


Where next? Services for children and young people.



Contents

Introduction	3
Background	5
Objectives	9
Campus Working	15
Conclusions	23
Appendix 1	
A short guide to the Education and Inspections Bill	26

Introduction



am now in my third year as portfolio holder for Children and Young People. During that time I have seen much that has been good, that is delivered by the County Council and is achieved by staff, students and parents. In large part Surrey has a good relationship with its schools.

However, there is also much that frustrates, many opportunities missed and more to be done if we want to deliver truly world class services to our children and young people. The era where the County Council could throw money at the service are long behind us. Even if that were possible, the levers and pulleys no longer work. Two decades of legislation have seen

There must be a better way to deliver services for children and young people in Surrey.

schools and authorities move further apart and nothing is likely to reverse this trend. In any case, there are many talented people in our schools and our communities more than capable of running excellent services. Parents also have more information available to them than ever before in making decisions about their children's future.

In the paper that follows I have set out my views of where we are, of what we should be seeking to achieve and one possible solution. It draws on my experience of the last three years, but also my wider experience outside the County Council and in particular my work with universities. Much of what I propose builds on work already done, but moves the system further and quicker than has been previously considered. This is not a revolution, but an acceleration.

Background



urrey's schools are consistently among the best performers in the country. Last year around 63% of candidates achieved 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE. Staff, students, parents and the local authority have much to be proud of. Surrey's schools have always been innovators, historically making the running on Local Management of Schools, working through the new relationship brought about by 4S and more recently, developing the confederation and extended schools agendas.

However, not all our children are as successful as they might be. The national curriculum puts children in a straightjacket rather than providing a personalised curriculum that best meets their needs.

In Surrey many parents decide for a variety of reasons to put their children through the private education system; current figures suggest this may be as high as 1 in 4 children.

The current system does not deliver all the skills that we need to take forward the local or national economy. International competition is ever

Schools in Surrey deliver high quality education, but are always seeking to improve their offer to children.

increasing with education systems in what might historically have been called developing countries advancing rapidly.

There are currently around 10 million students in the Indian higher education system, while the UK produces about 500,000 domestic graduates annually. In China this year 9.5 million students sat university entrance exams for 2.5 million places.

Surrey's schools should seek to compare themselves favourably with the best schools wherever they are whether that's in the UK, elsewhere in western Europe, in Japan, the US or the rest of the world. While there has been much legislation and innovation in education in recent decades the fundamentals of state education have changed little in the last 60 years. Legislation in recent years has tended to separate the relationship between local authority and school, a trend which is continued by the current Education and Inspections Bill.

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listair Campbell the Prime Minister's spokesman, dismissed many schools with the phrase 'bog-standard comprehensive' prior to the last election. Such a damning of the education system was never more than simple political rhetoric, but it does raise the question about how successful comprehensive education has been and where it might develop in the future?

Never has there been a better time to revitalise public perceptions of comprehensive education and discover a new comprehensive system.

I have long believed that the best time to change is when you are successful. By any measure Surrey is successful, but must not be complacent.

This paper aims to set out an innovative way forward for Surrey that makes best use of, and links all the education resources available to the people of Surrey. To make change now will deliver greater success for our children in the future.

In setting out this vision I have focused on Woking. The proposals are not exclusive to Woking and I believe could be rolled out anywhere in Surrey. I have used Woking because I have some knowledge of the local area being a

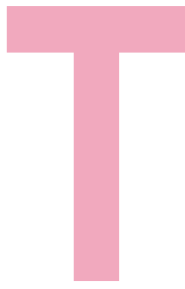
Never has there been a better time to revitalise public perceptions of comprehensive education.

County Councillor for South Woking and because I believe there are certain

opportunities that exist in Woking at present which are not necessarily available elsewhere.

Woking already has a national reputation as an innovator in energy efficiency and generation, has excellent rail links to London and the south coast, a growing and diverse population and a growing economic base.

