



HILLINGDON
LONDON



Children, Young People and Learning Policy Overview Committee

Date: WEDNESDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2016

Time: 7.00 PM

Venue: COMMITTEE ROOM 5 - CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH STREET, UXBRIDGE UB8 1UW

Meeting Details: Members of the Public and Press are welcome to attend this meeting

Councillors on the Committee

Jane Palmer, Chairman of the Children's, Young People and Learning Policy Overview Committee (Chairman)

Nick Denys (Vice-Chairman)

Jem Duducu

Dominic Gilham, Chairman of Licensing Committee

Becky Haggar, Carers' Champion

Allan Kauffman

John Oswell, Deputy Leader of the Labour Group

Jagjit Singh

Jan Sweeting (Labour Lead)

Tony Little, Roman Catholic Diocesan Representative

Other Voting Representative

Anthony Little, Roman Catholic Diocesan.

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Terms of Reference

A central role of a Policy Overview Committees is to undertake in-depth policy reviews on specific issues. Reviews provide the opportunity to hear from members of the public and expert witnesses, including people from a wide range of external organisations. Reviews usually make recommendations to the Cabinet on how the Council could improve its work. They therefore perform an important role in opening up the policy-making process to a wider audience, including people who would not normally have the opportunity to participate.

This Committee undertakes the policy overview role in relation to the following matters:

- Education Services and statutory education authority functions
- School performance and attainment
- School Transport
- Relationships with Local Academies / Free Schools
- Pre-School & Early Years Services
- Youth Services & Careers Services
- Juvenile justice & probation services
- Adult Learning
- Education and learning partnerships
- Music & The Arts
- Social care services for children, young persons and children with special needs
- Adoption and Fostering
- Family Services

Agenda

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Declarations of Interest in matters coming before the meeting
- 3 Matters notified in advance or urgent
- 4 To confirm that items of business marked Part 1 will be considered in public and that the items marked Part 2 will be considered in private
- 5 Finance update (oral update)
- 6 Elective Home Education (EHE) 1 - 12
- 7 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) - TO FOLLOW
- 8 Education Policy Update 13 - 16
- 9 Major Review Scoping Report 17 - 80
- 10 Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions 81 - 86
- 11 Work Programme - Review the work programme for the coming year 87 - 88

Elective Home Education - Update

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REASON FOR ITEM

The School Placement and Admissions Team has been responsible for Elective Home Education (EHE) in Hillingdon since July 2015. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the responsibilities and powers the Local Authority has for EHE, developments following a previous review in 2012 by the Committee and further action being taken. The recommendations from the review undertaken by the Committee in 2012 can be found in appendix 1.

SUGGESTED COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Note the update.
2. Question officers about the update.

INFORMATION

The Legal Context

Every parent has a right to provide Elective Home Education (EHE) for their school age child(ren).

This means that, rather than attending school, parents take full responsibility for providing education to their child(ren) outside the school environment, which could be at home or elsewhere.

What the law says

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 provides that:

"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable -

- to his age, ability and aptitude, and
 - to any special educational needs he may have,
- either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

The responsibility for a child's education rests with his or her parents. An "efficient" and "suitable" education is not defined in the Education Act 1996 however

- "efficient" has been broadly described in case law as an education that "achieves that which it sets out to achieve"
- "suitable" education is one that "primarily equips a child for life within the community of which he is a member, rather than the way of life in the country as a whole, as long as it does not foreclose the child's options in later years to adopt some other form of life if he wishes to do so".

There is no definition for "full time", however when a child attends school he or she could expect to receive between 22 and 25 hours of tuition per week for 38 weeks per year.

Current law does not require parents to inform the Local Authority of their arrangements to home educate. The information most Local Authorities hold on children receiving home education are from parents taking their children off a school's roll and giving EHE as their reason. Furthermore, the local authority has no power of entry to evaluate whether the education being provided by a parent meets the requirements of section 7 (Education Act, 1996). Guidance states that local authorities can make contact with families providing EHE and, although the families are not required to engage with us, it would be sensible for them to do so.

Hillingdon's policy

In Hillingdon action is being taken to strengthen engagement with families who have chosen to home educate. Families are contacted on occasions to request evidence of the education being provided, and this can take the form of, for example, the family providing samples of work or a meeting being arranged either at home or elsewhere to go over the type of provision on offer. The purpose of the meeting is not to establish the quality of the education, or to establish that certain subjects are being taught (there is no requirement for a family to follow any curriculum), but rather to establish that the education provision is full time, efficient and suitable. Following an assessment, a report is provided to the family which will summarise the education being provided and identify whether, or not, the local authority has any concerns.

If information exists which may cast doubt on whether an "efficient and suitable education" can or is being provided, Hillingdon will seek to gather any relevant information that will assist in reaching a properly informed judgement. This will include seeking from the parents any further information that they wish to provide explaining how they intend to provide a suitable education for their child(ren) and the parents will be given the opportunity to address any specific concerns that the local authority has.

The local authority does have the authority to enforce a 'school attendance order' where an efficient and suitable education is not being provided despite the parents being provided an opportunity to address concerns raised by the local authority. Hillingdon sees the taking of the above measure as a last resort after all reasonable avenues have been explored to bring about a resolution of the situation. At any stage following the issue of the

Order, parents may present evidence to Hillingdon that they are now providing a suitable and appropriate education and apply to have the Order revoked.

The recent Children Missing Education statutory guidance which came into law from September 2016 states that all schools must notify the local authority whenever a child is taken off roll. This includes children taken off roll to take up EHE.

The Hillingdon Picture

223 children are currently (7th October 2016) known to Hillingdon Council to receive an elective home education. In most cases this is because parents notify the Local Authority.

Parents' reasons for providing elective home education can be very varied and can include:

- distance or access to a local school
- religious or cultural beliefs
- philosophical or ideological views
- dissatisfaction with the system
- bullying
- as a short term intervention for a particular reason
- child's unwillingness or inability to go to school
- parent's desire for a closer relationship with their child
- special educational needs

In Hillingdon, there are currently 79 primary aged children and 144 secondary aged children listed as receiving EHE. The significant demographic groups we are aware of (and we have records for 131 of the 223 pupils) are White English/British - 65, Traveller of Irish Heritage - 14 and Black Somali - 11.

LB Hillingdon will routinely contact parents once we have received a notification of EHE with an introductory letter outlining their responsibilities and those of the council. We also contact all families on the EHE list once a year with an update letter. Where a concern is reported from any source (eg former school/family member/social worker etc) the local authority will request some form of evidence to assess the education is suitable, efficient and full time. The School Placement and Admissions team will also work with any relevant agency or department (Participation team/SEN team etc) if there is a wider safeguarding concern (see appendix 2).

A recent article in a national newspaper indicates a 45% increase in home educated children in the last five years (following a Freedom of Information request).

An article in the media from September 2016 states that Council leaders are calling on the government to give them greater powers to check on the growing number of children who are apparently being home-educated – a trend that is thought to be linked to a rise in the number of unregistered schools across England.

The Service for Residents

It is not always clear why parents decide to electively home educate their child(ren) as it is not a requirement that parents share this with the local authority. As set out above, anecdotally there are a variety of reasons why parents and carers choose to make their own arrangements to educate their children. The following sections of the report summarise the action that has been taken to further develop the information, advice and other arrangements in place for local parents and carers following the previous review by the Policy Overview Committee in 2012.

Changes Already Implemented:

Improving Information to Parents - A Dedicated Webpage is in Place

The local authority is meeting the statutory duty to provide support where resources permit for parents wishing to electively home educate as the Council website now has a dedicated page which is clear, accurate and sets out the legal position, rules and responsibilities of both parents and the local authority. The website also gives advice to parents considering EHE before removing their children from a school roll. This helps manage expectations for parents.

EHE Policy Document Has Been Updated (Contact Details)

Hillingdon's EHE policy has been updated to reflect that the School Placements and Admissions Team is responsible for EHE arrangements. Contact details have also been checked and updated as necessary. The fundamental structure and content of the policy has not been changed. The document can be viewed at

[http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/media/35328/Elective-home-education---LBH-policy-2012/pdf/Elective Home Education LBH Policy 2012 - Revised 2016.pdf](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/media/35328/Elective-home-education---LBH-policy-2012/pdf/Elective_Home_Education_LBH_Policy_2012_-_Revised_2016.pdf)

All Correspondence for Parents Has Been Reviewed and Updated

Officers have updated the letters for parents in response to the recommendations from the previous review of the service by the Committee. Three main letters have been designed to reflect good practice following research regarding EHE communication with other local authorities. Communication is now intended to be simple, clear, friendly and supportive rather than previous versions which some interpreted as officious (please see appendix 2).

Joint Working

The School Placement and Admissions team work closely with the Special Educational Needs and Disability team as there are 6 children with an Education, Health and Care Plan who are known to be in receipt of EHE. Officers also work closely with Social Care to ensure coordination and careful risk assessment. Officers continually work with colleagues in Social Care to support families who electively home educate their children and have intervention and support arranged by social care through a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan.

The School Placement and Admissions Team have created a Professionals' Briefing Sheet which provides information to other council employees about EHE and the legalities surrounding it for parents and local authorities.

The School Placement and Admissions team work closely with Social Care to ensure that any information about education provision is shared for children on a need to know basis who may be involved with social care. Support and training is provided to social care staff who may be unfamiliar with the legal requirements surrounding EHE.

Invite Parents to Apply for School Place Allocations

At the beginning of each autumn term officers are now sending leaflets/letters to the parents of children in receipt of Elective Home Education in years 2, 6 and 9 to make them aware of their options for applying for a new school at either junior level, secondary level or Year 10 provision (University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools).

Working with families

To date officers have had very positive engagement from families providing elective home education. This goes against a trend nationally where other local authorities report difficulty engaging with EHE families and a sense of distrust with the council.

The numbers of EHE children in Hillingdon are the second highest (behind Newham) of 29 London authorities that responded to an Ofsted request for data in February 2016 (see Appendix 3). The average number of children subject to elective home education arrangements is 121 per London Boroughs. Officers attribute this high number to the fact that Hillingdon has a high pupil population (in the top ten in London) but also due to parents actively engaging with the local authority including reviewing the website page and contacting the School Placement and Admissions Team. This has helped officers to secure a more accurate picture of elective home education in the Borough.

Officers always provide a full range of options to parents wishing to discuss a move to EHE, including resolving any particular issues that may be affecting the child in their current school, providing support for changing school, or providing advice about EHE. This

information is always well received and following a recent meeting with one parent, officers were invited to contact them in 2 months to check on their progress. The parent even suggested that she could provide her story as a testimonial to her decision and the support of the local authority.

Changes - Action Underway:

Seeking the Views of Residents

To support engagement with parents who decide to make their own arrangements outside of school to educate their child(ren), officers are developing a proposal to ask a sample of parents for their views on the information and advice the LA offers. This will be subject to Member approval. Officers also hope to learn from the survey more information about parents' reasons for choosing EHE as they are not required to provide this information to schools when they take their children off-roll. Responses received will help shape future service development and feed into school improvement locally. In addition the survey will help engage EHE families for future development of EHE policies and services provided.

This questionnaire will assist with the assurance that the local authority is satisfied that everyone known to be home educating appears to be suitably educating their children, although the local authority has no statutory duty to request said information.

Working to comply with PREVENT Strategy

Guidance has been made available on the Hillingdon Council EHE webpage with regard to online safeguarding and guidance will also be made available for parents with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children when choosing private tutors and to be cautious of unlicensed schools. This will cover radicalisation as well as general safeguarding matters such as DBS checks, consistent with national guidelines.

Expanding Exam Centre provision

The Skills Hub in Yiewsley is the only publicised exam centre in Hillingdon that accepts EHE children. The School Placement and Admissions Team are continuing to explore alternative options such as Hillingdon secondary schools that are prepared to accept EHE children for examinations as well as the provision available privately within or outside the borough.

Working with EHE Community Groups

Officers have attempted to engage with Hillingdon's EHE community groups, however these have been hard to locate, which may be attributable to few formal groups being in operation in Hillingdon. Attempts to resolve this will include a dedicated question about support groups on the annual EHE questionnaire.

Online notification for EHE

Officers are developing an 'on-line' form for parents to notify us that they are providing elective home education. Although there is no legal requirement for parents to complete the form, some parents will find it convenient to communicate directly to the LA.

Proposed Changes:

Greater involvement with outside agencies

Officers are exploring the option to set up lines of communication with outside agencies that may be involved with children receiving EHE, such as the NHS (GPs/Hospitals etc). The aim would be for the local authority to be notified if they become aware of a child whose parents claim is receiving EHE. This could then be cross referenced against LA held records. Our intention would be to cut down on the number of 'invisible' EHE children who may live in Hillingdon, to ensure parents are receiving the support, guidance and advice on offer. Any changes would be subject to Member agreement.

APPENDIX 1 - List of previous POC recommendations (2012)

RECOMMENDATION 1:

That an annual Borough network meeting take place between LBH EHE Parents and the local authority to enable networking to take place between different EHE groups.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

That Officers review the EHE correspondence which is sent to EHE parents to ensure that their tone is empathetic and their contents are not open to misinterpretation.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

That EHE parents be provided with information on London Borough Exam Centres that will accept EHE children.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

That Cabinet be recommended to approve the updated policy on Elective Home Education and that the policy be reviewed on an annual basis.

APPENDIX 2 - Sample letter text

1. Introductory Letter

Our records show that you have chosen to provide elective home education for NAME.

By choosing to educate your child at home you assume sole responsibility for your child's education and the local authority will not provide:

- a grant
- teaching staff
- stationery or books
- the location for education to take place
- educational visits
- payment for the entry fees of future exams to be taken

We can still provide

- impartial advice and information
- assessment of your educational provision
- advice on employment or further education
- access to a public examination centre

In addition to this, we will also

- contact you on an annual basis and ask you to complete an annual update form
- contact you to provide information that may be relevant for your child such as information on applying for a new school for years 3, 7, 10 or sixth-form or information about exam centres

Hillingdon council periodically contacts parents providing elective home education to invite them to submit evidence to show that children are receiving an efficient and suitable education.

Please be aware that you are *not* legally required to provide such evidence to the local authority, however by doing so we will be able to assess the level of education being provided and report back to you stating the strengths of the education being provided.

If any concerns about the efficiency or suitability of the education being provided for your child are identified we will discuss these with you with a view to helping you improve the provision in the best interests of your child. Such discussions will be conducted in the spirit of respect and partnership working to seek an outcome satisfactory to all, particularly the child.

Accompanying this letter is some information you may find useful including weblinks and contact numbers for organisations that can provide advice and support regarding elective home education. We would also recommend that you continue to check the Elective Home Education Pages on the Hillingdon website as we will periodically provide information there

which you may also find useful (eg details of flu vaccination courses, cycling proficiency courses etc.)

If you would like to discuss this letter with me or would like further advice regarding elective home education then please contact me using the contact details overleaf.

2. Annual Update Letter

Our records show that you are continuing to provide elective home education for NAME.

Hillingdon council is committed to contacting parents providing elective home education at least once a year and this letter is being sent to provide an update to parents.

The number of parents choosing to electively home educate their children in Hillingdon is continuing to rise and as a result we have made some changes which you may find useful. We have compiled all the information currently available on our website in one easy-to-find location. You can now access information, policies and useful links relating to electively home education at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/ehe. We have also updated the Hillingdon policy to reflect recent changes in team structure and to ensure that the policy continues to provide up-to-date information to residents.

Attached to this letter is a questionnaire we would invite you to complete and return. This allows us to ensure that our information is up to date and also allows you to have a voice in the future of any services we may be able to provide to you as a local authority. You can also find an online version of the questionnaire on our website.

We are still able to offer parents providing elective home education with a report highlighting the strengths of their provision and provide suggestions for improvements if there are any concerns about the suitability of the education.

If you would like an assessment of your education provision you can submit evidence which outlines the education being provided for NAME. You can do this, for example, by:

- writing a report
- providing samples of work
- inviting me to your home, with or without your child present
- meeting me elsewhere, with or without your child present
- having the educational provision endorsed by a recognised third party (eg tutor)
- providing evidence in any other appropriate form.

Please be aware that you are *not* legally required to provide such evidence to the local authority, and by not supplying evidence we will *not* assume that there is a concern.

If you would like to discuss this letter with me or would like further advice regarding elective home education then please contact me using the contact details overleaf.

3. Evidence request letter

Our records show that you have chosen to provide elective home education for NAME.

Hillingdon council periodically contacts parents providing elective home education to invite them to submit evidence to show that children are receiving an efficient and suitable education.

