

Schools Forum

December 5th 2013

An Update on the Consortia Model

This report relates to both maintained and academy schools

Recommendation

The Schools Forum is recommended to:

- 1.0 Note and comment on the development of the consortia model.
- 2.0 Endorse the proposed Governance arrangements
- 3.0 Comment on opportunities to further embed the consortia model to support greater efficiencies and opportunities to income generate,
- 4.0 Consider and make recommendations on the proposed sustainability options

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Schools Forum on the implementation of a peer to peer school improvement model based on the Wigan 'consortia' model that was endorsed by the Corporate Board in May 2013.

The objectives of this report are to:

1. Present an update on the implementation of the consortia approach to school improvement.
2. Present a proposal for measuring the impact of the Consortia Model.
3. Present proposed governance arrangements that will support an ongoing dialogue with schools and learning providers and key stakeholders including: Elected Members, Governors, Schools Forum, Academy Sponsors, WES and Strategic Commissioning.
4. Present opportunities to streamline commissioning arrangements and opportunities to income generate.
5. Present proposals for sustainability of the consortia model for school improvement.

6. Present proposals to develop the current consortia model to include early years and post 16 providers.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The report to Corporate Board in May 2013 set out a rationale for change with regard to how the Learning and Achievement Business Unit will support underperforming schools and learning providers.

The rationale for change was underpinned by:

- The need to make efficiencies
- The changing role of Local Authorities as set out in The Importance of Teaching and the ACDS paper 'The Reality of the Middle Tier', states that "*...local authorities have a vital role in supporting and challenging schools to enable pupils to reach their potential... Local authorities have a vital role in supporting and challenging schools to enable pupils to reach their potential... in a time of increasing autonomy for schools...*"
- The Local Authority Ofsted Inspection Framework introduced by HMCI in May 2013.
- The number of children and young people in WCC accessing good and outstanding schools is at 71% currently. The national average is 77% as of July 2013.
- The widening gap between performance for all children in WCC and the bottom 20%-those children fitting the criteria for free school meals (pupil premium)

1.2 The consortia model enables the LA to draw from the capacity within the system itself and provide an ongoing dialogue with all schools.

1.3 In this way the consortia provides a mechanism through which the LA is alerted to changes in performance at the earliest opportunity within all schools in the county. This minimises the risk of focussing all resources towards underperforming schools.

1.4 Therefore the consortia model prevent schools that are not 'in a category', so are not judged by Ofsted to be 'inadequate' or in 'special measures', from slipping into category.

1.5 A key feature of the consortia model is that it is 'status blind' and the aspiration is that all schools and learning providers engage with the model regardless of their status.

1.6 Resources to Support the service area and the savings to be applied

1.7 Learning and Performance is one of the three service areas within the Learning and Achievement Business Unit. The preface to this report sets out how the Business Unit has been rationalised to meet the statutory duties set out in the Education Act 2006. The resources to support School Improvement are £2,524,236. The savings applied to this service area are £0

Table 2 Themes	Total Budget	DSG Budget	Core Budget	Savings
Early Years	24,180,892	16,216,322	7,964,570	2,988,192
SEN & Vulnerable	36,692,901	34,807,200	1,885,701	624,856
Transport - Sufficiency	14,098,519	30,613	14,067,906	6,500,000
School Improvement	2,524,236	261,972	2,262,264	0
Capital - Sufficiency & Places	503,040	57,851	445,189	150,000
Other HoS Budgets/ Out of Scope	10,090,341	3,177,796	6,912,545	2,000,000
Total L&A	88,089,929	54,551,754	33,538,175	12,263,048
*Savings Transferred to Early Intervention				1,750,000

1.8 There are no savings to achieve within this area although this report does set out options for sustainability.

1.9 However, the focus of this report is to update Schools Forum on consortia model and sustainability options.

2.0 An update on the implementation of the consortia approach to school improvement

Date	Event / Activity	Detail
01/03/13	Conference in Wigan	LA and head teacher representatives visit to Wigan to see how model works in practice
08/05/13 & 09/05/13	Wigan Consortium Model Conference at Chesford Grange Hotel	Conference with head teachers with input from Wigan to discuss / develop the new model
01/05/2013	Corporate Board	Proposals presented and signed off
16/05/2013	People Group – Group Leadership Team (GLT)	Sign off of proposals
22/05/13	Primary Strategic Policy Group	Feedback from the Wigan Conference in May (primary headteacher representatives)
23/05/13	Secondary Strategic Policy Group	Feedback from the Wigan Conference in May (secondary headteacher representatives)
07/06/13	Consortia Model Task & Finish Group	Representative group of headteachers and LA officers met to discuss implementation of the new model
18/06/2013	Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Report 'Championing the Learner – A Strategy for Change - A collaborative approach to school improvement. With recommendations. Signed Off.
26/06/2013	Governors Forum	Presentation to School governors introducing the new proposed school improvement model

