

Report to:	EXECUTIVE CABINET
Date:	28 September 2022
Executive Member:	Councillor Leanne Feeley – Executive Member (Learning, Achievement and Equalities)
Reporting Officer:	Tim Bowman, Director of Education (Tameside and Stockport)
Subject:	UPDATED SCHOOLS STRATEGY
Report Summary:	This report aims to outline the rationale and the ambition of this updated Schools Strategy in Tameside. The paper celebrates the success of Tameside’s current Strategy and explores the impact of the Schools White and Green Papers and Tameside’s response to them, a response which will build on existing strengths and successes and on our existing Schools Strategy as well as on the strengthened partnerships developed with schools and between schools over the last four years.
Recommendations:	That Executive Cabinet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Approve this revised School Strategy in light of the DfE’s White Paper and implications for local Government in line with national changes (ii) Agree that at this stage the Council does not need to express an interest in establishing a local authority MAT (iii) Agree that officers will continue to negotiate with DfE officials to establish plans for a fully trust-led system at pace subject to the necessary due diligence required and a further report advises of the same particularly the financial impact on the council relating to traded services. (iv) That such conversions can only take place where the cost of conversions are fully met by the DfE and schools.
Corporate Plan:	The content of this report supports most aspects of the corporate plan by ensuring that schools are able to provide high quality early years education for children and thus ensure that they have the best chances of starting well and living well in Tameside.
Policy Implications:	The report sets out the position in line with Council policies and the statutory framework.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)	<p>The strategy outlined within the report, considers converting schools at pace to academy in Tameside. Academy conversions currently are currently managed by diverting internal resources to support the process.</p> <p>To move Tameside schools at pace to a fully trust led system, would require additional investment across the support service functions, with the financial challenge the council currently faces this would increase the budget gap for the council.</p> <p>A fully trust led system either at pace or not will bring financial challenges, the Council currently trades services with schools in areas that tend not to be bought back from MAT’s, the loss of this business will need to be factored into the councils Medium Term Financial Plan.</p>

Tameside's High Needs budget continues to overspend the allocated grant, the DfE expect the local authority to live within grant allocated. The cumulative deficit is estimated to be £6m by the end of 2022/23 financial year. High Needs funding will continue to be a responsibility of the local authority in a trust led system, the deficit recovery plan needs to be updated.

**Legal Implications
(Authorised by the Head
of Legal Services)**

This report is seeking to reaffirm and further develop the council's school strategy. This report sets out the landscape within which the Council needs to operate however much more work is required on the financial impact of this change whether undertaken at pace and a greater understanding of the scale and how it will be managed as it is unlikely that the academies will wish to take these services preferring their own arrangements.

Risk Management:

There are potential future budget pressures associated with schools moving out of local authority control and into MATs, likely to be more challenging if conversions take place over a longer period of time, which will be closely monitored. There is a risk that the political landscape may change and the promised monies to support Priority Areas is no longer available.

Background Information:

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Tim Bowman



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The current Schools Strategy was agreed by Executive Cabinet in August 2018, outlining Tameside's approach, it stated in section 3.2:

'The key to a revised and updated Tameside Schools Strategy is to exert more assertive and systematic leadership in order to deliver these key functions. To do this well we must be a credible, effective and responsive partner for schools and central government and we must have an effective and engaged relationship with all our schools. Our success is dependent on mutual co-operation.'

