

**Children and Young People  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
14 December 2011**

**An update on the offer that the authority will be making  
available to Academies for 2012/13**

**Recommendations**

- (1) To consider any implications of the development of the Academy programme within Warwickshire and the service provision for 2012/13
- (2) To agree any areas for scrutiny, as appropriate

**1.0 Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide:

- An update on the development of the Academy programme within Warwickshire
- An update on the offer that the authority will be making available to Academies for 2012/13 within the context of the wider review of all Traded Services
- An update on the support and advice being made available to Governors in relation to the process of conversion to Academy status

**2.0 The Academy Programme in Warwickshire**

2.1 **Appendix A** shows the current list of Schools in Warwickshire who are actively pursuing conversion to Academy status. Others are in the early stages of discussing conversion. In summary, as of 8 November 2011, we have:

- 14 Academies and one Free School open in Warwickshire
- Two Academies due to open on 1 December 2011
- Four Academies due to open on 1 January 2012
- Five secondary schools who are consulting on conversion or have submitted applications to the Department for Education (DfE) with intentions to convert during 2012/13
- One primary school planning to convert on 1 April 2012

2.2 The Academies and Free Schools working group continues to co-ordinate the local authority (LA) response to and support for schools moving to Academy status and to bring together all services trading with Academies.

**3.0 Service Provision to Academies from the LA**

3.1 There are broadly two categories of services provided to Academies from WCC: those that are provided free of charge and those that are chargeable (i.e., traded services).

- 3.2 For services that are provided free of charge, a Memorandum of Understanding is currently being developed. This sets out Warwickshire County Council's statement of intent to collaborate and work in partnership with schools converting to Academy status to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people in Warwickshire. It also describes the nature of our relationship.
- 3.3 Academies will continue to receive certain services from WCC free of charge as the LA is under a statutory obligation to continue providing these services. They are funded from centrally retained budgets, so Academies receive these services on exactly the same basis as maintained schools. These non-chargeable services primarily provide specialist support to children in relation to special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities and, broadly, these include:
- Home-to-school transport (including SEN)
  - Educational Psychology Service, SEN Statementing and Assessment
  - Monitoring of SEN provision, parent partnerships etc
  - Prosecution of parents for non-attendance
  - Individually assigned SEN resources for pupils with rare conditions needing expensive tailored provision
  - Provision of pupil referral units or alternative education provision for pupils who are no longer registered at a maintained school or Academy
- 3.4 There are other discretionary services that the LA will continue to provide to Academies free of charge as there is a mutual benefit in doing so. An example of this would be immediate support for Academies in the event of a major emergency.
- 3.5 The offer of traded services to Academies is outlined in section 4 below.

## **4.0 Traded Services**

- 4.1 Academies, like LA-maintained schools, can choose how to obtain support for service provision. Head teachers of secondary schools considering conversion to Academy have expressed a wish to continue to work closely with WCC, whatever their status and this sentiment has been confirmed in meetings held with all head teachers during November. This is welcome, but the LA cannot take this expression of interest for granted as Academy schools are seriously considering other options and will exercise choice to seek alternative services in some areas if the LA does not shift its emphasis towards a greater customer focus and commercial awareness. If the LA wishes to retain this market, it will be necessary to demonstrate that our traded services are of high quality, offer value for money and can compete with similar services now being offered by the private sector.
- 4.2 A wide range of traded services is currently offered to Academies through Warwickshire Education Services (WES). These have been carefully designed to meet the needs of Academies and to reflect the changing framework of responsibilities.

- 4.3 The offer of traded services to Academies for 2012/13 is currently under review in line with the following two recommendations from the Council's Future Relationship with Schools review, as reported to Cabinet in July and October 2011:

Recommendation 8 – That a detailed review of every traded service is carried out and completed by 31 October 2011.

Recommendation 11 – That all traded services should be required to balance income and expenditure, without any subsidy from the Council's revenue grant effective from the financial year commencing 1 April 2012. The only exceptions to this rule would need to be formally approved by Cabinet based upon clearly defined benefits for the Council and/or schools that justified a subsidy.

- 4.4 Immediately after these recommendations were presented to Cabinet in July 2011, the WES Board took the following steps to address the issues raised:

- Briefings for all managers of traded services were arranged in July to provide an update on the corporate review and its recommendations relating to the traded services provided by the LA.
- A business case template was established and published throughout the Council with the instruction that any service wishing to continue to trade with schools must complete and return the template, approved by their Head of Service, by 19 September 2011.
- 42 business cases were received from across the Council. One further service took the decision to cease trading for 2012 before the process started, making the total number of services reviewed 43.
- A small team was appointed to review all the business cases submitted and to produce a comprehensive analysis and report to be considered by the WES Board at two meetings in October.
- The WES Board reviewed the proposals for each business case submitted. The review considered the financial viability of each service given the service performance, market assessment and potential options going forward. Taking the whole business case into account, the WES Board made recommendations for each service under the following headings:
  - Continue trading
  - Continue trading subject to re-pricing/re-packaging. This is either as recommended within the business case or as requested by WES Board
  - Not to trade from 1 April 2012 onwards
- These recommendations will form the basis of a report to Corporate Board in November and Cabinet in December.
- Those services approved as being viable to trade from 2012 will be marketed to schools on 6 January 2012 with a return date for schools to make their decisions of 2 March 2012
- An analysis and review of the schools' buy-back of LA-traded services will take place in May 2012 to inform the LA's approach to the future viability of those services.

## **5.0 Support and Advice to Governors**

- 5.1 At the Overview and Scrutiny meeting in September, members requested that further advice and support was offered to governors in relation to the Academy-conversion process.
- 5.2 The Academies and Free Schools Working Group developed a comprehensive guidance document for all schools in May this year that provides information for governors of schools considering conversion to assist them in deciding whether this is the best option for their school. This guidance was issued to all Chairs of Governors in June. It is currently being updated and will be re-issued to all schools and Chairs of Governors before Christmas 2011.
- 5.3 Comprehensive guidance and support is also available for schools through the DfE website.

## **6.0 Summary**

- 6.1 Secondary school interest in converting to Academy status is continuing with 20 secondary Academies likely to be open by the end of this financial year.
- 6.2 Work is underway to develop a Memorandum of Understanding between WCC and Academies to ensure clarity of service provision – for both traded and non-chargeable services.
- 6.3 The LA's guidance for schools considering conversion to Academy status will be updated and re-issued before Christmas 2011.
- 6.4 Those services approved as being viable to trade from 2012 will be marketed to all schools, including Academies on 6 January 2012.

## Background Papers

1. CYPOSC, 1 September 2011 – 04 Relationship with Schools and 05 Academies and Traded Services  
<https://democratic.warwickshire.gov.uk/cm5/Calendarofmeetings/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/1756/Committee/417/Default.aspx>
2. Cabinet, 14 July 2011 – 07 Future Relationship with Schools  
<https://democratic.warwickshire.gov.uk/cm5/Calendarofmeetings/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/1745/Committee/395/Default.aspx>
3. Cabinet, 13 October 2011 – 05 Future Relationship with Schools  
<https://democratic.warwickshire.gov.uk/cm5/Calendarofmeetings/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/1747/Committee/395/Default.aspx>

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