I would be grateful if you could respond to this letter by providing evidence which outlines the education being provided for NAME. You can do this, for example, by:

- writing a report
- providing samples of work
- inviting me to your home, with or without your child present
- meeting me elsewhere, with or without your child present
- having the educational provision endorsed by a recognised third party (eg tutor)
- providing evidence in any other appropriate form.

Please be aware that you are *not* legally required to provide such evidence to the local authority, however by doing so we will be able to assess the level of education being provided and report back to you stating the strengths of the education being provided.

If any concerns about the efficiency or suitability of the education being provided for your child are identified we will discuss these with you with a view to helping you improve the provision in the best interests of your child. Such discussions will be conducted in the spirit of respect and partnership working to seek an outcome satisfactory to all, particularly the child.

If you would like to discuss this letter with me or would like further advice regarding elective home education then please contact me using the contact details overleaf.

APPENDIX 3 - London LA EHE numbers collected by OfSted - February 2016

London Borough	Number of EHE children
Barking and Dagenham	no response
Barnet	137
Bexley	no response
Brent	187
Bromley	147
Camden	103
City of London	1
Croydon	181
Ealing	170
Enfield	208
Greenwich	no response
Hackney	169
Haringey	162
Hammersmith & Fulham	65
Harrow	64
Havering	90
Hillingdon	222
Hounslow	94
Islington	76
Kensington & Chelsea	36
Kingston	57
Lambeth	83
Lewisham	198
Merton	95
Newham	251
Redbridge	127
Richmond	60
Southwark	no response
Sutton	76
Tower Hamlets	132
Waltham Forest	203
Wandsworth	75
Westminster	35
Total	3504

UPDATE ON NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

Contact Officer: Dan Kennedy / Venetia Rogers
Telephone: 01895 250495 / 250494

REASON FOR ITEM

To update the Committee on recent developments in Government policy in education, including the content of ministerial speeches.

SUGGESTED COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Note the update.
2. Question officers about the update.

INFORMATION

Background

Since the White Paper 'Education Excellence Everywhere' was published on 17th March 2016 there have been further announcements by new Ministers setting out proposals for the schools sector and for education and skills more broadly. Many of these continue the previous policy direction but there are some significant changes, notably the proposal to extend selection in the schools sector.

In addition to changes at ministerial level, there have also been significant changes to departmental portfolios. In particular, on 14th July, it was announced that the Department for Education would take on responsibility for higher education and skills from the (then) Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. This means that the DfE now has responsibility for education and skills across the age range, rather than ending at 19. The DfE's objectives are set out in a single departmental plan published on 24th August.

Recent announcements and policy developments are set out below.

New Green Paper; 'Schools that work for everyone'

On 9th September, the new Prime Minister, Theresa May, delivered a speech ('Britain, the great meritocracy') on proposed changes to the schools system, in which she set out 'the Government's ambition to create an education system that extends to everyone, not just the privileged few'. Following this, on 12th September, the new Education Secretary, Justine Greening, introduced a Green Paper which formalised the content of the Prime Minister's speech. Consultation on the proposals set out in the Green Paper closes on 12th December 2016.

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/schools-that-work-for-everyone>

The introduction to the Green Paper sets out the Government's view that not enough children are able to access places in 'good' schools. It also acknowledges the need for more school places. The Government's approach is to increase the number of places in good schools that are accessible to all families, for schools of all types to extend their offer and to increase diversity in the schools system.

The Paper also states that, whilst the need to support pupils on free school meals is acknowledged, there is also a need to support 'families who are just about managing'. These families are described as those falling just above the eligibility for free schools meals, whom the Government believes are 'not necessarily well-served' by the education system. The National Funding Formula will include factors (consultation on this to follow 'shortly') that reflect proportions of lower attaining pupils and those from less wealthy backgrounds.

The Green Paper sets out in more detail the specific changes to the schools system that it wishes to put in place. It also confirms the Government's commitment to the proposals set out in the White Paper 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' (2016), describing the approach to school improvement and to academy status. The Paper sets out the Government's case for each of the proposed changes to the schools system.

1. Extension of Selection

It is proposed to allow the expansion of selective education, through permitting:

- Expansion of existing grammar schools (up to £50m will be set aside for this).
- Establishment of new, wholly or partly, selective schools.
- Existing non-selective schools can become selective in response to local demand, with the flexibility to select 100% on the basis of ability.

The Green Paper also states that measures to preserve school diversity where schools choose to convert will be considered. A number of conditions are proposed. These may vary from school-to-school and will be selected from a menu of options, intended to ensure that increased selection adds value to the whole schools system. These include:

- Selective schools to admit a proportion of pupils from lower income households.
- The establishment of a new, non-selective school.
- Establishment of a new feeder primary school in an area with a higher density of lower income households.
- Partnering with an existing non-selective under-performing school.
- Opportunity for pupils to join the new selective school at different ages.

In addition, the Green Paper states that:

- Proposers of new schools will be expected to work with local authorities and other bodies in considering where to locate a new selective school.
- Selective schools will be particularly encouraged where there is local demand (in this context, reference is made to the number of pupils travelling out-of-borough to grammar schools).
- Multi-academy trusts will be encouraged to select within their trust.

2. Faith Schools

Around one-third of mainstream schools in England are faith schools. At present, proposers of new faith Free Schools can only allocate up to 50% of their places on faith criteria. It is proposed to remove this requirement and replace it with the following:

- Evidence that there would be demand for places from pupils of other faiths.
- Establish twinning arrangements with schools not of their faith.
- Consider setting up mixed-faith multi-academy trusts.
- Consider including in the governing body a member of a different faith or no faith.

It is stated that measures, such as closer monitoring, would be put in place to ensure compliance.

3. Role of Universities in the State Schools System

The Green Paper sets out the Government's belief that universities should take a greater role in raising standards in the schools system, including sponsoring existing schools and setting up new schools. It is proposed that universities will have to meet one of the following as a condition of being able to charge higher tuition fees:

- Establishment of a new school in the state system (costs to be met by the Government).
- Sponsoring of an academy in the state system.

The school would need to be good or outstanding within a certain number of years and over time universities would be expected to extend their partnerships with schools. New guidance will be issued to the independent Director for Fair Access, with an expectation that new the requirements will be reflected in universities' Access Agreements from 2018/19.

4. Role of Independent Schools in the State Schools System

The Government believes that independent schools should be doing more to benefit children from a wider range of backgrounds. Around half of independent schools have charitable status. It is proposed that those independent schools 'with the capacity and capability' should meet one of the following 'in recognition of the benefits of charitable status':

- Sponsor academies or set up new free schools in the state system (capital and revenue costs would be met by the Government).
- Offer a proportion of places as bursaries, with the level expected much higher than that offered currently by most independent schools.

Smaller schools that do not have the capacity for the above would be expected to contribute to the state school sector in other ways e.g. school-to-school support.

Technical Education & Apprenticeships

Significant proposals have been brought forward relating to post-16 education and training. This is summarised below.

In July 2016 the Government published a **Post-16 Skills Plan**, setting out its intention to reform the skills system and 'transform' technical education. The Skills Plan proposes a common framework of 15 routes across all of technical education. A rationalisation of qualifications and awarding body arrangements is also proposed. The Plan sets out a timetable for the changes. The plan also includes the new system for apprenticeships and the need for improved careers guidance. On 5th October, the Education Secretary stated that the Skills Plan would be a 'big focus'.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-skills-plan-and-independent-report-on-technical-education>

On 12th August, proposals for a new funding model for **apprenticeships** were published. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/views-sought-on-plans-to-boost-apprenticeships>

Social Mobility 'Opportunity Areas'

On 4th October, the Education Secretary announced six 'opportunity areas' will benefit from a scheme to promote social mobility, supporting schools and links with employers. None are in London but it is stated that the programme will be rolled out to four other areas. £60m is to be allocated to the programme.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/social-mobility-package-unveiled-by-education-secretary>

Schools & Early Years Funding

On 21st July, the Education Secretary confirmed the Government's commitment to introduce 'fairer funding' for schools, high needs and early years (the subject of consultation in March 2016). Proposals for a second stage consultation are to be set out this autumn, with final decisions in the New Year.

On 11th August, a six week consultation on the funding system for nurseries, preschools and childminders was launched. It is proposed to replace the existing arrangements with a new formula based on three factors - universal rate for each child, additional needs, and regional costs.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fairer-early-years-funding-plan-launched>



Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee Review Scoping Report

Major review of the local authority's current and future relationship with academies and free schools

1. REVIEW OBJECTIVES

Aim and background to this review

National education policy, as outlined in the White Paper 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' published in March 2016, laid out a clear direction of travel for all schools with the Government's ambition being for all schools to cease to be maintained by Local Authorities (LAs) and become academies by 2020 or sooner. Although recent changes in Government have marked an easing of the pace of conversion, the Government continues to promote this ambition and recent months have seen the merging of the Department for Education's (DfE) Education Funding Agency (EFA) with the resources of the Regional Schools Commissioner's office.

In light of this significant change to the national landscape in education and the associated reduction in funding for Councils to use to support schools in their local area, Members have expressed interest in exploring the Council's current relationship with schools in Hillingdon who already have academy/free school status and in considering how these relationships may evolve to include maintained schools who may be considering academy conversion in the short or medium-term. It is noted that it is possible that there will be a national transition period of up to four years before all schools choose or are directed to convert to academy status.

The aim of this review is to present Members with a picture of the Council's current roles, responsibilities and relationships with local standalone and multi-academy trust (MATs). As part of this process, the review will explore the changing relationship of the Council with all schools as the academy agenda gains momentum and should clarify the Council's strategy for supporting maintained schools who may

choose to convert to academy status in the short and medium-term alongside those maintained schools who have not yet made decisions about conversion.

The review should allow Members to ensure that the proposed and reduced statutory education function at local government level from September 2017 is able to operate efficiently and effectively, making best use of reduced resources whilst ensuring that the Council is able to continue to champion high standards of education for all residents and for the most vulnerable learners in the borough whether they are educated in academy, free or maintained settings.

Terms of Reference

1. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the national and local academy agenda.
2. To explore the Council's current relationship with academies in the borough.
3. To investigate the measures that the Council currently has in place to support conversion to academy status.
4. To ensure that the Council's vision for academy schools is clear, aligns with the Council's wider strategic plans and is in the best interests of residents and providers of education.
5. To review the shape of Council's current and future relationship with schools and to provide practical recommendations that ensure that Council resources are used effectively during and after the national education transition period.

It is noted that the academy agenda presents a major shift in the way that schools are governed and led and, therefore, on the expectations of Councils. The changing relationship of LAs with their schools presents an opportunity for Councils to redesign or repackage their services to schools or to reshape their provision of a number of education services. This Committee's Terms of Reference include education services, school performance and attainment and wider education and learning partnerships. This means that this Committee has a key role in providing direction and recommendations for the effective delivery of the Council's statutory duties around education.

2. INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

The London Borough of Hillingdon has 104 state-funded schools. Of these, 47 (45%) are academy/free schools and 57 (55%) are currently maintained by the Council. Of the 47 academy/free schools, three are registered as free schools including one specialist provider. There have recently been three additional free schools approved in the borough. Two of these are mainstream secondary settings and one a special education provider.

The largest majority of academies are in the secondary sector with 20 settings holding academy status and, in most cases, having converted as standalone academies some time ago. In 4 of these cases, standalone academies have well-established MAT status and are now responsible for outcomes in other local schools.

Currently a number of single-school secondary academies are actively exploring or have applied for MAT status and it is anticipated that these schools will extend their reach in the next year.

In the primary sector, 52 of the 72 primary schools in the borough are currently maintained settings with the largest majority of primary academies (20 in total) sitting within a local MAT.

The table below shows a breakdown of schools by type and their current inspection grades (correct as of September 2016). It should be noted that, in line with Ofsted protocols for new schools or those who have recently converted to academy status, 7 schools have yet to be inspected. It is also noted that 1 maintained primary school is currently in the process of converting under a new Directed Academy Order.

Type of School	No. with current judgement *	% Outstanding	No. Outstanding	% Good	No. Good	% Requiring Improvement	No. Requiring Improvement	% Inadequate	No. Inadequate
Primary All	69 (of 72)	17.4	12	69.6	48	11.6	8	1.4	1
Academy	17 (of 20)	11.8	2	58.8	10	29.4	5	0	0
Maintained	52	19.2	10	73	38	5.8	3	2	1
Secondary All	19 (of 22)	26.3	5	52.6	10	15.8	3	5.3	1
Academy	17 (of 20)	29	5	53	9	12	2	6	1
Maintained	2		0	50	1	50	1	0	0
Special All	9 (of 10)	33.3	3	44.4	4	22.2	2	0	0
Academy	6 (of 7)	33.3	2	33.3	2	33.3	2	0	0
Maintained	3	33.3	1	66.3	2	0	0	0	0
All Schools in Hillingdon	97 (of 104) *new schools without a judgement	21.00%	20	64.00%	62	13.00%	13	2.00%	2

The DfE is clear that the establishment of MATs is key to providing effective system-leadership in education and that school-to-school support and improvement models delivered within the MAT structure is central to securing more good school places across the country.

It is noted that the large, national academy chains have not yet established themselves in the borough and that, presently, the MATs operating within Hillingdon are local in nature with some cross-border presence.

The table below outlines the shape of the MATs that currently operate within the borough:

MAT	No. of schools
The Rosedale Hewens Academy Trust	7
LDBS Frays Academy Trust	4
Park Federation Academy Trust, The	3
Elliot Foundation Academies Trust, The	3
QED Academy Trust	3
Eden Academy, The	3
Vyners Learning Trust	2
Orchard Hill College Academy Trust	2
Barnhill Partnership Trust, The	2
Willows School Academy Trust, The	1
Uxbridge High School Academy Trust	1
Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust, The	1
Ruislip High School	1
Bishop Ramsey Church of England School	1 (+ 1 free school confirmed)
Swakeleys School for Girls	1
Bishopshalt School	1
Haydon School	1
Charville Primary School Academy Trust	1
Harefield Academy Trust	1
Heathrow Aviation Engineering UTC	1

The local landscape means that there are 57 maintained school settings in the borough who may be in scope for academy conversion. At this stage, the Governing Bodies and school leaders of these schools are engaged in exploration of their future status with a varied picture in terms of definite decisions and timescales. This term, the Council's School Improvement Team has undertaken an academy exploration

survey with maintained school Chairs of Governors to gain a picture of the progress that schools are making. To date, 22 Chairs of Governors have responded to the survey with the largest majority of these schools in the early stages of exploring this agenda. In order to support schools with this process, the School Improvement Team, in partnership with the Schools' Strategic Partnership Board (SSPB), is planning Academy Conversion Information Events for maintained schools.

Key Information

School Improvement and the local Academy sector

The Council does not provide a traded service via a Service Level Agreement for school improvement for academies. However, during the past two years particularly, the Council's education teams have developed stronger links with the academy sector in Hillingdon. The establishment of the SSPB as the central steering group for school improvement allows for the views of all Head Teachers including those in MATs to be represented at a strategic level. Recommendations made at SSPB are informed by links with each of the important education executive groups across the borough including the Primary Forum, Hillingdon's Association of Secondary Head Teachers and the Governors Executive Committee. SSPB recommendations should be fed into Schools Forum discussions and decisions and, in line with statutory guidance relating to Schools Fora, the views of academy schools are equally represented. The Hillingdon Schools Improvement Plan 2015 - 18 outlines the Council's commitment to championing high quality education for all learners in the borough regardless of where they are educated. In line with this approach the Council currently provides a range of education support functions to academies in Hillingdon at no cost. These include:

- General education improvement advice and guidance including ad hoc email/telephone school improvement advice
- Bi-monthly Head Teacher's Briefings and centralised Head Teachers Termly updates
- New Head Teachers to Hillingdon orientation event / induction
- Assessment and moderation training including the provision of statutory moderation services
- Additional improvement events and coordination capacity for borough-wide improvement conferences and networks
- School-specific performance data reports and support from the Business Performance Team

In addition, the Council's oversight of standards of performance in all schools in the borough means that academy schools are included in the internal 'Schools At Risk Register'. The support and challenge role that the Council has in relation to maintained settings only is provided through the allocation of dedicated School Improvement Link advisory support. This resource is limited and is not provided for academy/free schools. Where concerns arise regarding standards within these settings, the Council's School Improvement Team follows DfE guidance by engaging swiftly with the Regional Schools Commissioner's office and, where necessary,

Ofsted partners to highlight these concerns. Where concerns are raised with the Council regarding non-regulated safeguarding notifications, systemic questions, complaints about academy trusts or information related to Members Enquiries, the School Improvement Team will link with individual academy Head Teachers or MATs to gather information and pass this onto partners as required.

