

Wiltshire Council

Annual Council

10 May 2016

Notice of Motion No. 31 – Forced Academisation of Wiltshire Schools Councillors Jon Hubbard and Glenis Ansell Officer Response

1. The Department for Education released its White Paper 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' on the 17th March 2016. The paper sets out the Government's plans for the next 5 years, building and extending on the current reforms to achieve educational excellence everywhere.
2. The White Paper set out that by the end of 2020 all schools will be academies or in the process of becoming academies. If schools have not started the process of conversion by 2020, then the Department for Education (DfE) will take steps to direct them to become academies.
3. The DfE's reforms confirm that by 2022, local authorities will no longer be maintaining schools. Responsibility for oversight of educational standards and school improvement will move towards a school-led system and the role of local authorities in allocating local funding will be overtaken by a National Funding Formula.
4. The White Paper sets out a continued and strong role for LAs in relation to children's education. The three key roles for LAs will be:
 - Ensuring every child has a school place and that there are sufficient special school and alternative provision places to meet demand.
 - Ensuring the needs of vulnerable pupils are met, including assessing and supporting children with special educational needs or disability (SEND), looked after children, those in alternative provision or missing from education and also ensuring that schools meet their safeguarding responsibilities.
 - Promoting and supporting the needs of parents, children and the local community, including a continuing role in managing the school admissions process, including the administration of independent admission appeals function.

Fulfilling these roles will require the LA to continue to work in partnership with every school in Wiltshire.

As Government policy on the issue of academisation is still emerging and will require legislation if proposals are to be implemented, it is too early to debate the Council's response. There will be an opportunity for Children's Select Committee to discuss the direction set out in the White Paper – possibly through the existing School Improvement Task Group - and make recommendations on the Council's response.