- 1.2 Since 2018, Tameside has been realising this vision successfully. The Council has developed positive relationships with schools and between schools. We have moved the system closer towards a school-led system but have remained a system leader. The Council has developed partnerships and established stability and has supported schools causing concern into formal partnerships with strong Multi-Academy Trusts to secure improvement. The Council has worked with home-grown Trusts and supported others to establish in Tameside to provide the system leadership we need to ensure good schools in the Borough.
- 1.3 The current Schools Strategy has prepared schools well for the future but the publication of the recent Schools White Paper (March 2022) has implications for the Council and its family of schools (accelerated targets for improvement, a fully trust-led system, which are set out and explored in this paper) and an updated Schools Strategy for Tameside is now needed, one which defines the current and future challenges and priorities which are most important and most urgent and explores how these challenges could be met.
- 1.4 The local authority's (LA) role has changed since 2018 however, as have the challenges, which give rise to the need to have a refreshed strategy in place. In order to be confident in our leadership we must ensure our Schools Strategy continues to address new challenges.
- 1.5 This paper will explore the key strategic issues, policy, performance improvement and financial, which will affect our system in the medium term. Whilst these challenges have been exacerbated by the pandemic, our pre-pandemic challenges remain. We must seek to impose our strategy on this challenge, rather than allow the pandemic to impose its challenge on us.
- 1.6 The purpose of this updated Schools Strategy is to identify the opportunities and refresh thinking to ensure that we have a school system which is fit for purpose and responds to the requirements of the White Paper. By this we mean it is planned, sustainable and able to directly respond to the needs of children in the Borough. We have a window to act and it is a narrow one. As ever our strategy must be thoughtful, hopeful and impatient about improving outcomes for children.
- 1.7 Whilst there has been much debate in the last decade about the role of local authorities in leading education improvement, Tameside's Schools Strategy has been clear about its role in education and must continue to confidently assert that this role is enduring. Tameside must continue to be confident in its leadership. In addition to fulfilling its statutory duties, the role of the local authority is to be a system leader and place-shaper; it is to advocate for all children; be the commissioner of high quality school places; be an intelligent broker of school support; and provide leadership for the whole borough, setting shared education priorities and embodying values. The Council cannot be passive as a system leader and advocate for all children. Rather it must have a clear voice in determining the future of all schools and must be concerned with the long term sustainability and viability of its schools. Our current Schools Strategy, agreed by Executive Cabinet in August 2018, already reflects this assertive role.

1.8 The clarity we already assert, is confirmed in the White Paper; local authorities remain at the heart of the education system, championing all children in their area, especially those most vulnerable. The White Paper states that Councils will do this by:

- Coordinating local services to improve outcomes for children
- Meeting the needs of communities for good school places in terms of planning and securing provision
- Securing the best outcomes for individual children, especially those most vulnerable, in terms of admissions, safeguarding, and attendance.
- And the Council will have new legal powers to object to PAN and there will be a backstop power to direct trusts to admit children.

2. BUILDING ON OUR STRENGTHS AND FACING THE CHALLENGES

2.1 Despite the challenges of the current context, we are building on our strengths, and it is clear that we do so many things well.

2.2 In the most recent published national data set (2019), progress in reading and maths is strong (0.5, 0.7) between Key Stage One (KS1) and Key Stage Two (KS2) and ranks highly compared to LAs with similar challenges to Tameside (2nd and 4th in the group respectively). In the recent end of KS2 tests (2022), Tameside children have scored better than children nationally in reading. Reading has been a strategic focus through our Tameside Loves Reading campaign since 2018.

2.3 Tameside schools have exceptionally good pupil attendance, in the main, and therefore low pupil absence. It is consistently better than national and the best of comparative LAs, 2nd in Greater Manchester and 4th in the North West. Tameside's Education Welfare Service has provided high quality support and partnership to schools over time and continue to support schools to achieve such high attendance standards.

2.4 As the 24th most deprived local authority (IMD) in England, Tameside ranks higher than its level of deprivation at KS2 and only a handful of local authorities outperform Tameside's level of deprivation at Key Stage Four (KS4) on Progress 8 and strong passes in GCSE English and maths. Tameside always strives to reach at least national expectations for its children, but due to the high level of deprivation in the Borough, this will always be a stretch-target.

