



**Meeting: Council**

**Date: 26 February 2015**

**Wards Affected: All**

**Report Title: School Improvement – The Way Forward**

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## **1. Purpose and Introduction**

- 1.1 This report illustrates the need and the actions required to deliver a new approach to school improvement in Torbay. It reflects the changing landscape of education within Torbay the statutory requirements of the Local Authority and the expectation of the regulator (Ofsted).

## **2. Proposed Decision**

- 2.1 That the transfer of the existing school improvement resource (staff and budget) on a reducing basis to the Torbay Teaching School Alliance be approved in principle initially for a three year basis subject to the continuation of the Torbay Teaching School Alliance.
- 2.2 That the Executive Director of Operations and Finance be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, having considered the detailed business case and financial details, to approve the final transfer of the existing school improvement resource to the Torbay Teaching School Alliance.
- 2.3 That, subject to 2.2 above, the Executive Head of Commercial Services be given delegated authority to agree the terms of the lease or contracts for the school improvement service.

## **3 Reason for Decision**

- 3.1 The general duty for the Local Authority to promote high standards is set out under Section 13A of the Education Act 1996, as follows:

*'Duty to promote high standards and fulfilment of potential'*

The Local Authority in England must ensure that their relevant education functions are exercised by the authority with a view to:-

- a) Promoting high standards.
- b) Ensuring fair access to opportunity for education; and
- c) Promoting the fulfilment of learning potential by every person of compulsory school age.

These duties have been amended to take account of schools causing 'concern' by the 2006 Education and the Academies Act 2010.

3.2 Emanating from the 2010 Academies Act the majority of schools in Torbay are now academies:-

6 (8) Secondary Schools  
17 (30) Primary Schools  
1 (2) Special Schools

There are also a number of schools actively exploring the possibility of academy status as all political parties now seem committed to this approach on their respective manifestos.

3.3 Although the Academies Act 2010 removes the statutory Local Authority intervention role for schools that have gained academy status, the Local Authority still retains the wider responsibility under the 1996 Act. This has now been interpreted by Ofsted, in guidance published in November 2014 to justify a new framework for the Inspection of Local Authorities for supporting school improvements in schools.

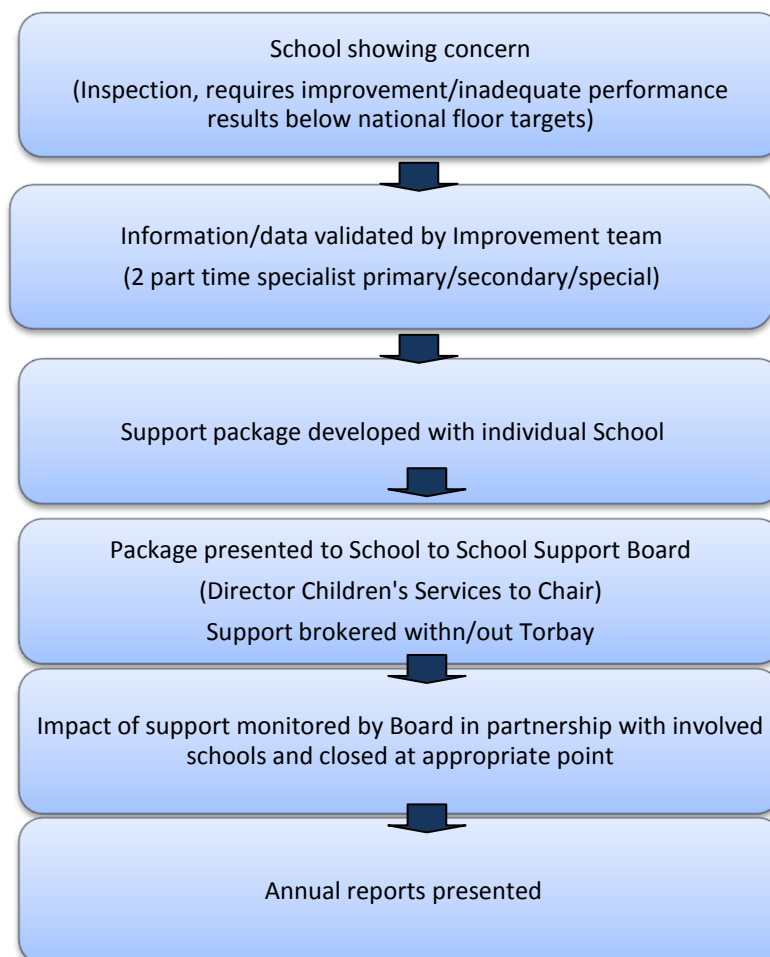
3.4 This Inspection is not universal and will only occur where concerns about performance are apparent or as requested by the Secretary of State. Based upon the current individual school inspection results and academic results from 2014 Torbay is not a Local Authority of high concern.

