

Local Members' Interest
n/a

Schools and Colleges Scrutiny Committee - 25 January 2011

Education in Rural Communities Scrutiny Inquiry - Final Report

Recommendation

1. That the Schools and Colleges Scrutiny Committee consider the report of the Education in Rural Communities Inquiry, with a view to endorsing its submission for Executive Response.

Report of Scrutiny and Support Manager

Summary

What is the Committee being asked to do and why?

2. Members of the Committee undertook an inquiry into Education in Rural Communities as part of their agreed work programme for 2010/11. The inquiry is now complete and Members have agreed their final conclusions and recommendations. The Committee are asked to consider the report and determine whether they endorse it for submission to Cabinet, for the provision of an Executive Response.

Report

Background

3. At its meeting held on 20 July 2010, the Schools and Colleges Scrutiny Committee received a report on work programme planning. The report set out the Committee's terms of reference and highlighted possible areas of work including referrals from the Corporate Review Committee, items carried over from the previous Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme and priorities put forward by the Directorate.
4. Members discussed the issue of Educational provision in rural communities, which had been carried forward from the work programme for the previous Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee, and were advised that an officer working group was currently considering this issue alongside looking at smaller sized schools with regard to access to services and delivering the best outcome for children.
5. Members decided to include this issue on their work programme for 2010/11, whilst ensuring they avoid duplication with the officer working group.

Scope of the Inquiry

6. The key objective of this work was to assist the Cabinet and County Council in considering the education issues which primary schools in rural communities in Staffordshire face in order that a set of priority issues can be agreed. These could then inform a strategy and policy which can be consistent across Staffordshire to support education in rural communities.
7. The inquiry received evidence in relation to:
 - The position of Staffordshire primary schools, within the local and national context.
 - As many of the rural primary schools in Staffordshire are Church schools, either Voluntary Controlled or Voluntary Aided, the opinions of the Dioceses on school organisation.
 - As a number of Local Authorities have experience of developing a strategy to support education in Rural Communities best practice from other councils
 - The range of criteria which have been developed by officers to support the development of a policy.
8. Members considered:
 - How do we support rural schools?
 - What is a small school?
 - How many small schools do we have in Staffordshire?
 - Where are our small schools?
 - Is there an optimum size of school which enables better outcomes for children?

Method of Investigation

9. The Committee agreed to undertake the investigation of this issue as an inquiry.
10. Members met on the 22 November 2010, to undertake the inquiry, consider the key factors surrounding the issue and receive presentations from officers and witnesses to support their considerations.
11. Members met on 14 January 2011 to consider their findings and determine the conclusions and recommendations.

Background Evidence

12. Prior to the inquiry, Members of the Committee were provided with the following key information to assist their investigations
 - Policy Paper, Peoples Directorate - Sustaining Small Rural Schools - Summary of how other Local authorities are responding
 - Securing the Future - The Process: Advice and Guidance Birmingham Diocesan Schools Commission
 - Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education Statement of School Organisation
 - Excellence in Education - an extract from the Conservative Manifesto 2009

Inquiry

Background

13. Members received a presentation from Anne Birch - Commissioner for Education and Skills which gave background to the inquiry and highlighted the need for a policy to be developed.
14. The presentation detailed that Staffordshire was predominantly rural and therefore presented specific issues relating to rural communities. Staffordshire had a richness and diversity of provision but there was a need for the Authority to understand how to manage and sustain this.
15. Members were advised that demographics were changing in rural communities with falling birth rates. Small schools tended to be heavily concentrated in rural areas. Schools in rural areas, some of which are faith schools, support diversity of provision and help ensure families have access to local services and rural schools are often seen as the hub of the local community and can offer additional facilities. There was no one definition of a small school, however the DfE suggested a small school was any school with less than 100 pupils.
16. Consideration needed to be given to specific challenges which included attracting and retaining high quality staff, especially head teachers and the limited capacity to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum with appropriately qualified and experienced staff.
17. Other issues included that small schools were disproportionately hit by small fluctuations to pupil numbers and surplus places; had higher per pupil costs compared to larger schools.
18. In addition, all schools, including rural schools, existed in a fast changing national context. The advent of academies and free schools were challenging existing school leadership, governance and commissioning models and further reforms would see schools given greater freedoms. The role of Ofsted would also be reformed through the Education and Children's Bill and the Schools White Paper. The changing role of the Local Authority to more of a commissioning focus mean that schools could no longer receive some services from the Local Authority that were currently provided.
19. The Authority needed to ensure that all school provision was sustainable, including size, scale and capacity to create the best learning environment. They needed in the future to maximise the efficient use of resources across the school network so as to secure the best possible educational outcomes for all schools and to ensure that the education delivered to young people in Staffordshire met the demands of the new challenging environment, including technological advances, which could be a challenge for smaller schools.
20. Members queried the timing of considering this issue when the White Paper would probably impact on many related factors. They were advised that whilst this was true it was necessary for the Local Authority to develop a consistent policy or strategy to consider the long term sustainability of schools as such a policy did not currently exist. This meant that any specific school issue was dealt with in isolation. An agreed