27/06/13 & 03/07/13	Primary Headteachers' Business Meetings	Presentation to all primary headteachers introducing the new proposed model and further discussion of how this would be implemented
28/06/13	Secondary Heads' and College Principals' Conference	Presentation to all secondary headteachers introducing the new proposed model and further discussion of how this would be implemented
10/09/2013	Consortia Model Task & Finish Group	Representative group of headteachers and LA officers met to discuss implementation of the new model
12/09/13	Cabinet	Report presented to elected members with recommendations that they endorse the new delivery model for school improvement. Funding is allocated to pump prime the model. Signed Off.
30/09/13	Consortia are established	There are 12 Primary, 4 Secondary and 1 Special Schools Consortia
30/09/13	The Business Intelligence Unit develop the 'consortia data packs'	The Consortia Data packs are circulated to Consortia Leads
October 2013	Consortium meet	Nomination of chair per consortium; dialogue of development through data. Establishing programmes and new working processes.
November 2013	Primary and Secondary Improvement Boards meet	Development and embedding of the role of the Improvement Boards as monitoring, measuring and strategically reporting to School's Forum and

		Cabinet.
December 2013	Funding devolved to schools wb 2/12/13	£6000 for consortium chair for those under 15, £12000 for those 15 and over with consortia with less than 15 schools receiving £24200 and for those 15 and over receiving £28200 .

3.0 Impact to Date

3.1 Although the consortia model is in its early operational stages, the level of engagement is highly positive. 224 schools (95%) are engaged in a consortium and of the 17 consortium in operation across primary secondary and special schools; all bar 4 have nominated a consortium lead at the time of writing.

3.2 The messages emerging from the initial meeting of the School Improvement Boards indicate that there is a market to income generate. All schools regardless of status find themselves in the same boat; the consortium model brings together schools to work with less resource to the best use. Essentially, wise and appropriate use of budget supports the move from principle to practice. The Improvement Boards are already beginning to identify gaps in provision, offering WCC in built market research. The Primary Improvement Board have already indicated a desire to purchase bespoke data packs from the LA that will enable them to present information to Ofsted in a meaningful way to support the progress for vulnerable groups – an open analysis of the RAISE Online documentation issued to all schools before the end of the first term. Currently, schools are paying £650 each for this service to external, private providers.

3.3 Another area the Primary Improvement Board has identified is support with the embedding of the revised Early Years Framework and support for Head Teachers. Coventry City Council offer an Early Years package that if WCC mirrored, all indications suggest that Primary schools would purchase to support the much needed development of early years achievement within the county.

3.4 Messages emerging from the Secondary Improvement Board largely focused on the opportunities to realign policy and strategy groups to allow head teachers and the consortia model access and influence on strategic decision making process and empowerment through accountability, potentially through the Impact Evaluation model.

4.0 A proposal for measuring the impact of the Consortia Model

4.1 The role of the LA within the consortia model is to provide data to enable schools to identify strengths and areas of development across the group.

4.2 The LA will measure the impact of the individual consortia through the School Improvement Boards. The Improvement Board will be serviced with 'position statements' setting out the baseline for each group and progress made in supporting progress. These will occur annually with summative assessment data, with a developmental period for adjusting and aligning results data to the proposed new performance tables for first publication in January 2016. This will be produced following on from the validation and publication of the Performance Tables in January 2014. With the imminent publication of the HMCI Annual Ofsted Report, the consortium and the Improvement Boards will be supported by the current and developing Ofsted grades on a consortium, county and national baseline in the New Year.

