

How might independent governance feature more prominently in the English education system?

Key questions to consider during St. George's House consultation:

Reaffirming the case for a National Education Council

1. Why is independent governance in education important?
 - a. Is anyone currently playing this role - e.g., Non-Execs in DfE?
2. What will the benefits of a National Education Council be?
3. What could go wrong?

What will the National Education Council look like

1. What should the purpose and remit of the National Education Council be? What should the Council not do? - see proposal below
2. What should the membership look like - number, profile of people?
 - a. Who should chair the Council?
 - b. How should members be appointed/elected onto the Council? For how long?
 - c. Who else should be part of the meetings?
3. How often should the Council meet? Who will support the Council in conducting its business?

Setting up a National Education Council: Moving from idea to implementation

1. Who needs to be convinced of the value of a National Council for Education?
2. How can we show the workability of a National Council for Education?
 - a. How will this proposal fit together with the other proposals?
 - b. How will the National Council knit into the current system?
 - c. What resources are needed to set it up and run it effectively?
3. What are the risks of setting up a National Council for Education?
4. Anything else?

Next steps

1. Who else needs to be involved in refining this proposal?
2. Who do we need to share the proposal with for their challenge/support?
3. What else needs to happen between now and publishing the next FED National Education Consultation report in July 2024 and between now and the next General Election?

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PRINCIPLES & GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATION IN ENGLAND

BETTER EDUCATION-BETTER SOCIETY-BETTER COUNTRY

Background

Over the past three years there has been extensive consultation and debate about the need for a long-term plan for education in England. The need and merits are now well understood. One of the key requirements for success of a long-term plan is an oversight and governance model for the plan. This is especially important given the challenges and churn of modern political leadership in the UK. In the past 12 months there have been 5 secretaries of state for Education, furthermore there have been 10 in the past 10 years and 39 in the past 60 years. Each has approached the role with good but different intentions and priorities for change. **A successful long-term strategy must be clear, consistent and while being adaptable it must maintain a constant vision and direction.**

Against this background, proposals are developed to provide **continuity and excellence** around education strategy and outcomes in England for the long-term. And to provide some **protection against continuous change and interference by rapidly changing governments and ministers.**

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to outline some thoughts and principles for the governance and oversight of a long-term strategy for education in England. The focus is intended to be exclusively on National oversight and takes into consideration thinking already done on wider stakeholder engagement and devolution. We have focused on seven key principles and initial thoughts on the scope of responsibilities for a new governance body, like a National Council for Education.

It is important to note that there are many details to be considered and developed and these proposals are solely focused on **high level governance and oversight**. They are not intended to deal with the detailed design, development and execution of education on a regional, local and individual school or college basis.

Principles for National Council for Education (a Board)

1. The Council is the **highest level body to oversee the development and implementation of a long-term plan for education**. The long-term plan would offer a **framework to inform annual planning, budget setting and a structure for organising national educational initiatives and policies**. The Council's remit could over time include oversight of education policy, strategy and performance on behalf of government and parliament.
2. The **Council is on statutory footing** in the form of an executive non-departmental body like the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) and Office for

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Budget Responsibility (OBR). The Council will provide independent advice to the government.

3. The Council will also offer advice to government through a public and transparent process in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, for example teachers, learners, parents/carers and business leaders.
4. The governance model will incorporate learning and best practice from that used in the NHS, National Infrastructure Commission, OBR, Bank of England, etc.
5. The Chair is appointed by government and **appointments to the Council recommended to, and approved by government.**
 - **Membership is based on extensive experience and skills for high level governance and insight on education.** The Council will consist of no more than 10 independent Non-Executives and possibly 4 Education Executives (i.e., senior level positions within the Department for Education such as the Permanent Secretary or Director General)
 - **Members would not attend representing specific education interest groups but ideally would reflect broader experience in public and civil service, education, business, science, arts & culture.** Further thought needs to be given to the selection criteria for the Non-Executive Chair and NEDs.
 - **The Council will work closely with government as well as opposition parties**
 - The Council will be supported by a Secretariat
6. There will be clearly defined Reserved Powers (Decisions, Recommendations and Advice) including the development of a long-term plan for education and a governance model for its implementation as well as the definition of boundary conditions - the point at which matters are devolved to local areas.
7. The Council will determine the number, purpose and scope of expert/advisory/policy sub groups; which will include but not be limited to Curriculum, Youth/Learners, Mental & Physical Health, Diversity & Inclusion, Parents/Carers.

The scope of the Education Council responsibilities would include;

- Developing and approving the Vision and Values for Education in England.
- Developing and approving the long-term plan for Education in England.
- Shaping a governance model to support the implementation of a long-term plan for Education in England.
- Reviewing progress of the long-term plan against milestones and key performance criteria annually and making adjustments to the plan as needed.
- Advising on Structure and Organisation across education.
- Advising on prioritisation of resources and the development of long-term budgets.
- Advising on National KPIs & System Performance Assessment.
- Advising on Curriculum to meet long term needs.
- Advising on Key Policies (to be determined).
- Advising on selected Key appointments.
- Advising on Remuneration Policy across education.
- Delegate implementation of the long-term plan to Regional/Local areas.