	Inadequate	Requires Improvement	Good	Outstanding
<b>Primary</b>	1	5 (3 Academies)	20 (14 Academies)	4
<b>Secondary</b>	1	2 (2 Academies )	2 (1 Academy)	3 (all Grammar Academies)
<b>Special</b>		1	2 (1Academy)	

3.5 Generally speaking, therefore, the standard of Torbay Schools is moving in the right direction, however, the failure to have a real impact on the 'narrowing the gap' for children in poverty is still an issue and must remain a priority. However, this is not to say that an area of concern would not arise that would potentially call in an Ofsted

Inspection. To address the issue of concern it is proposed to call a 'task group' of Headteachers during the Summer Term to analyse the data and underlying factors and develop a plan of action for the future. It is the intention that this model would be developed for any future issues of concerns that may arise.

- 3.6 Traditionally the Local Authority has had a large advisory service and school support function. The advent of academies and the development of the two Teaching Schools and the impact of budget reductions have reduced this to a minimum in Torbay. At the end of August 2014 the Executive Head of Schools moved back to a Headship in Torbay and discussions began on exploring the best options to maintain and develop school improvement.
- 3.7 It is imperative that in Torbay we learn from the past and build on the current good practice that has been developed in recent years to support all our schools. The Schools Supporting Schools model has grown from the Torbay Teaching School Alliance (led by Oldway School and including Ilsham C of E School). It provides a range of networks of support to all schools and in particular allows packages of support to be put in place for schools that may be of concern, either through their results or from an Ofsted inspection.
- 3.8 In consultation with a number of Headteachers and the Teaching Schools it was clear that the most effective and most popular option was to continue the investment in the Torbay Teaching School Alliance (building on both teaching schools). To maximise the impact of this it is proposed to transfer the remaining resources of the Local Authority (one member of staff and supporting budget) and develop a new improvement process.
- 3.9 The final shape of the process will be determined in a consultation meeting with all schools on the 12 February and will follow the route mapped out below. It will be important to fully involve the Regional Commissioner of Schools in Torbay as this role will act on behalf of the Minister of State for Education for those schools that are academies.



This process will be administered by the existing School Improvement Manager who will be transferred to the Torbay Teaching School Alliance. The budget for this work will be allocated on a three year diminishing basis, recognising the financial pressure on the Local Authority and the increasing number of academy schools. It is proposed to formalise this process from September 2015 with informal arrangements during the Summer term to resolve any issues.

#### **Budget**

15/16	£188,300
16/17	£152,523
17/18	£123,543

The budget and arrangements will be reviewed on an ongoing basis subject to the continued improvement of schools in Torbay

- 3.10 It is proposed that a condition of the transfer of the school improvement resource to the Torbay Teaching School Alliance will be a termly report to the Director of Children’s Services highlighting schools causing concerns, with specified actions, progress and impact and an annual report to be presented to Council detailing the performance of children and young people, individual schools and highlighting any concerns, with specified actions, progress and impact.

- 3.11 It is also proposed that the Council will review the arrangements with the Torbay Teaching Alliance with all schools on an annual basis, taking into account the overall performance highlighted in the annual report and the changing schools landscape.

#### **4. Possibilities and Options**

- 4.1 Throughout the development of this proposal a wide range of options was considered before arriving at the conclusions presented in this report. There were constraints by the statutory duties remaining with the Local Authority, the financial situation and the views of the regulatory body.

#### **5. Fair Decision Making/Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012**

- 5.1 The proposals in this report have been subject to extensive discussion and consultation with schools in Torbay and the Regional Commissioner for Schools.
- 5.2 The report endorses the proposals of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 by building on a successful partnership with schools through the enhancement of the Schools Support Schools approach.

#### **6. Risks**

- 6.1 This approach minimises the risk to the school improvement process by sharing the responsibility between the Local Authority and local schools, both of whom have a vested interest in ensuring its success.

#### **7. Supporting Information**

- 7.1 Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment