



Notice of a Meeting

Education Scrutiny Committee Thursday, 4 July 2013 at 10.00 am County Hall

Membership

Chairman Councillor Lynda Atkins
Deputy Chairman - Councillor Michael Waine

<i>Councillors:</i>	David Bartholomew	Richard Langridge	Val Smith
	Yvonne Constance	Caroline Newton	
	Hoare	Neil Owen	
	John Howson	Gillian Sanders	

Co-optees: Mr Chris Bevan Mrs Sue Matthew

Notes:

Date of next meeting: 19 September 2013

What does this Committee review or scrutinise?

- a focus on the following key areas:
 - work in relation to the education strategy, and including review of an annual report on progress;
 - constructive challenge on performance issues highlighting issues where the Committee can support the improvement dialogue;
 - reviewing the Council's education functions including early years, Special Education Needs and school place planning;
 - reviewing the progress of, and any issues emanating from, the School Organisation Stakeholder Group with regard to admissions patterns and arrangements;
 - reviewing issues raised by the Schools Forum.
- assists the Council in its role of championing good educational outcomes for Oxfordshire's children and young people;
- provides a challenge to schools and academies and to hold them to account for their academic performance;
- promotes jointed up working across organisations in the education sector within Oxfordshire.

How can I have my say?

We welcome the views of the community on any issues in relation to the responsibilities of this Committee. Members of the public may ask to speak on any item on the agenda or may suggest matters which they would like the Committee to look at. **Requests to speak must be submitted to the Committee Officer below no later than 9 am on the working day before the date of the meeting.**

For more information about this Committee please contact:

Chairman	-	Councillor Lynda Atkins E.Mail: lynda.atkins@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Policy & Performance Officer	-	<i>James Kanimba, Tel: (01865) 323458</i> Email: james.kanimba@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Committee Officer	-	<i>Sue Whitehead, Tel: (01865) 810262</i> sue.whitehead@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Peter G. Clark.

Peter G. Clark
County Solicitor

Date Not Specified

About the County Council

The Oxfordshire County Council is made up of 63 councillors who are democratically elected every four years. The Council provides a range of services to Oxfordshire's 630,000 residents. These include:

schools	social & health care	libraries and museums
the fire service	roads	trading standards
land use	transport planning	waste management

Each year the Council manages £0.9 billion of public money in providing these services. Most decisions are taken by a Cabinet of 10 Councillors, which makes decisions about service priorities and spending. Some decisions will now be delegated to individual members of the Cabinet.

About Scrutiny

Scrutiny is about:

- Providing a challenge to the Cabinet
- Examining how well the Cabinet and the Authority are performing
- Influencing the Cabinet on decisions that affect local people
- Helping the Cabinet to develop Council policies
- Representing the community in Council decision making
- Promoting joined up working across the authority's work and with partners

Scrutiny is NOT about:

- Making day to day service decisions
- Investigating individual complaints.

What does this Committee do?

The Committee meets up to 6 times a year or more. It develops a work programme, which lists the issues it plans to investigate. These investigations can include whole committee investigations undertaken during the meeting, or reviews by a panel of members doing research and talking to lots of people outside of the meeting. Once an investigation is completed the Committee provides its advice to the Cabinet, the full Council or other scrutiny committees. Meetings are open to the public and all reports are available to the public unless exempt or confidential, when the items would be considered in closed session.

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting

A hearing loop is available at County Hall.

AGENDA

1. **Introduction and Welcome**
2. **Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**
3. **Declarations of Interest**

See guidance note on the back page.

4. **Petitions and Public Address**
5. **Presentation from Children, Education and Families Directorate on Education Strategy and Performance (Pages 1 - 22)**

Frances Craven, Deputy Director – Education and Early Intervention, will join the Committee to provide an overview of Oxfordshire County Council Education Strategy and Performance.

6. **Discussion of terms of Reference (Pages 23 - 24)**

Setting the Scope: A discussion of the current terms of reference

7. **Proposed Home to School Transport Policy 2014 (Pages 25 - 46)**

Roy Leach, School Organisation & Planning Manager and Neil Darlington, Admissions & Transport Services Manager to attend and inform the Committee on the proposed Home to School Transport Policy 2014.

8. **Forward Plan and Committee Business**

An opportunity to discuss and prioritise future topics for the Committee, potential approaches to its work and to discuss the schedule for future meetings.

Close of meeting

Declarations of Interest

The duty to declare.....

Under the Localism Act 2011 it is a criminal offence to

- (a) fail to register a disclosable pecuniary interest within 28 days of election or co-option (or re-election or re-appointment), or
- (b) provide false or misleading information on registration, or
- (c) participate in discussion or voting in a meeting on a matter in which the member or co-opted member has a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Whose Interests must be included?

The Act provides that the interests which must be notified are those of a member or co-opted member of the authority, **or**

- those of a spouse or civil partner of the member or co-opted member;
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as husband/wife
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as if they were civil partners.

(in each case where the member or co-opted member is aware that the other person has the interest).

What if I remember that I have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the Meeting?

The Code requires that, at a meeting, where a member or co-opted member has a disclosable interest (of which they are aware) in any matter being considered, they disclose that interest to the meeting. The Council will continue to include an appropriate item on agendas for all meetings, to facilitate this.

Although not explicitly required by the legislation or by the code, it is recommended that in the interests of transparency and for the benefit of all in attendance at the meeting (including members of the public) the nature as well as the existence of the interest is disclosed.

A member or co-opted member who has disclosed a pecuniary interest at a meeting must not participate (or participate further) in any discussion of the matter; and must not participate in any vote or further vote taken; and must withdraw from the room.

Members are asked to continue to pay regard to the following provisions in the code that *“You must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself”* or *“You must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned.....”*.

Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting should you have any doubt about your approach.

List of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

Employment (includes *“any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain”*.), **Sponsorship, Contracts, Land, Licences, Corporate Tenancies, Securities.**

For a full list of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and further Guidance on this matter please see the Guide to the New Code of Conduct and Register of Interests at Members’ conduct guidelines. <http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Insite/Elected+members/> or contact Rachel Dunn on (01865) 815279 or rachel.dunn@oxfordshire.gov.uk for a hard copy of the document.

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Outstanding
Leadership
and
Aspiration
Networks

Campaigns

System
Redesign for
Education

Early Intervention and a Good Start in Life

A Strategy for Change

Improving Educational Outcomes in Oxfordshire

2012 – 2015



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Delivering Transformational Education Change for Oxfordshire

Our vision is for Oxfordshire to be a dynamic and forward looking place for education and learning, providing the best quality experiences for children and young people to grow up, learn, develop and achieve. This Strategy sets out our approach for achieving a transformational change in education over a three year period (2012 – 2015).

Every child and young person in Oxfordshire should be able to attend a good or outstanding school or setting, access the best teaching, achieve well and as they become an adult, have opportunities for an independent economic and social life. Through providing the best start in life, whatever their background, children should be able to thrive at school. Education and skills provision also needs to be shaped around the needs of the Oxfordshire economy, alongside ensuring that good quality services are available for the vulnerable.

'The more children know that you value them, that you consider them extraordinary people, the more they will be willing to listen to you and afford you the same esteem. And the more appropriate your teaching is based on your knowledge of them, the more eager your children will be to learn from you. And the more they learn, the more extraordinary they will become.' M Scott Peck (*The Road Less Travelled*)

The education system is changing rapidly alongside the role of the Local Authority. We need to embrace the national agenda and make it work for Oxfordshire. Education and learning needs to be seen as a lifelong process, where children and young people are ready to progress to the next stage of their lives. Our priorities are to:

- Ensure strong partnership relationships with all schools and providers, based on a shared vision and collaboration
- Rigorously focus on raising educational standards and to challenge and support lower performing schools
- Support vulnerable pupils so that they achieve well and make good progress
- Commission a sufficient and diverse supply of school places in strong schools and quality early years settings to support greater choice and fair access
- Use resources efficiently and effectively, moving towards a more strategic commissioning role
- Promote and champion educational excellence, providing vision and direction for an outstanding education system in Oxfordshire

Today's children deserve and need educators who are advocates, good teachers and leaders that believe in an exciting and progressive educational future.

Jim Leivers
**Director for Children, Education
& Families**

Frances Craven
**Deputy Director for Education
& Early Intervention**

OUR VISION

Our **vision** is for Oxfordshire to be a dynamic and forward looking place for education and learning, providing the best quality experiences for children and young people to grow up, learn, develop and achieve. This means that every single child and young person in Oxfordshire will make good progress in their learning and achieve their aspirations and goals. We want children and young people to thrive in sustainably good or outstanding schools and settings throughout their education, wherever they live across the county.

We want to engage and harness the resources of all who care about children and young people and the future of a thriving Oxfordshire to work together to deliver our vision. The children of Oxfordshire deserve only the best.

