

Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee (virtual meetings from May 2020 due to Coronavirus)

Wednesday 2 December 2020

1.00 pm Microsoft Teams Meeting



SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA

To: The Members of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee (virtual meetings from May 2020 due to Coronavirus)

We are now able to enclose the following information which was unavailable when the agenda was published:

Item 7	Update on the consultation on the future school provision in the Crewkerne and Ilminster area The presentation given at the meeting is now attached - (Pages 3 - 10)
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Democratic Service Team, County Hall, Taunton

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Crewkerne & Ilminster Schools Consultation

Children and Families Scrutiny
November 2020

- Cllr Faye Purbrick, Cabinet Member for Education and Transformation
- Amelia Walker, Assistant Director - Education, Partnerships & Skills

www.somerset.gov.uk/crewkerne-and-ilminster-strategic-school-review



Improving
LIVES

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Background



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History of this review

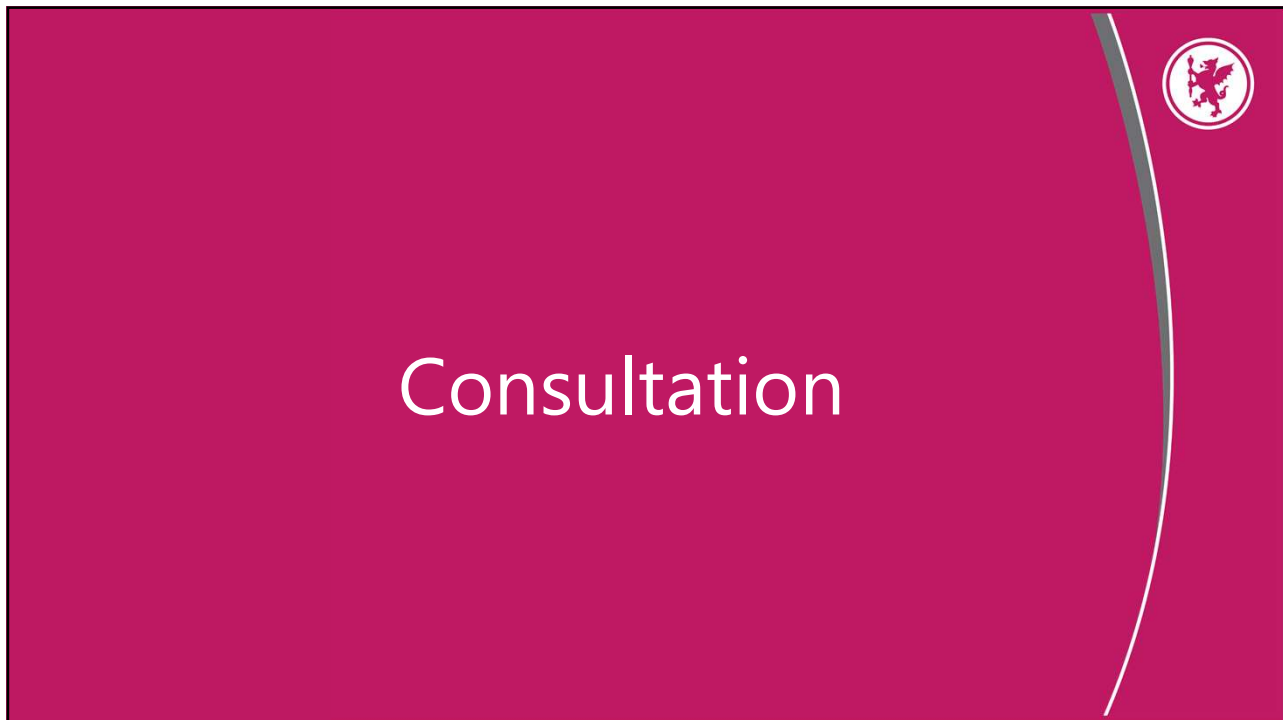
- Declining pupil numbers and resultant overspending has been a growing issue in Ilminster and Crewkerne for over ten years.
- The biggest impact of declining numbers has been on Wadham. It's deficit was previously cleared but the underlying cause has not changed – leading to new deficits.
- Five years ago schools in the area were funded to develop a new school organisation model. This was not successful.
- In early 2019 an independent review was commissioned by SCC from Futures for Somerset. This review found that the system was unsustainable.
- In summer 2019 there was a public consultation on a wide range of different options. This consultation was inconclusive.