The ideas I have proposed are not set in stone nor am I suggesting that there is any formal consultation at this stage. However, they are proposed to stimulate a debate on the future provision of services for children and young people in Woking and more broadly across Surrey. Out of this debate I hope to formalise plans that can be taken forward across the County.



he proposals set out although focusing on education have a far broader perspective. The Every Child Matters agenda set out by the Children Act 2004 makes it clear that children's lives and their transition into adulthood are likely to be better if services are designed around the needs of the child and not driven by the target based culture of central government. To that end the proposals have the Every Child Matters agenda as its foundations, building on the work of the Children and Young People's Plan and the emerging Children's Trust.

The national dimension must also be considered. In developing education services for children and young people in Surrey the current Education and Inspections Bill produce situations that the Local Authority would not choose to put itself in. The proposals in this paper thus seek to jump to where we believe is best for children and young people in Surrey rather than be pushed to somewhere else by events.

Inevitably, in any new proposals someone always turns to the question of cost. The proposals are not predicated on a certain level of funding, indeed they recognise that additional resources alone are not the answer, nor is there an optimal level of resources. However, funding issues are raised

National policy, such as Every Child Matters and the Education and Inspections Bill, will have a major impact on services in Surrey.

within the proposals, with a focus on finding structures and strategies that make the most of existing

resources. Principles key to the proposals are equity, excellence, and sustainability.

Finally, it is important to see these proposals for what they are rather than what some might assume they are. This is not an attempt by the County to seize control or to direct development of services for children and young people, the proposals are however an attempt by the County to exercise its role as a community leader, bringing together interested parties to deliver better results for all.

Objectives



aving established why, the next question to answer seems to be what - what are the objectives of these proposals? Some objectives are straightforward and it would be difficult for anyone to disagree with them, some highly ambitious, some difficult to measure and others more complex, more controversial and more difficult to achieve. It would be easy to aim for small steps forward and reach those goals, the more difficult objectives are those that will lead to step change and sustainable achievement for all our children and young people. In bringing forward these proposals the objectives are as follows:

To give every child the best possible start in life

Some may dismiss this as meaningless political spin, but it is important to have this objective. These proposals are about universal improvement not just for the few. One group that are often disadvantaged are the disabled, yet medical advances mean more of these children are surviving longer with greater needs.

To make the most of existing resources and create a structure that will maximise the possibility of additional resources

Education spending has grown in recent years and the Chancellor has pledged to bring state school spending up to the same levels as the private sector, although the precise details are unclear. Much of that spending is taken up by increased salaries and increased duties; little remains for innovation and service extension beyond statutory requirements.

Schools across Surrey receive around £450 million through the Dedicated Schools Grant. Expenditure is higher when local fundraising is taken into account, when capital sums are added in and when centrally provided services are included, pushing the total to over £500 million. When all publicly funded services for children in Surrey are counted the figure will be even higher. The total cost of all educational services in the County is

The objectives of these proposals are to deliver step change and sustainable achievement for all children and young people. estimated to be between £800 million and £1.2 billion, especially when the

costs of private education and money spent by parents on additional tutoring are included. Whether all of this spend is effective and efficient is another matter.

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imilarly, this broader based organisation would be able to consider how it could develop partnerships with the pre-school and childcare sector. High quality early education makes a difference to children's engagement and attainment at primary school. The campus model can build on existing networks with early education providers and the primary sector schools, that the children move onto, through better transition planning and foundation stage curriculum support. These partnerships could also enable support for the extended curriculum and provide work based placement opportunities for young people wanting to experience childcare as a future career. It may also enhance the access to childcare places for staff and parents

Inappropriate target setting by government, onerous inspection regimes and countless initiatives have diverted energies away from the task of building a modern education service. The County Council believes that in its own spend of around £400 million, it has been possible to identify procurement savings of around £20 million. A simple redistribution of this money equally across all Surrey schools equates to around £50,000 for each school in Surrey.

A charitable trust or social enterprise maybe able to raise funds from sources not available to the local authority.

