The evolving role of local authorities in the education sector

Cllr Roy Perry
Leader, Hampshire County Council
and Vice-Chairman, LGA Children
and Young People Board
Council role in education

- Councils do not ‘run’ schools and are supportive of school autonomy
- Councils do have a key role in holding schools to account and securing improvement
- Duty to ensure all children receive a good education
- Insufficient powers to fulfil this and other duties
- Mixed economy of schools – need to work together
The Role of ‘Middle Tier’

• The Government’s current preferred model for a middle tier (e.g. academy chains and RSCs) is unaccountable to local communities.

• There is a need for urgent debate about how the middle tier could be reformed:
  – Cost effectiveness
  – Transparency about CEO and headteacher pay
  – Clarity of roles
  – Partnership working to deliver improved performance and equity for pupils.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finance</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
<th>Access</th>
<th>People</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allocating finances - ESFA, LA, MAT&lt;br&gt;Accounting - ESFA, LA, MAT&lt;br&gt;Financial monitoring - ESFA, LA, MAT, Dioceses&lt;br&gt;Finance returns - ESFA, LA, MAT&lt;br&gt;Intervening in financial issues - ESFA, LA, Diocese&lt;br&gt;Audit - LA, MAT&lt;br&gt;Allocating grants - ESFA&lt;br&gt;Bidding for grants - LA, MAT</td>
<td>Monitoring standards - RSC, LA, Dioceses, MAT&lt;br&gt;School improvement - NCTL, LA, MAT, Dioceses&lt;br&gt;Complaints - LA, ESFA, Dioceses&lt;br&gt;External Reviews - ESFA, RSC, LA, MAT, Dioceses&lt;br&gt;Governance support - LA, MAT, NCTL, Dioceses&lt;br&gt;Intervention - LA, RSC, Dioceses&lt;br&gt;Liaison with DFE agencies - MAT, LA, Diocese</td>
<td>Admissions &amp; appeals - LA, MAT, Dioceses&lt;br&gt;Curriculum - MAT, LA, Dioceses&lt;br&gt;SEN - LA&lt;br&gt;Educational welfare - LA&lt;br&gt;Place planning - LA&lt;br&gt;Buildings &amp; grounds - MAT, LA, Dioceses</td>
<td>Recruitment - NCTL, MAT, LA&lt;br&gt;Training and development - NCTL, MAT, LA&lt;br&gt;Initial teacher training - NCTL&lt;br&gt;NQT induction - NCTL, MAT, LA, Dioceses&lt;br&gt;HR - LA, MAT, Dioceses</td>
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Improving standards in all schools

• Strong track record – 91% of maintained schools *good or outstanding* (compared to 86% - all schools)

• DfE should recognise councils as improvement partners and go further:
  • Allow councils to help all schools improve
  • Allow maintained schools to help failing academies, without having to convert themselves
  • End the ban on high performing councils creating MATs
A school place for every child

• A duty to ensure access to school places, hampered by national restrictions
• DfE should give councils the power to open new maintained schools
• Give councils back the responsibility for making decisions about opening new schools
• Give councils the same powers to direct free schools and academies to expand that they currently hold for maintained schools
Making sure every school is adequately funded

- IFS estimates that schools will see a real terms cut of 4.6% between 2015-19
- Supportive of a ‘fair’ NFF
- DfE must provide greater financial certainty: sufficient funding for all schools and three-year budgets
- Retain local flexibility under the ‘soft’ NFF
Championing pupils with SEND

• Councils retain a unique role in protecting the interests of children and young people with SEND
• Additional £350m in high needs funding welcome, but…
• £667 million high needs funding gap 2018-19
• The DfE must provide additional funding to meet increasing need for SEND support
• Restore flexibility for councils, with the agreement of schools, to move money between schools and high needs budgets.
Protecting the interests of vulnerable pupils

• Councils should have the power to protect the interests of all pupils
• This includes the power to direct academies and free schools to admit pupils that need a place
• Councils need powers to ensure home schooled children are receiving a suitable education
• Councils should receive funding for the additional burden of working with schools in order to commission independent counselling in every secondary school
Looking forward

• A good education is key
• Councils as strategic local leaders of education
• All schools, councils and central government working in partnership to raise standards
• Outcomes, not structure or organisational silos