approach would ensure that there was a fair, robust and consistent process and methodology followed

Quality & Performance

21. Members received a presentation from Nicky Featherstone - Education Transformation Division, Primary, covering the issues surrounding the quality and performance concerns in relation to small schools.
22. Members heard that effective leadership was crucial to a school's success and impacted on its overall effectiveness and capacity to improve.
23. Potential issues and impact of recruiting and retaining effective leadership were:
 - Size and salary range of a school - often smaller schools got the more inexperienced applicants for headships
 - Potential sustainability of school
 - Ofsted category - in many cases it was more daunting to take on a higher Ofsted categorised school as potentially "the only way is down"
 - School location - particularly if potential staff have a family and therefore any move could affect family members
 - Dual role - head teachers of smaller schools often had a large teaching commitment whilst still having the same amount of work as any other sized school in administrating and leading the school
 - Frequent changes in leadership - newer heads of smaller schools would often move after only two or three years to ensure career progression which could have a destabilising affect
 - Lack of opportunity to share leadership across schools
 - Management of staffing issues can be difficult with fewer staff
 - Professional development and career progression was difficult in a smaller school
 - Access to professional partnerships can be limited
23. In addition, there are potential issues and impacts on the provision and curriculum in small rural schools and Staffordshire wants to ensure the best possible curriculum provision for its young people with a broad and rich balance. Primary and Foundation stage was special and unique, and was the longest phase of education in a school career. This phase of education provided the essential tools for learning and for emotional and personal development.
24. Members were advised of the following issues and impacts of small schools:
 - Quality first teaching
 - Difficulties with lack of flexibility due to numbers and/or budgetary constraints
 - Expectations and the available resources
 - Access to new digital technologies
25. Members discussed the appropriate pitch and challenge across a wide age and ability range to sufficiently meet the needs of all learners and were advised that this becomes more difficult if the age range of a class covers more than one Key Stage

26. Members expressed concerns in relation to independent learning and that in a very small school pupils are used to having immediate access/support from the adult which can prevent them having the space to problem solve, learn and behave independently. They also discussed the issue of personal, social and emotional development where in some small schools there are children who have no same age peer group in the school. This can impact on their social and emotional development and prevents sharing thoughts with same age children. Young people can also find the transition to the larger feeder school more difficult than those from larger primary schools, and they have less peer group members moving with them from one school to another. Older children could find they feel pressured to support the younger children in smaller schools.
27. In order that the best possible outcomes for the child could be considered, the minimum levels of attainment in Staffordshire were outlined:
- an average of 78 points across the 12 areas of learning described in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) profile;
 - Level 2b+ in reading, writing, speaking and listening and mathematics at the end of KS1;
 - Make at least 2 levels progress in English and in mathematics between KS1 and KS2;
 - 65% of pupils to reach level 4 in English – 65% to reach level 4 in mathematics;
 - At least 55% of children within the school to attain level 4+ in both English and maths at the end of KS2
28. Members were advised that the minimum attainment levels were the same whatever the school size. In a small school one child's attainment could make a huge difference to the percentage attainment levels and could skew the data. The size of the school did not always have a negative impact on attainment and there were some very successful small rural schools but being successful was more difficult in that environment. The unit costs for any Local Authority intervention and support were higher where there were limited pupil numbers.
29. Members discussed whether the "do nothing" option was not appropriate as 156 of current primary heads in Staffordshire were over 50, with 52 of these being heads of rural schools and 22 heads of schools with less than 100 pupils. Considering the difficulties in recruiting appropriate candidates to fill such headships there was a potential for considerable difficulties in the near future (next 5-10 years)
30. Members acknowledged the difficulties in being the head of a small school and the relentless pressure of combining a full teaching timetable with the leadership and management work of the head. Members asked when a school became unsustainable and were informed that part of the work of the Inquiry Day was to consider this issue
31. Members queried how a school worked practically with only 7 children and were advised that the Headteacher taught a full time table, teaching all 7 children, for 4 ½ days a week, with a temporary contract teacher covering the ½ day. The age of the children at the school was 4-11 being taught together. There were collaborations with other schools to allow specialism's in the curriculum.