The significant brokerage role that the Council has in relation to linking schools together for improvement purposes is supported by the provision of school-to-school support from a wide range of schools including academies. The Council has negotiated intensive support packages for schools at risk which have been provided by local academy schools or MATs. These include the chairing of Interim Executive Boards, brokerage of National Leader in Education support where additional school support is provided by teachers from an academy trust and bespoke pre- and post-inspection leadership packages for high risk schools.

It should be noted that MATs and academy Head Teachers are not duty bound to engage with school improvement services from LAs. In Hillingdon, most single academies and trusts engage positively with the School Improvement Team and associated services.

Wider Education Services provided to academies by the Council

The Council offers some services to academies via Service Level Agreements. Engagement with these services is variable with some larger trusts using internal models of support. It should be noted that all but one academy in the borough uses the Service Level Agreement with the Participation Key-Working Service. Services currently on offer via Service Level Agreements include the following, which are subject to review:

- Schools Finance (very occasional ad-hoc requests)
- Learning & Development
- Health & Safety
- Schools Library Service
- Participation Key Work Service

In addition, the Council fulfils its statutory duties to all schools including academies through the provision of a range of universal services including All Age and Disability Services including Special Educational Needs (SEN) and liaison with the School Placement and Admissions Team which involves the placement of in-year admissions. Some additional services are provided to academies through enhanced funding agreed by Schools Forum from the centrally-retained Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). These include:

- Educational Psychology Services
- Procurement
- Early Years Advisory Service
- Family Information Service
- SEN - Inclusion Team

- SEN - Early Support/Portage
- SEN - Sensory Needs
- School Courier
- LADO/Child Protection/Domestic Violence Officers

Responsibilities

The following Council service areas may be required to provide input to this review:

- School Improvement Team
- Wider education services including Admissions and School Place Planning
- Council Finance Team inc Schools Finance
- Legal Team

Connected activity

The SSPB has recently proposed a review of governance arrangements for school improvement to support the borough's transition into a new landscape of school support. If approved, this report should be available early in 2017.

Current intelligence, best practice and research

Prior to the publication of the White Paper and in line with the Government's clear commitment to the academy agenda for all schools, many LAs have been working with schools to explore different shapes, paces and models of school governance, leadership and improvement. It is generally accepted that school-to-school support provides an effective model of improvement for most schools and that facilitating the collaboration of high-quality school leaders results in improved outcomes for children and young people. Building capacity in the school-led improvement community is critical to the success of this model and the Government has invested in the creation of Teaching Schools alongside the development of oversight functions through the Regional Schools Commissioner's office.

Historically, in Hillingdon the freedom for good or outstanding maintained schools to convert to academies has resulted in a number of settings opting to move away from LA control. A number of these schools have developed into MATs and offer trust-specific models of governance and support to their families of schools. It should be noted that there have not been any academy conversions in the borough since 1 September 2015.

Across the country, the engagement of academies with Councils is variable although anecdotal evidence suggests that smaller academy chains have tended to retain stronger links with LAs than larger chains. In addition, across the London Councils region there is a diverse approach to academy conversion, ranging from blanket direction for all schools to convert by a given date to a longer-term commitment to school improvement functions for maintained schools.

Most LAs provide or signpost academies in the area to school support services. Some LAs, including a number of London boroughs, have well-established traded services with their academies and, in some cases, these commercial relationships

have evolved into the development of arms-length partnerships or trusts with links into a Council as required. In some cases, these partnerships have been established within a local Teaching School structure or via an outsourced provider.

The DfE is developing some triggers for mass-scale academy conversion which should be available later this year. These triggers, based upon LA performance and viability will be used to decide which Councils will be directed to proceed to full academy conversion. In addition, the withdrawal of the Education Services Grant funding from April 2017 onwards will mean that many Councils will be required to make timely decisions about their capacity to provide support services to those schools who may not have chosen academy conversion in the shorter-term.

In some areas, LAs have been approached by groups of maintained schools who are keen to explore the establishment of Council-supported MATs or co-operatives. DfE guidance indicates that consideration of these multi-academy trusts will be predicated on no more than a 49% LA influence on the Boards that form the trust and that, in line with all applications to form MATs, there will be a requirement for the trust to demonstrate a proven ability to raise and sustain high standards. A recent survey of 47 LAs has indicated that more than a third of these LAs are beginning to explore this option with their maintained schools.

For all Councils, supporting maintained schools who wish to convert into academy status may bring capacity challenges. The national withdrawal of funding and duties around school improvement and wider education services may reduce the Council's capacity to coordinate discussions with school leaders and national partners and there may be additional capital assets, legal and finance pressures on Councils as schools convert.

Further information

Educational Excellence Everywhere white paper March 2016 -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/educational-excellence-everywhere>

Oversight and monitoring of academies January 2015 (annex 3)

Re-imagining the role of councils in supporting London's schools (annex 4)

LGA response to education white paper (annex 5)

http://www.local.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/-/journal_content/56/10180/7751981/NEWS

LGA councils call for oversight of academy finance (annex 6)

http://www.local.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/-/journal_content/56/10180/7936318/NEWS

3. EVIDENCE & ENQUIRY

Members may wish to explore the current shape of the Council's relationship with academies through engagement with Council service area leads and representatives from both the academy/free school and maintained school sectors including governors. Witness sessions and written reports may be the most effective way of gathering this information. In addition, surveys designed to capture the views of all schools can be used to provide responses from a wider range of schools.

Witnesses may include:

- Council Senior Finance officers
- Council Senior Education officers from a range of services including but not limited to Safeguarding, Admissions, Early Intervention & Prevention Services, School Improvement, SEN
- A range of multi-academy trust Chief Executives
- Maintained school Head Teachers covering the full range of opinion
- Representatives from the range of executive committees for schools including SSPB, The Primary Forum Executive, The Hillingdon Association of Secondary Head Teachers and the Governors' Executive Committee

Key information required

It is proposed that some or all of the following information will be required to enable the Committee to undertake an effective review:

- Feedback from academy leaders
- Feedback from maintained school leaders
- Academy risk analysis information from the Council Finance Team and other services
- Input from additional Council services engaging with academies
- London Councils advice

Lines of enquiry

The following provide examples of some questions that Members may wish to ask Witnesses taking part in the review:

- What is the current relationship between the Council and academies?
- How effective are the Council's arrangements for supporting and challenging the education of Hillingdon's children and young people in academy schools?
- How does the performance of academy and maintained schools in Hillingdon compare?
- Are the Council's current arrangements for engaging with academies in the best interests of the Council as a whole, its children and wider residents?
- What are the implications for the Council of an all schools conversion in the short, medium and longer-term?
- How best should the Council support schools in a national transition period?
- What role, if any, should the Council have in promoting local and national academy trusts?

4. REVIEW PLANNING & ASSESSMENT

Meeting Date	Action	Purpose / Outcome
TBC	Agree Scoping Report	Information and analysis
TBC	Witness Session 1	Evidence & enquiry
TBC	Witness Session 2	Evidence & enquiry
TBC	Draft Final Report	Proposals – agree recommendations and final draft report
TBC	Cabinet - Consider Final Report	Agree recommendations and final report
TBC	Monitoring of implementation of recommendations	

* Specific meetings can be shortened or extended to suit the review topic and needs of the Committee

Resource requirements

- Independent review of school improvement governance and strategic committees relating to the national transition period in education
- Detailed survey of school conversion timescales
- LA viability triggers review to include Council finance modelling following withdrawal of ESG funding from April 2017.

Equalities impact

As the measures outlined in the White Paper translate into practice it is expected that the role of Councils with regard to education will move away from the promotion, monitoring and support of high-quality education standards. The pace of this move will be dependent on the speed of all-school conversion to academy status. However, the Council is likely to retain its role as a champion for the most vulnerable young people in its area including those with SEN and/or a disability and those facing disadvantage. In addition, the Council is likely to retain responsibility for School Place Planning, aspects of Admissions and quality outcomes for all children for whom it has a corporate parenting responsibility. The Council may consider access to good or outstanding school places in both academy and maintained schools as key to ensuring an equitable educational offer for Hillingdon's learners. It is noted that closing attainment gaps is central to school improvement. The Hillingdon School Improvement Plan 2015-18 refers to the Council and school community working together to demonstrate 'that we are closing the gap rapidly for young people from our most vulnerable groups (including those who are disadvantaged...)'. The Ofsted framework for inspection of LA school improvement services states that one criterion used to decide whether to inspect is 'where pupils

eligible for the pupil premium achieve less well than pupils not eligible for the pupil premium nationally'. Additionally and as a key element of risk assessment under the new common inspection framework, Ofsted uses the analysis of gap data, alongside a range of other measures, to determine intervals between inspection and to confirm lines of enquiry.

5. ANNEXES

- Annex 1 - Hillingdon School Improvement Plan
- Annex 2 - Schools' Strategic Partnership Board Terms of Reference
- Annex 3 - Oversight and monitoring of academies January 2015
- Annex 4 - Re-imagining the role of councils in supporting London's schools
- Annex 5 - LGA response to education white paper
- Annex 6 - LGA councils call for oversight of academy finance

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Hillingdon School Improvement Plan 2015-18

Our partnership for success

November 2015

Version 2 amended February 2016

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1. Introduction and Vision

The children of Hillingdon deserve the best. We firmly believe that all children in the borough should receive at least a good or better education.

Our **vision** is for every child in the borough to be successful and fulfilled learners, reaching their potential and thriving within inspirational and outstanding educational settings.

The **principles** that underpin our vision for school improvement are:

- § That school improvement systems are most effective when they are based on partnership and collaboration
- § That local solutions, supported by national best practice, are often best placed to drive improvement
- § That challenge and support mechanisms across the borough should be transparent, clearly understood by all and open to interrogation to ensure the greatest impact on outcomes and opportunities for our young people
- § That the council, as a strategic champion for securing the highest standards of education for all young people within the borough of Hillingdon, will provide appropriate drive and leadership; challenging, brokering and intervening where necessary to address concerns around underperformance.

The **purpose** of this strategy document is to clearly articulate the shared vision of the council and the wider Hillingdon School Improvement Community, and to explain how we will work together to translate our legal and moral imperatives around school improvement into action.

The central **aim** of this strategy, which has been developed in consultation and partnership with school leaders and key stakeholders across Hillingdon, is to ensure that **all children, no matter where they live in the borough, access schools and settings that are judged to be at least good and which are constantly aspiring to improve to become, and remain, outstanding.**

2. Our Vision into Action

2.1. Partnerships for Improvement

Our borough is committed to fulfilling all statutory duties around school improvement and to developing, promoting and, in doing so, championing a strong and effective school-led model of improvement.

It is the council's intention that, by working collaboratively with a wide range of school leaders and partners, and through the early identification of problems or concerns, we can facilitate any support necessary to ensure the resolution of difficulties with the minimum of council intervention. We know that schools have the skills, expertise and ability to meet many of their own challenges and we will work in partnership with them to maximise their potential to develop and improve.

We believe that, within the dynamic and diverse national landscape, local authorities must work flexibly and openly with partners from a range of settings and schools to drive and maintain improvement. We are committed to shaping and supporting the school-led improvement offer through our strong links and formal partnerships with a range of key improvement partners. These partners include our local Teaching Schools and other successful local providers, executive committees, outstanding school leaders, through our links with high quality research and development within the Higher Education sector and through our relationships with the Regional Schools Commissioner, Ofsted, and National College partners.

We will utilise a range of existing networks to consult regularly with school leaders across the borough and will respond to feedback by communicating regularly with leaders and strategic partners.

Our **Schools' Strategic Partnership Board** (SSPB) will act as the central leadership forum for school improvement by developing, promoting and quality-assuring our shared school improvement strategy. This key leadership group is strategically aligned with a range of partners in order to best represent the needs and vision of school leaders and professionals across the borough and to secure shared accountability for outcomes for children in and from Hillingdon. (*Please see Appendix A - SSPB ToR*). The SSPB will act as the champion of borough-wide school improvement strategy, providing direction, challenge and innovative practice into our school improvement offer as a result of members' links with the best local and national expertise.

2.2. Our Model for School Improvement

The over-arching intention of our strategy is to ensure that, by August 2017, standards of progress and attainment across the borough...

- § Compare favourably against those of our statistical/borough neighbours
- § Match rates of improvement in line with London data so that Hillingdon children can be sure of outcomes that are as strong as those for young people across London

- § Are in line with national medians for key progress and attainment measures
- § Demonstrate that we are closing the gap rapidly for young people from our most vulnerable groups (including those who are disadvantaged, children with special educational needs and those most at risk of school and social exclusion)
- § Aim high so that all schools in the borough are judged good or better.

The council will undertake its duties with regard to promoting the highest standards of education for young people in Hillingdon by:

- § Retaining an accurate and up-to-date overview of the performance and effectiveness of all schools across the borough and sharing this with stakeholders regularly to scrutinise Hillingdon's school provision against London and national averages
- § Collaborating with partners to tackle key barriers to school improvement at borough, phase/setting and individual school level
- § Encouraging head teachers and school leadership teams to set and achieve aspirational targets for all
- § Identifying and challenging underperformance at the earliest stages
- § Sign-posting and, where necessary, brokering appropriate support in a timely and effective manner
- § Intervening without delay where schools require rapid improvement
- § Identifying and assisting vulnerable young people so that they may sustain their engagement in education, employment and training
- § Securing sufficient high quality early years provision, in support of children's development and readiness for school

The shape of our strategy is captured in our Six Strands for Success which we are committed to integrating and securing across the borough to ensure robust whole system improvement.



Figure 1 Six Stands for Success Model

Strand 1: Securing Outstanding Leadership & Governance

This strand is fundamental to the success of school improvement in Hillingdon. Strong, effective and skilled leadership provides the foundation for high quality education, better life chances for young people and improved outcomes for all stakeholders. Leadership thrives in communities which promote aspiration and ambition and allow for autonomy and creativity. The council is committed to supporting the development of exceptional leadership in a variety of ways:

- § By linking established and effective leaders with emerging and aspiring leaders to share practice and strengthen leadership outcomes across the borough
- § By developing and supporting an Executive Head Teacher pool to provide interim leadership capacity for schools facing challenge and to facilitate opportunities for Deputy Head Teachers to undertake headship within their own schools
- § By working closely with governance support providers to identify, develop and place consistently excellent governance solutions in all schools

- § By engaging with school leaders transparently and strategically through connections with the SSPB, Schools' Forum and other executive committees
- § By working with local school improvement partners within the Teaching Schools, NLE/LLE clusters and elsewhere to ensure that any skills-gap in leadership is filled quickly and effectively
- § By bringing leaders together at least twice each year to explore school improvement and leadership and to learn from best practice in this field locally, nationally and through the council's our links with Ofsted
- § By providing access to external School Review mechanisms and data analysis solutions, designed to ensure that school leaders have the information that they need to self-evaluate and target improvement activities accurately.

Strand 2: Borough Overview

The purpose of this strand is to ensure that the borough retains an accurate and holistic overview of school effectiveness and performance at all times. The overview should be inclusive and will encompass all maintained and academy/free school data and intelligence, alongside qualitative evaluations from the widest range of professional partners. The overview, in the form of our School Improvement Overview Database, includes data from Raiseonline, FFT, DfE performance tables and Ofsted data dashboards and is fundamental to ensuring that, as a local authority and a community of schools and settings, we know our context in detail, in real time and over time.

At whole borough level, themes (including areas of expertise, best practice and the most positive outcomes as well as areas of concern or challenge for our school community) will be identified via this database and will be shared through our links with our strategic partners and the SSPB to shape borough-wide improvement activities and interventions. The school improvement function within the local authority will also use information and data from the database or other areas to inform Risk Assessment activities at the beginning of each term and, in some cases, to trigger consideration of placement on the borough Schools At Risk Register (please see Strand 6: Schools at Risk & Interventions).

Strand 3: Communication & Navigation

The purpose of this strand is to provide a clear and consistent channel for communication and sign-posting that is accessible to all schools. Alongside the cultivation of positive and trusting relationships with individual schools through regular contact between the school improvement team and school leaders throughout the borough, an additional range of mechanisms will be used to provide timely updates on important local and national priorities, opportunities and concerns.

The Head Teachers' Briefing and the termly School Improvement Update will provide operational and strategic school improvement headlines and highlight local opportunities for improvement.

The development of the ENHANCE space (led by our Teaching School partners and available to all schools) will complement this process, providing a crucial central point of access, available to all schools, for a variety of school developmental initiatives and opportunities.

Bi-annual school improvement conferences, delivered in partnership with school leaders and running alongside a wide range of other borough-wide improvement networks (please see Strand 4: Innovative & Improvement Networks) will provide a broad menu of choice for school leaders who have identified their priorities for improvement and would like to work with partners to effect positive change.