We have three main **aspirations**:



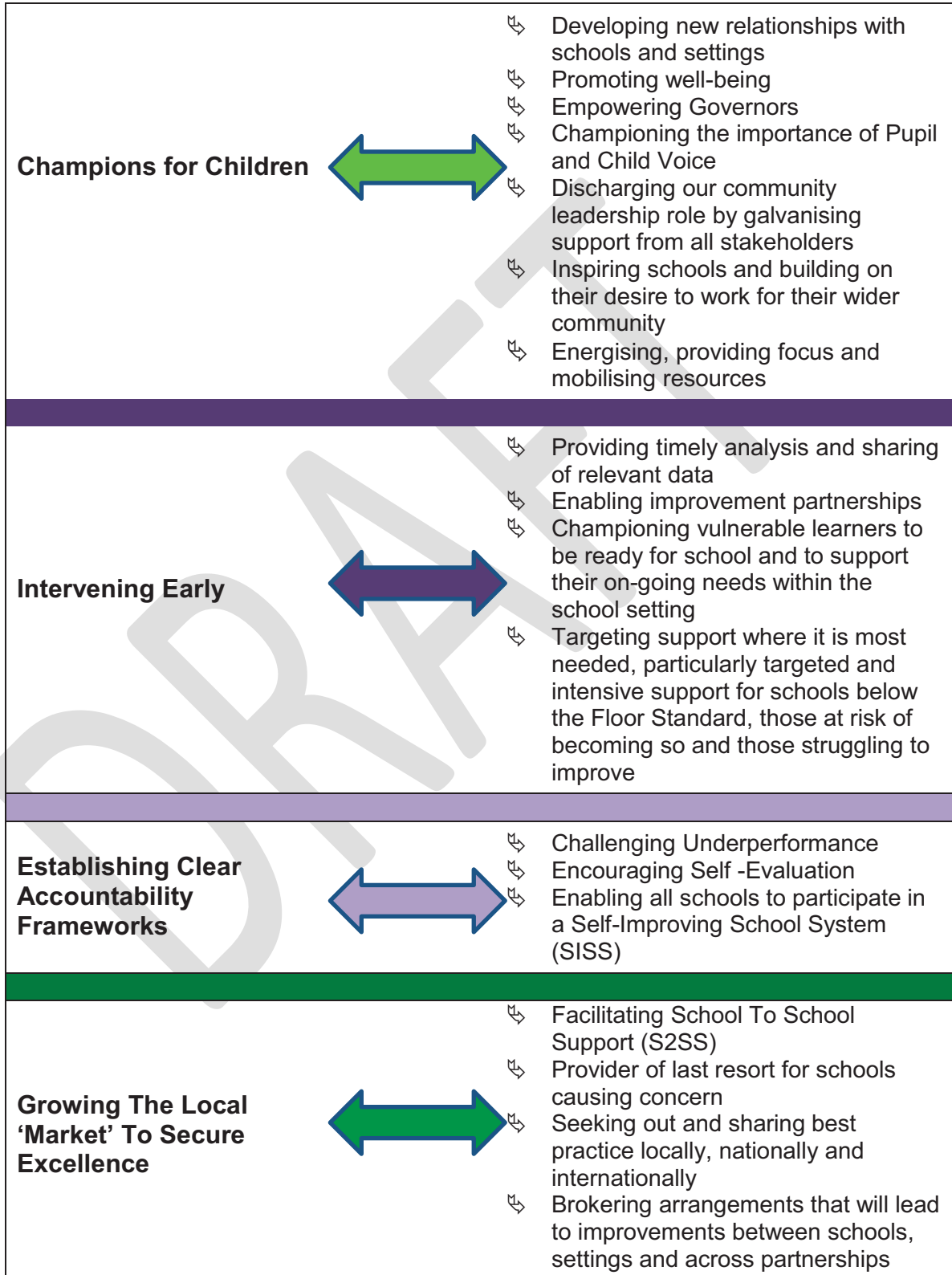
Our **intention** is that educators across the system in Oxfordshire will want to sign up to this strategy, recognising that we have a collective responsibility to secure the best for all our learners – irrespective of the type of schools or setting or college they are in. We believe that everyone involved in education is driven by a desire to make a difference and we want to harness that drive to secure brighter futures and outstanding success in all fields of learning.

Making Oxfordshire the best place for education, both to be educated and to work in education, is not any single person's or agency's remit. This is a shared ambition between the children and young people themselves, their parents, Heads, Governors, Oxfordshire County Council and a wide range of other partners who all have resources and expertise to offer.

This aspiration is shared by partners and education attainment is a key priority in the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy which is a partnership between the Local Authority, the NHS and local people.

1. OUR ROLE AS A LOCAL AUTHORITY

In the context of the changing education system, the role of the Local Authority in meeting our aspirations will be:



2. OUR OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

In a climate of economic uncertainty and competing pressures on resources, it is important to ensure that Oxfordshire is a thriving environment in which to live and work. Our education system has a key role to play in that by making sure that our children achieve their full aspirations and goals; are able to make a major positive contribution to their communities and to the local economy; and that they develop the skills and personal resources to compete in an increasingly global marketplace.

The national education landscape is undergoing a period of rapid and far reaching change involving shifting responsibilities, new and reduced funding arrangements, revised expectations, new accountabilities and changing relationships. New ways of working are becoming increasingly important to deliver the planned system changes. A key driver for change is the 2011 Education Act, which includes a determination to give school leaders more power and control to drive up improvement, not only in their own schools, but across the whole education system.

Whilst school performance nationally is improving, and the UK features in the McKinsey report on the best education systems in the world, there is still a way to go to reach the performance achieved in other comparable education systems. We in Oxfordshire are now looking at the approaches taken by the best, learning from them and seeking to urgently apply these more locally.

Alongside greater freedoms for schools, come different relationships with the Local Authority - more emphatically shifting responsibility for school improvement to schools and their governing bodies. The Local Authority is no longer the default provider of services and schools should be expected and encouraged to consider taking up services and support from a much wider range of providers, including each other.

The drive to encourage Free Schools and to convert all schools to Academy status instead of maintained Local Authority status is strongly articulated nationally, and endorsed locally through the February 2012 Cabinet report. Under current arrangements for Academies, the responsibility for school standards and progress sits with school leaders and governing bodies.

For maintained schools, the Headteacher and Governors are currently responsible for school standards and progress and, in the case of schools causing concern where there is a failure to meet expected standards or where pupils do not make sufficient progress, the Local Authority continues to hold a statutory responsibility and has statutory powers to intervene and to support and challenge the school to make improvements. In the case of schools that are judged to be inadequate or where pupils perform below the floor standards, the Secretary of State expects the Local Authority to ensure that there is a plan in place to improve those

schools and, where that cannot be delivered, to recommend structural solutions, including federation, Interim Executive Boards and finding sponsors to move the school to Academy status.

The level of support and challenge is relative to the category the school is in. High levels of support will be provided to those maintained school that are:

- below the floor standards
- at risk of falling below the floor standards or are showing declining performance
- judged satisfactory or below by Ofsted
- where pupils consistently underperform and this is recognised in inspection judgements
- where specific groups of pupils underperform even if the overall school performance is good

In this context, the Local Authority retains an important role in influencing improvement and, even if all schools convert to become Academies, under current legislation it still retains a strategic and statutory role; the Director of Children's Services (DCS) and Lead Member for Children's Services (LMCS) retain a responsibility to champion good outcomes for Oxfordshire's children.

Research is clear that many children and young people within the school setting are not reaching their potential. This may be because difficulties at school, and/or within their family circumstances, are not being identified early enough and the right support provided in a timely way to prevent issues escalating and affecting the child's ability to learn.

The Government has given clear guidance in relation to the importance of building early intervention strategies and approaches to support the most vulnerable families in partnership with universal providers of services such as schools. Government reports by the Right Honourable Frank Field, Graham Allen, Dame Clare Tickell, Professor Eileen Munro and Joyce Mosely have supported this position.

As part of its response to this direction, in 2011 Oxfordshire restructured its preventative and early intervention services to establish a single countywide early intervention service which works alongside partners, including schools, to support children, young people and families to reach their full potential and improve their life chances.

Early intervention and ensuring children have the best start in life is a key overarching theme for this strategy and will be built into all work strands.

3. OUR CHALLENGE

We need to be ambitious because there is much to do to bring about improvement. Although Oxfordshire, and in particular Oxford City, has historic and enduring international acclaim as a seat of great learning, the accolades are not reflected in relation to outcomes for local children in the state sector.

Oxfordshire has consistently lagged behind the performance of statistical neighbours, frequently last on a number of measures. Our performance is more often in line with national averages rather than being well above as is expected, given the overall affluence of the county. Although there are areas of significant deprivation within the county, other areas of the country perform much better in spite of high levels of deprivation.

There have been improvements in inspection outcomes and in the performance of some schools and, in particular, there are some positive indicators in relation to early years education. However, the overall picture is one of a slow pace of improvement, inconsistency between similar schools, across Districts, subject areas and for vulnerable groups such as Looked After Children and the inability to sustain improvements relative to children educated in the schools of our statistical neighbours. This has been a source of concern for many years.

Oxfordshire County Council is committed to raising achievement for all children and young people and closing the gap between those facing disadvantage and their peers. It remains imperative for us to address the needs of children and families that may be facing disadvantage related to their gender, ethnicity, disability or social deprivation. Nowhere is this more so than in our responsibility for our Looked After Children.