Cost Effectiveness and Efficiency

32. Alison Bardsley - School Financial Services Manager gave the Committee details of the funding issues concerning small schools. Members were advised that there was no formula for school funding that took account of rurality. Finance was not a driver for considering education in rural communities but it did have an effect and consequences.
33. Currently schools were funded through a funding formula that the Local Authority, in consultation with the Schools Forum, could alter re. methodology for allocating funding. Currently school funding:
- should follow educational requirements
 - was subject to regulations
 - Funding formula was set by the County Council (at present) in consultation with the Schools Forum
 - Staffordshire received money from the DfE for the number of pupils at Staffordshire schools, if a pupil lived in a neighbouring county but attended a Staffordshire school the funding for that pupil came to Staffordshire
 - Schools received a lump sum and a per pupil amount
34. In relation to small schools issues include:
- Small schools were funded more per pupil than larger schools, with over £3000 difference per pupil between the smallest and largest primary schools.
 - Small schools received support other than in the funding formula as SLAs did not always reflect cost, and in some cases larger schools were essentially subsidising the smaller schools
 - There was a cost to all Staffordshire pupils in maintaining smaller schools, e.g. if Staffordshire didn't maintain the 18 schools with fewer than 50 pupils then every primary school pupil would attract an extra £23pa. This amounted to an extra £5000 for a 210 pupil primary school per annum. There could be an additional transport cost for the Local Authority.
 - Whilst other methods of governance solved some problems they did not offer a financial solution, i.e. federation, collaboration etc.

Demography and Transport

35. Members considered the issues of demography and transport as part of their inquiry. Andrew Marsden - Head of School Planning detailed the key issues which needed to be taken into consideration.
36. The inquiry was advised that currently in Staffordshire there were 295 primary schools. Of these one third (105) were classed as rural (17 in hamlets, 51 in villages and 37 in rural towns). 18 primary schools (53%) in Staffordshire Moorlands were rural, and 23 primary schools (50%) in South Staffordshire were rural. The Department for Education's register of schools includes a rural/urban indicator based on Office for National Statistics (ONS) data about the area in which the school is situated.

Schools in urban areas are classified as either:

- Urban > 10k population - sparse
- Urban > 10k population - less sparse

There are six categories for rural areas (statutory guidance to decision-makers says that there should be a presumption against the closure of schools situated in rural areas).

- Town and Fringe - sparse
- Village - sparse
- Hamlet and Isolated Dwelling – sparse

- Town and Fringe - less sparse
- Village - less sparse
- Hamlet and Isolated Dwelling - less sparse

The full list can be viewed at

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolorg/data/downloads/2009%20List%20of%20designated%20rural%20primary%20schools.xls>

37. In Staffordshire, 1 in 5 primary pupils attend a rural school (12 000 out of 57 000 pupils, 21%), Rural schools tended to be smaller, however not all rural schools were small e.g. John of Rolleston had 370 pupils. Smaller rural communities were served by one school which may also be an important community resource. 54 of the 63 “small schools” were rural (i.e. have fewer than 100 pupils) and of those all 16 “very small schools” were rural (i.e. with fewer than 50 pupils). In addition, birth rates are declining most in rural areas, especially in South Staffs and the Moorlands.
38. Members discussed the issue of schools transport and were advised that at present 890 primary school pupils currently received free transport to their nearest or catchment schools (2% of pupils). Proportionally more transport was provided to rural schools, with 7% of pupils in hamlet schools receiving free school transport (102 pupils), 6% for village schools (275 pupils), 3% for schools in rural towns (166 pupils) and 1% for pupils in urban schools (347 pupils). 48 out of 105 rural schools had no free transport
39. Members queried why the birth rate was decreasing and were advised that there was a varying picture, with a slight increase nationally. Generally birth rates had declined in the more rural areas which may in part be due to the age of those able to afford to live in more rural areas, e.g. National Park and shortage of affordable housing. Members felt housing affordability was a key issue which had an impact on the whole community
40. Members questioned whether the drop in pupil numbers in rural areas, particularly in the Moorlands and South Staffs, was part of a natural cycle and would “pick up” but were informed that trends suggested this was a long term change in demographics rather than a natural ebb and flow.

