

## Wiltshire Council

Children's Services Select Committee  
22<sup>nd</sup> July 2011

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### Future Educational Direction: Discussion Paper

#### Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to share a common understanding of the future educational direction as nationally the system moves towards a more self-improving, practitioner-led and locally determined model.

#### Background

2. Shaping the future of our education services in the current climate is challenging and as we are working within a changing context the transition to a more self-improving system will need to be supported by the Local Authority (LA). **Self-governing** is about all schools being able to convert to independent academies to create and sustain their own improvement and learn from each other. **Practitioner-led** refers to headteachers and teachers finding their own solutions from within the profession. We await the Education Bill in the autumn 2011, which will set out future legislation for schools and the LA.
3. The White Paper 2010, 'The Importance of Teaching,' outlined the specific role of the LA as a champion for educational excellence, vulnerable children and parents and families. The LA has to ensure that the school system works for every family and must use its democratic mandate to challenge every school to do the best for their population. LAs have a unique role in bringing together all services for children in a local area so that every child is ready and able to benefit from high quality teaching in excellent schools. They are well placed to help schools manage the twin challenges of delivering an aspirational National Curriculum and ensuring that teaching and learning reflects the nature of the local community.
4. LAs have to support parents and families through promoting a good supply of strong schools, with fair access to all and supply enough places and lead co-ordinated admissions to all schools. LA's have to support maintained schools

performing below the floor standards to improve quickly and they are encouraged to market their school improvement services to all schools, not just those in their immediate geographical area as well as broker support between schools. LAs have to use their intervention powers early and effectively to secure improvements in maintained schools and they can ask Ofsted to inspect an academy where there may be concerns.

5. Wiltshire has 11 academies to date, 10 secondaries and one primary. Within that 11 there are two traditional academies: Wellington and Sarum. These were part of the previous Government's strategy for raising standards. These two academies have sponsors, Wellington College and Wiltshire Council, the Salisbury Diocese, Bryanston Independent School and Bath Spa University respectively. The others are converter academies. At first these schools could convert if outstanding at their last Ofsted inspection, then if good and now any school providing it has another higher performing school in support. Wiltshire has four further secondaries, six primaries and one special school actively moving towards academy status in the near future. Most other schools are asking questions about converting and assessing the situation before acting. In total, 22 schools out of 236 in Wiltshire – 9% are currently actively pursuing conversion to an academy. Schools can convert to an academy at the start of any month; they do not have to wait for a new term or academic year.
6. It is for Headteachers and Governors to decide whether to convert to an academy and schools are becoming aware of some of the issues related to the change of status. For example, if a school is currently a maintained Community or Voluntary Controlled School, and converts to an academy the Capita licence fee alone for the School Information Management System (SIMS) is £20,000 per academy. There is £25,000 start up budget from the DfE. Capita has 80% of the market share for such information management systems in schools. Academies should receive the same budget as all schools with an additional proportion of the budget in lieu of the LA services no longer supplied to academies. No school, converting to an academy, should be advantaged or disadvantaged financially compared to maintained schools. The current consultations on academy funding and a national funding formula have ended and we await the outcomes.
7. The pace of change continues to be very rapid with many major documents out for consultation such as; Managing and Appraising headteacher and teacher Performance, School Admissions, Ensuring Good Behaviour, Ofsted Inspections, Draft Standards for Teachers, SEN Green Paper, Funding Reforms,

The Independent Review of Key Stage 2 Testing, Assessment and Accountability Final Report from Lord Bew June 2011 and changes for Newly Qualified Teachers are on the way.

