the proposed action as the proposal is within the agreed revenue budget programme. Schools Forum has agreed the funding of the Independent Chair of the Surrey Education Partnership from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The resource for the actions identified by the SEP Board is also from existing budgets.

41. The direct Costs of Education are provided through ringfenced grants such as the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for Early years; to Further Education to the age of 19 or 25 for those with Additional Needs. Further grants are received from the DfE to support both further Education and Adult Education. There are therefore no immediate General Fund implications to this report.

Section 151 Officer Commentary:

42. The Council continues to operate in a very challenging financial environment. Local authorities across the country are experiencing significant budgetary pressures. Surrey County Council has made significant progress in recent years to improve the Council's financial resilience and whilst this has built a stronger financial base from which to deliver our services, the cost of service delivery, increasing demand, financial uncertainty and government policy changes mean we continue to face challenges to our financial position. This requires an increased focus on financial management to protect service

delivery, a continuation of the need to deliver financial efficiencies and reduce spending in order to achieve a balanced budget position each year.

43. In addition to these immediate challenges, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2024/25 remains uncertain. With no clarity on central government funding in the medium term, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority, in order to ensure the stable provision of services in the medium term.

44. The Section 151 Officer agrees the recommendations of this report.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer:

45. The local authority has statutory duties to exercise its functions to promote and support the wellbeing and learning of all children in accordance with a range of statutory duties including those within the Education Act 1996, Children Act 2004, Childcare Act 2006. The education strategy will contribute towards the local authority meeting its statutory duties for children and young people through the commissioning and delivery of education and training provision for young people aged 16 and 17 years. There is not a statutory duty to provide education to adults over the age of 18 years unless they have an Education, Health and Care Plan. In line with the Surrey Skills plan the Council has identified the benefits to the residents of Surrey in maintaining learning opportunities into adulthood.

46. The public sector equality duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) applies to the decision to be made by the Cabinet Member in this report. There is a requirement when deciding upon the recommendations to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics, foster good relations between such groups and eliminate any unlawful discrimination. These matters are dealt with in the equalities paragraphs of the report and in the attached equalities impact assessment (EIA) found in Annex A.

Equalities and Diversity:

47. There have been no negative equalities implications arising from the proposals within 'Equity in Education – Surrey's lifetime of Learning Strategy.' [An Equalities Impact Assessment is attached as Annex A].

48. The provisions outlined within the ambitions and priority areas of the strategy will support the Council's commitment to equality and diversity.

49. The EIA screening tool indicated that a full EIA is required. This has been drafted and is due to be reviewed by the DEG in September 2024. The EIA has been included within these papers.

50. Outcomes for some learners in Surrey are significantly below those of their peers. The ambition of the lifetime of learning strategy is to mobilise a collaborative effort to close the gap in outcomes for our most disadvantaged learners.

51. The Surrey Skills Strategy outlines the pockets of deprivation and stark gap in workplace versus residents' earnings which requires intervention to ensure no one is left behind and all residents share in Surrey's success.

Other Implications:

52. The potential implications for the following council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	See below
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report
Environmental sustainability	No significant implications arising from this report
Compliance against net-zero emissions target and future climate compatibility/resilience	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	The Strategy is closely aligned to several priorities within the Health and Wellbeing strategy and has links to the JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment). See below.

CORPORATE PARENTING/LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IMPLICATIONS

53. This is a key document to ensuring that the highest priority given to the attainment of children in the care of the local authority.

PUBLIC HEALTH

54. Links to Surrey Health and Wellbeing Strategy:

- Priority 2 Outcome: Environments and communities in which people live, work, and learn build good mental health

- Priority 3 Outcomes: Children, young people, and adults are empowered in their communities; People access training and employment opportunities within a sustainable economy.

55. Links to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

- Wider Determinants of Health: Chapter: Education, Training and Lifelong Learning
- Economy
- Population, Groups and Communities - Chapters (various)

56. Emotional Health and Wellbeing

- Chapter: Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy
- Chapter: Emotional and Mental Wellbeing in Surrey Adults

57. The Lifetime of Learning Strategy is also closely aligned to the Surrey Skills Plan as both an input into the programme's design and as a mechanism for change. See [Surrey-Skills-Plan.pdf (businesssurrey.co.uk)]

58. The Surrey Skills Plan is closely linked with the No One Left Behind programme, Surrey's No One Left Behind programme takes collective and collaborative action to identify and tackle the challenges faced by those furthest from the labour market in Surrey.

59. It focuses on those aged 16+ who are at severe risk of being economically excluded without additional support to access skills development or employment.

What Happens Next

60. During the autumn 2024 term we will communicate the strategy to residents and stakeholders. We will engage with residents further to seek their views on the strategy to help inform next steps.

61. Surrey's Education Partnership (SEP) has been established to support the strategy's development and implementation, focusing on collaborative working across sectors. The Partnership will be steered by a Board that will oversee its work, provide strategic direction, and approve and monitor delivery of annual priorities.

62. The SEP will continue to recruit Board members which represent the Surrey community. The SEP will work with stakeholders to develop an action plan which will support us to meet the priorities we have outlined.

63. The SEP will monitor the strategy's impact, share, and celebrate best practice, and ensure that excellence and equity remain central to meeting the vision and priorities.

64. The Board will be led by an independent Chair who will convene the diverse representatives of the education and skills sectors and ensure all are able to contribute fully as equal partners.

Report Author:

Dr Julia Katherine Director of Education and Lifelong Learning (interim),
Julia.katherine@surreycc.gov.uk.

Consulted:

- Surrey Schools Phase councils;
- Further education and skills providers;
- The local area Additional Needs and Disabilities (SEND) partnership board;
- Surrey's Health and Wellbeing Board;
- Schools Alliance for Excellence
- Wider Council services e.g. Head of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, No One left behind network etc

This strategy will sit alongside other key strategies that support our broader ambitions for children, young people, and adult residents in Surrey.

- Surrey Community Vision for 2030
- Surrey Skills Plan 2022
- Surrey Inclusion and Additional Needs Strategy
- Surrey All Age Autism Strategy
- Best Start to Life Strategy
- Surrey Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Children and Young Peoples Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy

Annexes:

Annex A Equality Impact Assessment

Annex B Data pack- Equity in Education

Annex C Equity in Education – Surrey's Lifetime of Learning Strategy

This page is intentionally left blank