



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

21 June 2023

Report Title	Scrutiny Review of Improving School Attendance and Cabinet Response
Cabinet Portfolio	Children and Young People
Cabinet Member	Councillor Nova Charlton
Exempt Report	No
Reason for Exemption	N/A
Key Decision	No
Public Notice issued	N/A
Wards Affected	All
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Borough Priorities	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	X
	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	
	Create safe and strong communities and neighborhoods for all	
	Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy	
	Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture	
	Be a responsible Council	

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Children and Young People's Task Group held a spotlight review into improving school attendance on the 3 November 2022. The report of the Task Group was formally agreed by CYPS Scrutiny on the 24 April 2023 and is to be submitted to Cabinet for responses as per the Council's constitution.

2. Recommendation for Decision

Cabinet is recommended to:

- i. Approve the Action Plan attached at Appendix 2 that sets out the recommendations from the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Task Group into improving school attendance in St Helens; and
- ii. Provide the response to the recommendations at the next meeting of the CYPS Scrutiny Committee on 24 July 2023.

3. Purpose of this report

- 3.1 This report provides Cabinet with the Action Plan response to the recommendations of the Improving School Attendance Task Group, which has been agreed by the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee.

4. Background / Reason for the recommendations

- 4.1 At the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Workshop held on the 6 July 2022, it was agreed to hold a spotlight review in November 2022 to contribute to the wider work to improve school attendance in the borough.
- 4.2 The focus of the review was in response to overall absence rates in St Helens reported for the Autumn and Spring Term 2022/23 which were higher than regional and national averages.

5. Consideration of Alternatives

- 5.1 N/A

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The Action Plan attached at Appendix 2 sets out the Cabinet response to the recommendations from the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Task Group into school attendance. If agreed, the response to the recommendations will be presented to the meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee on the 24 July 2023.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at school or by education otherwise than at school.

8. Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Implications

8.1 No Community Impact Assessment was carried out for the purpose of submitting the report to the Committee for approval and submission to Cabinet.

9. Social Value

9.1 Good school attendance is linked to improved educational outcomes which in turn provides young people with qualifications and skills to enable them to take advantage of local, regional and national employment opportunities.

10. Sustainability and Environment

10.1 N/A

11. Health and Wellbeing

11.1 Good school attendance contributes to improved physical health and wellbeing through participation in physical education. In addition, attendance at school enables access to pastoral support and a range of activities that provide social enrichment.

12. Equality and Human Rights

12.1 It is the right of every child irrespective of age, gender, race, disability, or social background to have access to a fulfilling high-quality education.

13. Customer and Resident

13.1 It is proven that good school attendance raises aspirations and improved educational outcomes and reduces the risk of young people drifting into criminality, substance misuse and becoming victims of exploitation.

14. Asset and Property

14.1 N/A

15. Staffing and Human Resources

15.1 N/A

16. Risks

16.1 Absence from school contributes to low aspirations and poor educational outcomes. Young People who are persistently absent from school are less likely to have their physical and mental health needs met and are more likely to engage in risk taking behaviours.

17. Finance

17.1 Each year, the government allocates money for the local authority to distribute to all state funded mainstream schools including academies in the form of the Designated Schools Grant. It is estimated that as a result of non-school attendance a financial loss of approximately £250,000 a year can be attributed to lost school days.

18. Policy Framework Implications

18.1 N/A

19. Impact and Opportunities on Localities

19.1 Good educational outcomes are inextricably linked to school attendance and supports young people's access to further education and training and higher education enabling them to take advantage of employment opportunities at a local, regional, and national level.

20. Background Documents

21. Appendices

21.1 Appendix 1 – Improving School Attendance Spotlight Review

21.2 Appendix 2 - Action Plan