4. OUR STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

The school improvement messages from all types of schools and their leaders are similar: the same approaches are needed to maintain a culture of, and outcomes for, excellence - whatever their structure and governance arrangements. Our strategy needs to secure a shared understanding of these approaches, commitment to and capability in their application and a willingness to consider the needs of the system and children and young people above the needs of any individual school.

The ambition is that all schools and settings will take collective responsibility for the improved outcomes for children and young people in Oxfordshire by:

- Working in partnership to ensure that leadership and management is good or better
- Striving to ensure that their own establishment achieves good or outstanding Ofsted grades

- Ensuring that teaching and learning is good or better and that support is given to staff so that they can achieve that aim
- Working in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council to prioritise governance so that schools are effectively challenged and supported to achieve their aims
- Recognising that educational outcomes make a difference for future investment and that economic opportunities and employment are paramount for our children and young people's future
- Partnership working because the health and welfare of children and young people are crucial for the economic well-being of our families

When we are successful in implementing this strategy we will have:

- ✓ *An education system of which we can all feel proud*
- ✓ *Confidence that Oxfordshire learners have achieved and continue to achieve their potential*
- ✓ *Schools and Settings with effective and motivated workforces*
- ✓ *All schools and settings taking collective responsibility for all the improved outcomes of children and young people*
- ✓ *Best practice approaches that are sought after nationally*
- ✓ *A common intent to work together to share good practice*
- ✓ *A sustainable and self-improving system*

Our change programme will therefore comprise of three linked strands of work that are easy to understand and, when simultaneously combined, create the synergy of whole system improvement. Underpinning these three strands is our core theme of **early intervention and a good start in life**.

4.1 CORE THEME: EARLY INTERVENTION AND A GOOD START IN LIFE

Early Intervention and a Good Start in Life

Early intervention, ensuring school readiness and supporting our most vulnerable learners will form key underpinning aspects for this Education Strategy.

This core theme consists of two elements.

1. **Families** – this is a focus on the important work that needs to be built on with families through the evidence based successful approaches used in our children's centres and early years' settings; when children are at an early stage of development it is vital to ensure that they get the very best start in life.

2. A Continuum of Interventions – the aim is to create a focus on access to a continuum of evidenced based interventions with families in partnership with schools and settings when there are problems and difficulties at any stage of their lives. This should ensure that children are emotionally ready to learn when starting school, aspire to do well and are resilient to overcome future difficulties. This also means that parents feel supported and able to encourage their children’s learning. Schools and settings will need to ensure that they are flexible in their approach to support the most vulnerable to improve their opportunities and outcomes.

A good start in life begins with high quality education for potential parents about sex and relationships and continues with the best pre-natal and post-natal care available. Midwifery services, health visiting, breastfeeding and immunisation services are all critical. The move of Public Health services into Local Authorities in 2013 will facilitate these services joining more closely with existing Local Authority services.

Part of this area of work will be to embed the new Early Intervention Services and to ensure that a consistent approach is adopted across the county. This will involve a review of the provision of Children’s Centres to ensure that services continue to develop in response to local need and that performance is measured against key outcomes. This work will also relate to other key initiatives e.g. Troubled Families.

4.2 STRAND 1 - OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP AND ASPIRATION NETWORKS

Outstanding
Leadership
and
Aspiration
Networks

This strand has two parts. The first is about a concentrated approach to securing the outstanding and dynamic leadership and governance that our system needs together with an excellent workforce. The second is the Aspiration Networks that have been established to share practice and raise standards.

Through this strand we will:

- support the best schools and school leaders to lead the system and drive improvement across all schools and settings
- support and challenge each other in achieving our goals
- promote innovation and creativity in learning and teaching

‘The primary responsibility for improvement rests with schools...our aim should be to create a school system which is self-improving... we know that teachers learn best from other professionals... we will make sure that schools are in control of their own improvement...’ The Importance of Teaching (2010)

Outstanding Leadership

Research in 2010 by Mckinsey & Co '*How The World's Most Improved School Systems Keep Getting Better*' indicates clearly that wherever there was high performance then there was also embedded collaborative practice, a professional career infrastructure and routines of teaching and leadership excellence.

The quality of leadership in our schools and settings is absolutely critical to the drive to improve educational outcomes. However the style of leadership needed in the 21st century will not be the same as that needed in the past. High performing Headteachers see their biggest challenges as improving teaching and the curriculum and they believe that their ability to coach other teams and support their development is their most important skill.

We know from international research that good leadership creates good schools and settings. Part of Oxfordshire County Council's role as a strategic leader is to create the environment within which good leadership and best practice can be identified, developed and allowed to flourish. Our **Leading Edge** programme and developing an **Oxfordshire Teaching School** will be our mechanisms for achieving this.

Leading Edge is aimed at educational professionals – Executive Headteachers, Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers with part of the programme aimed at Governors. It encompasses a suite of support and intervention strategies which will empower and enable governing bodies to focus effectively on school improvement, recruit high quality leaders and find innovative leadership solutions. It includes highlighting and promoting engagement in available development opportunities for both school leaders and the governing body to empower them to drive school improvement.

Leading Edge - An Oxfordshire Teaching School

Although we do not currently have a nationally recognised Teaching School in Oxfordshire we know there is good practice in many schools that can be used to create better practice elsewhere in the system. Teaching schools have been established nationally to train new entrants to the profession, to lead peer to peer learning, to nurture leadership potential, to form networks to support innovation and knowledge transfer and to be at the heart of a new school improvement approach.

Our goal is to establish an 'Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Framework' leading in time to a Co-ordinating Network which will develop strategic alliances creating a number of 'satellite centres' or a 'spoke' arrangement of Virtual Teaching School expertise serving all areas of the County as a resource.

The Local Authority together, with the Co-ordinating network of schools, will quality assure, locally accredit and commission from this resource. This framework will contribute to the promotion of inspirational and excellent teaching in all subjects and across all phases and all ages.

Both the Leading Edge and the Teaching School programmes will seek to find ways to attract and retain the highest quality teachers to work and develop their skills in our schools and settings for the benefit of the children and young people of Oxfordshire. It proposes more innovative recruitment approaches, enhanced training opportunities, networks of support and the sharing of best practice between schools and settings. This work will be developed in conjunction with school leaders and will link with the Aspiration Networks.

Aspiration Networks

Since the origins of school improvement in the early 1980s the quality of school leadership has generally improved and most schools have gained experience of working in partnerships and networks of many kinds. Increased de-centralisation offers the opportunity for the school system to build on these - and for them to become self-improving. A network may be defined as *'A group of organisations working together to solve problems or issues that are too large or complex for any one organisation to handle on its own'*.

'Aspiration Networks' is the name we have given to encouraging schools and settings to work with each other to challenge and support each other to improve outcomes for all children and young people. The drive is to move all members of the group to being judged at least 'good' by Ofsted and to improve demonstrably outcomes for children, including narrowing the gaps in performance of the most vulnerable groups.

The Aspiration Networks will secure these goals through collective needs identification, prioritisation of common and contextual factors that will make a difference to their learners and collaboratively working to address those factors. National evidence indicates that for maximum impact the Aspiration Networks will need to plan 'stepping stones' over the next three years; develop a set of metrics to keep them on course, establish benchmarks by which the networks can be compared and contrasted; and set success criteria for evaluating impact for the individual networks and as a system.

They may also, for example, agree to share a development plan, self-evaluation approaches, staffing and staff development. It is hoped that the networks will lead to more formal collaboration and structures where appropriate.

The Local Authority is providing some limited financial resource to 11 groups of schools that have joined together to release staff and expertise for the benefit of the wider network. Each network has put forward a compelling business case to bid for the money – the greater the ambition, the more likely the success. A panel of educationalists has awarded funding and will continue to monitor the progress of the successful consortia to ensure they deliver the rapid improvement in outcomes that are at the heart of each initiative.

A key focus of their work in year one will be to structure themselves as a network and develop their processes to ensure continued viability in future years when the funding has ceased – their impact and their sustainability will need to be long term.

4.3 STRAND 2 - TARGETED CAMPAIGNS



A series of campaigns, supported by Elected Members that engage all schools, settings and partners is being developed. The first campaign focuses on **Reading**.

Through this strand we will:

- substantially improve reading standards as measured at Level 2b+ in KS1 tests
- contribute to wider improvements in education outcomes
- raise the aspirations of children and families
- foster a culture of reading and a love of books
- engage the whole community in the pursuit of high standards of literacy

Targeted Campaigns aim to bring together wider support by selecting a rolling programme of themes that create a compelling, easily understood campaign that everyone across the county can get behind and support simultaneously. In selecting one theme, it does not mean that all work on other areas for improvement stops or resources are diverted or diluted. Professionals working across the education sector will, of course, continue to work on the wider improvement agendas as appropriate and will draw upon wider support where possible.


2012-14 Oxfordshire Reading Campaign

Competency in literacy is an essential and vital foundation for all. There is clear evidence that persistent problems with reading at a young age are associated with greater problems later for example, reduced academic achievement leading to reduced employment opportunities, increased health risks, increased involvement in crime. At the end of 2011, 86% of our children achieve Level 2 at the end of their Key Stage 1, but only 74% achieved the higher level at 2b which placed us second from the bottom out of our eleven statistical neighbours.

There is enormous interest in improving educational outcomes across the county from a wide range of people, in addition to those professionally and directly engaged in delivering educational provision or related services. Councillors, parents, the media, libraries, faith groups, the universities, fire and rescue service, businesses, children and young people, health, police and voluntary sector partners, to name just a few, all have an interest and many have demonstrated their commitment to add support for improvements to the educational achievements of our children.

The National Literacy Trust, as the successful bidder, will lead and implement this campaign and will focus on the 80 lowest performing schools. Working with these schools is just one aspect of our ambitious Reading Campaign which also includes a major focus on volunteer reading support and promoting a culture of reading. The bidder will need to develop an integrated approach which harnesses, refreshes, focuses, refines and most importantly builds upon work already underway to achieve the necessary change in improved reading outcomes.

4.4 STRAND 3 - SYSTEM REDESIGN FOR EDUCATION



System
Redesign for
Education

Professor David Hargreaves has identified four essential building blocks that need to be in place to create and lead self-improving schools:

1. Clusters of schools working collaboratively
2. Local solutions
3. Co-construction of solutions
4. System leaders motivating and acting as role models

We have endeavoured to embed these building blocks throughout our strategy for change and wish to reflect them particularly in this strand. Through this strand we will:

- locally shape the new education landscape and changing status of schools in order to ensure a sustained focus on improvement and better outcomes for children and young people
- respond to the changing system by moving towards commissioning services for outcomes and considering new and sustainable models for service delivery

The School System - This is about the types of schools that exist across the county and the formal and informal partnerships, collaborations and networks that exist between them to bring about whole system improvement. There are a range of important themes to consider: School to School Support, Supporting Vulnerable Learners and the new Special Educational Needs Partnership Pathfinders that are trialling new ways of working together to improve sustainable outcomes for vulnerable learners.

A key thrust of Government policy is to promote Academies as one means of improving educational standards. Oxfordshire County Council is aligned with this policy and therefore wants to support maintained schools to become Academies. It is, however, governing bodies which are ultimately responsible for deciding whether to move to Academy status.

The County Council wishes to support all schools to become academies. The Council recognises that there is a process and some schools will be at different stages in taking this step. This work seeks to ensure that moves towards academy status by Oxfordshire schools happens in a planned way, using a coherent group of 'Choice Sponsors', encouraging schools to become academies as part of Multi-Academy Trust arrangements. This is in a context of different types of schools evolving and ensuring that the core focus remains on improving outcomes for Oxfordshire's children and young people.

As a significant leader in the changing school system we will:

- Work with schools to ensure that the benefits of collaboration and cooperation between schools and the local authority are maintained
- Support high performing schools to work with lower performing schools as part of their Academy conversion process
- Concentrate on the transformation of underperforming schools through facilitating sponsored Academies
- Be proactive in supporting schools to identify sponsors or partners recognising that it is the Department for Education who agree the sponsor
- Encourage schools to ensure parents and carers are informed and engaged as part of the conversion process
- Strongly encourage schools through the 26 Local Partnerships to be open and transparent with each other about their intentions to convert to Academy status
- Be clear with schools at the outset of the conversion process about any charges we might make for services where Oxfordshire County Council necessarily and demonstrably incurs additional costs
- Work with the relevant Diocese to enable them to progress their engagement with Academies
- Help to develop the local market for support services for the benefit of all schools
- Be a champion for Oxfordshire residents to ensure that appropriate interventions are undertaken in underperforming Academies
- Engage constructively in proposals to develop new Academies e.g. Free Schools, Studio Schools and University Technical Colleges

Oxfordshire County Council will maintain its role in terms of ensuring the best possible learning outcomes for children and young people including those who attend schools in other local authorities. This will ensure that as Academies are rolled out in Oxfordshire we maintain high standards whilst driving improvement.

Support Services to Schools – Oxfordshire County Council, working with schools and settings, is exploring new service options for the delivery of their statutory and strategic accountabilities. This work will also need to review how best to increase the range of traded development on offer that helps schools and settings become good and outstanding and maximises pupil achievement.

5. GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

This Strategy for Change is overseen by an **Education Transformation Board**, chaired by the Deputy Director - Education and Early Intervention. The Deputy Director, through the Director for Children, Education & Families, will be accountable for the progress of this strategy through to the County Council's Management Team (CCMT) and, ultimately, to Cabinet.

The Education Transformation Board will comprise of key stakeholders. Other partners and the Project Leads for each of the strands of the programme will present updates and report on milestones.

The remit of the Education Transformation Board will include:

- reviewing progress and actions needed to meet ambitious county-wide targets
- overview and administration of any funds made available to support the key strands of work
- discussion of areas for joint commissioning across education providers
- overview of quality assurance of Oxfordshire County Council services supporting school improvement
- review of data to identify areas of provision needing further improvement
- being outward looking to find the best practice elsewhere from which Oxfordshire children and young people could also benefit

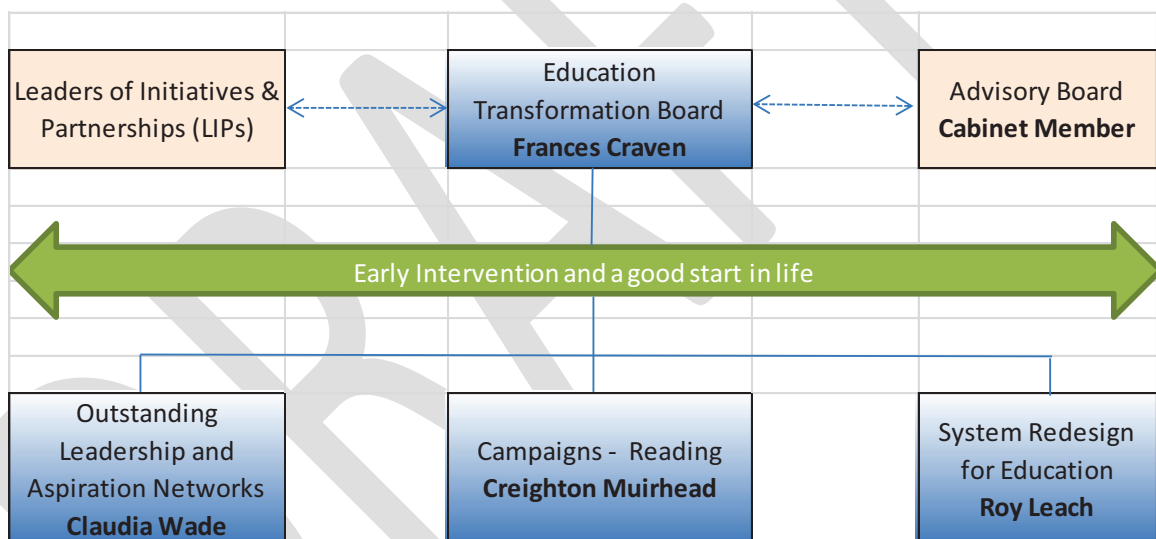
The Board should produce an annual report setting out progress towards targets, successes of the schools and settings, details of new targets and areas identified for improvement.

The **Leaders of Initiatives and Partnerships** is a group that consists of chairs of partnership groups of schools, Headteachers who are leading outstanding schools or those leading innovative practice that is improving outcomes for children and young people. As the group may be large, there will be a need for task and finish groups to focus on identified

priorities. The aspiration is that the Group will become a driving force for change, influencing key developments in the area of education and driving forward the education strategy for the future. It will meet six times a year to coincide with the Education Transformation Board who will meet to make decisions about further strategy and will be monitoring the impact and outcomes of existing work.

The **Advisory Board** will be chaired by the leader of the Council. Its membership is comprised of local influential members of the educational community, City Council, key Academy Sponsors and the Diocese. Its remit is to act as a think-tank providing synergy through a co-ordinated approach to improving outcomes for Oxfordshire learners.

A **Communication Strategy** will be developed to support both the Education Transformation Programme Board and the Advisory Board and links to the communication strategies for each individual project strand. Following Programme Board meetings, updates on progress and next steps will be communicated to a range of stakeholders.



The strategy will be reviewed annually and updated to reflect any changes that have occurred in government thinking and the impact of time on the changing educational landscape.