Surrey is not scheduled to receive Building Schools for the Future money until 2011. Last year, the capital settlement for Surrey was around £14.5 million, yet the identified repairs amounted to around £90 million. Surrey's most valuable asset is its land, if schools are to benefit from this asset then there needs to be a review of whether the land used by schools and other services for children and young people is currently put to best use.

Models for schools built as recently as the 60s and 70s may not be appropriate for today's learning needs. Tackling the land issue on a school by school basis is unlikely to yield many benefits and those available will be difficult for an individual school to realise. With a number of schools and services acting together it will be easier to realise larger returns. Structures for funding are also important. The local authority is restricted in many ways in the funds it can access; a charitable trust or social enterprise maybe able to raise funds from sources not available to the local authority and may also benefit from a more advantageous tax regime.

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aking best use of all our resources also means considering how County services such as the Youth Service and Adult Learning might be included in the proposals set out in this paper. Both services have a role to play in supporting children, young people and their families in raising levels of achievement, developing new skills and adding to the enjoyment of life.

To increase pass rates in traditional academic subjects

In Surrey our best performing state schools achieve results as good as those in the private sector. However, on average 61.3% of Surrey's children attain A*-C grades at GCSE.

League tables aside, it should still be possible to achieve higher average pass rates than currently exist in Surrey school's. For the average to be 61.3%, many schools must be doing better and transferring the know-how that produces these results is essential.

To provide a wider range of vocational subjects that meet employer needs

Traditional academic achievement is not right for everyone. The government are proposing to develop 14 vocational diplomas for 14-19 year olds. All children should have access to these vocational courses, but such an outcome is unlikely if individual schools seek to provide all 14 diplomas themselves. Whether it is cooperation between schools, with FE colleges or with business and industry, one or all of these routes is likely to deliver a

School must not just be about academic achievement, but must also offer vocational, sporting and cultural opportunities. better outcome than an individual school approach.

To position vocational studies and qualifications as vital to the success of the economy and of a value equivalent to academic qualifications

With high quality vocational provision rather than treating these options as an afterthought, staying on rates and attendance at school are likely to be improved, reducing potential problems elsewhere in society.

To ensure greater cultural and sporting opportunities

The entertainment and leisure sector of the economy is now greater than ever, whether it's music, sport, theatre, cinema, dance, television, web, food, drink or any other pursuit. Culture and sport are important for children and young people to develop skills that they will need throughout their lives, to provide them with leisure opportunities of their own and for those with particular skills in these fields to have the opportunity to excel.



reater sporting and cultural opportunities are also about enriching young people's lives. Recent debate around issues such as 'the toxic childhood' reinforce the need for children to play, enjoy and have fun as children rather than simply becoming resources for an exam factory.

However, development of these facilities is often costly and not possible for a single school. Facilities may even prove expensive for groups of schools, but by developing a community component of such facilities and bringing in other funders and revenue streams, state of the art facilities can become reality.

To reduce the need for intervention by social care teams

The proposals set out are about more than just education. However, improvements in education as well as other services for children and young people should ultimately mean the need for fewer social care interventions, fewer behavioural issues with children and less involvement of the police with children and young people. Where support is required it should come earlier and quicker, removing the need for more complex and more costly interventions later in a child's development.

To ensure greater links between schools and communities

Best use of a school site means it is seen as a community hub, offering health, welfare, business, sporting, cultural and democratic services for those

Choice is an important part of education, but can be delivered in different ways.

both currently at school and those in the wider community. In too many cases schools have simply become a place where children go to learn; there is little involvement of those in the community who do not have school age children.

To provide wider choice for parents and children

Parents are often told about the choices they can make for their children in education. The reality is that they can express a preference among a relatively limited range of options.

To truly offer choice would require all schools to take whoever applied to them for a place. The consequence of such an approach is that some schools would become very large and that others would become so small that they could not continue. However, this does not mean that parents should be obliged to send their children to failing schools, simply to keep some schools alive.

