



## Report to Children, Young People & Family Support Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2016

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**Report of:** Executive Director Children, Young People & Family Support

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**Subject:** The implications of 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' Government White Paper

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**Author of Report:** Antony Hughes, Director, Inclusion and Learning Services and Children's Commissioner

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**Summary:**

This report identifies the implications of the Government White Paper 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' published in March 2016 and specifically focuses on:

- The continuing role and responsibilities of the local authority in terms of education.
- The future role of governors – including in the context of academies
- The future role of Learn Sheffield.

This information has been requested by Cllr. Ian Saunders, Chair of the CYPFS Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee.

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**Type of item:** The report author should tick the appropriate box

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	<b>x</b>
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	<b>x</b>
Other	

**The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:**

- Have a clear understanding of the proposed changes to the role and functions of the Local Authority with regard to schools and education.
- Be aware of the future role of Learn Sheffield in working with partners to meet the requirements set out in the White Paper.

**Background Papers:**

'Educational Excellence Everywhere' – Government White Paper, March 2016

**Category of Report:** OPEN

**Report of** Executive Director Children, Young People & Family Support

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**Title of report:** The implications of 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' Government White Paper.

## **1. Introduction/Context**

1.1 In March the Government published its White Paper setting out its plans for further education reform over this Parliament. It builds on the recent Education and Adoption Act 2016, which significantly increased the powers of the Education Secretary and the eight Regional School Commissioners to intervene in schools.

The White Paper contains a clear policy aim that every school in England will become an Academy by 2022. This equates to roughly 15,000+ schools converting to Academy status over the next five years across the country. In Sheffield, it means approximately 111 schools to convert.

The Paper also clarifies the Government's stated policy around local authorities and education as well as the key commitments in the White Paper concerning schools.

### **2.1 The changing role of local authorities**

The White Paper proposes that by 2022 local authorities will no longer maintain schools and their role will be redefined to focus on three core duties which are outlined below:

- 1. Ensuring every child has a school place:** including school organisation so that there are sufficient school, special school and alternative provision places to meet demand. However, Government will reserve the right to intervene if local authorities do not engage with the free school programme. Local authorities will be handed back control of co-ordinating all in-year admissions and appeals. The local authority will retain responsibility for school transport policies and "take the lead in crisis management and emergency planning"
- 2. Ensuring the needs of vulnerable pupils are met** – incorporating existing duties around Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), safeguarding; promoting school attendance and tackling absence; ensuring that alternative provision is "available for headteachers to commission" for excluded pupils; Children Missing from Education; children at risk of radicalisation; working with schools on safeguarding; acting as corporate parent for looked after children and having a Virtual Head role.

- 3. Acting as champions for all parents and families** - including “working alongside elected mayors”; supporting parents through admissions; supporting parents of children with SEND and “co-producing local SEND policies, services and commissioning” and “championing high standards locally for all pupils”.

It is very likely that the three functions described above will result in local authorities retaining significant statutory duties relating to vulnerable pupils and school organisation. This will not become clear however, until the Government publishes its Education Bill.

- LAs are expected to encourage top performing multi-academy trusts (MATS) to support weaker schools and also set up new schools, with the approval of the Regional Schools Commissioners.
- The White paper states that “to retain expertise in the system and ensure children continue to benefit from the best talent in local authorities, we expect that some individuals working in local authority teams will leave to set up new trusts or join existing ones and become academy sponsors”
- The Government will “review local authority functions and responsibilities” including the “implications for the role of Director of Children’s Services and Lead Member for Children”. This will probably mean some deregulation of some existing duties around school improvement.
- For “maintained community schools” that convert, the land “will transfer to the Secretary of State, who will then grant a lease to the Academy trust”. This is very different from now, where the LA retains the land and leases to the Academy Trust.

Further legislation will be forthcoming shortly.

## **2.2 The future role of great leaders and governors**

- There will be an increased focus on leadership development training, delivered by successful schools, including teaching school alliances and multi-academy trusts.
- Stronger expectations on governing boards to fill skills gaps, including through training and help to recruit skilled people.
- A new competency framework for governance in different contexts to be developed.
- A database to be established of everyone involved in governance.
- New legislation to be created so that unsuitable individuals can be barred from being governors of maintained schools. This is already the case in academies and independent schools.

## **2.3 The future role of Learn Sheffield**

- During its first year of existence, Learn Sheffield has established strong relationships with schools in the primary, secondary and specialist sectors, regardless of schools’ maintained or academy status. This has been a real strength in its aim of improving outcomes for all Sheffield children.

- Learn Sheffield has further developed a school led system of school to school support through the brokering and commissioning of school improvement support from strong schools working with weaker schools and those identified as causing concern.
- Learn Sheffield has worked extensively with school leaders to identify a set of school improvement priorities and action plans which will form the structure of its work in the academic year 2016/17 and beyond.
- Learn Sheffield has built upon the existing locality based school networks to further strengthen joint partnership working across Sheffield in the key areas of school improvement.
- School leaders in the primary and secondary sectors are currently trialling a new school categorisation process ready for full implementation in September 2016. This work has been led and co-ordinated by Learn Sheffield and will identify the focus for school support next year.
- Learn Sheffield has co-ordinated and facilitated the work of the teaching school alliances, both Sheffield universities and local authority based teams so that schools across the city have access to a comprehensive range of professional development and support.
- Sheffield City Council officers continue to work in strong partnership with Learn Sheffield, holding it to account and ensuring support for schools, children and families is co-ordinated and effective.

### **3 What does this mean for the people of Sheffield?**

- The Government White Paper heralds some significant changes to the role, responsibilities and funding of Local Authority services to schools. However, the LA will be expected to retain its responsibilities for vulnerable children and for school organisation. Many of the proposed changes have been anticipated here in Sheffield with the creation of Learn Sheffield.
- Learn Sheffield has made an excellent start to its work with schools to improve outcomes for all Sheffield children and the proportion of schools achieving good or better judgements from Ofsted is higher than it has ever been. Learn Sheffield is also well placed to consolidate its position in leading and driving the school improvement agenda in the next academic year and beyond.
- We continue to share our aim to ensure that each and every child fulfils their own potential and is supported to grow into confident young people, able to enjoy their life experiences and contribute positively to the economy and their community.

### **4 Recommendations**

- To be aware of the implications of the White Paper for schools, the Local Authority, children and parents.
- Understand how the government White Paper 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' aligns with The Education and Adoption Act 2016.
- Agree how this report can contribute to any further work Scrutiny may wish to undertake with regard to the proposed educational legislation.