

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Children's Select Committee**

**4 September 2018**

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## **Education Transformation Board – Stage 2 Update**

### **Purpose of Report**

1. The report provides an update on the progress of the Education Transformation Project in Wiltshire and outlines changes to the Local Authority's School Improvement Framework to be implemented from September 2018.

### **Background**

2. In September 2016 The Education Transformation project was launched to address the following:
  - Respond to the DfE White paper, Education Excellence Everywhere (DfE, 2016)
  - Minimise the fragmentation arising from the differing status of schools
  - Provide a system to generate a collective responsibility and moral purpose
  - Reflect on national research and establish an enquiry into how other Local Authorities are responding to the changing landscape
  - Develop lateral partnerships rather than hierarchical
  - Avoid instability and uncertainty
  - Dovetail the work into that of other council transformation projects and business plans

Neil Baker, primary school Headteacher and chair of Schools Forum, was seconded for three days a week to lead on this project. The Education Transformation Board (ETB) was set up to oversee the work streams, endorse the change programme and agree any terms of reference. This group was chaired by the LA's Lead member for Children's Services, Cllr. Laura Mayes

The ETB established the core vision

*'to create a strong, self-improving, self-sustaining school-led system to improve the educational outcomes for every child in Wiltshire.'*

Its core principles were *'within schools, between schools and beyond schools'*.

The drivers were:

- Schools working for and on behalf of each other ensuring that all children are in a good school
- High quality school improvement evidenced by high quality interventions that secure a positive impact
- All schools to be sustainable (able to respond to needs, be self-improving and responsible for school improvement) and viable (financially/standards/leadership)
- Responding collaboratively to sub-regional data

The ETB also published its core values statement (Appendix 1). To create a school led system it was important that the design of the system was driven by school leaders. A Design and Task Board was set up to design the system.

On February 28, 2017 a conference was held to ask schools leaders how they would like the project to respond to the challenges and rationale of the ETB and the design board. Over 90 schools were represented covering a wide diversity of school types.

The conference identified characteristics that were desirable in the new system:

- Supporting peer to peer working
- Enabling schools, and the wider system, to respond to changing national requirements
- Offering effective challenge and support for school leaders and governors
- Enabling schools to validate their own Self Evaluation Framework (SEF)
- Building potential leaders of schools
- Enabling teachers, and leaders, to observe excellence and work alongside excellence
- Having access to research and innovation

Apart from the above leadership elements the conference also highlighted the need for:

- A central portal for CPD
- Clarification of the statutory duties of the Local Authority
- Swift and easy access to services
- Greater recognition and utilisation of National and Local Leaders of Education and Governance

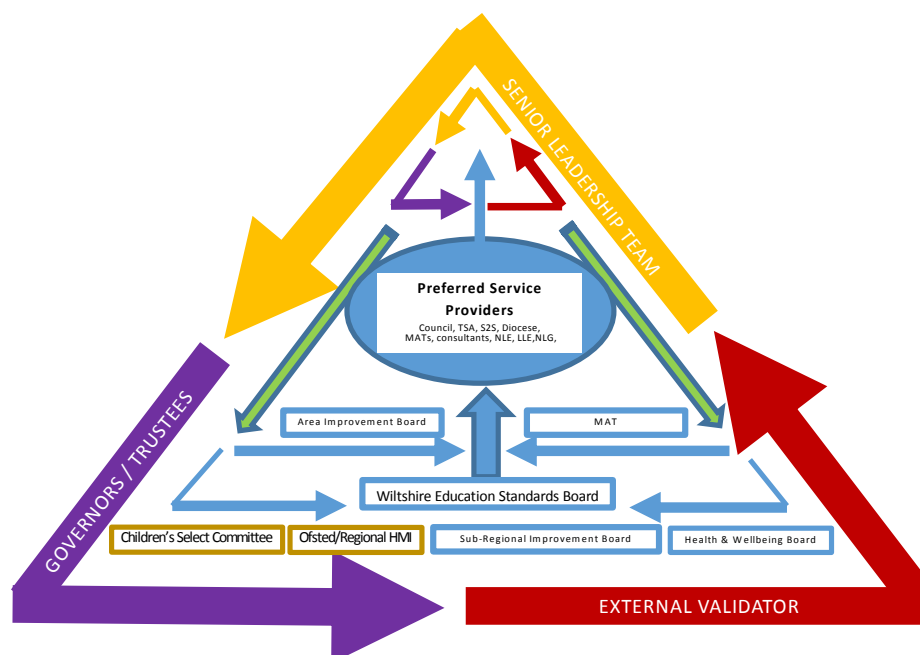
- Development of the working relationships with the Teaching School Alliances
- An evaluation of the financial audits for maintained schools
- A review of the safeguarding audit

Throughout the project regular communication was held with Local School Associations (WASSH, PHF WGA), local school/academy clusters, collaborative partnerships, RSCs office, Teaching School Alliances, relevant Diocese, Ofsted and differing Local Authority transformation projects. At each step of the programme endorsement was required from all of the above.

The 4th July 2018 saw the launch of the system. At the conference over 100 schools were represented with a diverse range of school phase and type. The principles and activities have been incorporated in the review of the School Improvement Framework which outlines the monitoring and support role of the LA for schools and academies.

## Main Considerations for the Council

### 3. Principles of the Education Transformation Partnership from 2018



The above system diagram shows how the school led system works, with three corners of the triangle identifying key elements of the process.