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elivering a range of vocational diplomas will offer an element of choice. However, through collaboration between schools it should be possible to deliver a broader academic, vocational, cultural and sporting offer, providing parents and children with a degree of choice not currently available. Such an approach will be important in the period 2009-13 when current forecasts of the birth rate and other demographic trends suggest there will be a dip in the numbers moving into secondary education.

To offer new opportunities to staff

Much of the agenda in recent years has been about providing staff with an improved working environment in schools, with time out of the classroom to better develop their skills. Taking this agenda further makes great sense, providing a greater variety of posts within the system, more opportunities for development and progression in a local area and flexibility within schools to

While any new system must be focused on improvements for children and young people, excellent and motivated staff are essential to deliver success.

ensure high quality in specialist fields rather

than relying on generalists. In developing a new system there are also likely to be a greater variety of posts within the system than would be found in a single school, both in teaching and management. Such variety and opportunities for personal development are likely to help retention of high quality staff.

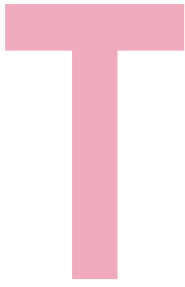
To provide for greater opportunity for the personalisation of learning

Greater choice means being able to meet individual requirements rather than simply requiring each child to accept a common approach which may not be suited to their needs or desires. Greater use of information technology will also provide for personalisation of learning.

To ensure greater opportunity for all children to make the most of their abilities

Through delivering on the objectives set out all children should be able to make the most of their abilities, discover abilities they didn't know they had and in time exceed what they may otherwise have thought possible.

Campus Working



The model suggested is based on a university and has been given the working title of Campus Woking. A university is usually made up of a number of faculties, each with their own reputation, their own management structure and their own facilities. In addition, a university might have sporting and cultural facilities, links to other services in the area they are based and further afield, a students union, an administration facility and other common services. A faculty may have a stronger reputation than the university itself, but it benefits from the common brand.

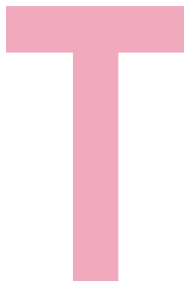
A student at any given university will only ever make use of some of the faculties and the other common facilities. Usage will vary from student to student, each having some common experiences and some personalised. Often the faculties and other services will be spread over a campus or a wider area such as a town or city. The University of London, includes colleges based in Surrey, with specialist facilities in Berkshire and Kent, a postgraduate only college at London Business School, a central careers service in the middle of London and international links with other colleges and through distance learning right around the world.

In applying the model in Surrey it will require a degree of flexibility. In an urban area there is a possibility of having a distributed campus model over a relatively small area. In a mixed urban/rural area it may make more sense to have many facilities located on a single site and in a rural area the model may still be appropriate, but on a smaller scale and a more varied range of services on the campus, potentially creating a virtual campus through the use of technology.

Campus Woking takes a university model and applies it to children's services in a particular geographic area. Schools, youth clubs, social care facilities,

Campus Woking takes a university model and applies it to children's services, delivering a united brand, but also maintaining the independence of individual institutions. children's homes, leisure all retain their independence, but

come together under a single brand to enhance cooperation and in turn the benefits available to children, young people and their families. Such an approach works in a specific geographic area because the scale is manageable, there is sufficient flexibility, there is a sense of belonging and a recognition that all are part of the whole.



he model also works well because it has its roots in much of the work currently being undertaken to build federations of schools and extended schools across the county. Indeed a working federation may even be a necessary first step towards a campus solution. In the introduction to this paper it is suggested that this is an acceleration not a revolution; the campus solution is an acceleration to a distant point that begins at federation. In essence, it allows schools and other services to fast-track federation and to bring benefits forward quickly for students and others involved in education.

A university model may seem somewhat distant from the primary sector, but when age is put aside there should be many benefits. A more joined up

A university model may seem distant from the primary sector, but actually has many benefits to offer children of all ages.

approach among different schools should assist children at the point of

transition from one school to another. For year six children the opportunity of better connections with local secondary schools should help smooth the move to their next school and provide opportunities to stretch gifted and talented pupils. Time between the end of SATs and the end of term could be used to far greater benefit if links between primary and secondary were strengthened.