We will achieve the following by 2015

Early Years

1. Foundation Stage outcomes for five year olds will continue to improve so that the percentage of children working at expected levels in Communication and Language and Personal, Social and Emotional Development increases by at least 1% point year on year from 2013 – 2015
2. A narrowing of the gap in Foundation Stage by at least 0.5% point from 2013 – 2015

Primary Schools

3. Key Stage 1 Reading will be at 86% at Level 2b+ from a 2011 baseline of 74%
4. Key Stage 2 attainment will be amongst the best for our statistical neighbours (i.e. in the top quartile) and improve to at least 80% of pupils attaining level 4 in English (2011 baseline 85.7%) and Maths (2011 baseline 83.9%)
5. At least 95% of primary schools will be above the current Floor standard

Secondary Schools

6. Key Stage 4 attainment will be amongst the best for our statistical neighbours and improve to at least 65% of pupils attaining 5 good GCSEs including English and Maths with a 2% annual increase from a 2011 baseline of 57%
7. At least 95% of secondary schools will be above the Floor standard

Special Schools

8. All special schools will be judged Good or Outstanding by Ofsted

OFSTED

9. At least 85% of all childcare settings will be judged Good or Outstanding by Ofsted
10. At least 78% of primary and 82% of secondary schools will be judged Good or Outstanding by Ofsted

APPENDIX 1 BUDGET

A dedicated cost centre has been established for 2012/13 to enable a proactive launch and implementation of this strategy. Each strand will have a budget allocation, which in some cases may be used for commissioning a range of providers.

Theme	Budget
1. Outstanding Leadership and Aspiration Networks:	
a. Leading Edge (Teaching School)	£400,000
b. Aspiration Networks	£565,000
2. Reading Campaign	£585,142
3. System Redesign Schools/Services	£600,000
TOTAL	£2,150,142

APPENDIX 2 ASPIRATION NETWORKS

The following summarises the key focus area of each aspiration network.

Name of Network	Schools Involved	Focus Area
Watlington Partnership Main contact: Julie Quarrell Chalgrove Primary	Chalgrove Primary Watlington Primary Lewknor CE Primary Ewelme CE Primary RAF Benson Community School Stadhampton Primary Icknield Community College	Achievement in maths and English Governor Collaboration
Oxford Partnership Main contact: Sue Tomkys St Joseph's Catholic Primary	St Joseph's Catholic Primary SS Mary and John New Marston Primary St Michael's Primary St Barnabas Primary St Philip and James Primary St Nicholas Primary	Attainment in maths through teaching and parental engagement
Oxford City Learning Partnership Main contact: Alison Robb-Webb Oxford City Learning	Cheney School The Cherwell School Iffley Mead School Matthew Arnold Meadowbrook College Oxford Spires Academy St Gregory the Great Catholic School The Oxford Academy	Improving standards and numeracy and literacy across all subject areas to improve GCSE results

Name of Network	Schools Involved	Focus Area
	Wheatley Park School	
Woodcote Partnership Main contact: Mary Bather Checkendon CE Primary	Checkendon Primary Stoke Row CE Primary Peppard CE Primary Brightwell CE Primary Benson CE Primary Kidmore End CE Primary Sonning Common Primary	Improve progress in maths and English
Abingdon Partnership Main contact: Margaret Wolf Caldecott School	Caldecott School St Nicholas Long Furlong Primary Carswell Primary Dunmore Primary Thameside Primary Thomas Reade Primary St Edmunds Primary	Raising awareness, skills and passion for maths
Faringdon Partnership Main contact: Nick Sheppard Watchfield Primary	Faringdon Community College Faringdon Junior Faringdon Infant Shellingford CE Primary Longworth Primary Longcot and Fernham CE Primary John Blandy Primary Buckland Primary Shrivenham CE Primary Ashbury and Compton Beauchamp CE Primary Watchfield Primary Fitzwaryn School	Maths and English Leadership and management
Improving Learning Consortium Main contact: Kay Baul Hanwell Fields Community School	Hanwell Fields Community School William Morris Primary Orchard Fields Primary The Grange Primary Bishop Loveday Primary North Oxfordshire Academy Secondary School	Maths
Bicester Partnership Main contact: Damian Booth St. Edburg's CE Primary	St Edburg's CE Primary Fritwell Primary Finmere Primary Charlton-on-Otmoor Primary Southwold Primary Bure Park Primary	Performance levels at Key Stage 2

Name of Network	Schools Involved	Focus Area
	St. Mary's Primary Longfields Primary Launton Primary Langford Primary Chesterton Primary	
Outstanding Facilitators Network Main contact: Mary Watts Appleton CE (A) Primary	Appleton CE Primary Botley Primary Church Cowley St James Primary Cumnor CE Primary Garsington CE Primary Wheatley Primary Wood Farm Primary	Teaching and learning
Wantage Partnership Main contact: Phil Hibbs Wantage CE Primary	Wantage CE Primary Charlton Primary Grove C of E Primary Millbrook Primary St Amand's Catholic VA Primary Standford in the Vale C of E Primary St James C of E Primary St Nicholas C of E Primary Stockham Primary The Hendreds C of E Primary The Ridgeway C of E Primary Uffington C of E Primary Fitzwaryn King Alfred's Academy	Improving leadership and the quality of teaching
Carterton Partnership Main contact: Mike Curtis Carterton Primary	Carterton Primary Edith Moorhouse Primary The Gateway Primary St John the Evangelist Primary St Joseph's Catholic Primary Carterton Community College	Improve teaching and literacy levels

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Education Scrutiny Committee - Terms of Reference

General role of scrutiny committees

Within their specific terms, each scrutiny committee may:

- i. establish their own working groups in order to explore issues further;
- ii. review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions;
- iii. consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants;
- iv. make reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or the Cabinet in connection with the discharge of any functions;
- v. conduct, as appropriate, any research, community or other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options;
- vi. consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options;
- vii. question members of the Cabinet, ordinary committees and officers about their views on issues and proposals affecting Oxfordshire or about their decisions;
- viii. report annually to full Council on their work and make recommendations for future work programmes as appropriate;

Specific role of the Education Scrutiny Committee

The Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee will have a membership of 7 county councillors and 4 co-opted members. The county councillor membership will be politically proportional to the membership of the Council. The terms of reference of the Committee will be:

The specific terms of reference are:

- i. To focus on the following key areas:
 - a. The work of the Education Transformation Board, providing a two way relationship with the Board which oversees the education strategy, and including review of the annual report of the Board;

- b. Constructive challenge on performance issues with the Education Transformation Board highlighting issues where the Committee can support the improvement dialogue;
 - c. Reviewing the Council's education functions including early years, Special Education Needs and school place planning;
 - d. Reviewing the progress of, and any issues emanating from, the School Organisation Stakeholder Group with regard to admissions patterns and Arrangements;
 - e. Reviewing issues raised by the Schools Forum.
- ii. To assist the Council in its role of championing good educational outcomes for Oxfordshire's children and young people;
 - iii. To provide a challenge to schools and academies and to hold them to account for their academic performance;
 - iv. To promote joined up working across organisations in the education sector within Oxfordshire;
 - v. To review the bigger picture affecting academic achievement in the county so as to facilitate the achievement of good outcomes;
 - vi. To represent the community of Oxfordshire in the development of academic achievement across the county, including responding to formal consultations and participating in inter-agency discussions;
 - vii. To contribute to the development of educational policy in the county;

Report for Education Scrutiny Committee - 4 July 2013

Home to School Transport Consultation

This report covers

1. A summary of the proposed changes to the Home to School Transport Policy
2. Annex A the full public consultation document
3. Annex B a summary of the responses to the public consultation (to follow)

Background

The Local Authority has consulted with the public, head teachers and other interested parties upon a number changes to the Home to School Transport Policy. The Cabinet is due to consider the proposals on 16th July.

The proposed changes have been made in the light of the current difficult financial situation in the UK, the continuing impact this will have on local government finances, and the need to ensure that the Home to School Transport Policy is equitable. If the Cabinet decides to accept the proposals regarding the two tier appeals process and the use of the Road Safety GB guidance in making decisions regarding route safety, they will be implemented from September 2013. However, if the proposals regarding concessionary fares and the ending of free travel to the designated (catchment) school are agreed they would not take effect until September 2014.

1. To increase the charges for concessionary travel and post 16 travel in 2014/15 to £290.40 (£96.80 per two terms of the 6 term year) for those who live under 3 miles from the school attended and £541.20 per annum (£180.40 per two terms of the 6 term year) for those who live over 3 miles from the school attended .
2. From September 2015 onwards, to increase the concessionary fare by 2% per annum.
3. From September 2014 to end the waiving of the concessionary charge for the third and subsequent children of families where they have more than two children using the same home to school transport service
4. To only use the guidance issued by Road Safety GB when making risk assessments of walked routes to school.
5. To end free travel to the designated (catchment) school if the distance from home to school is over 3 miles if aged 8 or over, or 2 miles if less than aged 8 and of school age, unless this is the nearest school to a child's home address. This would take effect from September 2014 and those children for whom free transport has been agreed before that date would not be affected by this proposed change of policy. This protection would last up until the end of Year 6 for those in primary school and Year 11 for those in secondary school. (NB At present the Council provides free transport to *either* the designated (catchment) school or the nearest school if the distance is over 3 miles if aged 8 or over, or 2 miles if less than aged 8 and of school age. For most

addresses the designated school and the nearest school are the same but there are a limited number of examples where the designated school is considerably more distant.)

6. To reassess routes designated as “unsafe walking routes” against the guidance issued by Road Safety GB during 2013/14 and 2014/15. This part of the policy would come into force in September 2013 and would ensure that all routes are reviewed by the end of the 2014/15 academic year. Those receiving free transport on the grounds that there is no safe walking route would, as now, have this financial assistance withdrawn if the route were re-assessed as safe to walk.
7. To remove references to collaborative learning transport from the Home to School Transport Policy. Collaborative Learning Partnerships are no longer operating in Oxfordshire.
8. To adopt a two stage review/appeal process from September 2013 in accordance with the Department for Education Transport and Travel Guidance of March 2013.

