

Children's Services Committee

Item No.....

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| Report title: | Update on School Exclusions |
| Date of meeting: | 14 November 2017 |
| Responsible Chief Officer: | Sara Tough Executive Director Children's Services |
| Strategic impact Exclusions in Norfolk schools have been high for the last 2 years. Reducing school exclusions will ensure that more Norfolk children and young people are in continuous education that is meeting their needs and leading to good educational outcomes. | |

Executive summary

The rise in school exclusions in Norfolk over the last two academic years is widely known. This is mirrored nationally, however the numbers of Norfolk pupils excluded is higher than national.

It has been a Local Authority Education Services priority to work with schools to reduce exclusions over the last academic year. We are beginning to see the impact of this work with ongoing reductions in exclusions; a reduction of 10% last year compared to the year before and at the start of this academic year a significant reduction within the first half-term compared to a similar time last year.

The outcome of the Members Task and Finish Group (Autumn term 2016) resulted in an action plan which has been put in place and is built into the overall strategy, led by the Local Authority but in partnership with schools.

Detailed recent analysis of year end data gives a picture across the county which indicates permanent exclusions are not the norm in the majority of Norfolk schools. Our revised approach to exclusions data analysis further enables a targeted approach to intervention and challenge.

This is a brief update report which includes:

1. An outline of the priorities to reduce school exclusions and some key actions by the Local Authority
2. A summary overview of the year end data and early Autumn term 2017

Recommendation:

1. **Children's Services Committee is asked to note the content of this paper, endorse the actions advocated in relation to the Local Authority role in intervention, challenge and support for the reduction of school exclusions.**

1. Exclusions – a priority

- 1.1 The Local Authority has the reduction of school exclusions as a key priority. Over the last Academic year there have been a range of actions to improve intervention, challenge and support to the school system that have been discussed and developed in partnership with Norfolk school leaders. The Members Task and Finish Group which reported in the spring term of the last academic year resulted in an action plan which has been put in place. An

update of the progress against that action plan was brought to Committee in June 2017. The Assistant Director Children's Services, Education has recently reviewed, and restructured Education Services and this enables a sharper focus on this priority.

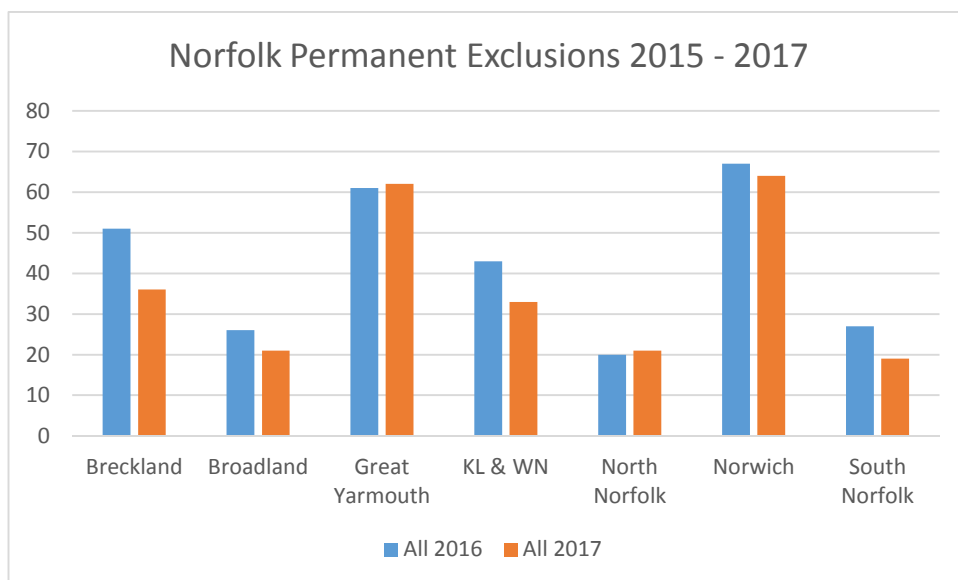
- 1.2 As a result of the work in the last year with stakeholders, including the Local Authority, school exclusions has been agreed as the third priority of four in the Norwich Opportunity Area delivery plan. The priority focuses on the children at risk of exclusion in Norwich schools. The Assistant Director Children's Services, Education sits on the Strategic Partnership Board for the Norwich Opportunity Area and co-leads the work stream on this priority.
- 1.3 The Norfolk Children and Young People's Strategy Board has agreed a plan with its multi-agency membership which has a priority 'Fitness to Learn'. This priority is chaired by the Assistant Director Children's Service, Education and includes members of school leaders, FE, early help and the voluntary sector.
- 1.4 The review the Local Authority Services will play a big part in delivering the key actions to support the reduction of school exclusions. A new service has been created as part of the restructure called the 'Education Vulnerable Groups Achievement and Access Service'. It is this service that will work with schools to identify children and young people at risk of exclusion and support schools to prevent this happening. This new service will draw on the best practice in the school system, both locally and nationally, as well as target resource to those children and schools where there is risk that behaviours will result in exclusion; co-ordinating intervention from Early Help teams also where appropriate.
- 1.5 The Local Authority services are currently engaged in a range of activity which can be summarised as follows:
 - Work in partnership with schools to develop local, school-led models to prevent exclusion
 - Implement a new charging policy for schools that permanently exclude; with a dual purpose of dis-incentivising exclusion and assisting with the costs of exclusion within the High Need Block budget
 - Deeper and ongoing analysis of fixed term and permanent exclusions to understand patterns, trends
 - Work with VNET to develop more embedded strategies and networks to improve inclusive practice
 - Development of an new triage/ hotline/ duty desk for all schools to discuss children and young people at risk of exclusion
 - More effective signposting of existing support, specialist services to help meet need
 - Extend coherent practice, trialled with a high excluding school, to put a team around the school involving the LA, Voluntary Sector, police, Early Help social care etc.
 - Secondment of expertise from the school system to challenge and support schools
 - Continued exploration of best practice beyond Norfolk
 - Early identification of children at risk of exclusion from target areas across the county
 - Develop more targeted support for behaviour management of challenging children
 - Ongoing review of commissioned services for the prevention of exclusion and specialist placements and provision for those pupils following permanent exclusion