The model proposed should also allow greater deployment of specialists among primary schools, providing expertise in the classroom and in support functions. IT specialists to support the ever more complex uses of technology in our schools as well as finance, procurement, HR, legal, social care, health professionals, musicians and others would all be more widely available to small primary schools. While few would be able to afford such a range of specialists as individual schools, by joining a network of other education and children's services providers it should be possible to access a wider range of expertise for the benefit of children.

Better networks should also mean easier and quicker transfer of best practice enhancing prospects for each school and every child. Benefits might also arise from connection with innovations such as children's centres and access to capital programmes such as Building Schools for the Future.

A broader based organisation should be able to provide assistance to smaller schools which are more vulnerable to changes in the birth rate.



ampus Woking is not just about links within the formal education sector. Networks should also be built that formally or informally include those with direct links to children's services such as nursery providers, borough and district councils, the youth service and the NHS, as well as those less clearly involved such as the police.

Other groups that need to be connected to campus activities would be the voluntary, charitable and faith sectors. Voluntary organisations already provide a growing contribution to enriching and supporting children's lives. Some groups such as the YMCA and uniformed groups like the Scouts and Guides have played a part for many years, while other organisations have sprung up to deal with more recent developments in our society. All have a part to play and by raising awareness of what these voluntary groups can offer to the education system, children will benefit.

Campus Woking delivers a united brand, but maintains the independence of individual institutions. Schools and other services can work together for the benefit of children and young people, but maintain and grow their own reputation at the same time, with their own management structure and their separate ethos. Ultimately, it is not the ownership of Campus Woking that is important, but commitment and involvement from each of the partners.

In seeking funding for Campus Woking, one possible solution that will have to be considered is estate reorganisation and management. Estate

Making best use of our land and buildings is essential in creating a sustainable financial model. reorganisation could mean closure of some facilities, but it might

also mean better use of the land that is currently occupied by services, putting different services in different places or introducing entirely new services. Alongside reorganisation, better management of estates is required. Management can mean effective use of the land occupied, but it also means effective use of the facilities available - are they used intensively, are they maintained and updated, are they leased out at an appropriate charge to external users?



he vast majority of our schools are now more than 30 years old with many occupying buildings that date back 100 years or more. To suggest that a building put up 30 years ago is fit for purpose today is hard to imagine; to say the same about a 100 year old building is ridiculous. This doesn't mean that every 100 year old building should be torn down nor that great achievement can't emerge from old buildings, what it does mean is that in changing use of buildings or putting up new buildings the key is flexibility. It is not realistic to deliver vocational studies in engineering in a traditional classroom.

Many of our school buildings have been built on the ground floor only. Better use of the space above, whether it is for administrative purposes, community use, sports, cultural or other children's services would free up valuable land.

Laptops for all children is an achievable goal and can have a significant impact on academic achievement. Surrey will receive Building Schools for the Future money

for its secondary estate in 2011 and at some point will receive similar monies for its primary schools. Planning for this money and making effective use of it is essential. It is more likely that such effective use will be achieved if there is a broad and imaginative approach rather than a narrow, traditional outlook.

Moving forward, it is essential that there should be an ambition to ensure every child is benefiting from the Campus Working initiative. One very tangible way that such an ambition might be met and at the same time contribute massively to improved achievement is the provision of connectivity for every child aged nine and above. Laptops, wireless connection and the use of the new generation mobile phones are part of the education tools of today – we should provide them. There is a growing body of research evidence that the provision of a laptop has a considerable impact on a child's achievement (not that this should be seen as a replacement for book expenditure). We should find a way to provide every child from year five to year eleven in Surrey with a laptop.

Such a development would have considerable benefits in terms of better use of IT, a key skill for almost any child growing up and working in the future. An initial reaction to such a programme might be that it would be out of reach on cost grounds. This need not be the case.