In this way, we will ensure that no school or leader feels isolated or unsupported in the journey to outstanding and that all schools across the borough are able to access the support that they need, in the way that feels right for them and at the time that it is needed.

Strand 4: Innovation & Improvement Networks (IINs)

The purpose of this strand is to facilitate time-limited learning networks, based around key themes of challenge or concern in the borough. The themes for the IINs will arise from our analysis of the School Improvement Overview Database and will be agreed by SSPB.

It is recognised that the Hillingdon schools' community already benefits from a diverse and strong school-led support and improvement offer which includes a range of local partnerships and cluster-groups. IINs should be used to complement this offer and may also provide a route for pockets of good practice within established partnerships to grow and reach a wider range of school leaders in the borough. The networks, funded strategically but facilitated by school

leaders and other appropriate professional colleagues, will provide the opportunity for schools to collaborate beyond traditional partnership/setting/phase structures and to examine, develop and share best practice in their focus field. The impact of the IINs will be measured using our school improvement overview database and will be quality-assured and reported on by the SSPB.

It is anticipated that the vast majority of schools (and in particular those good or outstanding) will choose to contribute to an IIN and that their experiences/improvement journeys will be disseminated to all schools across the borough regularly. In many cases, the development of IINs will allow for the further development of school-to-school support models, where specific areas of focus are identified as critical to the success of a school at risk of underperformance.

The IINs will form part of the diverse improvement offer currently available across the borough and will encourage the engagement of schools with the school improvement themes that impact across all education institutions in Hillingdon as well as within their own context.

Strand 5: School Reviews & Self Evaluation

In our borough schools are self-managing and autonomous and are, therefore, primarily responsible for their own performance and improvement. Every school is expected to make an accurate self-evaluation of its performance and provision, and take clear and decisive action to improve any weaknesses this identifies. We recognise that effective self-evaluation is the most important process of school improvement, enabling continued autonomy, self-management and excellence.

However, as part of the core responsibility to secure high standards for the young people of Hillingdon, our school improvement strategy recognises the value that many school leaders place on the external validation of baseline - particularly for schools facing challenge, those undergoing changes of leadership and/or governance and those tackling underperformance or underachievement.

For that reason, the local authority will facilitate the provision of School Reviews and data analysis to inform individual school self-evaluation and risk assessment. The School Review process may be delivered via an outsourced/commissioned model or via a blended model, using outstanding and current school leaders and borough resource. Our aim is for all maintained schools in the borough to access a School Review at least once every three years. Academies/free schools will also be given access to the School Review mechanism on a basis agreed by SSPB.

School Review intelligence will be used to contribute to holistic pictures of individual schools' strengths and weaknesses and will also contribute to the identification of thematic foci.

Strand 6: Schools at Risk & Interventions

The purpose of this strand is to outline the processes that will be used to raise concerns with school leaders when an individual school is identified as being at risk.

The local authority will retain a register of schools considered to be at risk. These schools will be identified via the statutory guidance (please see reference link to DfE - Schools causing concern January 2015). Schools may also be identified as a result of significant risk indicators within the borough school improvement overview database.

Placement on the Schools At Risk Register (SARR) should always result in regular contact with a school and through the provision of support and challenge in a variety of forms. All maintained schools on the SARR will be allocated a council School Improvement Link for this purpose. In the case of academies/free schools the council will take all reasonable steps to indicate placement on the SARR with the Head Teacher, the responsible body or the Regional Schools' Commissioner. However, it should be noted by all Head Teachers that any school judged RI will automatically be included on the SARR, as will all schools in formal Ofsted categories.

NB. Our strategy recognises that schools judged Requiring Improvement may be at different points on their journey to improvement and, for that reason, will be sub-categorised as:

- § **RI (A) = RI but making good progress, with a view to good at next Section 5**
- § **RI (B) = RI and not yet making sufficient progress towards good/there is insufficient evidence to predict good at next inspection**

Those schools judged Good or Outstanding but at risk (GOBAR) will be identified via the school improvement overview database and will **always** be contacted to discuss their placement on the SARR.

Further detail regarding support and challenge for Schools At Risk can be found in Appendix B - SARR Guidance document attached to this strategy.

In accordance with our commitment to local improvement solutions and effective school-to-school solutions, in most cases the local authority will seek to galvanise support for schools facing challenge from within our Teaching Schools, LLE/NLE and Exec Head Teacher networks. However, when appropriate school to school support is needed particularly rapidly and where

capacity within our local and school-led network for school improvement is limited, it may be necessary for the borough to deploy advice and intervention support quickly. Where this occurs, the aim will usually be to agree local school-to-school support as soon as is practicable for all parties.

3. Local Authority Use of Statutory Duties - Schools Causing Concern

Alongside this strategic focus and within the shared remit of our Six Strands for Success, the council will continue to discharge essential statutory duties with regard to school improvement which include the local authority's responsibility to address concerns swiftly when schools fall into DfE categories (as outlined in the SCC guidance link in reference section) and within Part 4 of the Education Act 2006.

The content of this guidance informs the LA's work with schools identified as causing concern:

“Where schools are failing or seriously underperforming, it is vital that there is rapid intervention to address the problems as quickly as possible, so that children’s education is affected as little as possible.”

An important strand of our school improvement strategy (Strand 6) specifically addresses the LA's role in support and challenge for schools causing concern. At the heart of our approach to these duties is our belief that preventative interventions through good communication, timely collaboration and school-to-school improvement mechanisms are the preferred approaches to securing improvement.

However, in line with statutory guidance and in cases where life-chances, opportunities and outcomes for young people are compromised as a result of insufficient progress, poor leadership and governance, concerns about the safety of pupils and/or inequalities in achievement for vulnerable young people, the council will act swiftly and decisively to take appropriate action, within our overarching commitment to ensuring the highest standards of education for the young people of Hillingdon.

Our aspiration is for every school in Hillingdon to be at least a 'good school' and that no schools should be in an Ofsted or LA category of concern. The great majority of schools will be able to identify what is working well and what they need to do to improve, brokering their own support, but for others some additional support or intervention may be needed. It is necessary and appropriate for the local authority, as champions of all children in Hillingdon and their parents/carers, to act quickly and provide or broker support where required and, when

necessary, to use its powers of intervention to promote improvement should standards, provision and quality for children and young people be compromised. There is a legal obligation upon the council to take action where there are concerns about the performance of any school in Hillingdon, using our powers of intervention to act early and effectively to secure improvement in maintained schools or to raise concerns with the Regional Schools' Commissioner in the case of academies/free schools.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006, together with subsequent legislation, places a duty on local authorities to act decisively in respect of Schools Causing Concern. The London Borough of Hillingdon is committed to fulfilling this duty and acting swiftly to eradicate underachievement and drive up educational standards, so that children and young people are able to learn and achieve irrespective of the school that they attend or the neighbourhood in which they live. Whilst statutory intervention powers for school improvement are centred on the schools which the borough maintains, Hillingdon firmly recognises its statutory duties with regard to **all** young people in the borough and is equally committed to maintaining a regular and effective dialogue with the responsible bodies of all local academies and free schools and, where necessary, the Regional Schools Commissioner.

Effective schools are characterised by determined leadership and strong governance and have well developed self-improvement procedures. Reflective, evaluative and forward thinking, they take the initiative when building on their strengths and addressing their weaknesses. They form strategic alliances with partners and seek support through collaborative arrangements based on hubs and networks. Their effectiveness is endorsed by positive inspection outcomes and by the high levels of achievement of the children and young people who attend them. Some schools, however, cause concern because the children and young people they serve have lower achievement than their peers locally and nationally and have been unable to address poor performance effectively or quickly enough. Some schools do not ensure that vulnerable groups perform well enough and that any gaps in performance in relation to peer groups are reduced through targeted interventions and good teaching. Some of these schools are unable to sustain incremental improvement meaning their performance remains insecure over time.

For these reasons, where schools cause concern, the local authority will take action to ensure that the school system works for every family using intervention powers where required in those schools who are considered 'eligible for intervention'.

National guidance makes a distinction between schools deemed to 'cause concern' and those that are 'eligible for intervention'. In Hillingdon, Schools Causing Concern will be considered a School At Risk and will be placed on the confidential SARR. When this happens, the local

authority will work in partnership with the school at risk by allocating a borough representative to provide oversight of the journey to improvement and to broker additional and appropriate support as required.

Where a school is an academy/free school setting, the local authority will also strive to sign-post additional support and link leaders together to improve outcomes for children. In these cases, the local authority may choose to engage with responsible bodies and the Regional Schools' Commissioner in order to highlight concerns and to prompt action to improve outcomes for the children of Hillingdon who attend the school.

In most cases, early identification of risk, coupled with professional and focused partnership-working within the principles outlined within this strategy, will result in swift improvement and local authority oversight contact will taper or hand-over to other support partners.

In some cases, however, a school at risk may need additional and formal intervention to highlight to leaders and governors the urgent need to take action to improve educational standards and opportunities. These schools, referred to as 'eligible for intervention' in the national guidance, will receive formal Warning Notices from the local authority and may also be subject to additional legal intervention as detailed in the statutory guidance (please see reference link). Any school subject to a Warning Notice in Hillingdon will be expected to produce a coherent and externally-validated Leadership & Rapid Improvement Plan and to engage fully with partners within and beyond the borough to effect positive and sustainable change.

3.1. Clarification of relationships with the Local Authority

Maintained/academy/free school is outstanding?

- Autonomous and independent, working in partnership
- Leading practice and shaping strategy across Hillingdon
- Strong role in Innovation & Improvement Networks by choice
- Commissioned to provide services to other schools
- Part of the ENHANCE collaboration

Maintained/academy/free school is securely good?

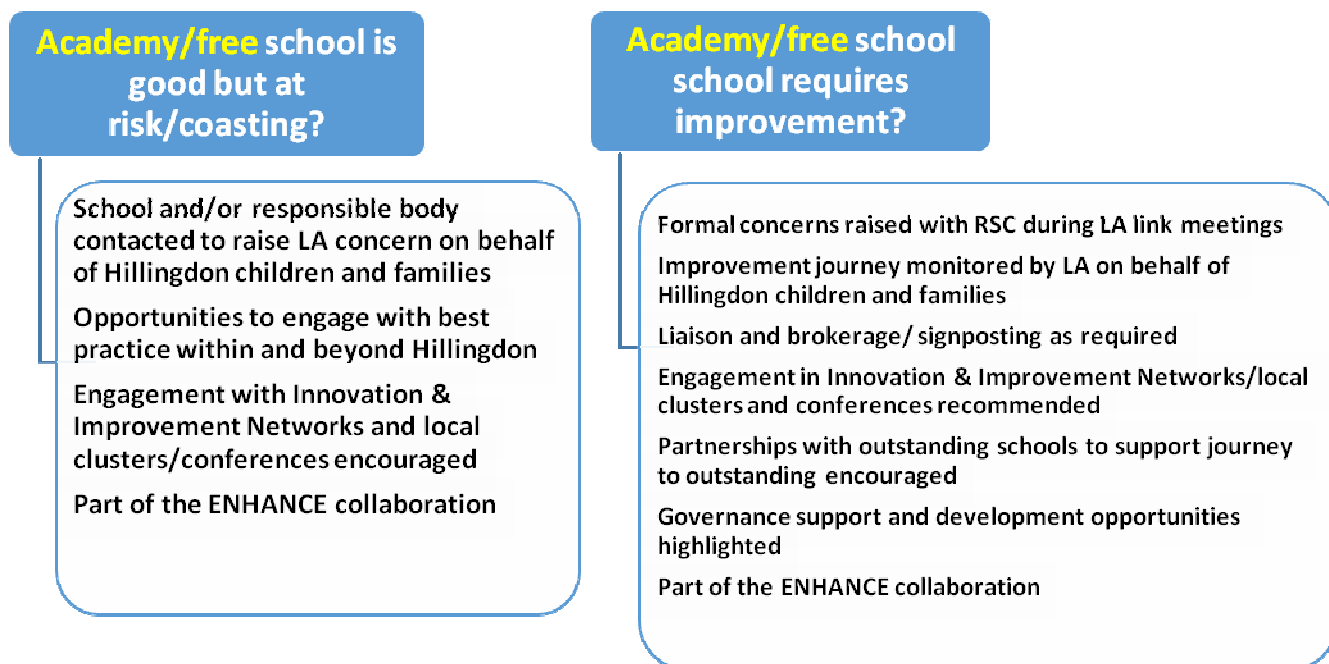
- Autonomous and independent, working in partnership
- Sharing practice and influencing strategy across Hillingdon
- Engagement in Innovation & Improvement Networks by choice
- Partnerships with outstanding schools to support journey to outstanding
- Part of the ENHANCE collaboration

Maintained school is good but at risk/coasting?

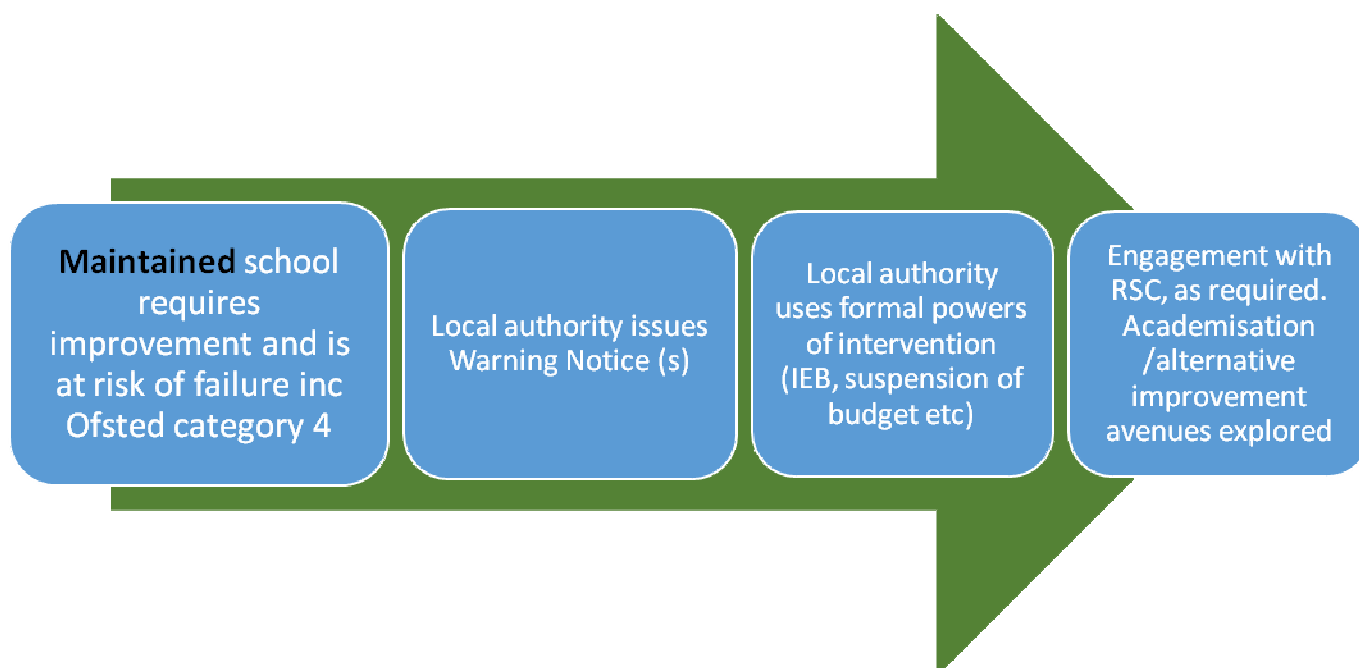
- Supported to mitigate risk through regular contact with local authority partner
- Risk assessments, brokerage and sign-posting interventions
- Opportunities to engage with best practice within and beyond Hillingdon
- Engagement with Innovation & Improvement Networks and local clusters/conferences
- Governance healthchecks
- Part of the ENHANCE collaboration

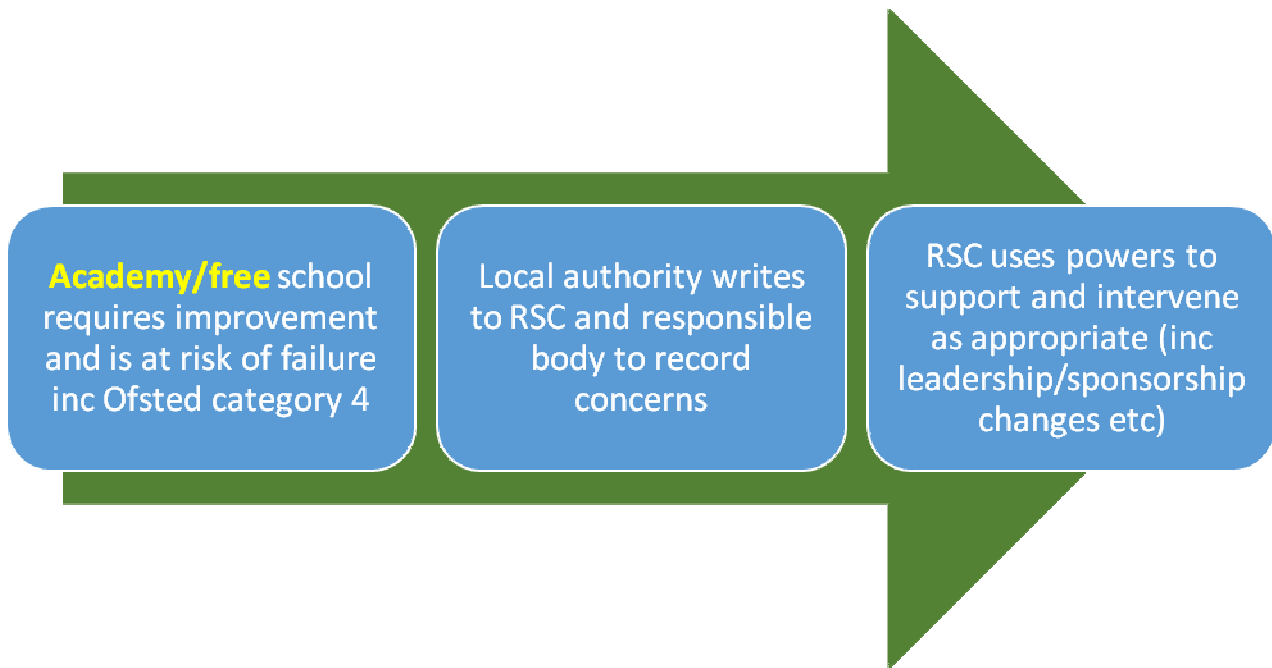
Maintained school requires improvement?

