

CABINET - 20 OCTOBER

NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DELIVERY OF EDUCATION SUPPORT AND ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS IN OXFORDSHIRE IN RESPONSE TO FUTURE NATIONAL AND LOCAL CHALLENGES

Report by Director for Children's Services

Introduction and current context

1. In July 2012 the Council agreed that it *'will ensure that support services for schools continue to be available, whether they are provided in-house or through the commercial market place. We will not seek to retain them in-house unless there is strategic value in doing so, but will work with schools to ensure they have access to services.'*
2. The growth of school autonomy has triggered a debate about the role of local authorities and the conditions necessary to encourage and sustain a self-improving system. This paper argues that there is still significant strategic value in retaining in-house school improvement services.
3. The Corporate Plan 2015-18, A Thriving Oxfordshire, states that the Council *'has a crucial leadership role in ensuring there is a diverse supply of strong schools for the county's children and a key role in continuing to improve educational attainment in the county.'*
4. Oxfordshire's Children and Young People's Plan 2015-18 wants Oxfordshire to be *'the best place in England for children and young people to grow up in, by working with every child and young person to develop the skills, confidence and opportunities they need to achieve their full potential.'*
5. These plans reinforce the Council's aim for strong schools, which provide children and young people with appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding, which will be fundamental to the future of a thriving Oxfordshire. An in-house service, able to trade with all schools and settings to ensure its future viability, will provide the Council the opportunity to continue to improve educational standards for all.
6. While schools can, and do, receive support services from a variety of sources, the Council would be well placed to continue to have in-house capacity to achieve the corporate aims and targets. This will provide for an integrated approach across health, social care, safeguarding and post 16 education and training. It will also enable a more integrated and bespoke approach for the future, to address whatever particular pressures or concerns face the county.

7. In Oxfordshire our work with schools will be underpinned by the following principles:
- We act as champion for all children, young people and their families.
 - We recognise and respect increased school autonomy and will develop mature ways of working with all schools and academies.
 - We value debate and discussion with schools as equal partners and will seek opportunities to ensure the exchange of views and build a learning and collaborative community.
 - We scrutinise the standards achieved by all schools and will support and challenge as necessary, as we still have a clear accountability mandate.
 - We identify isolated schools and those at risk, offering support as we are determined not to leave any school behind.
 - We share any concerns in the appropriate manner with those that are responsible for schools i.e. the governing body, sponsor, Regional Schools Commissioner, Ofsted.
 - We work with schools and partners to create a future school-led self-improving system, e.g. through the establishment of the Strategic Schools Partnership where we seek to model effective behaviours to build capacity, responsibility and accountability with partners.
 - We provide data that allows both for individual schools and for thematic issues to be clearly identified and addressed.
 - We understand that school leaders know where to access the high quality support they need and we will provide opportunities for schools to lead and innovate.
 - We ensure that there is local capability to support all schools and will ensure the highest quality, with low overheads and effective systems to support our core business.

Responsibility for Schools

8. Oxfordshire has overall responsibility for children in 285 schools. Of these, 198 (69.5%) are maintained schools and 81 (28%) are academies, including both converter and sponsored academies. A further 13 schools are currently in the process of becoming academies.
9. There are currently 15 Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) with 61 academies between them and 7 more schools programmed to join before December 2015.
10. The Government has published its intention to provide 500 more Free Schools in this electoral term, some of which will be established in Oxfordshire. In addition, the LA has statutory responsibility for the Virtual School for children in care.

Council Stance on School Diversity

11. Following the Education Act 2011, Oxfordshire County Council stated its support for the conversion of schools to become academies and for the establishment of new forms of schools, including free schools, studio schools and university technical colleges. The Council has a strong track record of supporting schools to become academies and endorsed a formal position regarding the academies programme in 2012.
12. The proposed Education and Adoption Bill is aimed at those schools 'requiring improvement'. It introduces a requirement upon local authorities to facilitate academy conversion and contains a provision requiring all schools with an inadequate Ofsted rating to become academies, which extends the existing policy presumption to a legal requirement.

Education Strategy 2015-18

13. The Council's strategic aim is for a more autonomous and self-improving education system and it is committed to enabling schools and settings to promote excellence and lead their own improvement. The draft Education Strategy 2015-18 reflects the significant changes of the last three years and the succession of Ofsted Frameworks for schools, each one raising the bar in terms of thresholds and expectations. The Education Strategy 2015-18 defines the new relationship that the Council will have with its schools. Further detail about the targets within the new Education Strategy can be found in Annex 3.