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What are we hoping to achieve?

- What matters most is that every child and young person in Somerset have access to **excellent, well-rounded teaching and curriculum** at every stage in their education.
- We also want **thriving schools** that are able to confidently recruit the best teachers and staff, deliver a rich curriculum, maintain attractive and well-cared for buildings and plan for the future.
- Our world and economy are changing faster than ever before. Our schools need to be confident, outwardly focused places that are evolving the **curriculum for the next generation**, not worrying about having enough financial stability to survive.
- Schools are part of the community. Somerset is a beautiful, rural area, and our **town and village schools are at the heart of those communities**. Recognising it is not always possible, we want to secure the future of those schools where we can.

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A slide with a white background and a dark red footer. The word "Process" is written in dark red at the top left. Below it is a bulleted list of five items. In the top right corner, there is a circular logo featuring a red lion rampant on a white background. A white curved line separates the text area from the logo.

Process

- Preliminary consultation took place in 2019
- 21 October Cabinet meeting – consultation on single model agreed
- First consultation 12 November to 11 December 2020
- Second consultation (statutory) 30 December to 27 January (subject to NKD in December)
- Cabinet decision end of February 2021

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What is being proposed?

- We are proposing to change the upper school (Wadham School) to a **secondary** to maintain a high quality of education with a good range of subject choices.
- First and middle schools would change to teach the **primary** age range.
 - Ashlands, St Barts, Maiden Beech, Merriott and Haselbury Plucknett would become primary schools (alongside Hinton St George, already primary)
 - Misterton would close
 - Greenfylde and Swanmead would merge and become a single primary over two sites
- This is about **protecting the quality of education in the long-term** for the area.



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How would this affect pupils?

- If Cabinet members decide to implement in February, it would be 18 months after that decision before these changes would take place
- As a guide, for children in:
 - **Year 3 or below** – pupils would stay in their current school until they go to secondary school in Year 7
 - **Year 4, 5 or 6** – pupils would do at least two years in middle school before going to secondary school
 - **Year 7 or 8** – pupils would go to secondary school in Year 9 as at present



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How would this affect staff?

- It is very important that we keep the committed and expert staff that work in schools in the area.
- We would work alongside every school to plan what staff would be needed in each school in future.
- Any member of staff who may need to move to a comparable role in another local school would be fully supported to do so.
- We would 'ring-fence' jobs in the area so that local staff are always first in line to be appointed.
- Trade unions are part of regular communications about the process.

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Issues emerging
to date

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Process

- Is during the pandemic the right time to do this?
- Does holding events online disenfranchise vulnerable people?
- What are the costs of change?
- Is the consultation period long enough?
- What would the timing and process look like for appointing a leader in Ilminster?



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Quality of education

- Would this mean teaching classes across key stages?
- Does this risk losing subject specialism?
- Is Wadham a good enough school?
- Why do parents take their children out of area?
- Will this make schools larger and less supportive for pupils with SEND?



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Transition

- Would pupils with SEND get lost in transition?
- Would new primary schools in Crewkerne get transitional funding?
- Would staff be supported to retrain?
- Would admission numbers be too small in Crewkerne to keep siblings in the same school?
- Would catchment areas need to change?
- Would it be better to phase the movement of pupils?

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Community and context

- How accurate is the understanding of housing growth potential?
- What would be the impact on early years provision?
- Would this result in primaries that were too small and at risk financially?
- Is the road from Misterton into Crewkerne unsafe?

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Alternatives

- Middle schools and upper school joining the same MAT
- All primaries in Crewkerne to have an admission number of 30
- Maiden Beech and Swanmead (middle schools) to become secondary schools
- Misterton to become a primary school (and not close)
- Greenfylde to become the only primary school