- Supported and challenged by regular contact with local authority
- Regular involvement to monitor progress and challenge underperformance leading to bespoke LA support models
- Brokerage of support
- Liaison with link HMI
- Expectation of engagement in Innovation & Improvement Networks/clusters and conferences
- Partnerships with outstanding schools to support journey to outstanding
- Governance support and development
- Part of the ENHANCE collaboration



The processes below will be actioned in any case where (in the opinion of the Local Authority and subject to the information that it has received from borough representatives, the school and any other responsible bodies) there remains insufficient evidence of improvement leading to compromised educational opportunity for children and young people in Hillingdon:





3.2. Quality assurance and accountability for school improvement in Hillingdon

The principles of partnership and school-led improvement are at the heart of the Hillingdon School Improvement Strategy. For this reason, quality assurance, monitoring and the evaluation of the school improvement strategy for the borough lies with the key strategic body for school improvement, SSPB. This board, held to account by Schools' Forum and other executive groups, will take responsibility for ensuring that the aims of the strategy outlined in this document are regularly and robustly monitored, that resources are used appropriately and that the quality of school provision throughout the borough improves and attains at least good or outstanding standards by 2017.

In addition and in line with the statutory responsibilities held by the council with regard to ensuring high standards of education for all young people in Hillingdon, education outcomes and school performance data will be scrutinised regularly by Members and by senior officers, including the Director of Children's Services.

The impact and effectiveness of this strategy for school improvement will be reviewed by the SSPB no later than twelve months from the date of first publication.

4. References

- DfE - Schools causing concern (January 2015) - link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-causing-concern--2>
- Ofsted - The framework for the inspection of local authority arrangements for supporting school improvement (November 2014)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/framework-for-the-inspection-of-local-authority-arrangements-for-supporting-school-improvement--2>
- Ofsted - Inspecting local authority arrangements for supporting school improvement: guidance for providers (December 2014)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsted-inspections-of-local-authority-arrangements-for-supporting-school-improvement>
- Education and inspections Act 2006
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents>
- White Paper - The importance of teaching (2010)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-importance-of-teaching-the-schools-white-paper-2010>

5. Appendix A

5.1. Schools' Strategic Partnership Board Terms of Reference

Reconstituted June 2015

Agreed Terms of Reference

Rationale

A strong and positive relationship between a local authority and all schools within the borough is central to the success of the borough, and the shared ambition to provide the highest quality of education and opportunity for all young people from Hillingdon.

Within the context of an increasingly diverse and autonomous school system the borough is committed to developing and supporting the most effective models of school-led support and challenge, alongside its central role as strategic champion of educational excellence. The borough has a clear role and responsibility to work with partners to secure the highest standards of education, to tackle underperformance swiftly and effectively and to promote school to school collaboration.

The development of the Hillingdon Schools' Strategic Partnership Board (SSPB) is key to the development, leadership and quality-assurance of school improvement strategy and direction across the borough. This leadership group is strategically aligned with a range of partners in order to best represent the needs and vision of school leaders and professionals across the borough and to take the driving role in shaping and securing school improvement in Hillingdon. As national and local requirements regarding school and education development evolve, it is anticipated that the SSPB will broaden and extend its focus.

Principles

The principles that underpin our vision for school improvement and which are upheld by SSPB are:

- That school improvement systems are most effective when they are based on partnership and collaboration and that school leaders and the local authority will work in equal partnership
- That local solutions, supported by national best practice, are often best placed to drive improvement
- That challenge and support mechanisms across the borough should be transparent, clearly understood by all and open to interrogation to ensure the greatest impact on outcomes and opportunities for our young people
- That the council, as a strategic champion for securing the highest standards of education for all young people within the borough of Hillingdon, will provide appropriate drive and leadership; challenging, intervening and brokering where necessary to address concerns around underperformance.

Membership

- a) The SSPB will consist of appropriate representation to reflect all phases and settings of education across the borough. In order to offer representation in line with borough diversity, the following broad settings must be represented on SSPB membership:
 - All primary/infant schools
 - All secondary schools
 - Teaching Schools alliances
 - The Special School sector
 - Alternative provision/PRU settings
- b) The SSPB will include appropriate senior school improvement officers from the borough
- c) The SSPB will include Governor representation
- d) The SSPB will include representation from the LLE/NLE network
- e) The SSPB may invite temporary representation from other leaders as deemed necessary to undertake its duties
- f) The SSPB will appoint Co-Chairs and a clerk whose appointments will be re-elected on an annual basis
- g) The SSPB will operate via a co-chairing arrangement between local authority and school leaders
- h) SSPB membership will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Quorum

- a) The quorum will be 8 members, one of whom must include a borough representative and one of whom must be current Co-Chair
- b) The quorum shall vote only if the majority of members present are current borough headteachers
- c) The clerk of the meeting is not required to vote.

Meetings

- a) The SSPB will meet once per term (3 x per year) as a minimum
- b) Additional/extraordinary meetings may be held as required at the discretion of the SSPB
- c) SSPB meetings will be scheduled at least two weeks prior to Schools' Forum meetings
- d) Papers for SSPB meetings will be prepared by the SSPB clerk and, wherever possible, will be shared by email with SSPB members 7 days before each SSPB meeting. Papers will include the following:
 - Notice in writing of meeting date, time and venue
 - Copy of agenda
 - Draft minutes of previous meeting
 - Papers relevant to meeting
- e) Minutes will be taken for each SSPB meeting
- f) Following approval by Chair, minutes will be distributed to SSPB members within 14 days of each meeting
- g) Minutes will be shared with Schools' Forum as a standing item.

Responsibilities

- To take the lead in proposing, developing and supporting the school improvement strategy for the borough, ensuring that the model fully represents the interests of all

stakeholders and that all schools can access appropriate and high-quality models of support and challenge to secure improvement

- To use borough-wide intelligence and data to shape priorities for school improvement
- To monitor the impact of models of support by challenging rates of improvement and use of council and delegated/other resources where necessary
- To actively promote and support collaboration and innovation between schools and providers, leading to rapid improvement in outcomes and borough cohesion
- To support the self-evaluation of school improvement services across the borough
- To regularly update associated executive committees and partners inc Schools' Forum
- To make recommendations to Schools' Forum regarding strategy and/or finance as appropriate.

6. Appendix B

6.1. Guidance for Schools At Risk in Hillingdon: Identification and Support Processes & Protocols

Key to abbreviations

SARR	Schools At Risk Register
SIOD	School Improvement Overview Database
HoSI	Head of School Improvement
SIL	School Improvement Link
RI (A)	School Requires Improvement but is making good progress
RI (B)	School Requires Improvement and is not yet securing good
GOBAR	School Good or Outstanding but at risk
LLE/NLE	Local Leader in Education/National Leader in Education
NOV	School Improvement Note of Visit

Introduction

As part of the local authority duty to monitor progress and standards in education and to intervene appropriately where necessary, Hillingdon's local authority school improvement function will retain a register of schools considered to be at risk.

In some cases, and where the local authority may choose to exercise its right to issue a Warning Notice and intervene formally, the guidance for identifying a School Causing Concern will be used. Please see below for general guidance relating to the issuing of a Warning Notice. More detailed guidance can be found by following the link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-causing-concern--2#history>

DfE Schools Causing Concern Guidance - Schools eligible for Warning Notices

National guidance makes it clear that local authorities should consider the use of a Warning Notice where at least one of the factors below apply:

1. Standards of performance in the school are unacceptably low and are likely to remain so, unless the local authority intervenes
2. There has been a serious breakdown in the way a school is managed or governed which is prejudicing, or is likely to prejudice, such standards of performance
3. The safety of pupils or staff is threatened

How will schools in Hillingdon be identified as being at risk?

In some cases and particularly when there is a sudden and drastic deterioration associated to the categories above or when a school has not taken sufficient action to remedy concerns in spite of advice and support, the council will use its power to issue Warning Notices. However, in most cases, and in line with the view of the local authority that early intervention is the most appropriate and effective approach to mitigating risk, a School At Risk in Hillingdon will usually be identified through a risk assessment activity undertaken by the School Improvement Service.

This risk assessment involves the detailed scrutiny of a range of data and information captured within the borough school improvement overview database. The borough school improvement overview database is important as it provides performance data alongside other dynamic information, based on local knowledge and contextual factors.

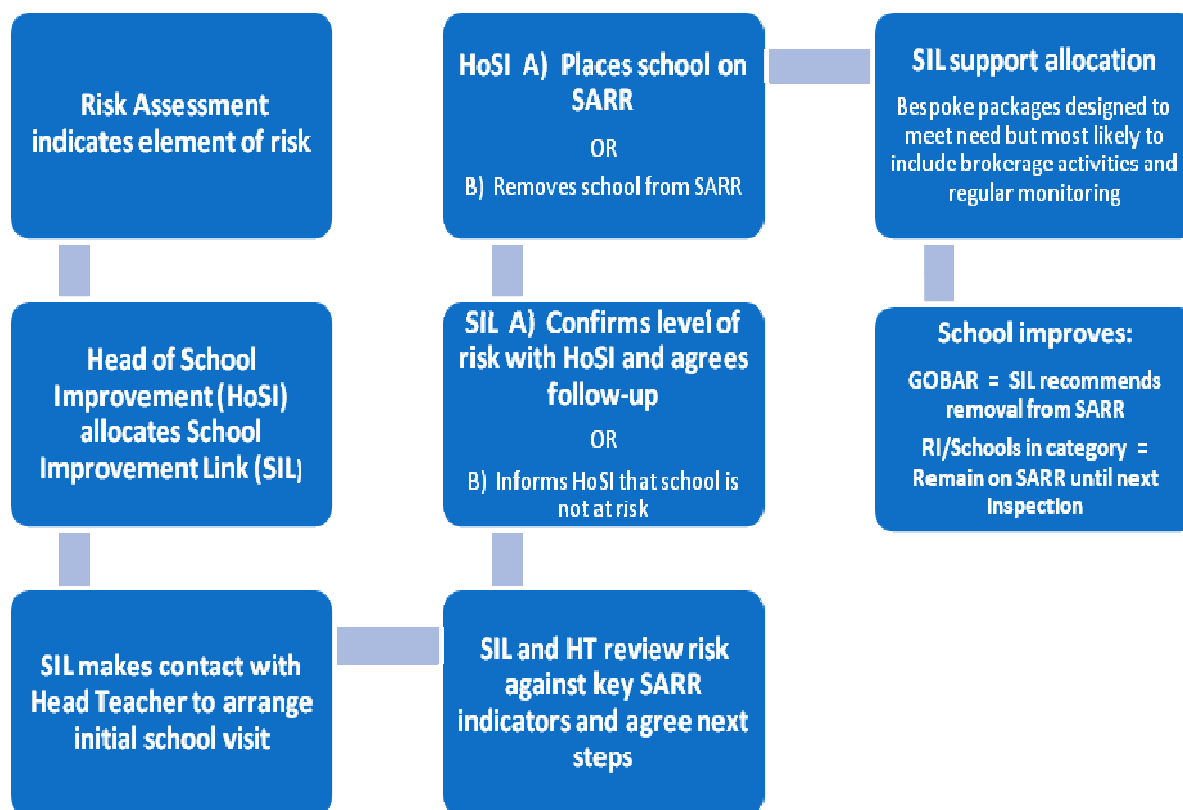
The School Improvement Service undertakes risk assessment activities on an, at least, half-termly basis. Risk assessment includes the scrutiny of a range of school intelligence including Raiseonline and FFT analyses and other publically available data-sets and additional data pertaining to vulnerable children. This always includes feedback from recent inspection reports and/or monitoring visits and local authority commissioned School Reviews where they have taken place. In addition, the risk assessment will take into consideration feedback from a range of school support teams including, but not limited to, School Improvement Link officers, governance liaison colleagues, early intervention and prevention services for vulnerable children inc LAC and local authority finance support teams in order to capture the most comprehensive picture of a school's areas of strength and challenge. The final decision to place a school on the Schools At Risk Register in Hillingdon will be made based on one or more of SARR Indicators listed below.

SARR Indicators

- Data analysis indicates a sudden drop or a steady decline in performance (attainment and/or progress)
- Outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable children, including those Looked After, are not in line with national averages
- The gap between key vulnerable groups, including disadvantaged children, and their peers in school is not closing quickly enough and does not compare favourably with the national picture for all children
- Outcome data indicates inconsistent or variable patterns of attainment or progress within the school
- Data suggests that the school is not performing as well as comparable schools in the borough (against benchmark groups)
- Attendance and exclusion data raises concern
- Evidence suggests that Looked After children are not having their needs adequately met
- There are concerns regarding the management of financial resources
- Turbulence/poor practice at leadership or governance level places the school at risk of underperformance
- The school has not acted quickly enough to address any areas of weakness/recommendations made by external or internal review partners
- There is any indication that standards of safeguarding are not adequate for pupils or staff

What is the process that the School Improvement Service follows?

The flowchart below outlines the process that will take place following School Improvement Service risk assessment.



Please note that the allocated SIL will always have reviewed school data prior to the initial school visit and will be able to outline the reasons for SARR placement during this meeting.

Placement on the SARR will result in regular contact with a school where it is maintained by the local authority and through the provision of support and challenge in a variety of forms. For maintained schools this may include monthly Challenge Task Group meetings and/or focussed Scrutiny meetings which will take place at the Civic Centre, and will be supported by relevant senior colleagues. In the case of academies, the School Improvement Team will take steps to ensure that appropriate bodies are aware of any concerns and are able to advise and support the school as required. It should be noted that **any** school judged RI will automatically be included on the SARR, as will all schools in formal Ofsted categories.

Our strategy recognises that schools judged Requiring Improvement may be at different points on their journey to improvement and, for that reason, will be sub-categorised as:

- § **RI (A) = RI but making good progress, with a view to good at next Section 5**
- § **RI (B) = RI and not yet making sufficient progress towards good/there is insufficient evidence to predict good at next inspection**

For schools categorised as RI (A), the assumption will be that the school has made positive progress and has successfully addressed any areas of weakness. These schools should be able to demonstrate stable and effective leadership structures at all levels and should be able to provide robust quantitative evidence of progress and improved attainment and achievement. Head Teachers of schools RI (A) should be able to demonstrate that they know their school well and that they have taken appropriate action to secure improvement. The school's self-evaluation document will be used alongside the current School Development Plan and any additional post-inspection action plan to prompt discussion between the Head Teacher and SIL.

For schools categorised as RI (B), the SIL will work more closely with leaders to ensure that the School Development Plan, associated action plans and the self-evaluation document are appropriately focused and allow the school to provide clear evidence of improvement. The SIL may link with other partners to support the school in identifying and actioning activities to improve outcomes for pupils and families.

