

# REVIEW OF HEREFORDSHIRE MUSIC SERVICE

## REPORT BY HEAD OF COMMISSIONING AND IMPROVEMENT

HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

7 JUNE, 2006

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### Schools Affected

All schools.

### Purpose

To consider the funding and financial underpinning of the Music Service.

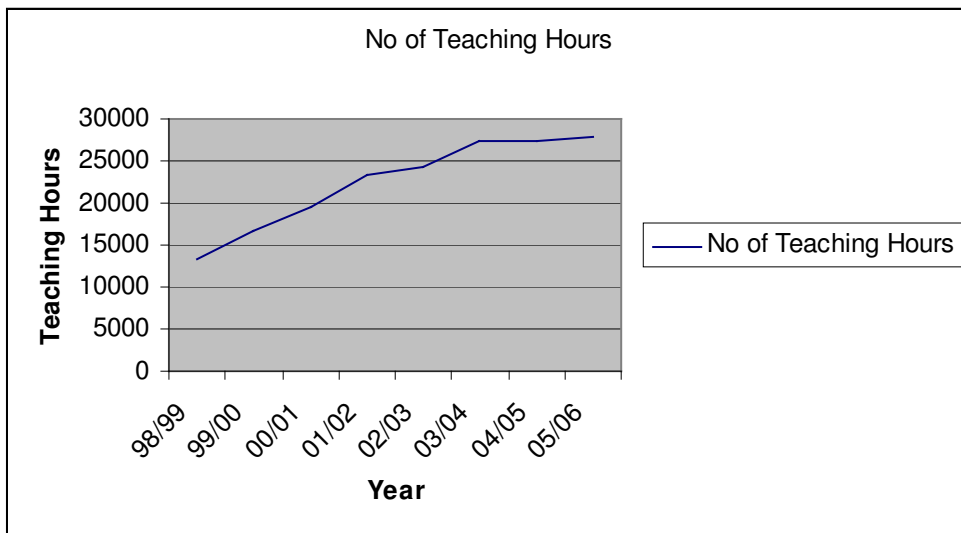
### Financial Implications

The changes will affect pupils, parents and schools.

### Report

#### Brief History

1. Until 1998 Herefordshire Music Service formed part of the Hereford and Worcester Music Service as its Western Division. In 1998 as a unitary authority Herefordshire separated from Worcestershire and took control of the Music Service appointing a Head for the Service and developing a structured management team that would further expand and develop music based activities throughout the County and in particular for all Herefordshire schools.
2. Funding for the new Service was, and still is, generated through charging schools for their hourly teaching needs and through charging schools for the hire of Music Service musical instruments. Initially Herefordshire Council covered the shortfall in income to cover costs with just over £200,000 being given to cover costs.
3. In 1999, a year later, the Government introduced a Standards Fund grant to all Music Services in England to equal the amount that each local authority was supporting their own Music Service. This was intended to develop and underpin Music Service activities. The amount awarded to Herefordshire Music Service was £219,700. A further £10,000 was added in 2003 for developing 'Wider Opportunities' for music with each local authority.
4. On the introduction of the government Music Service grant, Herefordshire Council in common with other local authorities, withdrew financial support to the Music Service. It is important to note that the Standards Fund grant has remained at the same level and not increased over the years to cover inflation and the extra costs of an expanding Service.
5. The following diagram illustrates how teaching has developed from 1998 to the present day; this development is the result of increases in requests from schools and parents. In short, the number of teaching hours provided has doubled since 1998:



The average number of children receiving instrumental musical tuition and support in Herefordshire is 8.07% compared to the national average of 7.4%.

6. The income is used to:

- Maintain a relatively low charging structure
- Develop curriculum support
- Organise and develop out of school rehearsals for bands and orchestras
- Expand the bursary programme of free tuition and instrument hire to children from disadvantaged families
- Deliver free concerts to schools
- Offer free individual instrument demonstrations to schools
- Offer free starter lessons on 'Endangered Species' instruments
- Maintain and increase the level and quality of musical instruments in our stock
- Develop greater awareness and participation in music throughout the County
- Develop links with other organisations e.g. visit from Australian school – 160 children to give joint concerts in July 2006 in Herefordshire
- Organise the BBC Hereford and Worcester annual young musicians Showcase concert
- Organise Royal Schools and Trinity Guildhall School of Music Examination centres
- As and when opportunities permit, usually from previous year underspends from the Directorate, as a whole, modest amounts of funding have been made available for investment in the instrument stock.

## **7. Concerns**

From September 2006 the hourly charge for tuition is increasing to £25 per hour, termly charges for instrument hire £34 for wind and brass and £21 for strings. These charges are equivalent to £400 per year for half hour weekly tuition plus £102 per year for the hire of a wind/brass instrument or £63 per year for the hire of a string instrument without any subsidy.

The Head of the Music Service advises that there is a danger that charges are becoming unacceptably high for some families and will exclude low income children from playing an instrument with tuition. The doubling of teaching hours since 1998 suggests that for parents who can afford to pay, there is no shortage in demand for music tuition.

## **Recommendations**

**The Forums views are sought on the 3 options for the long term future of the Music Service set out below.**

- a) No change: continue as at present by increasing the hourly teaching rate and hire charge for instruments on an annual base in line with increases in costs**
- b) The Service could reduce costs:**
  - 1) Reduce or stop the out of school ensemble activities i.e. no Youth Orchestra;**
  - 2) Stop funding the Music Pool curriculum support to schools (saving £15,000 per year);**
  - 3) Restructure: this would be difficult since the recent 'Best Value Report' of the Music Service already established excellent value for money was established in staffing.**
- c) Subsidy:**
  - 1) A regular annual budget contribution from the Schools Budget of £100,000 plus annual inflation;**
  - 2) Encourage schools to subsidise the provision of music service from school budget at the discretion of governors;**
  - 3) Consider whether the current scheme for bursaries for children from disadvantaged families should be expanded at a cost to be determined.**