

**Education and Children's Services  
Scrutiny Committee  
15 December 2014**

**Covering Report:  
EOTAS Provision**

**Summary and Objectives**

1. To provide the committee with an overview of how in practice the 'Education Other Than At mainstream School' ('EOTAS') alternative provision arrangements are working, with emphasis on the outcomes achieved for young people.

**Scrutiny Focus**

2. Key focus areas for this scrutiny include the following:
  - i) What data is there on the outcomes for the pupils who have received EOTAS provision, including regarding their progress and destination?
  - ii) What are the success measures? If the objective is to reintegrate pupils into mainstream how successful has this been and what is being done about Schools/PRUs/EOTAS intervention that doesn't achieve this? How are the inspections carried out?
  - iii) What action has been taken, with what results, in relation to the items raised at Cabinet on 10 June 2014 and at Schools Forum on 15 July and 13 October 2014?:
    - Cabinet: The lack of information within the 10 June 2014 Report? [including lack of reference to the recommendations from scrutiny, reference to the studies eg. medical EOTAS undertaken by Schools Forum, legal requirements, whistleblowing policy, fit with the RtB strategy, Ofsted highlighting of low attainment in EOTAS, linkage to careers advice / guidance, analysis of the reasons for the large increase in numbers, the Council's vision of EOTAS, and the action plan.]
    - Schools Forum: Items including to develop a more needs-led and proactive alternative provision preventative model, lack of effective extended support for excluded pupils, the changing funding framework, financial viability, cultural and structural change, accommodation issues, and the proposed action plan that sets out a timetable of targeted actions for reform?
  - iv) What are the arrangements for tracking and reporting incidences of bullying at school and the framework for overarching monitoring to inform Local Authority policy and strategy, including any mental health issues?

- v) With regard to future strategy, what financial responsibility might the Local Authority have in future for using some of the Dedicated Schools Grant funding towards alternative provision (EOTAS) in free schools? How might this affect the funding available for alternative provision in the maintained schools?
- vi) What focus is there on Home Educators? What are the regulations, requirements and effectiveness?

### How this relates to County Council priorities

3. This scrutiny is linked to the County Council’s corporate priorities as indicated below:

The County Council’s Corporate Priorities	Link to this scrutiny
Raising educational attainment and skill levels	✓
Supporting the LEPs to increase economic growth	
Maintaining roads and developing Suffolk’s infrastructure	
Supporting those most vulnerable in our communities	✓
Empowering local communities	

4. Having considered the evidence, the Committee may wish to:
- i) make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and/or the Corporate Director for Children and Young People’s Services;
  - ii) agree topics which could benefit from more detailed scrutiny at a future meeting, seek to influence partner organisations, or request further information.

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### Background

5. At its meeting on 4 December 2013, the Committee agreed that it wished to revisit progress with the implementation of the EOTAS review, to consider, (i) how the new provision was working and, (ii) the outcomes for young people who had been in receipt of EOTAS provision, including their GCSE results and information on the number of young people from the provision who had not gone on to further education, employment or training. It was subsequently agreed also to include Pupil Referral Units, and the paper that went to the Schools Forum on 15 July 2014.
6. In addition to the written material there will be verbal input from internal and external witnesses, to whom the committee will have an opportunity to put questions. Witness input to be sought from:
- CYP Director and officers.
  - The consultant (Paul Senior) who produced the Schools Forum report
  - Representatives of ex-pupils or parents (to provide examples or cases studies of young person outcomes achieved).

7. EOTAS was previously scrutinised at the education scrutiny committee meeting on 4 Dec 2013, and witness input was received from four headteachers of Pupil Referral Units (PRU) and from County Council officers. Several members of the Committee had visited EOTAS establishments before the meeting and reported their findings back to the Committee. The [26 March 2014 committee meeting](#) received a further, large amount of data about EOTAS within an Information Bulletin, including responses from CYP officers to the recommendations that had been made on 4 Dec 2013.
8. EOTAS policy was considered by the [Cabinet on 10 June 2014](#) (Agenda Item 17). In the Minutes it was noted that, *"In response to a Councillor's concerns about the lack of information contained in the report, officers advised Cabinet that the policy was aimed at parents in order to provide clarity on what they could expect from the local authority. Officers advised that the concerns raised by Councillors would be addressed, where possible, within the policy. .... A Councillor expressed concern about the serious issues currently surrounding the way that EOTAS was delivered and wished to see an action plan and a policy document for EOTAS in the future. Officers advised that in principle this was not a problem and suggested that this should be incorporated into the report on EOTAS for the Education Scrutiny Committee which was already scheduled in the Committee's forward plan."*
9. At the Schools Forum on 15 July 2014, there was a paper on, '[Working Together For Inclusion / High Needs Block](#)'. That paper outlined that *"in May 2014, Suffolk Council commissioned a strategic review of the delivery of alternative provision and education otherwise than at school (EOTAS) services, systems and processes in Suffolk with an educational inclusion focus. The objective was to consider how the existing service, systems, policies and processes could be re-configured to build on any already in place existing good practice, respond to local needs and meet the requirement to provide suitable full time suitable educational provision to all pupils needing to be educated otherwise than at school. ... Key considerations for this work stream were to consider the interface with the High Needs Block (HNB) and to explore the key drivers underpinning the increasing financial pressures such as rising permanent exclusion figures and the need for an increased volume of out of county specialised provision places to be secured for vulnerable learners."* A summary of the 'headline' findings and key issues, recommendations and proposed actions are in paragraphs 6.2 to 6.7 (of the report to 15 July Schools Forum):
  - The need locally to develop a more needs-led, cost effective, modernised and proactive alternative provision preventative model
  - An evidenced lack of effective extended support for excluded pupils
  - Responding to the changing funding framework
  - Financial viability and 'future proofing' of provision
  - The need for cultural and structural change
  - Accommodation issues
10. At the [Schools Forum on 13 Oct 2014](#), there was a paper on, 'Working Together For Inclusion Action Plan'. This reported that: *"The July 2014 Working together for inclusion Schools Forum report outlined that the current approach to meeting the needs of learners who may require education otherwise than in mainstream school settings is urgently in need of reform. The recommendations and proposed actions in the attached plan set out a timetable of targeted actions for reform and modernisation that will be required to ensure that future local needs for vulnerable learners will be met. ... The actions have been set out in five themes:*
  - Schools theme
  - Educational Inclusion theme