8. There are frequent new announcements. On the 16 June 2011 the Secretary of State was speaking at a National College for School Leadership (NCSL) Conference in Birmingham. He announced that the lowest performing 200 primary schools nationally would be converted to academies by September 2012. This announcement was about the 200 national primary schools that have been below the floor standards over the last five plus years. The floor standard has not been constant over the last few years. It is now becoming clear it is the current floor standard, which is being used retrospectively in this calculation. The current primary floor standard is: 60% Level 4 in English and mathematics and below median (middle point for all LAs) progress in English of 68% and mathematics of 61%. Wiltshire has 12 primary schools in this category and all have action plans to improve their performance. Many of these are not expected to remain below the floor standards when they receive the 2011 results. It is anticipated that floor standards in secondary will rise from the current 35% 5+ A\*-C in GCSE to 50% within the near future although no formal announcement has been made as yet.

### **Support to Wiltshire Schools in Transition**

9. The LA is keen to support the widest 'family' of schools in Wiltshire. Whether a school is an Academy, Voluntary Aided, Foundation, Community or Voluntary Controlled, the fundamental aims are the same; to improve life chances for children and young people in Wiltshire. Schools require support more than ever in this dramatic re-shaping of the system. Since the autumn term of 2010 we have worked with the Primary Headteacher Forum (PHF) and Wiltshire Association of Secondary and Special Headteachers (WASSH) to re-align that support. With a significantly reduced budget we have needed to prioritise our work very carefully. Wiltshire Council has recognised the importance of providing on-going support to raise standards, particularly for vulnerable groups and the Council's Business Plan sets out investment plans in relation to school improvement.
10. The relationships between the LA and schools are very good and we have used this to build the Wiltshire Learning Trust (WLT). **(See Appendix 1 for the WLT draft document)**. The WLT is an umbrella alliance to describe the LA's offer to schools and early years' settings to provide choice, access and quality. Its aim

is to support ALL schools to do the best for their population, particularly to improve life chances and safeguard children. It sets out the unique purpose of the WLT, its principles and offer. All academies have been offered an individual visit to discuss their requirements and received a clear offer of both free and charged services via the WLT. All schools have also received this information. Academies are being offered some services without additional charge because of the way the current funding is allocated. This may change into the future due to the Funding reforms under consultation currently.

11. All services offered through the WLT are in addition to, 'The right choice....' This is the current brochure we use to sell services to schools, which we have done successfully for the last 10+ years. Eventually these two documents will merge into the WLT. Within the WLT pack distributed to schools there are two sections. The green headed papers offer services available to academies without charge on the same basis that they are provided to maintained schools. These include; Central SEN, Sensory Impairment, Educational Psychologists, SoCIT (primary and secondary autism advice) Education Welfare Service (penalty notices only), Ethnic Minority Achievement Service, Family Learning, Behaviour (primary exclusions), Child Protection/Safeguarding (audit form, advice and guidance, emergencies) and Admissions.
12. The blue headed papers offer services available for academies to purchase from the LA should they wish. These are provided to maintained schools without charge from centrally held funds, a part of which has been recouped by the DfE to enable academies to provide these services themselves or to purchase from a supplier of their choice. These include: Appeals for admissions, Health and safety, Occupational health, data for self-evaluation and pupil progress tracking, Pupil attendance, Support and advice for pupil behaviour, Free School Meals assessing applications, Licences (photocopying rights), Media and public relations service, Post 16 transport (subsidy), Training in child protection and safeguarding and Newly Qualified Teacher support.
13. Headteacher and governor briefings for primary schools have been held recently and attended by over 60% of schools. Those sessions explored whether individual self-governing status, particularly if you are a small school, was the best way forward. Working together and developing trust in cluster communities appears to be the preferred way forward. This is irrespective of whether a school is an academy. Schools will be part of a number of cluster communities in the future, some perhaps based geographically as most are now but increasingly across LAs and perhaps by size or specialist interest. An input into

the WASSH meeting on 29 June 2011 on Educational Direction explored Wiltshire Council's direction, the LA role into the future and posed the question about the role of the three secondary federations into the future and what they will look like at milestones and journey's end.

