

Committee(s) Education Board Community and Children's Services	Dated: 12 May 2016 13 May 2016
Subject: Department for Education White Paper - <i>Educational Excellence Everywhere</i>	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
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Summary

In March 2016, the Department for Education (DfE) published a White Paper 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' in which it sets out the government's intentions to introduce significant changes to the way schools are run and the way local authorities support them.

The White Paper contains a number of changes, many of which relate to leadership models in schools. Of the changes, the most widely discussed are the DfE's intention that every school in the country should convert to academy status and that the local authority role for school improvement should reduce proportionally as each of its maintained schools convert so that when all schools convert, there is no further school improvement role or the distribution of funding to schools for local authorities.

Recommendation(s)

- Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. An academy is a state funded (maintained) school that is run independently from local authorities. On April 1st 2016 there were 5,655 open academies in England, making up 25% of schools within the maintained sector. Originally the academies programme was introduced as a mechanism for intervening where schools had consistently low standards. At that time it was usual to change the leadership team and introduce external sponsors who would add value to the school.
2. Since then, the reasons for converting to academy status have broadened and a significant number of Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) have developed, some with a large number of schools within the Trust and often operating regionally. From May 2013, it became no longer possible to introduce a new maintained school that is not an academy.

Current Position

3. The White Paper has caused considerable debate amongst education professionals, politicians and other stakeholders alike. The main proposals are:
 - That all maintained schools will be made to convert to academy status by 2020, with an absolute cut off point of 2022. The title for local authority school sites will be transferred to the Treasury

- That the local authority role for administering funding be changed so that schools will receive funding directly from the Multi Academy Trusts that they join or set up.
 - That the local authority role in school improvement will diminish as each of its maintained schools convert to academy status and will cease entirely when the last school converts.
 - That the local authority role will be enhanced in some areas and a new paradigm will be introduced in which local authorities will be expected to influence academies and facilitate important discussions such as failing schools in their area or agreement to expand as required with the EFA and Regional Schools Commissioner.
4. Its publication comes very quickly after the publication of a consultation on a national funding formula and underlines that consultations proposals to change the level of funding to schools across the country, levelling up those schools who have been financially disadvantaged with other schools who receive higher funding.
 5. This proposal has itself caused great controversy as although there is consensus of opinion that no school should be underfunded, those who have historically received higher levels of funding may have a significant reduction to their current funding levels, and be unable to let long standing commitments simply fall away.
 6. Within the last year there have been DfE consultations on strengthening the local authority role in safeguarding and in particular children missing education and a consultation on the provision of services for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. The White Paper broadly underlines its proposals for each.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

7. The City of London is discussing the implications of the White Paper with the Sir John Cass Foundation and the school. These discussions include evaluating the financial impact of changes to the current funding model, the way in which the City and the Foundation can continue to support the school when and if roles change and providing advice on options for constitutional models for 'academisation'.

Conclusion

8. There is significant change proposed within the White Paper which if introduced in legislation will have a significant effect on Sir John Cass School and the City of London's future role in education services. Whilst proposals are still in discussion, a workstream is underway to test their implications to allow informed decisions to safeguard the best interests of the City's resident children for now and in the future.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' – Briefing Note

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