If a laptop is bought over five years payments could be spread and with a parental contribution of around £1 per week, the cost to the central body would be about £60,000 - £70,000 per year. This would equip seven years of children in Woking with laptops. Support from parents would be less than many spend already on their children's text messaging and mobile phone usage. Nor is it uncommon for schools to already request parental contributions for a wide range of activities and resources, probably running to hundreds of pounds per year. Of course, there would be support provided for those children coming from poorer backgrounds and free school meals might be used as a good indicator. The cost might be reduced further if money from parents can be channelled in a tax efficient manner.

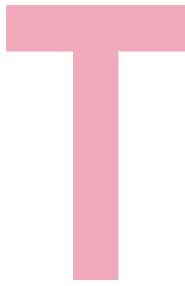
Just as no child or young person should be excluded from benefiting from this proposal, nor should any facility that wishes to take part. Special schools could easily be excluded if the project doesn't overtly seek to include them

Whether a charitable trust, social enterprise or some other structure, Campus Woking could receive considerable financial benefits not available to schools at present.

from the very start. Special schools are likely to have an even more

important role to play in the future as more children survive at birth with disabilities than previously happened. Of course, a special school is likely to serve a wider geographical area than the vast majority of mainstream schools. However, universities often have a facility based in one place that is shared with another university, sometimes even on the other side of the world, but this is no bar to being part of one institution and playing a full part in its work.

Finances might be improved further by the choice of structure used to run Campus Woking. A social enterprise is one possibility, but a charitable trust would certainly have tax advantages. The County has increasingly worked with charitable organisations to deliver services and increase capacity in recent years. A good example in children's services is the work of Disability Challengers, providing play services for disabled children.



he County sold a redundant school building in Farnham to Disability Challengers despite there being a higher offer for the building. Disability Challengers were able to access 80% of the purchase costs from a local company and then apply to 80 grant giving trusts for revenue support for the project. None of these funds would have been available to the County Council yet the County achieves an increase in capacity for services that it wishes to deliver. Of course, charities can also benefit through the tax system when in receipt of individual donations.

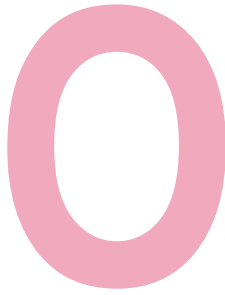
Whether a charitable trust, social enterprise or some other structure, Campus Woking will still require a joint board or partnership of some type to provide direction and accountability. Much of the money coming in to Campus

Campus Woking will require a joint board which will include Councillors, but should have a majority from those delivering and receiving services. Woking is still likely to be public money and hence there should be Councillors

involved on the Board, but the majority of members should be drawn from those delivering and receiving the services, including young people. Councillor involvement also means a continuing link to the County Council, which will still be charged with a range of statutory duties in the field of children's services. Alongside the Board there would also have to be a small staff to deal with operational matters.

The organisation that is established is set to have a number of key roles

- coordination of timetables in order to increase diversity of opportunity;
- monitor and review standards and achievement;
- ensure sufficient places are available for local children;
- potentially act as an admissions authority for all local schools;
- provide a financial structure to support maximum inflow of funds to the organisation and its partners;
- develop and own new facilities and activities to support all partners.




One particular role that the organisation might take on would be to own and develop a facility for the provision of vocational diplomas. In delivering on this objective further partners might support the project in different ways, including such as voluntary and faith groups, the LSC, Connexions, FE Colleges, Adult Education and the University of Surrey. The LSC might be able to provide capital support; FE colleges might also have capital available as well as delivering some of the courses; Adult Education may seek new facilities and extend their course range in to more work related subjects; while the University of Surrey could be involved in delivering foundation degrees and developing the idea of a public sector academy, enhancing skills through key training programmes.

Detailed costings remain to be completed for Campus Woking, but I have no doubt that if there is a will to move forward in the direction set out, it will be possible to find a financial solution to make it work.

This is not just about schools, but a variety of partners such as the LSC, Connexions, FE Colleges, Adult Education and the University of Surrey.