Educational Performance

14. The quality of education provided in many schools in Oxfordshire is often good, and sometimes outstanding, but across the county as a whole, standards for learners are not yet good enough when compared with statistical neighbours. Systems and processes are not yet fully effective in ensuring that all schools have the support and challenge to become as good as the best. Educational performance for vulnerable and disadvantaged learners is an area of significant risk for the county and, although recent progress has been made, the gap between the educational attainment and progress of vulnerable groups compared with their peers is not closing consistently.
15. There are relatively few schools in the lowest Ofsted categories of Special Measures and Serious Weaknesses, but there are not yet enough outstanding schools to be ranked in the top quartile for this indicator nationally. 87% of primary schools are judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted, a significant improvement and now exceeding the national average. 88.6% of secondary schools are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted, also better than the national average. 83% of special schools are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted, which is below the national average.

16. Changes to the Ofsted inspection framework for schools and the impact of the new national criteria for identifying 'coasting schools' will mean that the county's comparative position with regard to educational standards will remain under constant external scrutiny for the foreseeable future.

Educational Roles of Local Authorities (LAs)

17. The role of the Council in education has changed rapidly in recent years, yet councils are still bound by over 200 statutory duties covering education and children's social care (see Annex 1).
18. The national changes that affect the role with respect to education include:
- Increasing system diversity with the conversion of schools to academies, the introduction of free schools and the resulting reduction on centrally retained funding for school improvement.
 - A growing market of providers for school support services competing with LAs for best value and choice.
 - Local Government annual efficiency targets, resulting in continuous budget reductions.
 - The change of LA's role from provider to advocate, commissioner and quality assurer.
 - The increase in school based providers arising from the Teaching Schools initiative.
 - A growing recognition of schools' ownership of their own improvement and political will to devolve as much as possible to the front line.
 - Increased regionalisation of decision making and planning of national bodies such as the Schools Commissioner, funding agencies and Ofsted.
19. LAs should, as a matter of due process, decision making and scrutiny, undertake a local test of assurance to check that their structural and organisational arrangements enable them to discharge both their education accountabilities effectively. The proposals in this report are part of that due diligence and future thinking approach for school improvement functions.

Council Provision for School Improvement Functions

20. Over the last six years the Schools and Learning Service (S&LS) has been subject to annual staffing and budget reductions. Following policy directives, the service had re-focused the breadth of its work on schools causing concern and reduced its oversight of curriculum matters and the quality of all schools. Increased trading of training and consultancy was not previously deemed to be a priority as a strategy for offsetting the impact of these changes until 2013.
21. More recently, the service has reconfigured its provision for school improvement to keep all schools under review, reflect changes to grant

funding and prepare for the Ofsted Framework for inspecting local authority school improvement arrangements (LAASSI).

22. As part of this work, the S&LS has now established full cost recovery models in order to be ready to operate on a commissioned basis in line with the national direction of travel. The range of functions that secure the statutory accountabilities and the strategic responsibilities of the LA for school improvement are now clearly organised for internal commissioning and deployment purposes into two main categories:
- Core Offer (Statutory – ‘Must Do’)
 - Core Offer Plus (Strategic – ‘Intervening early to make a difference’)
23. Analysis of effective LAs indicates that an optimal balance of staff deployment across the different functions appears to be in the following ratios:
- Core Offer (Statutory): 25%-40% (OCC has historically been deploying c.70%).
 - Core Offer Plus (Strategic): 35%-40% (OCC has historically been deploying c.20%).
 - Traded Activity: 20%-30% (OCC has historically been deploying c.5-10%).

It is important to note that effective LAs are conducting activity across all three areas, which makes important connections between the three aspects and yields better outcomes overall with each function complementing the other two. (The groupings of Core Offer and Core Offer Plus functions being delivered for 2015-16 are set out in Annex 2).

24. The functions under the Core Offer (Statutory) do not significantly change from year to year unless major piece of new legislation occurs. In Oxfordshire, the approach now is to deliver these ‘compliance’ functions as efficiently as possible, releasing further capacity for the Core Offer Plus (Strategic) functions that have the potential to make the difference in outcomes and seek to prevent failure.