2.5 This updated Schools Strategy will build on the strengths of Tameside's offer to children and is intended to further embed what is working well within a sustainable and successful local school system. These strengths include:

- 2.5.1 Tameside's response to the pandemic (communication, collective action and collaboration, empowered schools, united approach).
- 2.5.2 Shared vision, common purpose.
- 2.5.3 Shared whole system commitment to inclusion
- 2.5.4 Schools and settings at the heart of communities; the heart of the response to challenges and the recovery.
- 2.5.5 Values leadership.
- 2.5.6 Outstanding relationships with schools and between school leaders.
- 2.5.7 Pupil achievement and attendance as detailed in 2.2-2.4.

2.6 Strong partnership needs to be both a partnership between schools and the local authority, and between schools and schools. Partnerships between schools are vital to their success and must be central to our strategy. Partnerships between schools improve financial sustainability; provide a vehicle for sharing high quality practice; and maximise the impact of strong leaders, vital to continuing success over time.

- 2.7 Tameside is rightly proud of the quality of education provided by its schools, colleges, and Early Years settings. In the last academic year, all schools inspected with a less than good judgement (six) have moved to Good or improved their judgement. Our % of Ofsted Good or better primary schools is now 94% from 89% in September 2021 and our secondary % is on track to be 75%.
- 2.8 However we are facing a number of notable challenges. We are significantly challenged by our High Needs settlement as it does not reflect the exponential increased demand for our children with SEND. The SEND Green paper highlights the unprecedented investment in the high needs sector where funding has increased by 40% between 2019-20 and 2022-23. As detailed at Schools Forum on 21 June 2022, despite this, Tameside continues to face significant deficits on DSG. Part of this is in relation to the cap on funding on the High Needs National Funding Formula, a significant part of the funding allocation is still based on 2017-18 baseline spend. Tameside has been receiving a cap on funding since 2018-19, the cap for 2022-23 is £2.988m. The table below shows the current High Needs Funding allocations across all Greater Manchester and Tameside is receiving the second lowest allocation per pupil despite having among the highest needs.

Table 1: High Needs Funding Allocations all GM Authorities

LA	2022-23 High Needs Block	Mid 2022 2-18 Population	Unit Per Pupil Funding
Trafford	£36,667,827	55,340	£663
Tameside	£32,917,502	48,784	£675
Wigan	£45,620,718	65,626	£695
Stockport	£42,816,539	61,424	£697
Rochdale	£36,870,805	51,557	£715
Bolton	£53,292,486	65,585	£813
Salford	£48,580,888	55,440	£876
Oldham	£51,158,374	56,805	£901
Manchester	£114,058,597	117,712	£969
Bury	£40,929,921	41,626	£983
	£502,913,657	619,899	

- 2.9 The majority of our primary schools are small; 45 out of 76 are one-form of entry schools, this is just under two thirds of all primary schools. In addition we have five secondary schools with under 800 pupils on roll.
- 2.10 Children who experience special education needs and those who have disabilities do less well at school than their peers nationally. There is a significant gap between the attainment of pupils who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding and their more affluent peers. Tameside has experienced entrenched challenge with outcomes in the early years and with early reading (phonics) despite targeted support improving outcomes at a school level.
- 2.11 A report was taken to Executive Cabinet on 9 February 2022 detailing the outcome of the SEND Area Inspection. A number of SEND updates have been provided in recent years to both Executive Cabinet and the Education Attainment and Improvement Board (EAIB). This includes updates to the March 2019, October 2019 and June 2021 EAIB. In the last update to EAIB the report concludes that “whilst we continue to make significant improvements across all areas of the SEND Service, we anticipate that because of the significant work still needed to be done we expect that the outcome of an inspection will be that we are asked to prepare a Written Statement of Action.” The outcome of the inspection therefore whilst extremely disappointing was not a surprise to leaders. Inspectors in their summary of the main findings rightly concluded that, “implementation of the 2014 code of practice started

very late in Tameside” as we note in our self-evaluation, which was submitted to inspectors, “the impact of this continues to be felt and that there is more to do to improve the SEND offer”. The Written Statement of Action was accepted by Ofsted on 1 July. The production of a Written Statement of Action is an important opportunity to redefine our improvement plans and to ensure that they are sufficient to meet the challenges we face.

2.12 The SEND Green Paper was published on the 29 March 2022, the same week as the Schools white Paper. The national SEND review had been undertaken since 2019 and has been significantly delayed. The Green Paper recognises that:

- The 2014 SEND reforms have not delivered on aspirations for SEND families and there needs to be change
- The system is too bureaucratic and adversarial
- Outcomes are still not good enough for SEND learners and identification is not early enough
- Systems are not financially viable
- Deliver clarity in roles and responsibilities with every partner across education, health, care and local government having a clear role to play, and being equipped with the levers to fulfil their responsibilities.
- There will be greater clarity about which partners should fund specific forms of support and provision
- The Code of Practice needs to be reviewed and updated
- EHCP process/multi-agency SEN panels will be digitalised and standardised
- The Family Hub model is central to support going forwards.

A further update on the Green Paper is being provided separately to Executive Cabinet at the same time as this paper.

2.13 It is important to consider these significant changes together; we must be aware that there is a large amount of proposed policy change for schools and education all taking place simultaneously which includes significant large-scale programmes such as Family Hubs.

2.14 Children’s learning has been disrupted in an extraordinary and significant way by COVID-19. The impact of this lost learning and disruption is greater in Greater Manchester than any other part of the country and within Greater Manchester, Tameside had one of the most sustained level of disruption. The impact is most profoundly felt by those who experience the greatest disadvantage. Whilst we must not catastrophise this challenge neither should we underestimate it. In autumn 2021, the average primary school pupil had lost 1.9 months in maths and 0.8 months in reading. Disadvantaged children lost an additional 0.3 months in maths and 0.4 months in reading (DfE, May 2022). This is likely to have been exacerbated since autumn 2021 with high levels of disruption to staff and pupils due to the Omicron variant of COVID-19.

2.15 Tameside is committed to every child, and should be clear about what we are trying to achieve, discussing the hardest issues, when they need discussing and making decisions. We must be clear about what we are trying to achieve, and prepared to hold each other to account for our behaviours and performance. We should set our own standards of high performance and a clear way to measure and demonstrate impact, and know that bringing about long term improvement requires us all to focus on improving practice and the quality of our leadership.

3. THE WHITE PAPER AND OUR RESPONSE

3.1 On 28 March 2022, the Department for Education released the long-awaited ‘**Schools White Paper: Opportunity for All**’. This set out the basis of new legislation and direction of travel to achieve this vision. As the local authority we must play a key role in ensuring resources

are best placed to support our schools to achieve the expectations within the report but to also maintain an holistic, child-centred focus. The government's vision is designed to be delivered over the next eight years, so that the ambition can be realised nationally by 2030. The schools bills have been laid before Parliament already.

- 3.2 The White Paper itself has four key themes:
- That all children should be taught by excellent teachers
 - That all schools deliver a high-quality curriculum and enable children to reach high standards
 - That targeted support will be provided where it is needed
 - To develop a stronger, fairer education system.
- 3.3 The most important intention of the White Paper, is that the school system in England will become a fully trust-led system, all schools will become academies in a strong multi-academy trust by 2030.
- 3.4 The central ambition of the White Paper is that the government's national education improvement targets - 90% of pupils achieving the national expectation at the end of Key Stage Two and improved GCSE outcomes in English and maths by half a grade - will be achieved through all schools being placed in a strong multi-academy trust (MAT) by 2030. The school system in England will become a fully trust-led system and all schools will become academies by 2030.
- 3.5 The White Paper poses a number of structural issues:
- 3.5.1 A **fully trust-led system** with a single regulatory approach, which will drive up standards, through the growth of strong trusts and the establishment of new ones, including trusts established by local authorities.
 - 3.5.2 A **clear role for every part of the school system** with local authorities empowered to champion the interests of children and a new collaborative standard requiring trusts to work constructively with all other partners.
 - 3.5.3 Collaborative standard requiring **trusts to work constructively with all other partners**.
 - 3.5.4 Consulting on **moving schools that have received two consecutive below 'Good judgments from Ofsted into strong trusts** to tackle underperformance.
 - 3.5.5 **Avoid converting single academy trusts**, most MATs are on a trajectory to serve a minimum of 7,500 pupils or run at least 10 schools.
 - 3.5.6 **Local authorities can set up MATs** where too few strong trusts exist. These will be regulated the same way as all MATs with limits to Council involvement on Trust Boards.
- 3.6 We must respond to the White Paper both strategically and operationally. Strategically we need to consider the structure and form of our schools system; the interaction between a fully trust-led system and council services; democratic accountability for the schools systems; maintaining relationships and influence; and of course the financial implications. Operationally we need to consider if the Council wants to express an interest in inaugurating a local authority-established multi-academy trust; how we should manage the move to a fully academised system and the pressure that this will likely put on Council services; how we maintain cohesion in our school system; how we manage the risks of PFI schools converting to academies; and, critically, how we support vulnerable children.
- 3.7 In addition to the Schools White Paper the government also launched its '*Levelling Up White Paper*' in February 2022. This paper announced 55 Education Investment Areas (EIAs); these are councils facing entrenched educational challenges. In its '*Implementing School System Reform in 2022/3*', published in May 2022, the government announced its early attention and financial support will be on EIAs and that EIAs will also benefit from other support. The Schools White Paper sets out that, within the 55 EIAs, a subset of 24 areas will

become Priority EIAs (PEIAs). Seven of the 10 Greater Manchester LAs are Education Investment Areas with four being Priority areas, these are: Tameside; Oldham; Rochdale; and Salford. The Government plans to build on this support by offering additional benefits to Priority areas, such as a local needs funding pot of around £40m nationally, Family Hubs, a MAT Leadership development programme for aspiring trust leaders, and an extension of the Connect the Classroom offer to all schools.

3.8 The Government's clear aim is for the plans laid out in the White Paper, namely establishing a fully trust-led schools system, are to be accelerated for Priority areas. In short, Tameside's schools will have to move to a fully trust-led system much more quickly than other areas.

3.9 Tameside is a Priority Area not because schools are not good, but because we are the 24th most socio-economically deprived LA in England. We have good schools, good school leaders and good outcomes but we want children's outcomes to be better and challenge is entrenched.

Responding to the White Paper

3.10 The Government engaged in initial regional planning conversations in June 2022 which included Tameside. It will follow this with a prospectus covering each Priority EIA in early autumn 2022. This will set out the key educational priorities for MAT development in each area – for example, whether there is space for a trust to grow into the area and detailing the phase of schools which might join it. Existing trusts, faith bodies, mainly dioceses, and groups of schools will then be invited to submit proposals that respond to these priorities, enabling underperforming schools to improve.

3.11 Nationally, LA options in the implementation of this policy are limited, but Tameside has an opportunity to be at the fore front of this policy change. By acting first and fast, there is great opportunity for us by being bold and shaping the system before it is shaped for us. The pace of change could be uncomfortable for schools and the Council, so it is about how we work together to gain the greatest advantage. The Government is open to ideas and wants local plans to reflect each area. For the DfE's timeline of activity, see Appendix One.

3.12 50% of children in Tameside are already educated in academies (April 2022), broadly in line with the national percentage of 52% (January 2021). Regional variation means that there are not enough strong trusts in areas most in need e.g. in the North West only 23% schools are in MATs vs 52% in the South West). We have a significant opportunity to plan for further success in our system in a way which works for Tameside but we must maintain a central voice in those conversations in order to sustain the harmony and high quality we have achieved to date, thus making any transition smoother for children and their parents and carers.

3.13 Around half of the schools in Tameside that are not academies are faith schools. Diocesan Education Authorities working in partnerships with local schools will be responsible for determining which MAT these schools join. There are therefore only 24 maintained schools in the borough for whom a strong MAT partner needs to be determined.

3.14 There are potential benefits to overseeing this change at pace. Most notably this would give the sector clarity on the intended strategy, it aligns with Tameside's Schools Strategy, and it would be helpful to services trading with schools to manage resources within a known timeframe. In order to do this we would need to be supported by central Government in at least the following areas:

- Trust capacity Funding
- Funding to support legal, HR and other costs incurred by the Council
- Significant resources to support the PEIA priorities.

3.15 This will bring some pressure for services supporting these conversions (HR, Legal, Finance) it is likely that a small dedicated team will be required to do this work.

- 3.16 The only option for the Council is how we engage not whether we engage. The alternative to moving *at pace to implement a trust led system* is that the Council takes a less assertive position and the pace of change is slower. It is likely that this approach would limit our ability to influence the system and we may lose the ability to maximise funding from the Government. A less assertive position would also be more difficult for Council services delivering to schools, as a reduction in maintained schools over a longer period of time without a clear and co-ordinated plan, would likely present significantly more challenge and cost to the Council.
- 3.17 The biggest change to the school system in the last decade has been the rise of academies and multi-academy trusts. This is a permanent change to our school system and the ambition is reflected in the White Paper. In order to affect outcomes for all children we must continue to embrace the academies agenda. By harnessing the power of the academies agenda we can influence the shape and structure of our school system; ensure that we have a sufficient supply of school places in the right areas; ensure that the right support is in place for schools which need to improve; and we can better influence the quality of provision.
- 3.18 The Council has a policy of full cost recovery for academy conversion and therefore would expect either the DfE or Multi-Academy Trusts to meet the conversion costs in order that other schools or Councils services do not pick up the bill for this work.

4. UPDATED SCHOOLS STRATEGY

- 4.1 Our existing Schools Strategy (2018) is very clear about our strategic objectives:

Our strategic objective should be for a relatively small number of outstanding locally led MATs who can work with the Local Authority to drive improvement, and for that we need a more assertive approach in which we expect to be a key influencer, we expect to be included in school's early thinking about academy conversion and their options, and we expect to work with the RSC's team to shape the MAT landscape in Tameside.

- 4.2 This policy change and our engagement with the PEIA offers a unique opportunity to deliver this objective.
- 4.3 These proposed policy changes will impact upon all schools and every local area, but perhaps the greatest change is for existing MATs. There is lots of shaping and brokering for the LA to do and we need to be clear about where to start. Single Academy Trusts (SATs) and small MATs are the most likely to need to respond strategically. Tameside must make its current trusts sustainable. It must identify where the gaps are and help the right trusts to grow as well as identifying the right external support.
- 4.4 We have some clear guiding principles when working successfully with MATs in Tameside. Looking at our MAT landscape, we have successful MATs in Tameside. Some are local, home-grown MATs working closely with the LA; some are new home-grown MATs needing to grow in size and capacity; some are externally based MATs with single schools in Tameside which need to grow more schools; and some are trusts that need to consolidate and grow stronger through doing so.
- 4.5 **Primary Multi-Academy Trusts with schools in Tameside:**
- Changing Lives in Collaboration – 1 school in Tameside 4 in the Trust
 - Chester Diocesan Academies Trust – 2 schools in Tameside 11 in the Trust
 - Epworth Education Trust – 1 school in Tameside 6 in the Trust
 - Focus Academy Trust (UK) Ltd – 1 school in Tameside 15 in the Trust
 - Forward as One Church of England Multi Academy Trust – 3 schools in Tameside 9 in the Trust

- Great Academies Education Trust – 1 school (and 2 secondary schools) in Tameside 4 in the Trust
- Oasis Community Learning – 1 school in Tameside 52 in the Trust
- Prestolee Multi Academy Trust – 1 school in Tameside 5 in the Trust
- The Enquire Learning Trust – 9 schools in Tameside 30 in the Trust
- The Harmony Trust Ltd – 1 school in Tameside 15 in the Trust
- Victorious Academies Trust – 6 schools in Tameside 7 in the Trust
- Two SATs.

4.6 **Secondary Multi-Academy Trusts with schools in Tameside:**

- Great Academies Education Trust – 2 schools (and 1 primary) in Tameside 4 in the Trust
- Stamford Park Trust – 2 schools (and 1 college) 3 in the Trust
- Tame River Educational Trust – 1 school in the Trust
- The Laurus Trust – 1 school in Tameside 8 in the Trust
- Four SATs.

4.7 **Special School Multi-Academy Trusts in Tameside:**

- New Bridge Trust – 2 schools in Tameside 6 in the Trust

4.8 From this data and context, it is our contention that the Council does not need to establish a LA established MAT. There are enough strong trusts already in the Borough and instead, we need to work to strengthen these trusts rather than fragment the system. The only exception to this might be in the need to support the establishment of a MAT for the Tameside Pupil Referral Service working with similar schools in Greater Manchester, this could be an LA established MAT, but will require further consideration.

Actions required

4.9 Whilst our current schools strategy continues to be fit for purpose. We contend that the following actions are required to update it.

4.10 Supporting every Tameside school to join a local MAT at pace, strengthening our existing MATs and maintaining our current strong relationships and partnerships with the school system. This will require the local authority to work with its school and MAT leaders to ensure we have a network of local MATs which are sustainable and successful. We have enough strong, local MATs operating in Tameside already but need to act quickly to support the growth of these MATs in a way that supports the Council's ambitions for children and in a way which supports families. We have a window to act and it is a narrow one (see Appendix One).

4.11 We already operate in an environment which enjoys good relationships but we should shore up and formalise our expectations for MATs working effectively in and with Tameside. We should require our local MATs to share our values:

- To embrace our vision for inclusion for every child
- To commit to our agreed strategies, plans and processes
- To engage with the local authority to ensure we have the right number of school places in the right areas of our borough
- To be an active partner in the borough, prepared to be held to account for their behaviours and performance in a culture of mutual high challenge and high support.

4.12 We should reaffirm the commitment, made in our Schools Strategy in 2018, to focus on creating a school-led system which recognises that the capacity and expertise to improve schools exists in our school system and recognises that the accountability for school outcomes lies with school leaders. We must re-assert that the Council's offer to schools - its

services, and support - must create the conditions in which good school leaders can run good schools.

- 4.13 The Council needs to develop a clear strategic and proactive plan to manage fluctuation in pupil numbers in a fully trust-led system.
- 4.14 We have already established a commitment to our enhanced partnership work with Stockport around education services and ensuring that we have maximised the collaborative advantage of the partnership and taken maximum advantage of the efficiencies it can deliver. We should also explore collaboration opportunities with the three other Greater Manchester Priority Education Investment Areas: Salford, Oldham and Rochdale to share learning and efficiency of process.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The school system in England will become a fully trust-led system, with all schools becoming academies in a strong multi-academy trust by 2030. Priority EIAs will move to this first and at pace.
- 5.2 The Council cannot be passive as a system leader. Tameside wants to be seen as a powerful and impactful advocate for all children. It must have a clear voice in determining the future of all Tameside's schools and must be concerned with the long-term sustainability and viability of its schools.
- 5.3 In implementing this strategy we must be clear that the structure and form of our schools system will change and that the interaction between a fully trust-led system and Council services will be different.
- 5.4 There are enough strong trusts already in the Borough, rather than establishing new Trusts or attracting existing Trusts into the area, we need to work to strengthen these local trusts rather than fragment the system.
- 5.5 Embracing this change and moving *at pace* to establish a fully trust led system, as outlined in 3.14, offers the best opportunity to ensure that our schools system works for all children and has the capacity needed to improve outcomes.
- 5.6 Tameside has a time-limited opportunity to be at the front of this policy change. There is great opportunity for us by being bold and shaping the system before it is shaped for us.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 As set out at the front of the report.

Appendix One: Delivery timeline for Priority Education Investment Areas (DfE slide 2022)

Timeline