Capital and Assets

41. In the Conservative manifesto, a commitment had been made to rural communities and in particular rural schools. Schools were often the heart of a rural community with the buildings being used for a range of activities.
42. Clare Collins - Capital Development Group Manager, detailed the Capital and Assets issues to be borne in mind by members which could form part of any review of a school.
43. These include:
 - Ownership - who owned the land and school buildings, often in the case of a church school this was not the Local Authority
 - Covenants and the legal issues these involved
 - Environmental sustainability
 - Estimated cost of the 5 year maintenance backlog for each property
 - Recent capital investment (last 5 years) and potential capital receipt

Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education

44. Colin Hopkins - Diocesan Director of Education, from the Lichfield Diocese presented their views on the issue. The Diocese covers 7 local authorities with 205 schools. 104 of these schools were in Staffordshire, 98 of which were for primary age pupils which was 1/3 of primary provision in Staffordshire, slightly higher than the national average of 25%.
45. The Diocese did not have a policy on school organisation but a statement of principles (which members had received in their background papers) which guided their deliberations and thoughts. This was partly because the range of school types was so diverse and partly because the LA was the commissioner of school places and the decision maker.
46. Church of England schools were not just part of the provision of maintained sector schools but also part of the ministry of the Church. There were strong links between the school and the local parish church that promoted and enhanced communities. Any change to the local school would also impact on the clergy. The provision of Church of England schools in Staffordshire was historic and the location of the schools would not necessarily be the same if you were building now.
47. It was imperative that any discussions on school organisation or re-organisation had educational principles at the heart of decisions or determinations. It was also necessary to consider how events would be seen through the eyes of the children it would impact on most, and their experience through any re-organisation process.
48. The overall proportion of Church of England places was broadly constant. For many individuals the Church of England school was the catchment area school and therefore it was not necessarily a choice to attend the school specifically on faith grounds. The Church of England operated neighbourhood schools, i.e. for children of the area rather than specifying the need for pupils to be a practising member of the Church. In many areas the school was part of the social history of a community.

There would be a concern if school re-organisation meant children travelling long distances to alternative schools.

49. The Diocese was in favour of federation, collaboration and partnerships where these were appropriate and added value. Federation between Church of England and community schools was possible and had been developed in other authorities. Head teachers of Church of England schools did not just have to manage and lead the school but also had the added dimension of promoting and developing the Church of England ethos. Over the last 3 years 20 new head teachers had been appointed in Church of England schools, a turn-over of 10%, with 1/3 of schools now having a new head teacher. Generally experience of head teacher appointments had been that an appropriate appointment could be made but it often took three or more attempts. There had recently been signs that it was becoming increasingly difficult to have a strong field of applicants from which to make head teacher appointments.
50. The Diocese always strived to work closely with the Local Authority. Broadly their thinking tended to be the same and the Diocese would wish where ever possible to support the Local Authority.
51. Members queried how many Church of England schools had had to close in recent years. Over the last 4 years only one school had closed in Shropshire, which was a small rural school of 20 pupils. However the Diocese had federated and amalgamated other schools. Members asked for clarification over the difference between controlled and voluntary aided school classifications. The difference was that, with a voluntary aided school, the church owned and maintained the buildings and the land. Church of England governors were in the majority on the governing body and the governing body were the employers.