2. Data overview

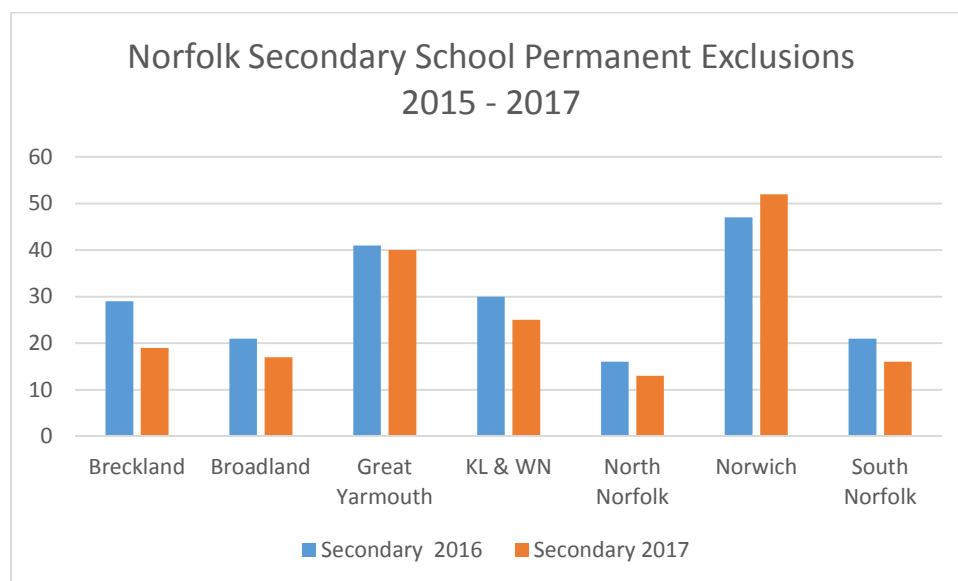
- 2.1 The year-end data for 2016 – 2017 with regard to Permanent exclusions across the county indicates that:

- 24% of Norfolk schools permanently excluded a child.
- 10 schools excluded more than 5 children
- Norwich was the highest excluding district and south Norfolk the lowest
- 6 LAC children were excluded in autumn term 2017, 4 from out of county, no LAC was excluded in spring and summer terms 2017

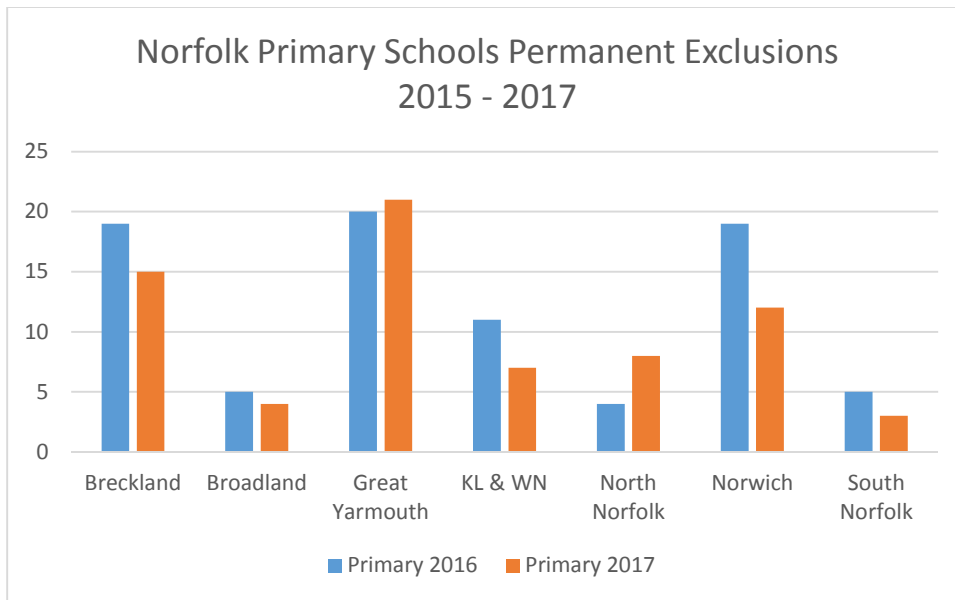
2.2 It is not appropriate to collate the analyses of exclusions by academy compared to LA maintained schools as the majority of secondary schools are now academies.



Norfolk Permanent Exclusions by district – 2 year trend



Secondary exclusions – NB this does not include special school or Independent but does include LA maintained schools and Academies



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2.3 In September 2017 16 pupils were permanently excluded compared to 34 pupils in September 2016.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The focus on the reduction of school exclusions is significant and linked to a range of plans. Schools are working in partnership with the Local Authority and other services to drive down and prevent exclusion.
- 3.2 Actions are beginning to show early signs of impact on a reduction in exclusions.
- 3.3 More targeted effort is needed to spread best practice and develop new models in areas of the county where exclusions are high

4. Evidence

- 4.1 Schools have the right to exclude pupils from their schools. This can be a fixed term – i.e. a session which could be a whole day, a morning, afternoon or lunchtime session. It can be permanent which means the child is ultimately removed from the school roll. The Local Authority has the duty to ensure that permanently excluded children are provided with an education, from the 6th day for children other than those in local authority care. The government guidance to schools and Local Authorities can be found here.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The Education High Needs / SEND Service and the Education Vulnerable Groups Achievement and Access Service have the budget to deliver the local authority actions outlined above. However members should note that the number of pupils excluded in Norfolk over the last two years has put significant pressure on the Night Needs Block, which funds the alternative arrangements for all children who are permanently excluded.

6. Issues, risks and innovation

- 6.1 The current number of children excluded from Norfolk schools is placing significant pressure on the commissioned provision and the High Needs funding, which is managed by the local authority. Commissioning additional places for alternative provision is expensive and can be a challenge to respond to an urgent need for places. Therefore some children are waiting for places beyond 6 days and this is unacceptable. Home tuition and on line learning is made available for those waiting. The list is monitored weekly by the Head of High Needs SEND Service and key colleagues.

7. Background

Please see Government guidance for further background.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained or want to see copies of any assessments, e.g. equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

Officer Name: Mark Adams
Michael Bateman

Email address: mark.adams@norfolk.gov.uk
Email address: michael.bateman@norfolk.gov.uk



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