Contact officers:

Neil Darlington, Admissions & Transport Service Manager
01865 - 815844
Neil.darlington@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Roy Leach
School Organisation & Planning Manager
01865 - 816458
Roy.leach@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Annex A: The full public consultation document

Annex B: A summary of the responses to the public consultation (to follow)

Oxfordshire County Council

Consultation on the Proposed Home to School Transport Policy

Introduction

Oxfordshire County Council provides either free or concessionary transport to approximately 12,000 children and young people travelling to school or college. The legal basis for this provision of home to school transport is set out in sections 508A, 508B, 508C, 508D and 509AD and Schedule 35B of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) and where appropriate the Equality Act and English and European case law. In addition local authorities are under a statutory duty to have regard to the Home to School Transport Guidance issued by the Department for Education in March 2013.

Oxfordshire spent approximately £14 million on home to school transport in 2012/13.

The decision to review the discretionary elements within the policy was made in the light of the current difficult financial situation in the UK, the continuing impact this will have on local government finances, and the need to ensure that the Home to School Transport Policy is equitable. Following consultation in June a report will be considered by the Local Authority's Cabinet on 16 July, early enough for a new policy to take effect for entry to school in September 2014. The following possible options for change are shown below:

1. To increase the charges for concessionary travel and post 16 travel in 2014/15 to £290.40 (£96.80 per two terms of the 6 term year) for those who live under 3 miles from the school attended and £541.20 per annum (£180.40 per two terms of the 6 term year) for those who live over 3 miles from the school attended (Proposal 1).
2. From September 2015 onwards, to increase the concessionary fare by 2% per annum (Proposal 2).
3. From September 2014 to end the waiving of the concessionary charge for the third and subsequent children of families where they have more than two children using the same home to school transport service (Proposal 3).
4. To only use the guidance issued by Road Safety GB when making risk assessments of walked routes to school (Proposal 4)
5. The phased ending of free travel to the designated (catchment) school if the distance from home to school is over 3 miles if aged 8 or over, or 2 miles if less than aged 8 and of school age, unless this is the nearest school to a child's home address.¹ This would take effect from September 2014 and those children for whom free transport has been agreed before that date will not be affected by this proposed change of policy. This protection will last up until the end of Year 6 for those in primary school and Year 11 for those in secondary school (Proposal 5).
6. To reassess routes designated as "unsafe walking routes" against the guidance issued by Road Safety GB over 2013/14 and 2014/15. **This part of the policy would come into force in September 2013** and would ensure that all routes are reviewed by the end of the 2014/15 academic year (Proposal 6). Those receiving free transport on the grounds that there is no safe walking route

¹ In addition those aged 11 to 16 whose parents are in receipt of the maximum of Working Tax Credit or who are eligible for free school meals will continue to receive free travel to any one of the three nearest schools to their address within a radius of 2 to 6 miles.

would, as now, have this financial assistance withdrawn if the route is re-assessed as safe to walk.

7. To remove references to collaborative learning transport from the Home to school Transport Policy. Collaborative Learning Partnerships are no longer operating in Oxfordshire (Proposal 7).
8. To adopt a two stage review/appeal process **from September 2013** in accordance with the Department for Education Transport and Travel Guidance of March 2013 (Proposal 8).

The proposed Home to School Transport Policy is shown as Section 1.

Any comments should be made on the Response Form which is attached as Section 2. This form should be returned to:

The Admissions Team
County Hall
New Road
Oxford
OX1 1ND
Fax: 01865 783198
E-mail: admissions.schools@oxfordshire.gov.uk

It would be particularly helpful if comments could be sent as an e-mail attachment.

The consultation will close at 1705 hours on 3 July 2013.

Neil Darlington
Admissions and Transport Services Manager

PROPOSED HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL POLICY

Introduction

1. The Local Authority is keen to encourage young people to walk or cycle to school or college or to make use of public transport, but it also provides free transport and some subsidised transport (the concessionary travel scheme) as set out in the Home to School Transport Policy. There are significant health benefits from walking or cycling to school and travel on public transport.
2. As with other young people, children with a Statement of Special Educational Need are likely to benefit from developing the ability to travel independently. It is a major factor in widening the horizons of young people and helping them to prepare for adult life and in gaining access to education, training and employment.
3. The legal basis for the provision of home to school transport is set out in sections 508A, 508B, 508C, 508D and 509AD and Schedule 35B of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) and where appropriate the Equality Act and English and European case law. In addition local authorities are under a statutory duty to have regard to the Home to School Transport Guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE) in March 2013.
4. The Home to School Transport Policy applies to young people who live in the administrative county of Oxfordshire. Those who are not resident in Oxfordshire are advised to contact their own home local authority for details of any policy that their home authority may have regarding home to school/college transport.
5. Parents of those aged from 4 (Rising Fives) to 16 need to complete and submit a Transport Application Form if they wish to apply for free home to school transport. If parents wish to apply for concessionary travel for their child they need to complete an 'Application for Concessionary Travel on a School Bus'.
6. When, under the Home to School Transport Policy, children and young people are entitled to free transport it is provided by the most cost effective means. This will usually be by the provision of a free bus pass. However, where numbers are small children sometimes have to be transported by taxi. Where parents wish to take their children to school and it is therefore possible to avoid the provision of a taxi the Local Authority may agree to the payment of a mileage allowance (see paragraphs 55 to 64).
7. Where free or concessionary travel has been agreed it is provided for attendance at the beginning and end of the school day and not for extracurricular activities.

The Children and Families Bill

8. The Children and Families Bill is expected to have become law by September 2014. This Bill proposes to replace Statements of Special Educational Need

with Education, Health and Care Plans. Any references within this policy to children with a Statement of Special Educational Need will be replaced by “Education, Health and Care Plans”, subject to any amendments to the Children and Families Bill and to it being given the Royal Assent.

9. Parents of children with Education, Health and Care Plans are expected to be given the option of a personal budget to meet some or all of the provision detailed in the plan and special transport will be an element of the personal budget. The Home to School transport Policy will be amended as necessary to include this provision, if it is enacted by Parliament.

Vehicle safety

10. Buses and coaches used for home to school transport are public service vehicles and are subject to specific safety legislation. This is enforced by an initial inspection and certification of the vehicle followed by subsequent annual checks. Vehicles are also subject to random roadside checks undertaken by the ‘Vehicle and Operator Service Agency’ (VOSA). VOSA are able to prohibit any vehicle that is non-compliant, i.e. is in a dangerous condition, not roadworthy and/or the driver’s hours are irregular. Any Service Provider using sub-standard vehicles may lose their operator’s licence.

Statutory Walking Distance

11. In understanding home to school transport and what can, and cannot, be provided free of charge it is important to understand what is referred to as “the statutory walking distance”. This is 2 miles for children who are under 8 years of age, and 3 miles for those of statutory school age who are 8 and over. It is measured along the shortest route along which a child, accompanied by a responsible adult, may walk with reasonable safety. The route may include footpaths, bridleways, and other pathways, as well as recognised roads. All such routes need to be open to the public.

Responsibility for assessing whether a child should receive free transport

12. The responsibility for assessing and determining transport entitlement issues for attendance at mainstream schools, for example whether a child should receive free travel, rests with the School Admissions Team since transport decisions relate to the school attended. The responsibility for organising the transport rests with the School and Social Care transport which will act on instruction from the School Admissions Team.
13. Therefore any information regarding Oxfordshire’s Home to School Transport Policy obtained from any source other than the Admissions Team of Oxfordshire County Council or the admissions pages of the Oxfordshire public website should be disregarded.
14. An assessment of eligibility for free transport is made as part of the normal admissions process for entry to school. Parents are normally notified of the decision in the letter offering a school place.
15. If a child ceases to be eligible during the course of the school term, for example due to moving address, the provision should cease at the end of that term.

Free transport for those of school age (Reception to Year 11)

16. Children within the following categories are eligible for free transport:

- a. Children attending the nearest available school or educational placement to their address, if the distance from home to school is over the “statutory walking distance” of 3 miles if aged 8 or over or 2 miles if less than aged 8 and of school age. This applies whether or not the school was listed on the Common Admissions Form (CAF).
- b. Children who are aged 8 or over and are under 11 years old who are eligible for Free School Meals or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit and attend the nearest school if it is over 2 miles from their home.
- d. Children aged 11 to 16 who are eligible for Free School Meals or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit and who attend one of their three nearest suitable schools (or places other than school at which they might receive education under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996), where they live more than two but not more than 6 miles from that school. The 2 mile distance is measured by “walking route” and the 6 mile distance is measured by road route.
- e. Children attending the nearest available school to their address even if it is less than the statutory walking distance, if it would not be safe for a child accompanied by an adult to walk from the home to the school. This applies whether or not the school was listed on the CAF. If the route is subsequently determined to be safe the free transport or mileage allowance will be withdrawn. However, a parent will be given up to 6 weeks to consider alternative arrangements. At the end of that period or when the alternative means of transport is taken up, whichever is the sooner, the free travel or mileage allowance will be withdrawn.
- f. Children aged 11 to 16 who are eligible for Free School Meals or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit and want their child to be educated in accordance with their religion or belief and they attend the nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief that is over 2 miles but no more than 15 miles from their home. The 2-mile distance is measured by “walking route” and the 15-mile distance is measured by road route.
- g. Children entitled to free transport if they move house during Year 11 and continue to attend their original school subject to the following limits:
 - i. transport can be provided other than by taxi;
 - ii. the distance travelled is no more than 15 miles.