For schools Good/Outstanding but at risk (GOBAR) will be identified via the school improvement overview database and will **always** be contacted by a member of the School Improvement Service to discuss their placement on the SARR. In most cases a Good or Outstanding school will be identified as at risk based on data decline/underperformance or an issue of data variance. In these cases, the initial discussion of risk between the SIL and the Head Teacher is very important to ensure that the reasons that flagged any concern are clearly understood and accepted by all parties.

What can a School At Risk expect?

In the interests of consistency and transparency, the general guidelines below will be followed although it should be noted that all actions will be taken with careful and professional consideration of each school's individual context and that the guidance below is neither linear nor exhaustive.

School GOBAR	School RI (A)	School RI (B) or Ofsted Inadequate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated SIL support and challenge visit at least once per half-term • Progress monitored against current or refined improvement plans • Data shared regularly to inform in-year tracking • Brokerage of additional support to address priorities • Liaison with governors as required • Consideration of external reviews as required (governance, finance, pupil premium etc) • Signposting to recommended improvement activities • Consideration of Local Authority formal powers inc Warning Notices as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated SIL monitoring meeting each term • Focus on monitoring progress against criteria for securely good including data updates as required • SIL support and contact via email/telephone between meetings • Additional brokerage as requested by Head Teacher • Liaison with Ofsted as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular support and challenge by allocated SIL and supported by Head of School Improvement as required • School priorities and self-evaluation, including data-tracking, shared with SIL • Challenge Task Group convened and chaired by SIL on a monthly basis • Intensive brokerage of support • Consideration of external reviews as required (governance, finance, pupil premium etc) • Signposting to recommended improvement activities • Regular contact with governors • Liaison with Ofsted as necessary • Consideration of Local Authority formal powers inc Warning Notices etc as necessary • Exploration of alternative improvement routes including federation, amalgamation or academisation as necessary

In accordance with our commitment to local improvement solutions and effective school-to-school solutions, in most cases the local authority will seek to galvanise support for schools facing challenge from within the Hillingdon local improvement community which includes, but is not limited to, the Teaching Schools, LLE/NLE and Exec Head Teacher networks. However, when appropriate school-to-school support is needed particularly rapidly and where capacity within our local and school-led network for school improvement is limited, it may be necessary for the borough to deploy advice and intervention support quickly. Where this occurs, the aim will usually be to agree local school-to-school support as soon as is practicable for all parties.

Confidentiality and administration

The SARR is a highly confidential document and is strictly managed according to the council's protocols for sensitive information. The SARR is held and managed by the School Improvement Team and is only accessible to other officers on a need to know basis.

SILs are allocated schools from the SARR and are required to record all contact with their schools using the standard Note of Visit. Following visits, each NoV is reviewed to ensure that key information is captured and that brokerage requests are actioned quickly. The NoV will be emailed back to Head Teachers following the visit.

Please note that, unless specifically requested to share the NoV more widely, the SIL will only share the NoV with the Head Teacher by email. However, Head Teachers are encouraged to share the content of their NoVs with governors and other partners in order to link improvement activities together effectively.

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Schools' Strategic Partnership Board

Reconstituted June 2015

Agreed Terms of Reference

Rationale

A strong and positive relationship between a local authority and all schools within the borough is central to the success of the borough, and the shared ambition to provide the highest quality of education and opportunity for all young people from Hillingdon.

Within the context of an increasingly diverse and autonomous school system the borough is committed to developing and supporting the most effective models of school-led support and challenge, alongside its central role as strategic champion of educational excellence. The borough has a clear role and responsibility to work with partners to secure the highest standards of education, to tackle underperformance swiftly and effectively and to promote school to school collaboration.

The development of the Hillingdon Schools' Strategic Partnership Board (SSPB) is key to the development, leadership and quality-assurance of school improvement strategy and direction across the borough. This leadership group is strategically aligned with a range of partners in order to best represent the needs and vision of school leaders and professionals across the borough and to take the driving role in shaping and securing school improvement in Hillingdon. As national and local requirements regarding school and education development evolve, it is anticipated that the SSPB will broaden and extend its focus.

Principles

The principles that underpin our vision for school improvement and which are upheld by SSPB are:

- That school improvement systems are most effective when they are based on partnership and collaboration and that school leaders and the local authority will work in equal partnership
- That local solutions, supported by national best practice, are often best placed to drive improvement
- That challenge and support mechanisms across the borough should be transparent, clearly understood by all and open to interrogation to ensure the greatest impact on outcomes and opportunities for our young people
- That the council, as a strategic champion for securing the highest standards of education for all young people within the borough of Hillingdon, will provide appropriate drive and leadership; challenging, intervening and brokering where necessary to address concerns around underperformance.

Membership

- a) The SSPB will consist of appropriate representation to reflect all phases and settings of education across the borough. In order to offer representation in line with borough diversity, the following broad settings must be represented on SSPB membership:
 - All primary/infant schools
 - All secondary schools
 - Teaching Schools alliances
 - The Special School sector
 - Alternative provision/PRU settings
- b) The SSPB will include appropriate senior school improvement officers from the borough
- c) The SSPB will include Governor representation
- d) The SSPB will include representation from the LLE/NLE network
- e) The SSPB may invite temporary representation from other leaders as deemed necessary to undertake its duties
- f) The SSPB will appoint Co-Chairs and a clerk whose appointments will be re-elected on an annual basis
- g) The SSPB will operate via a co-chairing arrangement between local authority and school leaders
- h) SSPB membership will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Quorum

- a) The quorum will be 8 members, one of whom must include a borough representative and one of whom must be current Co-Chair
- b) The quorum shall vote only if the majority of members present are current borough headteachers
- c) The clerk of the meeting is not required to vote.

Meetings

- a) The SSPB will meet once per term (3 x per year) as a minimum
- b) Additional/extraordinary meetings may be held as required at the discretion of the SSPB
- c) SSPB meetings will be scheduled at least two weeks prior to Schools' Forum meetings
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 - Notice in writing of meeting date, time and venue
 - Copy of agenda
 - Draft minutes of previous meeting
 - Papers relevant to meeting

- e) Minutes will be taken for each SSPB meeting
- f) Following approval by Chair, minutes will be distributed to SSPB members within 14 days of each meeting
- g) Minutes will be shared with Schools' Forum as a standing item.

Responsibilities

- To take the lead in proposing, developing and supporting the school improvement strategy for the borough, ensuring that the model fully represents the interests of all stakeholders and that all schools can access appropriate and high-quality models of support and challenge to secure improvement
- To use borough-wide intelligence and data to shape priorities for school improvement
- To monitor the impact of models of support by challenging rates of improvement and use of council and delegated/other resources where necessary
- To actively promote and support collaboration and innovation between schools and providers, leading to rapid improvement in outcomes and borough cohesion
- To support the self-evaluation of school improvement services across the borough
- To regularly update associated executive committees and partners inc Schools' Forum
- To make recommendations to Schools' Forum regarding strategy and/or finance as appropriate.

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3 Oversight and monitoring

Role of central Government in oversight

70. The Government holds academies to account through performance measures, as for maintained schools, but also through monitoring the funding agreements reached between the DfE and each academy trust. The model funding agreement includes a requirement for the academy to abide by the conditions of the Academies Financial Handbook and of the Independent Schools Standards which can be amended or updated. The Education Funding Agency (EFA) has day to day responsibility for monitoring the compliance of academy trusts with the agreement, including the Handbook.

71. Throughout our inquiry concern was frequently expressed about the impracticality of the system of central Government oversight of individual schools on a daily basis. The National Audit Office (NAO) released a report on *Academies and maintained schools: Oversight and intervention* in October 2014 which was critical of the DfE's level of knowledge about the cost-effectiveness of its interventions.[116] In the evidence session that followed, Russell Hobby of the NAHT told the PAC that "One of the flaws in our current system of oversight is that because we have so few people monitoring such large numbers of schools from such a distance, we are forced to rely on data".[117] This has the dual disadvantage that problems are not picked up until after the event, on the basis of poor exam results, and that "non-measurable aspects of school performance", such as safeguarding, may not be picked up at all.[118] He argued that there was no "substitute for having someone locally who knows what is going on inside that school".[119]

Regional Schools Commissioners

72. In response to the concerns about central oversight, in the course of 2014 the DfE created eight new Regional School Commissioners (RSCs), accountable to the Schools Commissioner, Frank Green. The core role of the RSCs is to oversee academies and free schools in their area. Their responsibilities include:

- monitoring performance and prescribing intervention to secure improvement in underperforming academies and free schools;
- taking decisions on the creation of new academies and making recommendations to ministers about free school applications.
- ensuring that there are enough high-quality sponsors to meet local need; and
- taking decisions on changes to open academies, including changes to age ranges, mergers and changes to multi-academy trust arrangements, as well as changes to admission arrangements.[120]

73. The RSCs are supported by Headteacher Boards (HTBs), the members of which are partly elected by academy heads in each region and partly appointed. The National Governors Association expressed reservations about the composition of the HTBs and raised questions about the skills and expertise represented on the Boards, especially with regard to the appointed members role.[121]

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74. The full complement of RSCs was only in place from September 2014, so it was not surprising that our inquiry heard some confusion over their role and scope. In October 2014 the Secretary of State was able to clarify that each Commissioner would have six staff and would be responsible for the oversight and monitoring of those academies which are in special measures, currently 112 schools across the country.[122] The RSCs have no responsibility in respect of maintained schools at the moment but the Secretary of State confirmed that the "direction of travel for the Conservative Party" is for Regional Schools Commissioners to oversee all schools: academy and maintained.[123] It remains unclear whether the RSCs have any responsibility for promoting school-to-school support, which is one of the duties of the Schools Commissioner which perhaps could be expected to be delegated.[124]

75. The RSCs were welcomed by some witnesses as providing a more localised service than was possible before. John Readman of Bristol City Council told us that, from the local authority perspective:

You have DfE, civil servants, sometimes quite junior, making major decisions around education business a long way away from London and sometimes it feels that, so the role of the regional schools commissioner to really improve and increase that level of local knowledge is crucial.[125]

76. Concern focussed on the size of the regions covered by each RSC and how they have been designed. Witnesses argued that the regions covered by each Commissioner were too big to be manageable and that there should be more localised oversight. Sir Michael Wilshaw told us "They have large responsibilities—a large number of local authorities to look after [...] it looks to be a very big challenge to have oversight of academies and free schools in a large number of local authorities and a large number of schools".[126] The regions were criticised by some witnesses for not recognising natural geographical boundaries,[127] and by representatives of the Church of England for creating difficulties for academy chains where their schools spanned different RSC regions. [128] The lack of alignment with Ofsted's eight regions was also raised as a lost opportunity for closer working between central bodies with responsibility for oversight and monitoring of academies. Emma Knights described the lack of commonality as "daft", whilst Sir David Carter, RSC for the south west, felt that "it would be very helpful for the system" for the RSCs and Ofsted regional directors to work together.[129]

77. David Blunkett MP has prepared a report for the Labour Party arguing that many more such regional officials would be required and they would need to be responsible for all schools.[130] Frank Green acknowledged that, as the number of academies increased, the regions may need to be divided up and the DfE "will need more [RSCs]."[131] Theodore Agnew defended the current number on the ground that "there are not that many underperforming academies" in each region but he accepted that "if all schools are to become academies [...] then I would see there being maybe 30 regional school commissioners".[132] The Secretary of State herself was firmly of the view that "I don't think we will have more regional schools commissioners", but rather that there would be more support staff for the RSCs in the future.[133]

Role of the local authority in strategy and monitoring

78. The role of the local authority with respect to education has been changing for many years. Several witnesses reminded us that "Local authorities have not run schools for 25, 30 years", since the reforms initiated by Kenneth Baker in the

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1980s.[134] The main responsibility of local authorities is now to ensure good provision for all children in their area. In this context the academies programme is part of a long-term development, but the speed of conversions and the possibility of a fully academised system in the future require a major adjustment on the part of local authorities in relation to the schools in their area. This is true of all authorities despite the uneven distribution of academies across England, with some local authorities almost fully academised while others are still almost fully maintained.

79. Evidence to our inquiry indicates that many local authorities now see their role as regulator and overseer of education, rather than provider. Ofsted told us:

The most successful local authorities are those that engage with all the schools in their areas, regardless of whether they are fully maintained, academies or free schools. They typically view themselves as the 'commissioner of education for the children and young people in their area'. If the local authority believes that provision isn't good enough for the children then it challenges schools to do better, irrespective of status.[135]

80. John Readman of Bristol City Council told us that: "the local authority's role clearly is as champion, as commissioner and as convenor of partnerships welcoming the diversity of the education landscape".[136] Later he added that "where [the new system] is working best [...] is where the director and the local authority [...] sees itself very clearly as that champion of children role and builds that relationship between the DfE, Ofsted, the local authority and academy sponsors within an area", with the local authority aiming at providing "advocacy and influence".[137] Jon Stonehouse of York City Council agreed that the role "is changing massively":

The traditional model of intensive school improvement resources within the local authority is no longer the case. We are much more in a place where we are quality assuring the school improvement, the peer to peer support that schools give one another. This gives us a much better basis on which to challenge how those arrangements are working and to what extent they are improving outcomes for children.[138]

81. We heard first-hand in Hull how the local authority had worked with schools to develop a multi-academy trust and how heads continued to maintain "a very good relationship" with the local authority.[139] This was echoed in evidence elsewhere. The local authority officials from whom we took evidence were unanimous, however, that it was not the role of the local authority to sponsor academies directly as this would create a conflict of interest to their role as "a champion for all children".[140]

82. Not all local authorities have embraced this change. Sir Daniel Moynihan described his experience where local authorities used the idea of "protecting the local family of schools" to resist the academisation of failing schools.[141] John Readman acknowledged that "There are some local authorities where they have not necessarily grasped that role and there is work to do".[142]

83. It is also the case that the role of the local authority in working with academies can be a difficult one. Kent County Council expressed concern that "one of the biggest challenges in the current school system is that LAs are legally responsible for the education performance of all children, but have powers to intervene locally in maintained schools only".[143] David Whalley of Calderdale Council told us that his authority challenges academies where they see underperformance and "to date, academies have responded". However, he also acknowledged that "there has been some tension" where chairs of governors have questioned the power of the council to

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enforce cooperation. The Calderdale response to this was to "have another dialogue with DfE and with Ofsted".[144] The new statement was published on 20 January 2015.

84. The Local Schools Network suggested that "A local education authority should be able to prompt an Ofsted inspection if it is concerned about the progress of a school in its area".[145] Sir Michael Wilshaw agreed that "If they do not have the powers to intervene themselves, they should ensure that they telephone the sponsor, write letters, talk to the Department about their concerns, and they can write to Ofsted to do an inspection." [146] That does not, however, resolve the difficulty that the authority can be held accountable for the performance of schools over which it has influence but ultimately no control. It also does not address the position of those stand-alone converter academies which do not fall below intervention thresholds but which may be declining from their previous positions. In evidence to us, Ofsted identified a gap in support for these schools, of whom only some will seek support from the local authority.[147]

85. In addition, the dialogue between the local authority and the DfE is not always easy. Some local authorities expressed concern that issues raised with the DfE about particular academies in their area were not addressed. Calderdale Council considered that there was "very little stability" at the DfE with the result that that "we are constantly meeting new people and it has been very difficult to establish a working relationship".[148]

86. The NAO found that the confusion over the responsibilities of local authorities in relation to academies extended to safeguarding. 15% of local authority directors of children's services told an NAO survey that they were not monitoring safeguarding in academies and the same percentage would not intervene directly in academies if pupils' safety were threatened.[149] The NAO attributed this to "the very strong messages that have been sent to local authorities more generally about not overseeing and meddling in academies".[150] They concluded that "The Department has not clearly articulated some of the roles and responsibilities of external oversight bodies" and both the DfE and Ofsted have sent "mixed messages" to local authorities[151]:

with academies, local authorities have no powers to intervene and the Department only expects them to maintain constructive relationships and raise concerns about performance with itself. The Department's policy is that local authorities do not need to monitor academies proactively and should not require academies to report performance data to them. However, Ofsted has interpreted local authorities' statutory duties differently, and has criticised authorities for not working effectively with local academies to improve performance.[152]

87. The NAO found that there was no single up to date document that sets out the roles and responsibilities of oversight bodies.[153] The DfE told the NAO that this was the purpose of the Accountability System Statement, which has not been updated since 2012, despite a commitment to update it annually. In June 2014 the DfE announced that it was working on a revised statement.[154] The NAO recommended that "The Department should update its framework for oversight and intervention" and that "future iterations of its Accountability System Statement should set out: the responsibilities and accountabilities of oversight bodies, and how they interact with schools' own responsibilities".[155] The statement was published on 20 January 2015.