- Education and Learning theme
  - Alternative Provision provider theme
  - Special Schools and Services theme”
11. There has been [further comment from Ofsted](#) about one of the Suffolk Alternative Provision / Pupil Referral Unit facilities, with the recent [inspection report](#) concluding that *“The centre is not making enough progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation. This monitoring inspection raised serious concerns about the behaviour and safety of pupils, and the quality of leadership and management. The centre should be re-inspected at the earliest opportunity.”* ... *“The local authority’s support for managing behaviour is having little impact on tackling the concerns identified in the last inspection.”*
12. This can be contrasted with a more positive Ofsted [inspection report](#) on a Suffolk PRU, which states, *“The headteacher, deputy headteacher and the management committee have set clear and high expectations for the work of the unit. They have an accurate understanding of how well the unit is developing and take firm action to tackle issues of underperformance. Hence, the unit is improving and its capacity to improve further is good. ... Nearly all Year 11 pupils who left the unit last year moved on to appropriate and relevant further education or training courses. In addition, a good proportion of younger pupils were successfully returned to mainstream schools. ... The local authority provides strong support; it has, for example, helped the unit to radically improve the accommodation, including facilities for teaching science.”*

## Main Body of Evidence

**Evidence Set 1** (attached) - a report and appendices from Children and Young People’s Services department.

## Supporting Information and References (available online)

- (i) Previous EOTAS reports to the Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee on 4 Dec 2013 and 26 March 2014:

4 December 2013:

<http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/meeting.aspx?d=04/Dec/2013&c=Education and Childrens Services Scrutiny Committee>

[Agenda Item 6 Education Other Than at School \(EOTAS\)](#)

[Agenda Item 6 Evidence Set 1](#)

[Agenda Item 6 Appendix 1](#)

[Agenda Item 6 Appendix 2](#)

[Agenda Item 6 Appendix 3](#)

26 March 2014:

<http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/meeting.aspx?d=26/Mar/2014&c=Education and Childrens Services Scrutiny Committee>

[Agenda Item 6 Information Bulletin](#)

- (ii) EOTAS report to Cabinet on 10 June 2014:

<http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/meeting.aspx?d=10/jun/2014&c=The Cabinet>

[Confirmed Minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2014](#)

[Agenda Item 17 - Education Other Than at School](#)

[Agenda Item 17 - Appendix A](#)

- (iii) Schools Forum 15 Jul 2014, 'High Needs Review':  
[https://www.schoolsurf.suffolkcc.gov.uk/docs/unrestricted/Consultative\\_Groups/Schools\\_Forum/2014-07-15\\_Meeting\\_Papers/index.aspx](https://www.schoolsurf.suffolkcc.gov.uk/docs/unrestricted/Consultative_Groups/Schools_Forum/2014-07-15_Meeting_Papers/index.aspx)
- (iv) Schools Forum 13 Oct 2014, 'Working Together For Inclusion Action Plan':  
[https://www.schoolsurf.suffolkcc.gov.uk/docs/unrestricted/Consultative\\_Groups/Schools\\_Forum/2014-10-13\\_Meeting\\_Papers/index.aspx](https://www.schoolsurf.suffolkcc.gov.uk/docs/unrestricted/Consultative_Groups/Schools_Forum/2014-10-13_Meeting_Papers/index.aspx)
- (v) Ofsted inspector calls for action ... at Kingsfield Centre, Stowmarket, East Anglian Daily Times, 28 Oct 2014:  
[http://www.eadt.co.uk/news/ofsted\\_inspector\\_calls\\_for\\_action\\_to\\_improve\\_students\\_behaviour\\_at\\_kingsfield\\_centre\\_stowmarket\\_after\\_damning\\_report\\_1\\_3822700](http://www.eadt.co.uk/news/ofsted_inspector_calls_for_action_to_improve_students_behaviour_at_kingsfield_centre_stowmarket_after_damning_report_1_3822700)  
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/133356>
- (vi) The Attic PRU, Ofsted Inspection Report, Sep 2014:  
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/140121>
- (vii) Dedicated Schools Grant 2015-16 final arrangements and DfE policy intentions  
<http://www.lgiu.org.uk/briefing/dedicated-schools-grant-2015-16-final-arrangements-and-dfe-policy-intentions>