14. Some schools are excited and energised by the new self-governing practitioner-led system, whereas others are more apprehensive. Forcing schools into a particular route too quickly may not be what some want, need or could cope with, which could de-stabilise some schools and risk the good progress currently being made with raising standards for all. WLT has been established to help with this fast changing agenda. There has to be a transition to the self-improving model. Schools and the LA need to co-construct the new system towards mutual school self help to create and sustain their own solutions. The primary briefings concentrated on what makes a cluster of schools really outstanding.
15. A conference for headteachers and governors was held on 2 March 2011 called, 'Managing Your Resources Better in Hard Times.' It was attended by more than 100 delegates and consisted mainly of primary school headteachers and governors. A range of tools and techniques were considered such as: root cause analysis or the five whys, the Association of School and College Lecturers (ASCL) toolkit was demonstrated and benchmarking financial information and saving money on recruitment costs were all explored.
16. The focus for the LA is to build capacity in schools to meet the future challenges and to ensure that no school or pupil gets left behind. Some of our schools in the most challenging of Wiltshire's communities have received considerable Pupil Premium funds this year, £430 per child (£200 per 'services' child) to support the successful early intervention programmes in place, such as Every Child a reader, talker, writer programmes. Now that there is less national prescription with these programmes we can use them to reach a wider group of pupils. Although this money is not ring fenced at school level there will be accountability through Ofsted to ensure the funding is being used to boost the performance of the lowest attainers.
17. Increased accountability on schools is beginning to emerge. The independent Review of Key Stage 2 Testing, Assessment and Accountability Final Report from Lord Bew was published in June 2011. It indicated autonomy but with robust accountability with increased published indicators of progress for lower attainers and increased moderation of results. League tables are to remain with

more indicators to be reported on. There will be additional attainment and progress measures for those pupils who complete Years 5 and 6 as evidence shows underperformance for those who move schools in these two year groups. Reading and writing results will be published and not just English and the writing test will be Teacher assessed only. Tests will remain in May each year and the Pupil Premium will be published although no specific details of this yet.

18. **Teaching Schools** A number of our schools both primary and secondary are applying to become Teaching Schools. Three schools (2 primary and 1 secondary) approached the LA to support their applications. Teaching schools will be awarded £60K for school-to-school improvement and collaboration. Nationally, initiatives such as National Leaders of Education (with their National Support School status) and Local Leaders of Education have demonstrated a strong trend of 'mutual benefit', where both those schools receiving support and those providing it, are achieving higher standards and improved outcomes for their children. Wiltshire already has a number of headteachers who are working successfully in this way and this is planned to continue alongside the Teaching School notion as the role of local authorities evolves. The aim is to ensure a coherent provision of training and development for new and experienced teachers and leaders, which supports school improvement and meets the needs and context of the local area.
19. Teaching schools will play a fundamental role in the future of school improvement, Initial Teacher Training, Continuous Professional Development, and Leadership Development. Teaching schools will draw together the very best that the schools in their alliance have to offer and to ensure that more children in schools experience the benefits of great teaching and leadership. An alliance is a group of schools and other partners that is supported by the leadership of a teaching school. Strategic partners are schools, universities and others such as local authorities that work with a teaching school to deliver particular aspects of the alliance's activity. Teaching school networks are formed when a teaching school and its alliance decide to work collaboratively with one or more other teaching school alliances to allow for a more flexible approach to meeting the needs of a much larger community of schools.
20. The White Paper proposes that a new national network of teaching schools is established, modelled on teaching hospitals. This will give outstanding schools the role of leading the training and professional development of teachers, support staff and headteachers as well as contributing to the raising of standards through school-to-school support. Teaching Schools should not only be

outstanding in their own performance, but have a track record of working with others to raise standards for children and young people beyond their own school. The government is looking for 500 Teaching School Alliances by 2014.

### **Proposal**

21. The Select Committee is invited to discuss this paper on future educational direction.

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