Birmingham Diocesan Schools Commission

52. Paul Williams - Diocesan Assistant Director of Schools, attended from the Birmingham Diocesan Schools Commission which serves the Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Birmingham. The Commission covered 13 Local Authorities with 200 primary schools, 29 of which were in Staffordshire, of varying sizes. The Commission wished to ensure that any school re-organisation should be for the good of the children.
53. The non-negotiable for the Diocese, their legal rights, which were rooted in their Voluntary Aided (VA) status, were:
 - The trustees ownership of the land and buildings in which a Catholic school was maintained
 - The instrument of government, which protected the Catholic ethos, character and purpose
 - The role and responsibilities of foundation governors, appointed by the Bishop and who were in the majority on the Governing Body
 - the fact that Religious Education, the liturgy, collective worship, prayer and the curriculum must be in accordance with the norms and teachings of the Catholic Church
 - the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher/Religious Education leader must be practising Catholics
 - the admissions policy which gave priority to baptised Catholic children

Catholic schools:

- searched for the excellence and uniqueness in each individual
- educating the whole person
- looked out to the community and worked for community cohesion
- operated under ecclesiastical law
- worked in partnership with the LA
- the Gospel values were the core principles of Catholic schools

54. Any Catholic school would need the consent of the Bishop to move to academy status as the land and buildings were owned by the diocese. As it was currently unclear how a change to an academy would affect the Catholic status of a school the Commission currently felt academy status was not in the best interests of the child.
55. The Commission did support and had been involved in collaborations and federations. There was a need to be flexible and work together for the common good, e.g. a bursar working across two or more schools. A Catholic school could collaborate with a non Catholic school but they would be unable to federate because of the schools governance arrangements.
56. The Commission were not looking at the need for any significant changes to their school provision in Staffordshire. The Commission had a mix of urban and rural schools.

Local Authority Experience - Shropshire Council

57. Norrie Porter - Head of Premises and Planning, Shropshire Council, attended the inquiry to discuss with Members the experiences at Shropshire County Council who had recently developed policy in this area.
58. He outlined that Shropshire had 120 primary schools, 50 with fewer than 100 pupils and approximately 27 with fewer than 50 pupils. They had had two recent attempts to develop a policy for school organisation. The first attempt had been approximately 5 years ago and had been based almost entirely around school numbers. The difficulty with basing any decisions solely on numbers was that there may be a small school that due to other factors, e.g. location, may need to remain open but according to the policy would be closed.
59. When Shropshire developed a series of principles for school organisation, initially the Council had not consulted with schools over the development of the policy and this had caused some issues. During the second attempt, a cross party working group looked at a set of principles to develop a set of review criteria. Shropshire was now applying the criteria. Working on an area based report process which enabled schools to compare themselves against their neighbours on issues such as surplus places. Schools were then asked what they wished to do within the agreed principles.
60. The agreed policy would be applied throughout the Council, but with a lighter touch in some areas where the problems were less pronounced. Area meetings were being held with Heads in November/December and a report was expected to go to Council in January/February. From this Cabinet would then consider going ahead with consultation on specific proposals. Shropshire currently had no weighting to the

agreed principles. The principles informed discussion rather than ranked schools. In the first review, where a school was named as under review, there had been a presumption by the public and press that this would automatically mean school closure.

Staffordshire County Council Schools - Data

61. Members considered a demonstration of a matrix database which had been developed for Staffordshire schools. The database included the following information:

- School details - district, status, type and rural classification
- Triggers/drivers - Oct 2010 Number on Roll (NOR) range, 2014 projected NOR, % drop in NOR, Average year group, LEA judgement, capacity to improve, Ofsted category
- Attainment - attainment range, leadership Ofsted range
- Sufficiency - surplus places %, surplus places number
- Community - deprivation range 0-279, additional use, closest school 1 ref, distance to closest school 1 in miles, spare capacity number of places (also for 2nd and 3rd closest schools)
- Financial - revenue cost per pupil 2010/11 budget/NOR
- Sustainability – Display Energy Certificate rating and score
- Capital & Assets - 5 year maintenance backlog per pupil, recent investment

62. Members considered priorities and criteria for school organisation, including whether there were details not included on the matrix and if one criterion should be weighted more than any other.

63. Members discussed the following issues:

- The “distance to next nearest school” did not include schools in other counties
- Staffordshire’s range of primary school size was from 7 pupils - 623 pupils
- Rural classification used was based by the DfE on population size
- Too long a period of time with an acting head was a concern
- The number of heads in rural schools of under 100 pupils who were aged 50+
- Members were keen to understand the reasons for any issues so that they could be addressed
- The effect of any decisions on pupil’s life chances
- The fact that any small fluctuation to any one criterion in a small school could have a significant impact - small schools could go “critical” very quickly
- Frequent changes in management and leadership could be very disruptive
- Distance measures had been by road rather than as the crow flies, although it did not give indications of terrain e.g. pavements etc
- There was a need for a “real world decision” if a school was not sustainable and there were places available in the next nearest school
- Members may feel there was a minimum number at which a review was deemed necessary
- Possible triggers for review would be a headteacher leaving - or a maximum time to be run under an acting head
- There was a cost and time implication to recruiting a headteacher
- Members were unsure if they wished for more than one trigger to be necessary before a review was initiated - waiting for three trigger points to be hit may be

too long to wait for the other issues to be addressed - was this an indication that members needed to weight the trigger points?