Taxis will only be used in exceptional circumstances.

- h. Children with a disability who do not have a Statement of Special Educational Need who by reason of their disability are unable to walk even

relatively short distances to school and children with a mobility problem caused by a temporary medical condition, for example a broken leg. This assistance is subject to confirmation of the medical reasons for the provision by a GP or consultant.

- i. Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs where one of the following applies:
 - (1) The school attended is the nearest suitable school or educational placement to their address that has an available place, if the distance from home to school is over the “statutory walking distance” of 3 miles if aged 8 or over or 2 miles if less than aged 8 and of school age.
 - (2) The school attended is the nearest suitable school or educational placement to their address that has an available place and the distance from home to school is less than the distances set out in h(i) but it would not be safe for a child accompanied by an adult to walk from the home to the school.
 - (3) The children concerned are unable to walk to school by reason of their special educational need or, if disabled, their disability or because of a temporary or long term medical condition. Evidence is required from a GP or consultant.

Free Travel to Out County Residential Schools for those with a Statement of Special Educational Needs

Out County Weekly Boarding

17. The beginning and end of each term of each school week to a total of 76 single journeys per year.

Termly Boarding (3 terms per year)

18. Children of 11 or over are entitled to free travel at the beginning and end of each term and half term up to a maximum of 16 single journeys per year.
19. Children aged up to 11 are entitled to free travel at the beginning and end of each term and half term, plus 4 discretionary journeys home per year, up to a maximum of 24 single journeys per year.

Termly Boarding (4 terms per year)

20. Children of 11 or over are entitled to free travel at the beginning and end of each term and half term up to a maximum of 16 single journeys per year.
21. Children aged up to 11 are entitled to free travel at the beginning and end of each term and half term, plus 4 discretionary journeys home per year, up to a maximum of 24 single journeys per year.

Out County 52 Week Boarding (joint placement with other agency)

22. All boarders (or parents) are entitled to 12 single trips home per year (broadly relating to term times). Any additional trips will be the responsibility of the other agency.

Payment of parental journeys for those with children at out of county residential special schools

23. Payment will be made if one of the following applies:
- a. attendance at their child's annual review;
 - b. attendance at any meeting called by the LA at the pupils school;
 - c. journeys necessitated by a child's sickness or emergency medical appointments;
 - d. an agreed journey to visit a new school placement;
 - e. to attend up to three additional meetings per year at the school (called by the school or requested by the parents) if sanctioned by the LA in advance.

Overnight Accommodation

24. The LA will not normally reimburse the cost of overnight accommodation for parents/carers.

Applications for Transport Assistance on Grounds of Religion and Belief

25. In making decisions on assistance with transport the LA will respect parents' religious and philosophical convictions as to the education to be provided for their children in so far as this is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure.
26. However, a parent will need to satisfy the LA of the genuine nature of the religious and/or philosophical belief and that the application is made in good faith. The burden of proof lies with the child's parent/parents.
27. Examples of acceptable evidence are:
- a. the provision of a baptismal certificate;
 - b. a statement of atheism;
 - c. a statement of adherence to a particular faith;
 - d. a letter of support from a priest or rabbi stating that the child belongs to a particular congregation.

Normally two pieces of evidence will be required.

28. It is important to note that the LA will take into account the financial consequences of any applications for assistance and that setting up new coach services or taxi routes or specifically continuing them when they could be discontinued in order to accommodate new travellers would normally fall within the definition of "unreasonable public expenditure". However, where there are spare seats on already existing home to school transport routes, or scheduled public transport services, the LA will be able to consider applications for places under the normal concessionary travel arrangements.

29. The LA will not take into account academic grounds for preferring a particular school when making a decision on whether to provide assisted transport on grounds of faith or belief.
30. Decisions on applications for transport assistance on grounds of faith or belief will normally be taken by the Senior Officer, School Admissions (Support).

16-19 Home to School/College Transport

Annual 16 to 19 Transport Policy Statement

31. Details of travel provision for the 16 to 19 age group will be published by 31 May of each year in the 16 to 19 Transport Policy Statement. This is intended to ensure that young people can make informed choices regarding post-16 education. The Policy Statement can be amended in year in response to complaints or a direction from the Secretary of State. Complaints can be heard by the Appeals & Tribunals Sub-Committee.

Free Travel

32. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are beyond statutory school age and who are aged 16 to 19, will receive travel to that placement at the concessionary travel rate when they attend the nearest suitable school or educational placement to their home address that has an available place and one of the following applies:
 - a. it is over 3 miles from their home to the educational placement;
 - b. it is less than 3 miles from their home to the educational placement but it would not be safe for the young person, even if accompanied by an adult, to walk from home to that placement;
 - c. the young person is unable to walk to the school or education placement due to their learning difficulty and/or disability, or because of a temporary or long term medical condition (evidence is required from a GP or consultant).

Subsidised Travel (16-19 age group)

33. Students who do not have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are beyond statutory school age, are aged 16 to 19, and who attend either a college or a school may use the concessionary travel scheme. The concessionary travel scheme makes places available on home to school transport routes. These routes are primarily provided for those who are eligible for free home to school transport.
34. Where places on relevant home to school transport routes are unavailable, season tickets on public transport may be provided for travel to the nearest college or school from the student's home address at the relevant distance related concessionary charge rate. This is meant to apply where a home to school transport route is full and it would be possible to use public transport and so avoid the unnecessary additional public expense of contracting for additional capacity on that route.
35. In the area served by Gillotts School, Icknield School, Chiltern Edge School and Langtree School (all 11 to 16 schools) post 16 education is

provided by Henley College. Where Henley College is the closest post 16 provision to a young person's address the Local Authority will provide travel either on one of its home to school travel routes, by service bus or by transport arranged by Henley College. The same charges will apply as those that apply for the Concessionary Travel Scheme.

36. The Local Authority will also arrange for transport to school or college where there is no other means of access, for example where there are no home to school transport routes and no service bus or train links to the nearest establishment offering post16 education. This transport would be subject to the same charges as those set out in the Concessionary Travel Scheme. In addition, the charge will be waived for those eligible for Free School Meals or for those whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit.

Travel Arrangements to the “harbours” in primary schools

37. Travel arrangements to the “harbours” in primary schools need to be agreed by the Admissions Team. These requests need to be submitted by the relevant school at least two weeks in advance of the child beginning the course.
38. Requests will be dealt with by the member of the Admissions Team responsible for the relevant school

Travel Arrangements for Learners with Learning Difficulties Assessments (aged 19-24)

39. An annual Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Transport Policy Statement will be issued by the LA either with the 16-19 Transport Policy Statement or separately. This document will specify any transport or other arrangements, any payment of travel expenses and concessionary schemes which the LA plans to make available to this group of learners in the following academic year to publication. The Policy Statement will also set out the arrangements for facilitating boarding provision outside both the further education and higher education sectors. Complaints can be heard by the Appeals & Tribunals Sub-Committee.

The Concessionary Travel Scheme

40. Concessionary seats are spare seats on home to school transport routes. These are routes that are operated for the benefit of those who are entitled to free transport to and from school. The key points regarding this scheme are set out below:
 - a. the Council cannot guarantee that a young person will keep the seat for longer than two terms;
 - b. fare prices are reviewed annually;
 - c. the parent, or in the case of Years 12 and 13 the student, must complete an application form for concessionary travel;
 - d. payment is required for two terms travel in advance;
 - e. the price charged covers a return journey for every school day of the relevant period;

- f. there will be no rebates for those deciding to travel for fewer than the maximum number of possible journeys per term, for example there is no rebate if a young person decides to use his/her bus pass for morning travel and returns by some other private means in the afternoon;
- g. if a seat is available a bus pass will only be issued on receipt of a completed application form, and correct payment;
- h. no guarantee can be given that the bus will continue to run throughout a young person's time at a school, or that the place on the bus will not be withdrawn at some future date if the place is required for a young person who is entitled to free travel;
- i. the concessionary charge will be waived for those eligible for Free School Meals or for those whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit;
- j. when there are more requests to pay for seats on a particular route than there are seats available they will be allocated in the descending order of priority shown in the table "Priority for Concessionary Places".