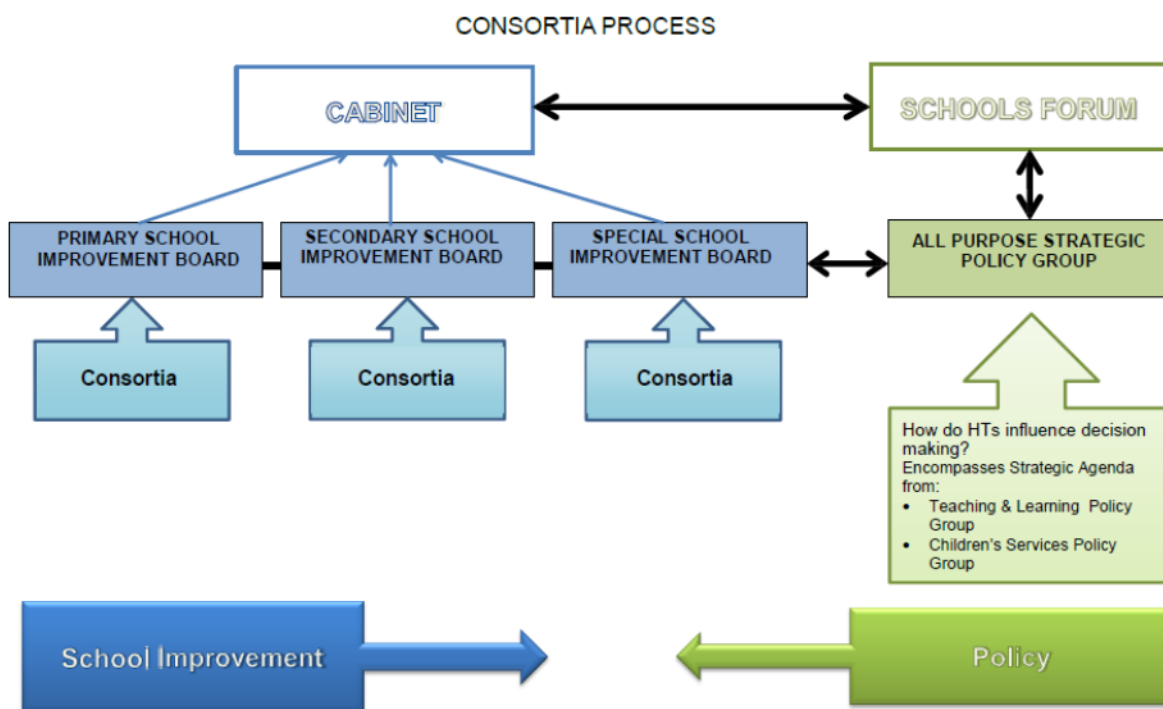
4.3 It is important to note that a key aspect of the Consortia model is that it is 'asset based' so although targets will be set and monitored through the Improvement Boards, the objective is to identify and share good practice as well as identify and address deficiencies.

4.4 The impact evaluation is a set of ambitious targets leading towards workable targets. An impact evaluation model has been developed from the key principles laid out at the Head Teacher's working party, through to the Task and Finish group and following on from the Improvement Boards and support from the Griffin Teaching School Alliance, a bespoke by consortium model will be produced to demonstrate county wide efficacy and establish pockets of good practice. The audacious objectives are:

- 85% "buy-in" to consortia model by schools/providers
- All Primary and Secondary Schools in Warwickshire judged good or better by Ofsted
- Warwickshire county data for primary and secondary shows measured improvement in progress and attainment year on year, gaps narrowing for vulnerable learners and all outcomes above national figures
- Ofsted inspection of LA judges Consortia Model good or better
- Positive destinations for all school leavers

4.5 The model baselines schools, provides a resource, has a process via the improvement board to support accountability and to measure the impact of investment.

4.6 Present proposed governance arrangements that will support an ongoing dialogue with schools and learning providers and key stakeholders including: Elected Members, Governors, Schools Forum, Academy Sponsors, WES and Strategic Commissioning.



5.0 Present opportunities to streamline commissioning arrangements and opportunities to income generate

5.1 To fully realise the opportunities latent within the consortia model, there needs to be a mechanism to support an ongoing dialogue with key stakeholders and decision making for a including:

- Governors
- Elected Members
- Diocese
- Academy Sponsors
- Schools Forum
- Cabinet

5.2 The rationale for this engagement is to enable schools to influence strategic commissioning and political decision making process. This process needs to be two way so that information is fed up from schools to inform commissioning and policy making and information is fed down to schools and providers so that they are fully informed and able to respond to current legislation and budget efficiencies. A slim lining of the existing cycle of meetings to an All Purpose Strategy Group, emerging from the Improvement Boards will allow head teachers to be empowered through offering Schools Forum and Cabinet reports into needs and issues arising in the changing education landscape.

5.3 To support this communication mechanism, a meeting cycle needs to be established that fits around the political decision making process and extends to schools forum and the School Improvement Boards.

5.4 There is a need to generate a methodology for working with WES. Improvement Boards have already established the potential for direct market research and to move forward, WCC through WES needs to establish the potential for these market opportunities and opportunities. In many respects, allowing the Consortia model to create a culture of research to product, allows for income generation. This can lead to profit generation, which in turn could well be fed back into the Consortia and act as additional or replacement to the pump primed funding currently received.

5.5 It is also worthwhile considering what a number of multi academy sponsors do in terms of economies of scale. EG, Midlands Academy Trust have sought to buy in support from the LA from HR. The consortium may well be in the same position to buy as a group. This both increases the opportunity for their voice to be heard so they are empowered but it also enables the LA to be more business-like in its marketing – essentially, we have an ideal opportunity to become customer focused and market driven.

6.0 Present proposals for sustainability of the consortia model for school improvement.

6.1 The options for sustainability are:

- Consortia commit funding per school to maintain the impetus of development. This is a high risk strategy as it will lead to disengagement and de incentivises the model at an early stage.