- School transport and the extra costs should schools be closed as a result of the review should be considered
- Attainment should be considered as should contextual value added scores
- The LEA judgements were often more stringent, timely and consistent than those of Ofsted
- Members felt that an added section on the matrix should be % decline in pupil numbers from current to projected figures to highlight any trends and also to include details of the % of pupils attending the school from within its catchment
- Some areas of Staffordshire were disproportionately affected by small schools - should these areas be reviewed in isolation?
- Some schools had difficulty in predicting school numbers, particularly if a large proportion of their number travelled from outside catchment and cross borders
- Should a trigger lead to a review, what would the review entail? This would not automatically result in a school closure
- School maintenance backlog and the Local Authority with no money allocation for maintenance under the new funding arrangements could lead to a crisis for that school, e.g. boiler breaks

Conclusions and Recommendations

64. As a result of their inquiry, the Committee have agreed the following conclusions and recommendations.

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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 1.4 Members **recommend** that any policy should apply to all schools across the County, not just rural schools.

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.
- 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.
- 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 with them during the inquiry day as:
 - 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

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.

- 2.4 Members **noted** the fact that a review would be triggered when required by statute as is presently the case. (i.e. Ofsted)
- 2.5 Members **recommend** that only one trigger needs to be hit for a review to be undertaken.

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.
- 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.
- 3.3 Members **recommend** that the review include the areas set out in appendix one.

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.
- 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.

Next Steps

- 65. Subject to the endorsement of the Committee, the final report, together with any accompanying submission that the Committee may wish make, will be submitted to Cabinet for the provision of an Executive Response to the conclusions and recommendations.

66. The Committee are reminded that if recommendations do not require any Cabinet decisions - in other words they can be dealt with through delegated decision making powers - then final reports are submitted to the relevant Cabinet Member and Corporate Director only.

Link to Strategic Plan - Enjoy and Achieve – that Children and Young People have the opportunity to enjoy, achieve and learn, raising aspirations and attainment is an identified priority for the Cabinet.

Implications - There are equalities, resource and financial implications in ensuring the best educational provision for children and young people in Staffordshire.

Risk - There could be implications for service delivery and reputation of the Council in not delivering high quality educational provision.

Climate Change - There are no direct climate change implications as result of this report.

Acknowledgements

The following officers supported the Working Group:

Witnesses

Colin Hopkins - Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education
Paul Williams - Birmingham Diocesan Schools Commission
Norrie Porter - Shropshire Council

Staffordshire County Council

Anne Birch - Commissioner for Education and Skills
Clare Collins - Capital Development Group Manager
Andrew Marsden - Head of School Planning
Nicky Featherstone - Education Transformation Division, Primary
Alison Bardsley - School Financial Services Manager
Mike Osborne-Town -Assistant Director - Education Transformation
Peter Watton - Information and Data Officer
John Giacomelli - Assistant Director - Strategy and Performance
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Rural Schools Current Spreadsheet Headings

School Details	District
	Status
	Type
	Rural classification
Drivers	Oct 2010 NOR Range
	2014 Projected NOR
	% Drop in NOR
	Average Year Group
	LEA Judgement
	Capacity to Improve
	Ofsted Category
Attainment	Attainment Range
	Leadership OFSTED Range
Sufficiency	Surplus Places %
	Surplus Places No.
Community	Deprivation Range 0 - 279
	Additional Use
	Closest School 1 Ref
	Distance to Closest School 1 in Miles
	Spare Capacity Number of Places
	Closest School 2 Ref
	Distance to Closest School 2 in Miles
	Spare Capacity Number of Places
	Closest School 3 Ref
	Distance to Closest School 3 in Miles
Spare Capacity Number of Places	
Financial	Revenue cost per pupil 2010/11 Budget /NOR
Sustainability	DEC Rating
	DEC Score
Capital & Assets	5 Year Maintenance Backlog Per Pupil
	Recent Investment