88. Apart from the disputed area of oversight, local authorities still hold statutory

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responsibilities in relation to place-planning and admissions, the exercise of which duties has been complicated by the academisation process. Local authorities can compel maintained schools to expand, if necessary, but have no power to force academies to take additional children if there are insufficient school places in the local area. Academies can also set their own admission arrangements (subject to the Admissions Code). Comprehensive Future, a group which campaigns on the issue of school admissions, warned us that: "As more schools become academies i.e. own admission authority schools able to set their own admission criteria, decide which applicant meets them and carry out appeals, we are likely to return to the confusion and unfairness of the past."^[156] Children who do not find places in academies must be allocated a place elsewhere by the local authority, putting further pressure on place-planning.

89. David Whalley from Calderdale Council called for a "more robust process [within the DfE] in working with local authorities when agreeing to expand free schools and academies", to take into account the impact on the local authority and their ability to plan future pupil places.^[157] The Secretary of State told us that under the new system the DfE would "continue to work with [local authorities] in the way that we have done", recognising that there was a need for liaison on "a variety of different issues", including safeguarding.^[158] With regard to underperforming schools, she argued that local authorities "should be passing that information on", either to the Regional Schools Commissioners or to the DfE itself.^[159]

Parent voice

90. The DfE's original written submission to our inquiry did not mention parents except in relation to free schools.^[160] Other witnesses raised concerns about the accountability of academies to parents, both collectively and as individuals with complaints. Warwick Mansell described the structure of Regional Schools Commissioners appointed by the Secretary of State and assisted by Head Teacher Boards as "a very top-down paternalistic system" and questioned why the Government was not "trying to get the pupil and the parent very much to the fore".^[161] On governance within academies, one parent wrote that "parents are sidelined from all important decisions, both over whether schools convert in the first place, and over how they are run once they become academies".^[162] Anastasia de Waal argued that "Because it is a changing landscape, it is difficult for parents [...] to find out what the accountability mechanisms are. There needs to be much greater clarity around that."^[163]

91. An important part of the accountability mechanism for parents is knowing how to raise issues of concern with particular academies. If the parents of a child at an academy have a complaint, the first port of call is the headteacher. If a complaint is not dealt with satisfactorily by the head, a panel of governors is convened, which must contain one member who is not a governor, but is appointed by the governing body. One parent told us:

Complaints against an Academy heard by Governors of the Academy with no further recourse, is a very good example of how self-regulatory accountability will fail. The Governors cannot be expected to be self-critical to the degree that might be required and there is a real danger that children are not adequately safeguarded by this system. Complaints against an Academy should be heard by a wholly independent body with no involvement of the Governors where the complainer feels this to be necessary. Headteachers who

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are confident of the backing of their Governors (often people they might personally have persuaded to become Governors) can act towards parents and children pretty much as they wish—unless there is evidence of criminality. This is a very uncomfortable state of affairs.[164]

92. The DfE told us that:

all schools, including academies, are required to have a complaints policy and procedure in place. In the first instance, parents who have concerns can follow the school's process by raising their concerns with the head teacher and the governing body. Local authorities are responsible for working with and acting on complaints referred for state maintained schools. The Education Funding Agency is responsible for handling complaints about academies (and free schools) where complaints have been referred to the academy and these have not been addressed through that route.[165]

93. From September 2013 to August 2014, the EFA received 1955 complaints from all sources. Of these, only 68 were deemed to be the responsibility of the EFA to investigate because the academy's complaints procedure had been exhausted. 51 of the 68 complaints were from parents.[166] Other routes of redress were proposed during our inquiry. Sir Michael Wilshaw, for example, suggested that Ofsted's regional offices were a further port of call for parents concerned about academy performance and he highlighted the role of parents in the Trojan Horse allegations.[167] In addition, the Schools Commissioner argued that "parents should have [...] accessibility to the Regional Schools Commissioner and their teaching board, if needs be, for resolution of an issue between the dean of an academy and a parent".[168]

94. Robert Hill suggested that "there was weakness and confusion for parents in the system" and that "there is a case for a proper regulator that is independent of the Department".[169]

Regulatory function of the EFA

95. The EFA is responsible both for funding academies and for monitoring their financial performance and probity. In particular, one of the EFA's objectives is to ensure the proper use of public funds through financial assurance undertaken by the EFA itself, or by others.[170]

96. As part of this inquiry, we commissioned independent research from the Institute of Education into potential conflicts of interest in academy sponsorship arrangements. The resulting report noted that there was a sense amongst those interviewed that "the academy system lacks transparency, is heavily politicised and prone to favouritism".[171] One interviewee told the researchers:

Civil servants in the EFA have become very politicised. Transparency needs to go right to the top; ministers and senior figures at DfE are still associated with or on boards of trusts. Although they have tried to build Chinese walls and avoid accusations of impropriety this involvement could still contribute to a wider culture in which it seems that some Heads are favoured by ministers. Human behaviour is such that civil servants and Ofsted might give these schools preferential treatment, even if they haven't been asked to.[172]

97. The research suggested that there was a real or perceived conflict of interest in one body both allocating funds and ensuring that they are spent appropriately. It recommended that we should consider whether the regulatory powers of the EFA

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should be split from its funding role, posing as an alternative a requirement that the EFA becomes a Non-Departmental Public Body rather than an Executive Agency, thereby giving it greater independence from Ministers as it conducts its regulatory work.[173] David Wolfe QC considered that splitting the functions "would be a very good idea": "parents often perceive, rightly or wrongly, that the EFA is an apologist for the academy, trying to paper over things rather than independently investigating on the parents' behalf". He added: "That may be a wrong perception but the fact that they are a single organisation certainly reinforces that sense".[174]

Conclusions and recommendations

98. The evidence to our inquiry supports the need for a middle tier between Whitehall and individual schools. The Regional Schools Commissioners are intended to fill that gap but their role is still evolving. There are differing views, including amongst postholders themselves, as to how the functions of RSCs will develop. We recommend that the Government clarify what that role is and how it will develop in the near future.

99. The RSC regions are too large as currently devised. We do not believe that an increase in staff numbers, as envisaged by the Secretary of State, would allow the RSC offices to be sufficiently in touch with local information, given the number of schools potentially involved. The number of Regional Schools Commissioners will need to increase from the current eight if they are to perform an effective oversight role for the academies in each region, and even more so if they are to be extended to cover maintained schools as well.

100. We recommend that the Government review and increase the number of schools commissioners.

101. Local authorities cannot embrace their new role in education without a clear and unambiguous codification of their role and responsibilities. These should include the championing of the interests of local children, families and employers in ensuring high quality, accessible local provision, rather than championing the schools themselves.

102. As local authorities adjust to their new role, the Department should also adjust and ensure that local authorities can play a constructive role in challenging all schools, including academies, to be effective. If local authorities perceive themselves to be marginalised and ignored, they will not fulfil their role in holding schools to account.

103. We recommend that the DfE, as a matter of urgency, clarify the respective roles of local authorities and RSCs in relation to academies.

104. The voice of parents can be marginalised in some academies. We recommend that the DfE work with academies and local authorities to ensure parents know how they can make representations and that these are meaningfully heard.

105. We also recommend that the Education Funding Agency and the Regional Schools Commissioners establish protocols so that parental complaints are dealt with effectively and information from the process is shared between the authorities.

106. Many witnesses have complained about the lack of transparency at the EFA. We

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recommend that the DfE and EFA further enhance the transparency and accountability of the monitoring process to ensure that academies comply with the terms of their funding agreement.

107. Public confidence in the academy process is undermined by having the EFA as both regulator and funder. We recommend that its regulatory and funding roles be split and that the DfE carry out a review about how that can best be achieved.

Re-imagining the role of councils in supporting London's schools

- By Barry Quirk

The needs of London's children in the 21st century

A 10 year-old at school in Balham or Barking today will be starting their new secondary school this September. They will most probably enter the world of work in the early 2020s; and they will most likely be starting their own family sometime in the early 2030s. The success they will achieve at their new secondary school will be a vital part of this critically important phase of their life. It is the beginning of their transition into adulthood; it is when they start to discover their wider potential in life. And it will be so much more difficult for them to craft their own path if their schooling fails them. In this way, all of London's schools offer positive paths for life; they are not simply places to learn how to pass exams.

Children start at school full of wonder and curiosity about the world. They approach every issue with a “why?” The purpose of schooling is to fuel this drive for learning through the disciplined pursuit of knowledge and the imaginative desire for creative self expression. The ability continually to discover new truths and creatively express one's views are the core purposes of a rounded education.

And this ability is strengthened by the transformative character of 21st century education.

Education is important substantively in its own right; and it is important in the instrumental power it gives young people to realise their full potential in the world of work but also in their own personal growth and development. These substantive and instrumental roles of education leads to many arguments amongst people who are passionate about the sector. Some worry about the growing “vocationalism” in education and feel that young people are schooled too early into the world of work. They need to worry less. Education has always fulfilled both roles. A good education serves to open minds and not to close them. It supports an independence of perspective and hence encourages the development not only of valuable work but also of critical debate and of the engaged and critical citizenry that London needs.

What's more the character of learning is changing.

Open sourced learning and peer networks of learning support are not restricted to the university sector. Schools in London are at the forefront of innovation in teaching and learning. Some of the leading edge pedagogic practice in the world can be found in London's schools - with tens of thousands of highly engaged classroom teachers motivated and inspired by thousands of excellent headteachers. But the world of learning is changing fast.

This was brought home to me recently at a discussion in Catford with 40 or so pupils representing the various schools councils in Lewisham. They were discussing with me the age when young people should have the right to vote. One young 14 year-old boy said to me, “Sir, because of the Internet we have more knowledge at our finger tips than you ever did at our age, so our chances of discovering the truth of things or of being successful must be greater than yours was at our age”. This was a healthy (if sobering) reminder of the changes sweeping through the character of education and learning.

My response to the young boy was to say that his task was substantially harder than mine was at his age. For his problem was that he had so much information he could call upon, that he needed to develop high order skills so as to filter out the truths from the untruths. He said that it was right that a lot of what passed for knowledge on the Internet didn’t merit knowing but that the tools at his disposal were incredible compared to previous generations.

London’s schools do well, they need to do much better

In the 21st century young people can increasingly pursue their own line of enquiry through self directed learning. But they also need the discipline of learning at school. Obviously we want to witness the individual and personalised flourishing of each and every pupil in all of London’s schools. The ideal for each pupil is that their school experience will add to their personal growth and creative potential.

Our means of appraising pupils’ experience of school often gets trapped in simple statistical tables of aggregate school performance. These tables (that aggregate pupil level performance at school level) are useful in showing an overall direction of collective success. And what they show, over the recent past, is that pupils in London’s schools are performing better than their counterparts elsewhere in the UK. Many have claimed part of the credit for this comparative success. In truth a mix of complementary factors is likely to be behind the facts.

London is the most socially diverse and highly populated place in the UK. London is also a destination for ambitious parents, teachers and headteachers.

London has the most successful economy in the UK and it therefore attracts talent and investment more generally. London is a crucible of innovative practice in teaching and learning - encouraged by the university sector and by schools themselves. London has some of the country’s most accomplished headteachers, who bring the vocation of educational leadership to impact upon the wider school communities.

And finally, London’s councils have a highly progressive approach to supporting their schools improve their performance. The combined effect of these (and other) factors is that London’s schools do comparatively well. London’s primary schools are doing exceptionally well in equipping young pupils with a baseline of education and skills. And London’s secondary schools are doing comparatively well. That is a substantial achievement.

Those who have played a part in this success should be proud - but not for long, perhaps for about fifteen minutes. That’s because this achievement is in truth not anywhere near good enough. They need to redouble their efforts and try to achieve substantially more.

When I was a teenager in the 1960s at school in Stepney, in East London, my headteacher addressed us in one of our school assemblies in the following way. “Look to the boy or the girl on your left. Now look to the girl or boy on your right. Only one of the three of you will succeed. So work as hard as you can at school to make sure that you are the one

that succeeds!” That’s what passed for scholarly inspiration in my school in the 1960s. The fact is, he was wrong. London’s population declined over the next 20 years. People moved out of London; including many of my fellow pupils. This meant that the majority of us who remained in London did fairly well in London’s labour market.

To put it at its simplest, it could be said that those who were successful over this period achieved that success against a background of comparatively weak competition. Not so now. The equivalent teenagers sitting in assemblies in Stepney today are going to live through a period of rising population. People are moving into London. London is a global mega-city that will shortly be home to over 10 million people. This means that these pupils are not competing with the girls or boys in their class but girls or boys from across the UK or more widely from across the world.

And this is why London’s schools need to redouble their efforts so that their pupils continue to do substantially better over the coming ten years. Just look at the Central and Inner London labour market. This is where the majority of Londoners work. Not all of course, but most. Over two-thirds of the jobs on offer in the Central and Inner London labour market are graduate level jobs. Well, how many of the 10 year-old pupils attending the schools in these central and inner London boroughs will, on present trends, go on to get degrees? Not two-thirds, that’s for sure. And that’s London’s problem - the aggregated pupil achievement at secondary school is falling short of the requirement of the sorts of jobs on offer for those pupils.

That’s not to say that all jobs are graduate level jobs. Many hundreds of thousands of workers across London perform fulfilling and valuable roles in the transport, logistics, service and retail sectors. After all, London’s bus drivers need a solid basis of education and arguably the role they perform across the capital is more crucial (or at least just as crucial) than the daily role performed by equity analysts in the financial services sector.

Of course the ratio of graduate level jobs in London just tell some of the story (albeit two-thirds). There are very many job roles for non-graduates. However, the other one third of the jobs available are subject to intense competition from that proportion of the resident workforce who do not have a graduate level education. Many of these roles provide good quality training and development - and opportunities exist.

But even here there is tough competition for these roles. For example, how many of London’s restaurants are fully staffed by under-employed young graduates, from around the globe, who crowd out others from this particular sector? These factors are behind the attempts of many councils to build easier paths for young people into work - particularly those who for whatever reason are excluded from the conventional routes into valuable employment markets. It is one of the reasons why the South London boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham are working on a “shared solutions” model of getting young people on the margins of the labour market into semi-skilled work.

To build easier pathways into work demands excellent connections between schools and wider society, and there are many excellent examples across London of schools connecting with wider society in ways that help their pupils succeed. Schools have links with local business, with local civil society, with the higher education sector more generally. But these links are tend to be developed ad hoc and in isolation. Each and every London secondary school needs to have strong roots in its locality. But they also need to devise effective routes for its pupils into the wider world of London’s work, culture and economy. There are several schemes for achieving this but they point to the future role of local authorities.

So what can councils do differently?

What precisely can London's councils do to support and challenge schools? There are three main ways they can assist. First, they can support them to be independent and autonomous. Second, they can help them strengthen their roots into their immediate locality. Third, through critical challenge they can help them thrive in the growing global mega-city that is London - with its acknowledged global excellence in business, sport, culture, public services and higher education.

The starting point for councils is the recognition of the significant and rising autonomy of the secondary school sector. In addition to the growth of Academies, all secondary schools rightly operate under conditions of very high autonomy.

And it is also recognised that they are doing well because they operate free from arbitrary constraint and because they have control over their own resources - with the commensurate freedom to innovate so as to improve the teaching in their schools. This high level of autonomy is a trend that will continue into the foreseeable future. There is no going back.

What's more the ring fencing of school budgets during the first phase of public austerity in the UK (2010 - 2015) has meant that schools have been shielded from the worst affects of the fiscal consolidation. Indeed, in very many London boroughs the amount of public resource that is devoted to schools (in the dedicated schools budget) is now greater than is spent on mainstream council services in aggregate.

Nonetheless, local councils have an important role to play in supporting local schools for a to arrive at sensible solutions to collective funding problems. For while it is right that headteachers locally (and their governing bodies) decide upon these matters; they require the support of finance and audit professionals to help them strike the right balance in the revenue and capital funding decisions they have to make.

Additionally, schools may, over the coming period, increasingly require more formalised "fee for service" deals with councils for the provision of professional support service functions.

But while schools start from a position of relative autonomy, they are not completely autonomous. No public institution, no public service, is completely autonomous and free to act wholly as it sees fit. In the glare of the modern world every agency is called to give a public account of their actions to someone: a regulator, a funder, the media, Parliament or the public at large. Institutions learn this when blunders occur or when they or their employees make errors of judgment or conduct. It is why they are called to give an account in the court of public opinion, to some regulator or to another level of public governance.