School Collaborations in Oxfordshire

25. Oxfordshire is divided into 26 area partnerships of schools. These are led by schools and some of them have progressed to employing formal co-ordination to help them deliver their locality improvement agenda.
26. Seven of the partnerships have evolved into formal collaborative companies, with a view to running a more business like model and securing efficiencies through shared services and procurement.
27. The Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance (OTSA) is a nationally accredited group of five designated Teaching Schools (with 35 Strategic Partner Schools) that have formed a strategic alliance. It is a growing partnership of Oxfordshire schools, Oxfordshire County Council, Higher Education

Institutions and other significant educational organisations. Their vision is that, by bringing together the strengths of all OTSA partners, they have a unique opportunity to develop a sustainable culture of aspiration, collaboration and excellence leading to a world class education for all young people in Oxfordshire. The alliance is a key player in the Strategic Schools Partnership which forms part of the proposed solution for the future. (See Section B.).

Progress to Date and the Way Forward

The Strategic Schools Partnership – A Commissioning Model

28. The Council has been considering the most appropriate model for the future delivery of school improvement functions since the January 2012. Options for a private sector joint venture arrangement and a public:public partnership with Hampshire County Council have both been considered and rejected. The model now proposed is a local solution, structured to create a sustainable model for the future. It is a system led model, but recognises that the Council still has to discharge a significant number of statutory functions relating to education, school improvement and quality assurance (irrespective of the reduced number of maintained schools) and that the schools market place as provider is as yet relatively immature.
29. The first phase in this process has been to establish a Strategic Schools Partnership (SSP). A shadow board was established in April 2015 comprising key partners who share responsibility and accountability for education in the county, with partners from the CEF Directorate, the Schools and Learning Service (S&LS), schools, governing bodies, the Diocesan Boards, Higher and Further Education, the Teaching Schools Alliance and Oxford City Council. The board has developed data sharing and quality assurance protocols to govern its work. From September 2015, the Strategic Schools Partnership will convene as a full board with agreed terms of reference.
30. Comprehensive consultation on a range of aspects concerned with the principles, scope and operational details of the Strategic Schools Partnership was conducted in June 2015. The consultation responses indicated agreement in principle to the direction of travel. There was also agreement that the Council should have a pivotal role in enabling partnerships and building relationships.

Restructure 1 - Schools and Learning Service (S&LS)

31. The key milestones for the two phases are set out in the table below. This paper focuses on the proposals to restructure services within the current Education and Learning portfolio to better deliver the responsibilities of the Council and to address more cost effectively the challenges raised in the Section A of this report.

Table 1: Phased Approach and Key Milestones for Future Actions

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Phase 1</p> <p>Strategic Schools Partnership (SSP)</p> <p><i>April 2015 – April 2016 →</i></p> | <p>1.1</p> <p>1.2</p> <p>1.3</p> <p>1.4</p> | <p>Establish a Commissioning Partnership Model with key partners for delivery of an initial range of school improvement initiatives. A key partner for the delivery of school to school support will be the Oxfordshire Teaching School Alliance (OTSA).</p> <p>Establish governance, accountability and quality assurance protocols that will ensure accurate commissioning to meet needs, deploy the commissioning funds and oversee value for money outcomes.</p> <p>Grow commitment to the SSP with all schools and stakeholders, winning hearts and minds and increasing capacity to share effective practice.</p> <p>Establish a Commissioning Fund for the SSP board to deploy – target £300k per annum to support strategic priorities.</p> |
| <p>Phase 2</p> <p>Internal Commissioning & Business Readiness</p> <p><i>April 2015 - March 2016 →</i></p> | <p>2.1</p> <p>2.2</p> <p>2.3</p> <p>2.4</p> <p>2.5</p> <p>2.6</p> | <p>Evolve the S&LS into a traded arm, with the requirement to ring fence a proportion of any surplus to re-invest in the service.</p> <p>Reconfigure specialist professional staff in the S&LS and administrative support from the core Children, Education & Families Directorate to the S&LS to better meet business and trading needs.</p> <p>Establish an internal commissioning model for the retained statutory and strategic functions to accurately determine real costs and zero based budgeting in advance of more structural changes.</p> <p>Develop commercial and public sector experience to manage the development of an effective traded model, with a view to further scoping potential models for the future.</p> <p>Roll out a trial of time recording systems to ensure that management information relating to a commissioning model is available.</p> <p>Establish trading income generation targets and systems to secure target and monitor variance.</p> |

32. The traded arm provides an opportunity to establish a Traded Net Surplus Share Agreement on a sliding scale of agreed ratios. The return for the Council could contribute towards the cost of any annual Core Offer Plus

commissioned projects. Such a re-investment in education would be positively viewed by schools. Entering into a share agreement with a new traded arm could secure an on-going revenue stream for the Council.

