

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

COUNCIL

13 JULY 2010

COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS

QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN OSBORN
TROWBRIDGE LAMBROK DIVISION

TO COUNCILLOR LIONEL GRUNDY CABINET MEMBER FOR
CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Question

What is the rationale for continuing with the Special Educational Needs Review in light of the considerable cuts in this year's educational budget plus the certainty of future cuts and the consequences of a significant number of Wiltshire schools opting out of the Local Educational Authority to acquire the status of Academies and Free Schools?

Response

The Local Authority has not yet received any direct communication from the DfE on the future of SEN provision and two Education Bills are awaited; one on Academies and the other on Accountabilities.

However, the DfE website on Academies has an extensive list of Frequently Asked Questions. It explains that when a school becomes an Academy the existing educational provision transfers with it. The Local Authority has to be part of the conversion process where a school has a Specialist Learning Centre or Resource Base. Academies can be named as schools of choice where a child has a statement for SEN. Schools which convert to Academies retain the admissions criteria they currently use for pupils.

Therefore, most of the issues consulted on during the SEN consultation are not affected by the move of schools to academies. The only area directly affected could be the size of the SEN inclusion service being retained. All other recommendations from the consultation are part of a normal review of SEN provision which is the statutory responsibility of the Local Authority.