The move over the past decade for many of London's schools to become academies may alter the constitutionality of this accountability but it does not alter the need for academies to give an account of their actions to some public fora. This points to the prospect for councils' oversight and scrutiny committees to have a role in the local education sector commensurate with the role they perform in respect of the local health sector.

For each secondary school to be successful it needs to effective roots in the locality where it is based. In London this is slightly more difficult than is the case elsewhere in the UK. That is because many pupils attend schools other than the one that is closest to their home. This is a

function of London's high population density and its excellent public transport network. The parents of the average 10 year-old in London can realistically consider up to 10 or so schools within reasonable travel distance for a teenager. And so pupils at any one secondary school will have attended dozens of different primary schools and may themselves live in several different boroughs. Together these factors mean that the community roots in London are seldom drawn as parochially as they are elsewhere.

Of course this varies across the capital with schools on the fringe of London tending to serve larger geographical areas, albeit with pupils derived from fewer primary schools.

Councils have an important role in cementing local links for schools. And not in terms of connections to local councils themselves but in terms of establishing effective links with local civil society, local businesses as well as the local sporting and cultural sectors. It may not be the "local business" that can make the most fruitful connection but the local business woman or man who may run a large business elsewhere in London but who may happen to live locally or have some strong local connection. Every locality has its "alumni" in the same way as every university searches for its successful graduates. Local ambassadors with links to local schools can be matched by activist local councils who are keen to add social and community capital to their schools.

Over the short term, London's councils need to have a close regard to their current responsibilities insofar as these impact upon schools. These include school places planning, special education, various support functions to schools, and a range of key children's social care functions including safeguarding and child protection. Increasingly, these functions are being conducted across borough boundaries as the fiscal pressures on councils bear down upon their abilities to maintain these functional responsibilities on their own.

As a result of these "top-down" budgetary pressures it is likely that, over the next five years, new styles of "combined authority" approaches (such as "joint committees" and more integrated approaches) for schooling and learning across three or four London boroughs are likely to come to the fore.

These responses are only in part driven by the changing legal responsibilities councils have for educating their children, which are developing in a more ad hoc way than ever before.

In 1870 the "School Board for London" was set up under the Public Elementary Education Act. According to the archives of the City of London, the School Board, "had great difficulty in carrying out its responsibilities in building sufficient schools to accommodate all London children of the elementary school class and persuading parents to send their children to school. It devoted great attention to school architecture and curriculum, and, once the problems of the early years had been overcome, to developing higher grade elementary education for older children and to assisting underfed and badly clothed children."

After just 30 years, following disputes about the Board's revenue raising powers, the Education (London) Act of 1903 abolished the School Board for London and transferred its responsibilities to the London County Council (LCC) in 1904. For the next 60 years, the LCC was the principal local authority for London in respect of a range of functions, including education.

Some 60 years later the Herbert Commission's report (published in 1960) recommended the establishment of the Greater London Council. This commission advocated a London-wide

division of educational powers between the GLC and the London boroughs. The GLC would be responsible for strategic control of schools, and the boroughs for routine management. However, this part of the report was rejected by the government of the day. Instead the London Government Act of 1963 created the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) so as to inherit the educational responsibilities of the LCC within Inner London. It also gave Outer London boroughs responsibilities for educational functions.

One generation later the ILEA itself was abolished and the responsibilities for education across London is as we see it today - with each London borough responsible for a range of education and (what has become known as) children's services functions.

So, structural change in borough councils' responsibilities for education has historically occurred through legislative change after considered reports by strategic London-wide commissions.

At present, changes across this sector are occurring in ad hoc, tactical and emergent ways. Some strategic approaches have been adopted - such as secondary school admissions; now implemented London-wide each year. Other innovative approaches to collaborative working on school support services are currently being devised by leading councillors across London and by the Directors of Children's Services and the professional networks of those staff working on school effectiveness.

Councils need to continue to support and critically challenge all their local schools to continue to improve the educational (and other) outcomes for their pupils. For while schools (and the teachers in them) are characterised as acting in loco parentis; London's councils act as stewards for the wider community. To do so councils need to adopt a whole system and long term perspective. Just as parents have ambitions for their children, so councils have ambitions for their communities. And just as schools nurture the capabilities and confidence of their pupils, so councils must foster opportunities for people and enterprises locally. Councils need to ensure that schools are alert to wider changes and alive to wider opportunities. And London is replete with both.

Three generations ago lessons learned and skills acquired lasted most people, for most of their working life. Lessons learned and skills acquired 10 years ago are already fading in their utility. And with the accelerating pace of change in the economy and society in London it is likely that some of the lessons learnt and skills being acquired now may not see the end of 2015.

In the context of the globally competitive world in which London's economy operates; and in the context of the competition for talent that London draws upon; London's schools need to ensure that all their pupils tightly grasp the mystery of life long learning. For over their long working lives (and in all likelihood they will most probably work longer than previous generations) this will surely prove more useful to them than the short term mastery of any specific skills.



Barry Quirk

Barry Quirk has been Chief Executive at Lewisham since 1994. He has worked in local government for over 30 years, with service and management experience in five London councils. Barry has a PhD in social and political geography and a CBE for services to local government. He writes regularly on public policy and management and his book, Re-imagining Government, was published in 2011 to critical acclaim. Barry is a Senior Fellow of Social Policy and Politics at Goldsmiths, London University; an Associate with the independent Institute for Government; and a Member of Collaborate (which promotes private, public and social sector collaboration) at the South Bank University, London

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LGA Responds to Education White Paper

Responding to the Educational Excellence Everywhere White Paper, Cllr Richard Watts, Vice-Chair of the LGA's Children and Young People Board, said:

"The White Paper rightly highlights impressive improvements in the attainment of primary school pupils. The fact is that 85 per cent of primary schools are still council maintained. Only 15 per cent of the largest multi-academy trusts perform above the national average when it comes to how much progress pupils make, compared to 44 per cent of councils.

"Schools have, until now, valued the opportunity to convert to academies voluntarily, where and when this is appropriate for pupils and the community, and councils have supported them to do so. The LGA opposes forced academisation and the Government needs to consider the wishes of parents, communities, teachers and councils before imposing any new education structures.

"Under these new plans, councils will remain legally responsible for making sure that all children have a school place, but it is wrong that neither they nor the Government will have any powers to force local schools to expand if they don't want to. Land currently owned by councils for schools will be transferred to the Government and then to the academy trust, and although schools will be funded to meet the costs of academy conversion, there is no funding for the costs to councils of the 18,000 conversions that will be needed. Academy conversions have already cost local authorities millions of pounds. At a time when councils are having to make further savings to plug funding gaps over the next few years, local taxpayers should not be expected to foot the bill for this process.

"We have serious concerns that Regional Schools Commissioners still lack the capacity and local knowledge to have oversight of such a large, diverse and remote range of schools. Placing significant powers over education in the hands of unelected civil servants, and asking parents to take complaints to either their Regional Schools Commissioner or the Secretary of State rather than their local elected councillors, presents a lack of accountability and a risk to the quality of education that our children deserve in the future. A more limited role for councils in education could also make it more difficult for vulnerable children to receive the support that they need to get the best education."

[LGA Briefing: Educational Excellence Everywhere White Paper, March 2016](#)

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Councils call for oversight of academy finance

Councils are calling for the power and resources to make sure money given to schools is spent on education and support for children following a series of recent abuses of the school finance system by academies and free schools.

With many of these uncovered by whistleblowers and the media, rather than the Education Funding Agency (EFA) which is responsible for their financial oversight, councils have raised serious questions around the capacity of the EFA to provide the level of scrutiny necessary to ensure value for money and to catch out fraudsters.

The Local Government Association (LGA), which represents councils across England and Wales, is today calling on the new Education Secretary to restore local oversight of all school finances, providing democratic accountability so that parents and communities can be confident their children aren't missing out.

The call comes in the wake of scandals including:

- The founder and two members of staff at Kings Science Academy in Bradford being found guilty of transferring £150,000 of Department for Education grants into their own bank accounts;
- The largest 40 academy trusts spending more than £1 million on executive expenses since 2012; and
- The payment of more than £1.3 million to a third-party supplier without contracts at the Perry Beeches Academy Trust in Birmingham.

Cllr Richard Watts, Chair of the LGA's Children and Young People Board, said:

"We are told that academies and free schools are subject to more financial scrutiny than council-maintained schools, yet we keep hearing that millions of pounds of taxpayers' money, which has been earmarked to make sure our children get a good education, is disappearing into the back pockets of those in charge.

"Parents have a right to know that their children have access to the best possible education and support at school – and that money for teachers and equipment isn't instead being spent on first class train tickets or topping up chief executive salaries. Effective auditing of school accounts must be in place for that to happen."

Councils currently oversee the budgets of maintained schools, making sure that the books are balanced, money is being spent appropriately, and any inconsistencies or concerns are spotted and dealt with quickly. Academies and free schools, however, are monitored by the EFA, which is an agency of the Department for Education (DfE). The National Audit Office refused to sign off the Department's latest accounts, returning an adverse opinion on the truth and fairness of its financial statements due to concerns about academies.

The EFA is currently overseeing the accounts of around 5,000 academies, however the Government stated earlier this year its intention for all schools to become academies by 2022, increasing the number of academies and free schools by nearly 400 per cent, to more than 20,000.

Cllr Watts continued:

"The National Audit Office has raised serious concerns about the ability of the DfE to effectively monitor academy trusts' spending, even before the planned expansion of the academy programme, and we don't believe it can possibly have effective oversight of spending in more than 20,000 schools. Centralising control of schools isn't working; oversight needs to be devolved down to local councils.

"With their experience in managing large budgets, knowledge of their local areas, and their reputation as the most efficient, transparent and trusted part of the public sector, councils are best placed to keep an eye on all school spending if they are given the power and resources to do so. Not only would this bring democratic accountability back into the process, it would make sure that the best interests of local children were protected."

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FORWARD PLAN 2016/2017

Contact officer: Kate Boulter
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REASON FOR ITEM

The Committee is required by its Terms of Reference to consider the Forward Plan and comment as appropriate to the decision-maker on key decisions which relate to services within its remit (before they are taken by the Cabinet or by the Cabinet Member).

OPTIONS OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE

- To comment on items going to the Cabinet or to the Cabinet Member for decision.
- Or to note the items and decide not to comment.

INFORMATION

The latest published Forward Plan is attached. The Committee may wish to consider the non standard items that fall within its remit.

SUGGESTED COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

To consider whether there are comments or suggestions that the Committee wishes to make.

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Upcoming Decisions

Ref	Further details	Ward(s)	Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Officer Contact for further information	Consultation on the decision	NEW ITEM	Public / Private Decision & reasons
Cabinet – 20 October 2016 SI = Standard Item each month Council Departments: RS = Residents Services SC = Social Care AD = Administration FD= Finance								
151	Charville & Cowley St Laurence Children's Centres This report seeks approval to the Council taking a lease at Charville Children's Centre and Cowley St Laurence Children's Centre.	Brunel, Charville		Cllr Jonathan Bianco	RS - Michael Paterson		NEW	Public / Private (3) - TBC
142	Accommodation and support for young people aged 16-25 Cabinet will consider a 6 month extension of the existing contracts with West London YMCA for the provision of building based support services for young people aged 16-25 at Jupiter House, Venture House and St Andrew's from 1 October 2016 to 31 March 2017, pending a wider review of such services.	All		Cllr David Simmonds CBE	FD - Clare Harris			Private (3)
SI	School Capital Programme Update This report will update Cabinet and request any necessary decisions in order to progress the School Capital Programme in order to upgrade facilities and keep on track to deliver sufficient places for children educated in the Borough.	Various		Cllr David Simmonds CBE & Cllr Jonathan Bianco	RS - Jean Palmer OBE / Bobby Finch	Corporate consultees		Public / Private (3)
SI	Monthly Council Budget - monitoring report The Cabinet receives a monthly report setting out in detail the Council's revenue and capital position.	All		Cllr Jonathan Bianco	FD - Paul Whaymand			Public
SI	Reports from Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committees Major Policy Review recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet as and when completed.	All		TBC	AD - TBC	TBC		Public
SI	Academy Conversions A standard report to Cabinet to seek approval for the Council granting of long leases to schools who wish to convert to Academy Status.	Various		Cllr Jonathan Bianco	RS - Michael Patterson			Public

Cabinet Member Decisions - October 2016

143	Extension of existing contract for Support for Teenage Parents	The Leader and Cabinet Member will consider the extension of the contract with Look Ahead Care and Support Limited to provide floating support and building-based support services for teenage parents for a further 6 months from 1 October 2016 to 31 March 2017.							Cllr Ray Puddifoot MBE / Cllr David Simmonds CBE	FD - Clare Harris			Private (3)
SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of decisions each month on standard items - details of these standard items are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various						All	AD - Democratic Services	Various		Public

Cabinet - 17 November 2016

SI	School Capital Programme Update	This report will update Cabinet and request any necessary decisions in order to progress the School Capital Programme in order to upgrade facilities and keep on track to deliver sufficient places for children educated in the Borough.	Various						Cllr David Simmonds CBE & Cllr Jonathan Bianco	RS - Jean Palmer OBE / Bobby Finch	Corporate consultees		Public / Private (3)
SI	Monthly Council Budget - monitoring report	The Cabinet receives a monthly report setting out in detail the Council's revenue and capital position.	All						Cllr Jonathan Bianco	FD - Paul Whaymand			Public
SI	Reports from Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committees	Major Policy Review recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet as and when completed.	All						TBC	AD - TBC	TBC		Public
SI	Academy Conversions	A standard report to Cabinet to seek approval for the Council granting of long leases to schools who wish to convert to Academy Status.	Various						Cllr Jonathan Bianco	RS - Michael Patterson			Public

Cabinet Member Decisions - November 2016

SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of decisions each month on standard items - details of these standard items are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various						All	AD - Democratic Services	Various		Public
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Cabinet Member Decisions: Standard Items (SI) that may be considered each month

SI	School Governing Bodies and Governors / Authorising Academy Appointments	To approve appointments, nominate appointments and make reappointments of local authority governors and to approve any changes to school governing body constitutions. To also authorise any Member to be a Governor or Director of an Academy.	N/A	Cllr David Simmonds CBE	AD - Democratic Services	Public
SI	Transport - Local Implementation Programme	Local Implementation Programme including schemes for the public realm, parking, road safety, school travel, walking, cycling, air quality improvement and Traffic Regulation Orders.	TBC	Cllr Ray Puddifoot MBE / Cllr Keith Burrows	RS - David Knowles	Public
SI	School Redundancy Payments	To consider requests for School Redundancy Payments and decide whether to approve them on behalf of the Local Authority	TBC	Cllr David Simmonds CBE	RS - Daniel Kennedy	Private (1,2,3)

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WORK PROGRAMME 2016/2017

Contact Officer: Kate Boulter
Telephone: 01895 556454

REASON FOR REPORT

This report is to enable the Committee to review meeting dates and forward plans. This is a standard item at the end of each agenda.

OPTIONS OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE

1. To confirm dates for meetings; and
2. To make suggestions for future working practices and reviews.

WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

14 June 2016 CR5	Educational Aspiration Review - Witness Session
	School Admissions Update
	Local Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year

28 Sep 2016 CR5	Educational Aspiration Review - Presentation of draft final report
	Major Review – Consideration of topics
	School Place Planning Quarterly Update / School Expansion Update
	Annual Complaints Report 2015/16 for Children and Young People's Services
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year

19 Oct 2016 CR5	Major Review – Consideration of Scoping Report
	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS)
	Education Policy
	Elective Home Education
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year

23 Nov 2016 CR5	Major Review – Witness Session 1
	Update Report - Progress on Implementation of previous review - 'The Effectiveness of Early Help to Promote Positive Outcomes for Families.'
	Child Sexual Exploitation - Update Report
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year

11 Jan 2017 CR6	Major Review – Witness Session 2
	Standards and Quality in Education in Hillingdon 2016/2017
	Budget Proposals Report
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year

14 Feb 2017 CR5	Major Review – Witness Session 3
	Minor Review - Consideration of Scoping Report
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year

14 Mar 2017 CR4 and 4A	Major Review - Presentation of Draft Final Report
	Minor Review - Witness Session
	Update on previous Review of the Committee - 'Supporting Educational Aspiration for Disadvantaged Children'
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year

12 Apr 2017 CR6	Minor Review - Presentation of Draft Final Report
	Quarterly School Place Planning
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year

****all meetings begin at 7pm.***

Children, Young People & Learning Policy Overview Committee – 19 October 2016

PART I – MEMBERS, PUBLIC AND PRESS