Restructure 2: Education and Learning Services (E&LS) to a Central School Support Portfolio

33. The proposed changes to a business model for the Schools and Learning Service outlined above has implications for the remaining services within Education and Learning. These comprise the School Organisation and Planning Service, the Foundation Years' Service and the Special Educational Needs Service. The proposal is to reform these services (following service efficiencies) into a **Central School Support Portfolio**. The existing post of Deputy Director would be reconfigured to include a significant commissioning function with the traded service and as a member of the Strategic Schools Partnership.

Options Appraisal

34. The status quo is unsustainable because of the range of drivers noted in Section A. The service will continue to shrink as annual budgets reduce and the central resource correspondingly reduces with increasing academy conversions. Unless action is taken, this shrinkage will happen in an ad hoc way as staff leave. The ability to service the Council's statutory requirements with appropriate quality will become compromised within the next year or so and relationships with schools would become further stretched.
35. The Council has indicated through its Education Strategy that it wishes to make a strategic contribution to the quality of education provided across Oxfordshire schools and enable all learners to fulfil their potential. It also wishes to be well placed in educational league tables when compared with statistical neighbours and on Ofsted outcomes as evaluated through both school inspections and also the Ofsted inspection of LA arrangements for school improvement. If the Council wishes to continue to make a difference to educational outcomes, then some investment in strategic functions is essential.

Options Appraisal Summary

Table 2: Options Appraisal Summary

| Option | Description | Implications |
|---------------|---|--|
| Option A | Reduce school improvement to statutory compliance functions only | There would be a significant risk that the service would lose further knowledge about schools and be unable to raise performance alerts with governing bodies. The current service staff would have to reduce by approximately one third with significant consequent redundancy and pension liabilities. |

| Option | Description | Implications |
|----------|---|--|
| | | <p>There would be no added value from trading and schools would need to purchase their professional development solely from the wider market place.</p> |
| Option B | <p>Cease and school improvement functions purely via Commissioning arrangements</p> <p>Service and secure</p> | <p>The Council would need to use its entire current core budget (and possibly more) to commission services from a range of providers in the market place (including schools) to match the existing provision.</p> <p>Fees are likely to be higher as providers bear the risk of outcomes.</p> <p>Coherence is likely to suffer as no one provider will be able to meet the full set of requirements and, therefore, additional commissioning capacity and central quality assurance would also be needed.</p> <p>One-off initial redundancy and pension costs would need to be met by the Council and these would be high given the salary levels and longevity of service of specialist staff.</p> |
| Option C | <p>Outsource school improvement</p> | <p>This option has already been explored and rejected in 2012-13.</p> <p>It would involve going out to the market again, which would be expensive and may not yield suitable providers. It would not address the stated desire for a local solution to local issues. It would, however, provide the opportunity to secure best value with competitive bidding and potentially offer a broader range of services to access, subject to the final provider selected.</p> <p>It would not yield initial savings as private sector charges are likely to be higher than the in-house provider.</p> <p>Due diligence by the selected provider is likely to result in additional redundancy and pension costs as in Options A and B.</p> |
| Option D | <p>Establish a new traded arm within OCC</p> | <p>Stability and local knowledge is secured via commissioning the Core Offer and Core Offer Plus, with the traded arm enabled to trade more innovatively and reinvest surplus in the service. The development of commercial skills would grow the business, so the traded arm has a good chance of success whilst providing</p> |

| Option | Description | Implications |
|--------|-------------|--|
| | | <p>a value added model for both the county and its schools.</p> <p>The successful development of a traded arm might in the future progress to the development of a separate traded company, bringing fewer liabilities to the Council.</p> |

Legal Considerations

36. None

Financial and Staffing Considerations

37. Current Budget Position 2015-16:

| Service Area | Gross Expenditure £000 | Grant Income £000 | DSG Income £000 | Other Income £000 | Recharges £000 | Net Expenditure £000 |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Governor Services | 436 | | | | -351 | 85 |
| Business Development | 87 | | | | | 87 |
| School Improvement | 608 | | | | | 608 |
| Schools Causing Concern | 421 | | | | | 421 |
| Vulnerable Learners | 397 | | -154 | | | 243 |
| Narrowing the Gap | 659 | | -200 | -74 | -347 | 38 |
| Looked After Children | 1,185 | -665 | -329 | | | 191 |
| Social Inclusion | 617 | | -476 | | | 141 |
| TOTAL | 4,410 | -665 | -1,159 | -74 | -698 | 1,814 |