Conclusions



n setting out these proposals it is important to remember what motivates the changes proposed:

Surrey has a broadly successful education system, but if it is to provide our young people with the skills they need to compete in the future, there needs to be a step change in provision.

Government funding will always fall short of what is required to provide the services that parents and children would desire and would be of benefit to them.

Other sources of funding are limited by the nature of the state system. In some places religious groups and foundations are able to supplement the funding available. In other schools there has been a growing reliance on parental contributions for various activities.

The nature of the national curriculum narrows rather than grows choice for children, forcing too many down a path that is clearly inappropriate for their needs.

In the past decade direction of our schools from Whitehall has grown significantly with those running schools in a constant state of flux rather than focusing on their core activities of teaching children. One Guildford head teacher complains of having received one new initiative from government every three days of term for the last nine years.

Given this background the need for significant change is clear. Campus Woking offers such an opportunity through a number of key steps:

Greater local control and flexibility with opportunities to broaden the academic and vocational offer made to children and their families.

New structural solutions that allow fundraising from sources other than the state and that maximise tax advantages in order to produce a sustainable system.



wider range of sporting and cultural facilities for all schools, promoting links and involvement with local communities.

Integration of services between schools and with other providers such as colleges and universities to put choice at the heart of the system and to deliver extended and adaptable learning beyond school.

To make the most of existing assets and ensure the provision of greater capital investment in technology to enhance personal learning and development.

Campus Woking provides an opportunity for more of Surrey's children to grow up confident and successful. It can deliver the step change required for Surrey to meet the challenge of growing international competition. Any new idea such as Campus Woking carries a degree of risk with it and to succeed it will need imagination, cooperation and hard work. I believe that the potential benefits far outweigh the possible risks and that Campus Woking represents the best hope for a better future for all Surrey's children, young people and their families.

Appendix 1

A short guide to the Education and Inspections Bill

Appendix 1

A Short Guide to the Education and Inspections Bill 2006

The Bill will empower schools by devolving as much decision-making to them as possible, while giving local authorities an enhanced strategic role as the champion of pupils and parents.

It is expected that many schools will acquire shared Trusts that can foster and deepen collaboration and help to deliver improved children's services and a new 14-19 offer.

Trusts will also be able to apply for additional flexibilities which can be used by all the schools with which they are associated. There will be new safeguards around the acquisition of Trusts to ensure that they operate in the best interests of local children, contribute to raising standards at the school, and promote community cohesion.

Local Authorities

Local authorities will take on a new strategic role, with duties to promote choice, diversity, high standards and, for the first time, the fulfillment of every child's educational potential. They will respond to parental concerns about the quality of local schools and, in doing so, they will have new powers to intervene earlier where performance is poor. As the commissioner of school places, local authorities will be able to propose expansions to all categories of school, set the terms for school competitions and take all decisions relating to school organisation.

Governing bodies and local authorities will be required to provide full-time alternative provision from the sixth day of an exclusion.

Curriculum

In order to deliver the entitlement to young people aged 14-16, schools will need to work with each other and with colleges and other providers. The Bill also empowers them to enter into formal collaboration with FE Colleges.

Youth

The Bill will give local authorities responsibility for making sure young people have a range of exciting and positive things to do in their spare time, as promised in the recent Youth Green Paper, Youth Matters.

Clause 6 places a duty on local authorities in England to promote the well-being of persons aged 13-19 (and up to 25 for persons with learning difficulties) by securing access to educational and recreational leisure-time activities and facilities. This gives effect to the proposals contained in the Youth Green Paper, Youth Matters.

The government are also committed to a new strategic role for local authorities, and to offering all parents a real choice of a school which suits their child's strengths and interests.

Part of the local authority's new strategic role is to plan local school provision, including making decisions about the establishment, alteration and closure of any maintained mainstream, special and nursery schools. This means that the local authority will take over existing functions of the School Organisation Committee which is abolished by clause 28. In the light of this, clauses 15, 16 and 17 introduce procedures for the closure of maintained schools. Local authorities will also have extended powers (under clause 19) to propose the enlargement of the premises, the addition or discontinuance of SEN provision or the addition of a sixth form to any foundation, foundation special or voluntary school.

