

Education in Rural Communities Scrutiny Inquiry - Action Plan

	Recommendation	Response/Proposed Action	Lead Officer	Completion Date
Policy				
1.1	Members noted the detailed information shared during the Inquiry Day and that the Directorate and partners who had been involved in the day were open and honest and participated with no pre-conceived ideas.	The Cabinet Member is grateful to those people who attended the inquiry day to assist the committee with its proceedings.		
1.2	Based on the evidence received, Members recommend that a policy be developed which would initiate a review of a school in certain circumstances and that it be noted that any review was just that, and would in no way automatically lead to a school closure.	The Cabinet Member agrees with the findings of the Committee. A policy will be developed, incorporating the views of the Scrutiny Committee.	MOT	May 2011
1.3	Members recommend that a set of criteria be established which would trigger an objective review of any school and that producing a policy to enable this process was important to allow for transparency and to be clear about the reasons behind any such review. Their recommendations in relation to these triggers are detailed in paras. 2.1 -2.5.	The Cabinet Member agrees that a set of indicators should be developed, in accordance with recently published DfE guidance, which will form a range of factors to be considered.	MOT	May 2011
1.4	Members recommend that any policy should apply to all schools across the County, not just rural schools.	The Cabinet Member agrees with the recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee.	MOT	May 2011

Education in Rural Communities Scrutiny Inquiry - Action Plan

Triggers				
2.1	Members felt there should be no identified minimum school size. They considered at length whether there was a need to include number on roll, projected numbers, average class size or surplus places as a trigger for review but felt these issues would be considered as part of a review but would not be triggers in themselves. Members therefore recommend as a trigger point for review a school where the number of full time equivalent teaching staff fell below a minimum of 1.5 full time equivalent teachers.	The Cabinet Member recognises that issues around school size is complex and will give consideration to the views of the Scrutiny Committee in respect of this matter.	MOT	May 2011
2.2	Members recognised the importance of good governance and strong leadership in any school and recommend that a further trigger for review should be where a school is unable to appoint a new head teacher within one year of the previous head teacher giving notice to leave, or where more than one head teacher leaves in a four year period. That the period in question becomes active immediately on approval of the policy	The Cabinet Member agrees with the recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee.	MOT	May 2011
2.3	Members were clear that high quality education and learning for all young people should be at the heart of any review. With regard to attainment members recommend a review be triggered when minimum attainment levels are shown not to have been met through the LEA inspection judgements. Members agreed the minimum attainment levels to be those shared	<p>The Cabinet Member agrees with the Scrutiny's Committee's view that high quality education should be central to any review.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member agrees that attainment and progression levels should be a key consideration in any</p>	MOT	May 2011

Education in Rural Communities Scrutiny Inquiry - Action Plan

	<p>with them during the inquiry day as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) an average of 78 points across the 12 areas of learning described in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) profile; b) Level 2b+ in reading, writing, speaking and listening and mathematics at the end of KS1; c) Make at least 2 levels progress in English and in mathematics between KS1 and KS2; d) 65% of pupils to reach level 4 in English – 65% to reach level 4 in mathematics; e) At least 55% of children within the school to attain level 4+ in both English and maths at the end of KS2 <p>Members noted that the minimum attainment levels were the same whatever the school size and that in a small school one child's attainment could make a huge difference to the percentage attainment levels and could skew the data.</p>	<p>review.</p> <p>Subsequent to the review we have received clear guidance from the Secretary of State for Education which sets out a range of indicators to be considered in raising standards of attainment.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member is therefore minded to adopt the latest guidance from the DfE on floor standards and addressing underperforming in schools.</p>		
2.4	Members noted the fact that a review would be triggered when required by statute as is presently the case. (i.e. Ofsted)	The Cabinet Member agrees with the recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee.	MOT	May 2011
2.5	Members recommend that only one trigger needs to be hit for a review to be undertaken.	The Cabinet Member agrees that the performance of one indicator could	MOT	May 2011

Education in Rural Communities Scrutiny Inquiry - Action Plan

		trigger a review, and that it would not only be considered in the light of other contextual factors, but also in accordance with DfE guidance.		
Review				
3.1	Members considered the timescales for any review and whether a school would be reviewed more than once in a given timescale if a recent subsequent review had not led to a need for any action to be taken. Members recommend that consideration of any review being undertaken should take account of the outcome of any previous reviews.	The Cabinet Member agrees with the recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee.	MOT	May 2011
3.2	Members recommend that any review takes into account any close cross border schools that may have an influence on the school under review e.g. in respect of pupil numbers.	The Cabinet Member agrees with the recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee.	MOT	May 2011
3.3	Members recommend that the review include the areas set out in appendix one.	The Cabinet Member agrees with the recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee.	MOT	May 2011
Process				
4.1	Members recommend that members of the appropriate scrutiny committee (currently the Schools and Colleges Scrutiny Committee) receive details of any schools that have triggered a review on a termly basis. Should the review highlight any concerns the Scrutiny Committee receive a report on the review to the next appropriate meeting, detailing the concerns raised/actions needed.	<p>We recognise that Members fulfil an important role in monitoring the effectiveness of education policy at a strategic level.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member recommends that a progress report on the implementation and effectiveness of the policy should be included in the Member Accountability report on a bi-</p>	MOT	May 2011

Education in Rural Communities Scrutiny Inquiry - Action Plan

		annual basis.		
4.2	Members recommend that the local member should be kept informed of any reviews initiated on schools within their division, both of those schools listed on a termly basis and for those where concerns have been raised. Members were also clear that the local members should be informed as soon as a review is triggered.	<p>The Cabinet Member recognises the importance of local members being kept informed of any potential reviews involving local schools.</p> <p>The Cabinet Members also recognises that it is good practice to keep members informed of developments in their local area.</p>	MOT	May 2011