38. Local Authority (LA) net budgets are funded from a variety of sources, including the Education Services Grant (ESG). This is allocated to LAs on the basis of pupil numbers and is intended to fund a number of core LA education responsibilities. Some of these responsibilities apply to all schools and academies and some only relate to maintained schools. £87 per pupil is allocated in respect of pupils in maintained schools, and £15 per pupil in respect of pupils in all schools and academies for LA retained duties.
39. Current estimated ESG for 2015-16 is £5.3m, reflecting expected conversions of maintained schools to academy status in this financial year. ESG reduces as more schools convert from maintained to academy status. If all schools

converted to academy status and the current ESG rate of £15 per pupil is maintained for all pupils in respect of retained duties, it is estimated that ESG would be reduced to £1.3m. This contributes to other CEF budgets, as well as Schools and Learning. Some of the main areas of work (see also Annex 2) that would still need to be funded in whole or part include:

- Director of Children's Services.
 - Strategic planning for education service.
 - Preparation of revenue budgets for education, plus external audit of related grant claims and returns.
 - Internal audit and other tasks necessary to discharge S151 responsibilities.
 - Provision of information for the Secretary of State.
 - Identifying children not receiving education, and addressing poor attendance.
 - Asset management strategy, including basic need.
40. The financial model required for future Schools and Learning core services needs to have the potential to contract to reflect reducing ESG as more schools convert to academy status and changing LA responsibilities. If the development of a trading model is endorsed, this could generate extra income to support 'core offer plus' activities that are strategically desirable rather than essential.
41. An illustration of possible reductions in ESG over the next couple of years is shown in the following table, assuming continued conversion of maintained schools to academy status. The speed of continued academy conversions will determine how quickly the ESG reduces to the current estimate of the £1.3m minimum for retained duties, assuming 100% conversion. The table shows the estimated split between the retained duty and the general element of the grant.

| | July 2015 Estimate | | | | July 2017 Estimate | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| | Pupil Numbers | ESG - retained duties element £000 | ESG - general £000 | ESG - Total £000 | Pupil Numbers | ESG - retained duties element £000 | ESG - general £000 | ESG - Total £000 |
| Maintained Primary and Secondary | 44,095 | 661 | 3,836 | 4,498 | 30,000 | 450 | 2,610 | 3,060 |
| Maintained Special | 579 | 9 | 214 | 223 | 579 | 9 | 214 | 223 |
| Academies Primary and Secondary | 44,290 | 664 | | 664 | 58,385 | 876 | | 876 |
| Academies Special/PRU | 479 | 7 | | 7 | 479 | 7 | | 7 |
| Total | 89,443 | 1,342 | 4,050 | 5,392 | 89,443 | 1,342 | 2,824 | 4,166 |

42. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funds a substantial part of education services, including some of the services in Schools and Learning. DSG is divided into 3 Blocks: Schools, Early Years and High Needs. The main on-going source of DSG funding in the Schools and Learning area is from DSG High Needs Block, and relates to vulnerable learners, looked after children and inclusion teams. The total of on-going DSG High Needs Block funding allocated in 2015-16 is £1.159m. It is expected that this level of contribution can continue in the near future for continued provision of these services. This may need to be reviewed if there are growing pressures elsewhere in the DSG High Needs Block, or following expected further reforms of DSG.
43. Current staffing of the service includes 48.37 fte specialists and 17.09 fte administrative staff. It is expected this will reduce, although the scale of reduction will depend on the preferred option.

Equalities Implications

Service and Community Impact Assessment (SCIA)

44. A SCIA has been completed for this project and indicates that there are no significant matters beyond those which would occur without the proposals. Indeed, the proposals, if implemented would, to a degree, mitigate the impact of reducing budgets and loss of specialist school improvement and inclusion expertise to the county and schools. (Attached as Annex 4).