Priority for Concessionary Places

Priority	Category
1.	Those with a Statement of Special Educational Needs naming the school
2.	Looked After Children
3.	Years 12 and 13, if there is no service bus or train link available
4.	Children in receipt of Free School Meals or whose parent/parents are in receipt of the maximum of Working Tax Credit
5.	Those who travelled on the route the previous term
6.	By year group, in ascending order of priority from F1 to Year 11
7.	Years 12 and 13, if there is a service bus or train link available
8.	Those living closest using the shortest designated public route on the County Council's Geographic Information System

41. The charges payable under the concessionary fares scheme are shown in the table "Charges 2014/15". These charges are subject to annual review and prices will be from September 2015 and in subsequent years by 2%.

Charges 2014/15

Reception to Year 11 Under 3 miles	£290.40 per annum (£96.80 per two terms of the 6 term year)
Reception to Year 11 Over 3 miles	£541.20 per annum (£180.40 per two terms of the 6 term year)

Risk Assessments of Walking Routes

42. When there are issues raised over the possible safety of a walking route the Admissions Team will arrange for a full risk assessment by an expert in road safety.
43. When making risk assessments of walked routes to school the Local Authority will apply the guidance issued by Road Safety GB.
44. Assessments are made regarding the relationship between pedestrians and traffic only. Any personal safety issues of children travelling alone are not taken into account and assessments are made on the presumption that children will be accompanied as necessary by an adult, usually a parent.
45. The presence or absence of street lighting is not considered as a factor in the risk assessment.
46. There is also a presumption that all road users will behave reasonably and responsibly.

Reassessment of “unsafe walking routes”

47. The Local Authority operates a 3 year review process for routes designated as “unsafe walking routes.
48. From September 2014 all “unsafe walking routes” will be reassessed using the guidance issued by Road Safety GB.

Distance Measurement for Free Transport for Children of Low Income Families

49. The 2 mile limit is measured in the same way as the “statutory walking distance”. However, the 6 mile and 15 mile upper limits are not walking routes. They are measured along routes that are passable using a road route suitable for motorised vehicles.

Home address

50. A child’s home is considered to be the child’s main place of residence during the normal school week. Free transport can only be provided from that one address.

Travel to a friend’s home

51. No seat can be provided on an ad hoc basis to children wishing to travel to the homes of children who are entitled to free transport.

Escorts

52. Escorts are normally only provided when it has been established through the assessment or review process that a child with a Statement of Special Educational Needs has a specific need to be accompanied.
53. Escorts will not normally be provided in any other circumstances.

Parents accompanying children in OCC transport

54. Parents will not normally be able to travel in OCC provided transport.

Payment of mileage allowance

55. Where parents wish to take their children to school, and it is therefore possible to avoid the provision of a taxi, the Local Authority may agree to the payment of a mileage allowance.
56. The mileage allowance is provided for the child's journey to school and the return to the child's home.
57. The decision to provide a mileage allowance will be made by the School Admissions Team in the case of children offered free travel for attendance at mainstream schools.
58. In the case children subject to a Statement of Special Educational Need the decision to provide a mileage allowance may also be made by the Special Educational Needs Team.
59. A central record will be maintained of students' details, including the agreed home to school mileage. The claim and payment process will be managed by the Local Authority rather than by individual schools.
60. The mileage will be approved by the Local Authority and there will be no negotiation over the rate to be paid, or over the distance to be travelled, which will always be the shortest route available. Parents are not provided with a mileage allowance for their own return to home in the morning or their journey to the school in the afternoon, i.e. the LA pays a mileage allowance for two journeys per day rather than four. The mileage allowance is provided for the child's journey to school and the return to the child's home. The mileage allowance is 40p per mile.
61. If the Local Authority has agreed to the payment of a mileage allowance an invitation to claim, pre-populated with the required information, will be sent to the parents concerned 3 times a year, approximately 2 weeks before the end of Terms 2, 4 and 6.
62. Payments may be made cheque or by BACS. Parents will be asked to sign a declaration indicating the number of days they wish to claim and the

preferred payment method. They will then need to contact their child's school to ask the school to validate the number of days of attendance before returning the form to School Transport to arrange payment.

63. Payment by BACS will take approximately 2 weeks and payment by cheque may take slightly longer.
64. If through a change in circumstance the payment of the mileage allowance proves no longer to be the cheapest way of transporting the child to school the alternative means of travel will be offered and the parent will be given up to 6 weeks to consider the new arrangement. At the end of that period or when the alternative means of transport is taken up, whichever is the sooner, the mileage allowance will be withdrawn.

Changes to school start and finish times

65. Oxfordshire is divided into a number of zones for transport purposes and new contracts are entered into as part of a six year cycle. However, schools can change start and finish times at any time.
66. The Local Authority will normally only amend established routes, including pick up and drop off times, at the start of a new contract period for the relevant zone.
67. Any amendments to the timetables of home to school transport services introduced prior to the end of a 6 year contract period will only be agreed if they do not involve additional costs for the Local Authority or if the relevant school is willing to fund the additional cost.
68. These arrangements are not issues that can be considered by the Appeals & Tribunals Sub-Committee under the transport appeal arrangements.

Code of Conduct

69. A Code of Conduct applies to travel on home to school transport services and will be publicised on the Local Authority's public website every academic year. Travellers are expected to follow the Code of Conduct and failure to do so can result in free or concessionary travel being withdrawn. This will be produced by the Admissions Team.

Responsibilities

70. Every academic year the Local Authority will publish on its public website a document setting out the responsibilities of all parties involved in home to school transport. This will be produced by the Admissions Team.

Alteration to home to school transport routes

71. Routes may be amended or extended to accommodate additional travellers who are entitled to free travel.

72. Routes will not be extended to accommodate travellers or prospective travellers who are not eligible for free travel unless they are in Years 12 and 13 and would not otherwise be able to access post16 education.
73. Additional pick-up and drop off points will not be established for travellers or prospective travellers who are not eligible for free travel unless they are in Years 12 and 13 and would not otherwise be able to access post16 education.

Assistance to schools and colleges

74. Subject to the availability of resources, the Local Authority will provide advice to schools or colleges that wish to establish transport links funded either by parents or schools/colleges.

Transport Appeals

75. There is a two stage review/ appeals process for parents who wish to challenge a decision about:
 - a. the transport arrangements offered;
 - b. their child's eligibility;
 - c. the distance measurement;
 - d. the safety of the route.
76. The appeal process is not intended as a means of challenging the law on home to school transport or for changing the lawfully adopted policy of the Local Authority.
77. Appeals are concerned with individual circumstances and are not a means of setting precedents for future application of the agreed policy or the law on home to school travel.

Stage 1

78. A parent has 20 working days from receipt of the Local Authority's home to school transport decision to make a written request asking for a review of the decision.
79. The written request should detail why the parent believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances the parent believes should be considered when the decision is reviewed. This should be made on the Stage 1 Review Form.
80. Within 20 working days of receipt of the parent's written request (the Stage 1 Review Form) the Admissions and Transport Services Manager will review the original decision and then write to the parent setting out the parent outcome of the review detailing:
 - a. the nature of the decision reached;
 - b. how the review was conducted, including the standard followed (for example Road Safety GB);
 - c. information about other departments and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process;
 - d. what factors were considered;
 - e. the rationale for the decision reached;

- f. information on how to proceed to Stage 2 of the appeals process (if the review has upheld the original decision regarding home to school transport).

Stage 2

- 81. A parent has 20 working days from receipt of the Stage 1 decision to make a written request to escalate the matter to Stage 2.
- 82. Within 40 working days an independent appeal will consider written and verbal representations from the parent and officer/officers and give a detailed written outcome setting out:
 - a. the nature of the decision reached;
 - b. how the review was conducted (including the standard followed, for example the application of the criteria set out in Road Safety GB);
 - c. information about other departments and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process;
 - d. what factors were considered;
 - e. the rationale for the decision reached.
- 83. Those hearing an independent appeal will not have taken part in the initial decision, or the Stage 1 Review, and will be independent of the process to date.
- 84. Those sitting as members of an independent appeal panel will receive training before hearing appeals. This will include general training on natural justice and the conduct of appeal hearings and specific training on the guidance on home to school travel and transport and the Local Authority's Home to School Transport Policy.
- 85. A representative of the Admissions Team will present the LA's reasons for not providing transport and appellants can present a case in writing and /or in person (if the parent wishes, accompanied by a friend). The format of the appeal is set out below:
 - a. presentation of the LA's case by the LA representative;
 - b. panel members and the parent are able to ask questions of the LA representative;
 - c. presentation of the parent's case;
 - d. summing up by the LA representative;
 - e. summing up of the parents case;
 - f. both the LA representative and the parent/parent's friend will leave the hearing together;
 - g. consideration of the case by the independent appeal panel;
 - h. the independent panel makes a decision as to whether to uphold or refuse the appeal.
- 86. The Independent Panel will send out a decision letter within 5 working days.
- 87. The decision of the independent appeal panel will be considered binding by the LA and there is no further right of appeal.

88. The LA will not consider requests for a further transport appeal within the same academic year unless there has been a significant change of circumstance.

Local Government Ombudsman

89. Following a Stage 2 appeal the information given to parents will make it clear that there is a right of complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, but only if complainants consider that there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules or if there are any other irregularities in the way the appeal was handled. If the complainant considers the decision of the independent panel to be flawed on public law grounds, the complainant may apply for judicial review.

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