

REVIEW OF PROVISION OF SCHOOL PLACES: PROGRESS REPORT

Report By: Director of Children's Services

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To consider the progress made in the Review of School Provision, and the next stages in the process, and to comment on the proposals announced on Thursday 10th January 2008.

Financial Implications

2. The outcome of the review will have considerable implications for the Dedicated Schools Grant and for some Local Authority budget. The full detail will be set out when recommendations are made to Cabinet. The staff requirement is being met within existing resources.

Background

3. At its last meeting on 5th October 2007 Scrutiny Committee gave its broad support for the Principles to guide the future provision of school places in Herefordshire. In light of all the comments received some relatively minor changes were made prior to approval by the Cabinet on 29th November 2007. The most significant change was the addition of a principle on the role of the school within the community. The report to Cabinet together with principles paper is at appendix 1.
4. The Review has now moved to the next stage which has involved the publication of draft proposals on 10/11th January, copies of which were provided to Members (appendix 2).
5. The views of all interested parties are sought on these proposals in a consultation period which extends to Friday 21st March. In this time meetings will be held with staff, governors, and parents of those schools specifically affected by reorganisation. In addition issues will be discussed at meetings of the Schools Forum, the Local Admissions Forum, the Children's Trust, the Shadow Board, the Herefordshire Association of Governors, HASH, Teaching and Non Teaching Trade Unions, and the Herefordshire Association of Local Councils.
6. Written comments will be sought from other statutory consultees such as the Learning and Skills Council, Diocesan Education Boards, and surrounding authorities.
7. The results of these consultations will be reported to Cabinet in late April/early May with recommendations on whether public notices should be issued for a further 8 week period of statutory consultation. The aim is to complete any statutory consultation in time for Cabinet to determine the notice at the end of July. The Council is the ultimate decision

making body albeit objectors would still have a right to appeal to the National Adjudicator.

8. At present it is proposed that the majority of changes take effect in September 2009.
9. Turning to the proposals themselves, they are broadly divided into proposals relating to changes in admission numbers and changes relating to the closure and amalgamation of school. These are listed in appendix 2. Proforma are provided to capture consultees' views on each of the proposals. The Committee is asked for its comments on the broad strategy adopted in the review and on each of the proposals.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT THE COMMITTEE

- (a) **Note the progress and the subsequent stages to follow; and**
- (b) **Comment on the proposals set out for consultation to Friday 21st March**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.