Next Steps

45. If the direction of travel is approved, the next steps are:
- Consultation with schools and governing bodies.
 - Consultation with staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

46. **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED To:**
- (a) **Approve, in principle, the creation of a ring-fenced trading service for Schools and Learning, trading with third parties and to allow for further developmental work and consultation with key stakeholders.**
- (b) **Endorse the proposal to reconfigure the remaining services into a streamlined and integrated Central School Support Portfolio comprising the remaining non-delegable functions.**

JIM LEIVERS

Director for Children, Education & Families

Contact Officer: Rebecca Matthews, Interim Deputy Director – Education and Learning (01865 815125) September 2015

Annex 1

Statutory Functions Relating to Education for Local Authorities

Statutory guidance was set out in 2013 relating to the roles and responsibilities of the Director (DCS) and Lead Member for Children's Services (LMCS).

| DCS Statutory Accountabilities | LMCS Statutory Accountabilities |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong strategic local leadership. • Development of an increasingly autonomous and diverse education and children's service sector – ensuring fair access and supply of school places. • Working with school leaders, support the drive for higher educational standards for all children and young people, paying particular attention to the most disadvantaged groups and being ambitious in tackling under-performance. • Act as effective and caring corporate parents for looked after children. • Ensure integration of children's services across the council ensuring smooth transitions. • Involve and listen to parents, carers, children and young people. • Ensure local voluntary and community sectors, charities, social enterprises and the private sector are included in the scope of LA planning, commissioning and delivery of children's services where appropriate. • Include named partners in co-operation to improve children's health and wellbeing. • Establish local co-operation arrangements to reduce child poverty. • Comply with duties under the Equality Act 2010. • Comply with safeguarding and welfare duties under the Children Act 2004 section 11. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the needs of ALL children and young people, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable and their families and carers, are addressed. • Work closely with local partners to improve the outcomes and wellbeing of children and young people. • Have regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and ensure that children and young people are involved in the development and delivery of local services. • Provide strong strategic leadership and support and challenge to the DCS and relevant members of the senior team as appropriate. |

A range of school improvement specific legislation also applies and governs the work of the current Schools and Learning service:

CA12

- Proposed Education and Adoptions Bill (Expected to come into force in December 2015)
- Schools Causing Concern Statutory Guidance – January 2015 (Revised Version)
- DfE Local Authority Statutory Roles and Responsibilities 2013
- Education Act 2011 (amended the 2006 Act)
- Academies Act 2010
- The School Governance Regulations 2010 (Transition Regulations)
- Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act, 2009 (ASCL Act)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (in particular Part 4 and Section 72)
- Education Acts 2005
- Education Act 2002
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- Education Act 1996 (S.13a re. Educational Excellence)

Annex 2

2015-16 Groupings of Core Offer (Statutory) and Core Offer Plus (Strategic) Functions

For 2015-16 the following key functions have been agreed. They are the ones against which the zero based budget allocations have been calculated and staffing capacity has been deployed.

(* denotes applicable to academies also)

| Statutory – Core Offer (CO) ‘Must Do/Compliance’ | Strategic – Core Offer Plus (CO+) ‘Makes the Difference’ |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendance and Exclusions Issues. 2. Assessment and Moderation. 3. NQT Appropriate Body Registration and Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). 4. *Standards and progress strategic overviews for all schools, including Data Analysis. 5. *Virtual School for Looked after Children. 6. Elective Home Education (EHE). 7. *Children Missing Education (CME) Register. 8. *Child Performance and Employment - safeguarding. 9. Curriculum compliance. 10. Schools causing concern. 11. Schools Ofsted inspections and HMI Liaison. 12. School Governance - maintained schools database. 13. SACRE/Agreed Syllabus. 14. British Values (PREVENT) issues. 15. Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)/Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs)/Post 16 commissioning and tracking. 16. Educational Visit Co-ordination and Quality Assurance. 17. *Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion Strategy. 18. Headteacher appointments and qualifications checks – Directors Representation Rights. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. *School Improvement statistical performance and standards database/analysis. 2. *Autumn Term Risk Assessment Position Statement. 3. Governance quality - monitoring for issues that may compromise school standards. 4. *Closing the Gap– Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Learners (SEN/BME/GRT/Pupil Premium). 5. New National Curriculum and Assessment implementation. 6. School to School Support (S2SS) models and brokerage. 7. Increasing numbers of children and young people in Good and Outstanding Schools. 8. Workforce – Schools’ leadership and management framework for succession planning and system leadership. 9. Effective practice dissemination. 10. Senior staff recruitment processes. 11. Annual preventative/development initiatives (based on data) e.g. Every Child projects, attendance, closing the gap for vulnerable learners. 12. *Overview of academies’ performance for alerts to the Regional Schools Commissioner. 13. Headteacher Appraisal support (traded for all except inadequate category 4 schools). |