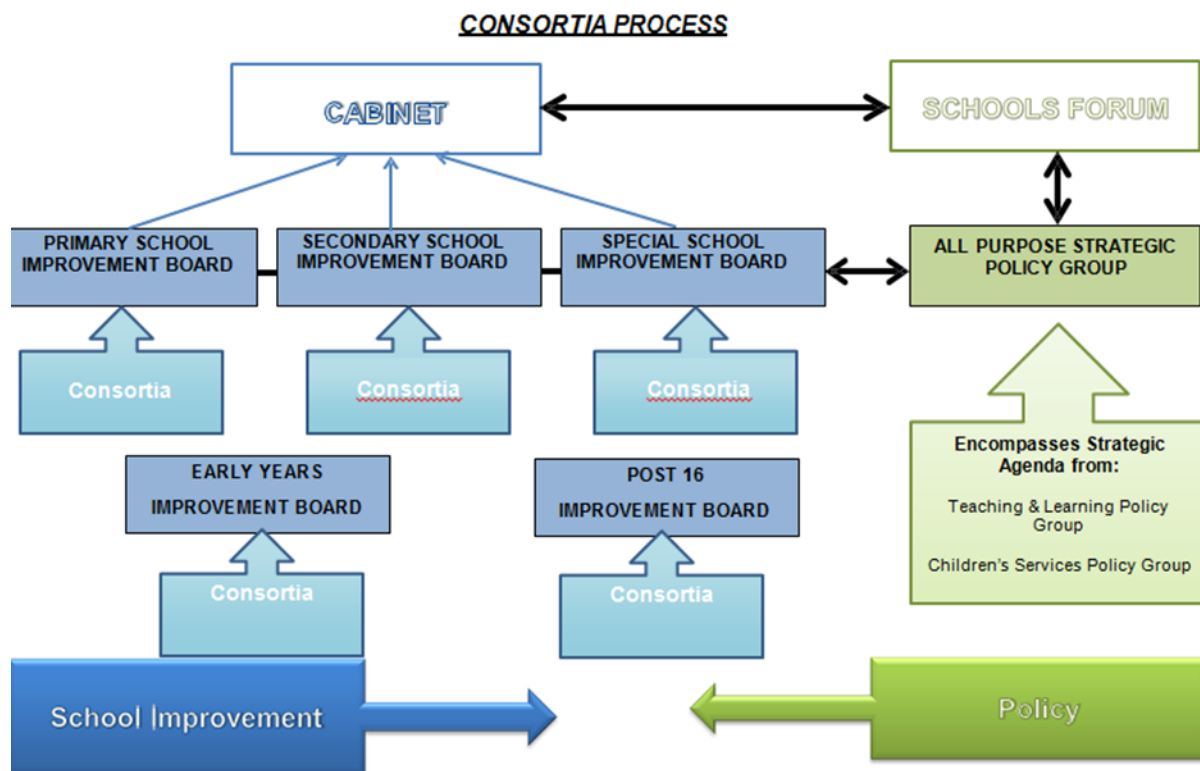
- People Group reserves commit the same amount for the financial year 2014/15 to allow the model to bed down whilst the funding within the DSG is reviewed with the Task and Finish Group for the Consortia and an element is redirected to sustain the model. A key risk in these early days of the consortia model is that the funding has drawn attention and incentive.
- Establishing the market is key to the LAs business development and another twelve months of funding in a similar vein would allow for the model to embed and evolve, especially considering the Impact Evaluation model and the inherent market research available to the LA via the consortia.
- Through better alignment with WES, opportunities are sought to income generate and part of the income is reinvested within the consortia model.

6.2 The recommendation will be that WCC commits LA funding for a second year with a view that immediate development commences on aligning more thoroughly with a market led business model with WES, would allow for the potential for a 'profit driven' model to be in operation for the 2015-16 academic year.

7.0 Present proposals to develop the current consortia model to include early years and post 16 providers

7.1 As we move to being all age in our scope we need to consider the next stages of the consortia. The addition of all settings to the consortia model is key. In many respects, the inclusion of early years settings offers will mirror the sector settings for primary and secondary currently in operation. The Post 16 framework needs consideration. It has been over 20 years since FE colleges became incorporated and to bring FE Colleges and post 16 providers together as a collective will be an innovative approach. However, initial discussions have established that, similar to the active post 16 providers group, commitment and uptake is high and we need to be able to offer the same level of challenge and support to all sectors.

7.2 There are some post 16 providers already connected with the consortia model, such as North Warwickshire and Hinckley College and the Midlands Academy Trust working with the Northern Secondary consortium. We will commence a consultation in the Spring of 2014, with a view of ascertaining the commitments of all post 16 providers within the county to work collaboratively, in a bid to be operational from September 2014.



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