Clause 32 sets out a number of requirements that must be met by Trusts. They must be incorporated charitable bodies and they will have to advance education and in doing so, promote community cohesion.

The clause enables local authorities to be a partner in a Trust. Finally, it gives the Secretary of State a reserve power to remove trustees (and to appoint replacements), and provides for regulations to prevent unsuitable persons from becoming trustees.

Clause 35 changes the assets regime around disposals for foundation and voluntary schools. It ensures that if a Trust school wishes to dispose of non playing-field land provided or enhanced at public expense, it must inform the local authority in advance, who will be able to object or to claim a share of the proceeds. Where agreement cannot be reached, the Schools Adjudicator will play a mediation role. Local authorities will also be able to make proposals to use any surplus land held by Trusts for other children's services. Any proceeds from disposals must be used for capital investment for the purpose of improving education. The existing rigorous restrictions on playing field disposal will apply to all maintained schools. Assets will revert back to the local authority in the case of school closure (except where the Trust originally provided the land).

Clause 36 places a new duty on the governing bodies of maintained schools to have regard to the views of parents and to the relevant Children and Young People's Plan in their conduct of the school and in their provision of extended services.

Clause 40 gives the local authority a duty to support parents to express a preference for a particular school, thereby helping a broader range of parents to exercise their right to choose the most suitable school for their child and take advantage of the diversity of local provision.

Clause 53 re-enacts existing legislation with amendments so that local authorities can intervene earlier and more easily tackle underperforming schools by issuing them with a formal warning notice. Schools will be given a right to make representations to Ofsted against the issue of the notice.

Clause 56 contains a new power which enables the local authority to require a weak school to collaborate with another school or to work with a partner on school improvement.

Clauses 61 and 62 put in place the powers to make access to Diplomas an entitlement for every young person everywhere. In order to deliver the entitlement to young people aged 14-16, schools will need to work with each other and with colleges and other providers in order to make sure that between them they offer young people the full entitlement, because no school could be expected to deliver every Diploma on its own. The Bill gives local authorities the strategic lead for securing the entitlement for these young people, with the essential role of making sure that in every area, schools and colleges between them make the full range available.

Clause 70 reduces the impact of transport as a barrier to parents from low income groups exercising their choice of school; it improves and extends the offer of free transport which was first set out in the 1944 Education Act. The Bill will place a new duty on local authorities to provide free transport for some of the most disadvantaged pupils (i.e. those eligible for free school meals or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit) to attend any of three suitable secondary schools closest to their home, where these schools are more than two (and less than six) miles away, and for primary-aged pupils to the nearest school more than two miles from their home.

Clause 69 gives local authorities a duty to prepare and publish a sustainable school travel strategy, leading to health and environmental benefits. Clauses 71, 72 and 73 will enable a small number of 'Pathfinder' local authorities to develop school travel schemes to pilot innovative approaches to home to school travel. 'Pathfinder' authorities will put in place new travel arrangements to support school choice, reduce the distances pupils are expected to walk to school, and increase the proportion of pupils traveling by sustainable means. 'Pathfinders' may also trial transport arrangements that support the provision of a wider 14-19 offer and extended services and that address the problems faced in rural authorities for example, by using Yellow Buses. The Pathfinders will also test the efficacy of co-funding arrangements.

In order to ensure that the legitimate concerns of parents are given proper consideration, clause 151 creates a new parental right of complaint to Ofsted, when local complaints procedures have been exhausted. The Chief Inspector of Schools will be given a new power to gather additional information as part of following up a complaint.

Clause 152 extends the existing Power to Innovate provisions, which allow schools to apply for legislation to be set aside or modified if they believe that it is inhibiting innovation that could raise standards. The existing provisions will be extended to give the same powers to Further Education colleges, and to enable Trusts to apply for freedoms on behalf of all their schools.

Clause 160 extends the powers of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide support for under-16s.