Annex 3

Education Strategy 2015-18 Overview

The draft Education Strategy (2015-18) indicates the following aspirational targets for Oxfordshire's learners:

- a. Every school and setting in Oxfordshire to be at least good by 2018.
- b. More of our schools to be outstanding - 25% by 2018.
- c. Improved standards across the county to ensure that outcomes for children are consistently in the highest performing 25% nationally.
- d. A reduced achievement gap between children and young people from deprived backgrounds to be in line with the highest performing 25% of local authorities nationally, with a strong equalities and early intervention approach promoted across all education providers.
- e. The attendance of all children and young people to match the attendance rates of the highest attaining authorities.
- f. A reduction of both fixed term and permanent exclusions across the county.
- g. Strong collaboration between early years settings, schools, alternative providers and colleges in order to realise the vision and improve education in Oxfordshire.
- h. A resilient and sustainable market of school and childcare places meeting local demand.
 - i. Every local area to offer a wide range of provision to ensure that vulnerable children and young people can remain in their local area wherever possible.

Annex 4

Service and Community Impact Assessment (SCIA)

Front Sheet

Directorate and Service Area:

Children, Education & Families - Education & Learning Service

What Is Being Assessed

Re-structuring of Schools & Learning Service and E&L Services to create a traded arm (Part of Strategic School Partnership Project)

Responsible Owner / Senior Officer

Rebecca Matthews (Interim Director for Education & Learning Service)

Date of Assessment

18 August 2015

Summary of Judgement

There are no significant negative impacts on the service or community from these proposals. The proposals have been predicated on sustaining quality services for schools and securing compliance for the Council in the delivery of its statutory and strategic functions including its advocacy and duty of care roles.

If these proposals are not agreed and implemented then there are likely to be medium and longer term implications for the supply and quality provision of services for vulnerable groups of children and young people.

There will be some redundancies of specialist advisory school improvement and inclusion staff with loss of expertise to the end user and financial implications for the Council regarding redundancy payments and pension liabilities but by implementing these proposals it is expected that these implications will be less than they would have been under the planned efficiencies as the trading plans will mitigate some loss of budget..

Detail of Assessment

Purpose of Assessment

This assessment has been completed in response to restructure proposals going to cabinet in September 2015 resulting from government policy and local government budget reductions

Social Value

Under the Public Services (Social Value Act) 2012 the Council also has an obligation to consider how the procurement of services contracts with a life value of more than £173,934¹ might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the area affected by the proposed contract, and how it might act to secure this improvement. However, it is best practice to consider social value for all types of contracts, service delivery decisions and new/updated policies. In this context, 'policy' is a general term that could include a strategy, project or contract.

Context / Background

The proposals involve the evolution from a centrally employed service (the Schools & Learning Service) to the creation of a traded arm.

This proposal is part of the wider move to a schools led school improvement system and the move from the LA being provider to commissioner in line with national and local policy.

Proposals

The proposals are subject to Cabinet decision in September 2015 but have been predicated on :

Sustaining a service that is under threat financially as more schools become academies and efficiency reductions have an impact

Extending trading opportunities under a commercial process to retain specialist expertise at the local level

Aligning with government policy on school led improvement

Shifting from the Local Authority being a service provider to commissioner functions, through the development of a traded arm

Evidence / Intelligence

The proposals were part of a wider consultation with all schools and other partners in May 2015.

The staff are broadly in favour of increased trading

Unions (COTO) are being consulted in September 2015 and have been briefed previously.

Two other alternative models have been subject to options appraisal and rejected since 2012.

¹¹ [EC Procurement Threshold for Services](#)

Alternatives Considered / Rejected

An options appraisal for 2 other options has been conducted between 2012 -2014. The council has rejected both an external outsource of joint venture option and a public: public partnership with Hampshire CC in favour of a local solution for local issues and to reinforce its commitment to the strategic schools partnership.