- Any evaluation carried out by a school leadership team will be scrutinized by the governing body or board of trustees. To ensure that this is a valid and accurate judgement, an external validator will be required to verify the judgment. This can be carried out by the Challenge and Support Partner (CASP) if the school is a LA maintained school. If the school is an academy it is anticipated that they will seek an external validator to verify their judgements. The triangulation of key judgements is a key principle ensuring that schools have an independent view of themselves.
- Three key areas vital to the effective continued performance of schools will be reviewed: school effectiveness; school finances, and; safeguarding. Schools and academies all go through a parallel process to confirm standards (indicated by the green arrows). These are reported to governors or the academy trust board. These are then verified by the external validator.
- Outcomes from LA standards, the safeguarding audit and finance review of LA maintained schools will be collated by the LA and themes reported to the Wiltshire Education Standards Board (WESB). This board is tasked with ensuring that the thematic needs of schools and academies can be met through the providers of support within the county through Teaching School Alliances and other providers. The providers, collectively, need to be able to respond to demands placed upon schools for their continued improvement.

- As part of the process the system needs also to be able to respond to other identified needs from other boards such as the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Ongoing work is planned to further establish process and consolidate the working methods of the WESB.

The next steps are planned to include:

- Establishing three Area Improvement Boards
- Ensuring regular communication with WASSH, PHF and WGA
- Ensuring regular communication with the Service Providers and Teaching School Alliances
- Evaluating the initial implementation of revised processes and ongoing effectiveness

Reflecting other council transformation projects the proposed name is : The Education Transformation Partnership (ETP).



### **Safeguarding Considerations**

4. Although this report does not include reference to issues regarding child protection, the broadest definition of safeguarding does take into account that safeguarding processes should optimise the life chances of individuals. The quality of school provision has a significant impact on supporting improved life chances for children and young people and for those groups vulnerable to underachievement, this is an essential consideration.

## **Public Health Implications**

5. Educational attainment is one of the key outcomes for children and young people included in the Public Health Outcomes Framework.

## **Environmental and Climate Change Considerations**

6. There are no specific environmental or climate change considerations in relation to this report.

## **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

7. It is an aspiration for all education establishments to be providers of at least a good standard of learning in order that they can achieve a good level of attainment and skills. The School Improvement Framework aims to provide an effective method of monitoring performance and providing support where schools and academies are vulnerable to decline. This will have an impact on the educational progress of children attending these schools and will impact on their achievements.

## **Risk Assessment**

8. With diminishing financial resources including the removal of Educational Services Grant funding for school improvement from April 2018, the continued funding for the work required to continue to monitor all schools and academies, provision of support for vulnerable LA maintained schools and the deployment of Challenge and Support Partners will be a challenge.

Other challenges include distraction from the core vision and its principles; developing skills and ways of thinking in all leaders in Wiltshire; maintaining the collective responsibility and ensuring that validation is consistently insightful and challenging.

## **Financial Implications**

9. There are a number of government financial policies that will directly impact on the delivery of school improvement activities. The Education Services Grant (ESG) has ceased in April 2018 and funding through the School Improvement, Monitoring and Brokerage Grant is reduced by central government from April 2018. Declining school standards as judged by Ofsted and thus more schools causing concern gives rise to financial strain and risk.

## **Legal Implications**

10. There are no legal implications in relation to this paper.

## **Conclusions**

11. With national ambition for an increasingly sector-led improvement landscape, key partnerships are ever more significant and the need for transparent accountability to all stakeholders never more important.

Whilst overview and monitoring of school performance remains a LA and RSC responsibility, the integration of partners in quality improvement is significant in creating the school-led system. With reduction in funding, capacity and powers it is essential that the system works to supporting the strong, self-improving, self-sustaining school-led system to improve the educational outcomes for every child in Wiltshire. The Wiltshire Education Transformation Partnership brings all stakeholders together to support the realisation of this aim.

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## **Background Papers**

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

None

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Core Value Statement

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**‘To create a strong, self-improving, self-sustaining school-led system to improve the educational outcomes for every child in Wiltshire.’**

### **Core values:**

- a collective will to make the above happen
- to strive for excellence in all our schools
- where every child is important
- to have high expectations of ourselves, each other and for all our young people
- recognise that education is a key driver for embedding change

### **How can this be achieved?**

- by working together and in close partnership with all types of schools
- by enabling and supporting schools to self-improve
- maintaining a sustained focus on improving outcomes and experiences for all children, especially those who are LAC, SEN and disadvantaged
- by monitoring data to enable schools to make informed decisions
- convene/enable partnerships to develop
- enhancing and developing a school-led system

### **Wiltshire Council stands for:**

- a recognition that high quality educational provision is key to the success of Wiltshire
- continuous consultation with schools and its close partnership working
- being a convener, enabler and supporter for school improvement
- having a focus on improving educational outcomes for all children and young people

### **A self-improving, self-sustaining, strong school will have the following characteristics**

- motivated and have a desire for self-improvement
- reflective
- culture of research and review
- strong problem solvers
- resilient
- partnership working for the right reasons (equity, trust and joint outcomes)

### **Recognised by:**

- financial stability
- strong, embedded, relevant curriculum
- continuous CPD
- strong committed staff
- staff loyalty
- strong strategic planning
- using evidence to improve pupil outcomes
- knows its strengths and weaknesses