Impact Assessment

| Impact on Individuals and Communities | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Group | Impact/Requirements | Risks | Mitigating Action |
| Age | The age profile of the staff in S&LS is a mature one | Redundancies will be expensive due to longevity of service and incur pension liabilities | Adopt proposals to retain staff wherever possible via a commercial traded model |
| Disability | n/a | | |
| Gender Reassignment | n/a | | |
| Pregnancy And Maternity | n/a | | |
| Race – This Includes Ethnic Or National Origins, Colour Or Nationality | The commissioned specification provides for focused support and early intervention for vulnerable groups | If Core Offer Plus functions are not funded the intervention work in this area which is bot statutory will be compromised | Elicit commit from collaboratives of school to address locality issues |
| Religion Or Belief – This Includes Lack Of Belief | n/a | | |
| Sex | n/a | | |
| Sexual Orientation | n/a | | |
| Marriage And Civil Partnership | n/a | | |
| Rural Communities | The commissioned specification will ensure that all schools including small rural primaries are kept under review. This is important as nationally they may not be deemed to be statistical significant due to small cohort | Small schools are left to themselves as do not represent a viable market proposition | All schools data will e evaluated under the School Quality Assurance Procedures. Support will be offered to the schools where performance risks are identified irrespective of the |

| | | | |
|----------------------|---|--|--|
| | size yet collectively contain Oxfordshire learners in significant numbers. | | school size |
| Areas Of Deprivation | As above – particular focus will be secured for geographical location variations in performance and the thrust of building capacity at the 26 Area Partnership levels (many of which contain deprived areas) is a key strand of the Strategic Schools Partnership | The specific areas of need are the ones least likely to be able to recognise their own challenges and have the capacity to deal with systemic issues The 'gap' data for Oxfordshire's vulnerable groups is one of the priority performance areas for the Council in education terms and is trigger for the Ofsted inspections of LA arrangements which is currently RAG rated RED | The SSP Board will analyse locality variations as part of their data model and commission appropriate thematic interventions – either from school to school support providers or via the Core Offer Plus centrally funded projects The work of the Inclusion and Closing the Gap teams will be closely interfaced with the work of the School Quality Assurance team under these restructuring proposals. |

| Impact on Staff: | | | |
|-------------------------|--|-----------------------|---|
| Group | Impact/Requirements | Risks | Mitigating Action |
| Staff | Some significant changes to the focus of work through the development of traded opportunities. | Loss of expertise | Ability to subcontract quality staff that have been lost to the service via associate contracts. Recognition that staff would have been lost anyway under budget reductions and these proposals mitigate those losses to a degree. |
| Other Council services | The integrative relationship between the staff in the current S&LS will need to be | Risk of fragmentation | The liaison arrangements required by the annual |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| | protected | | commissioning specification will ensure an integrated approach for the end user and joined up commissioning by the local authority. |
| Other Providers of Council Services | The traded arm will work as a partner to some of these other providers that are locally based and could look to increasing the range of services to be included. | The traded service will be operating in a competitive market scenario but in essence they already are as schools have choice regarding where to spend their delegated budgets. | The traded service will be supported to develop its more commercial and efficient trading practices to generated better value for money. Freedom from some council restrictions as a business unit will be an enabling factor in a commercial environment |
| Any Other Relevant Element | n/a | | |

Social Value

If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area.

How might the proposal improve the social well-being of the relevant area?

The total value of the commissioned functions from the new company will be in excess of £1m per annum and will be annually commissioned (based on data) to improve the outcomes and life chances of all Oxfordshire children and young people with a specific focus on vulnerable groups of learners (SEND; GRT; BME; PPG;LAC).

The thrust of the Strategic School Partnership is predicated on developing the education community into a system led collaborative model for school improvement which collectively works for the overall benefit of Oxfordshire learners.

How might the proposal improve the economic well-being of the relevant area?

The opportunity to increase trading with commercial freedoms will generate new revenue for the council and extend the market of service providers for school improvement and inclusion functions.

How might the proposal improve the environmental well-being of the relevant area?

This is a local solution for local issues and will enhance locally provided school to school support.

| Action Plan | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| Action | By When | Person responsible |
| 1. Ensure the new service mirrors an appropriate balance of age and gender and ethnicity in the staffing profile | April or September 2016 | DD |
| 2. Ensure that commissioning specification focus on the supporting the most vulnerable groups of learners and makes a positive difference to the gap between their outcomes and those of their peers | Annual specification contract renewal - March annually | DD |

Monitoring and Review

Monitoring of this SCIA will be conducted annually if the proposals are accepted by Cabinet – the timing and process will be as part of the development of the annual specification. Consultation outcomes on the Strategic School Partnership were published to all schools in early July 2015.

Person responsible for assessment:

Rebecca Matthews (Interim Deputy Director for Education & Learning Service)

| Version | Date | Notes (eg Initial draft, amended following consultation) |
|----------------|-------------|---|
| 1 | 28.7.15 | Discussed 29.7.15 |
| 2 | 18.8.15 | Following CCMT meeting |