

Report to: **Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services**

Date: **20 June 2007**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Title of report: **Progress report with regard to recommendations made in the Scrutiny Report of March 2006 on the CfBT East Sussex School Improvement Service (SIS)**

Purpose of report: **To provide a further update to the Committee on action taken by the service to address the recommendations made as a result of the Scrutiny Review. The first update was provided in November 2006.**

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Committee is recommended to note the progress made against the recommendations from the Scrutiny Review in March 2006.**

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### **1. Financial Appraisal**

1.1 The contract between East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and CfBT Education Trust to provide school improvement services to East Sussex schools is being extended for a further two years to August 2009. As a result of contract negotiations, a new budget for the service has been set by the Children's Services Department with a reduction of £400,000 on the annual core budget. The new reduced budget arrangements came into effect from 1 April 2007. As a result of the negotiations for an extended contract and the reduced budget, the service has been restructured to focus on key deliverables in terms of standards and school effectiveness and to reflect the fact that funding for School Improvement Partners sits within the County Council. There has been a reduction in funding for some projects undertaken with or for schools, such as the subsidy for the annual headteacher conferences.

1.2 Additionally, for the current financial year, there has been a cut in the Standards Fund grant for the National Secondary Strategy. This has necessitated a further reduction of two subject consultant posts in the secondary strategy team.

1.3 The restructuring of the service to meet the new contract fee and revised key deliverables is close to completion.

### **2. Supporting Information**

2.1 The Scrutiny Report of March 2006 made seven recommendations, the first of which is:

ESCC considers extending its contractual arrangements with CfBT for the School Improvement Service for a further two years (until August 2009).

2.2 The report made six further recommendations, as follows:

- Delivery of a programme to encourage, mentor, and identify potential candidates for headship within our schools
- An increase in the capacity to provide additional support and mentoring for newly appointed headteachers
- An action plan developed to lift East Sussex schools significantly above the 'National Average' on Key Stage targets
- An increase in the supply of specialist teaching support in specific subject areas, especially for the secondary sector

- A strategy developed to enable intensive support to be phased out when a school leaves an Ofsted category, rather than ending abruptly
- Consultation with schools, as part of the re-procurement process in 2009, to ascertain the type of service they would wish to see in the future

3. A report on progress with regard to the recommendations above is attached as Appendix A.

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Local Members: All

Background Documents:

1. Scrutiny Review of the School Improvement Service report by the Project Board March 2006
2. Progress report to the Scrutiny Committee 28 November 2006

## Update of action plan for SIS Scrutiny Review on 20 June 2007

No.	Recommendation	Timescale	Lead	Progress including actions	Additional actions	Impact on schools
1.	<b>Leadership: Delivery of a programme to encourage, mentor, and identify potential candidates for headship within our schools</b>	On going since the Scrutiny Review made this recommendation	Nina Siddall/ Helen Kenward	<p>Significant progress has been made in respect of this recommendation, although it is early as yet to judge the impact in terms of recruitment and retention of new leaders.</p> <p>The SIS has significantly enhanced its published strategy for improving leadership and management across the whole spectrum of schools with a particular focus on developing leadership potential amongst the schools' workforce. Key strategies have included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Senior Level Leaders Progression Programme</b> - A programme has been running over this academic year entitled 'Senior Level Leaders; Growing and developing our leaders', open to all acting or aspiring senior leaders in primary, secondary and special schools. The programme has consisted of a whole day launch followed by six twilight sessions and a two day conference that will take place on 21 and 22 June. 40 school representatives have taken part - 30 from primary schools, 8 from secondary schools and 2 from special schools. Many participants will be presenting at the conference on the impact of work they have been doing in their schools as a result of participating in the programme;</li> <li><b>Middle Level Leaders' Progression Programme</b> – A nine month programme for developing middle level leaders and leadership across all schools has been run this academic year - to date there have been 32 participants on the programme from primary, secondary and special schools. Additionally, a tailored course has been offered to middle level leaders in 5 of our secondary schools during 2006-07. This has proved extremely popular and has been added to the suite of support offered by</li> </ol>	<p>Agenda for the next round of county and area governor fora will focus on governors' role in creating sustainable leadership in their schools, by supporting the identification of leadership potential and ensuring that those aspiring to senior leadership positions are developed to do so</p> <p>The senior leadership strategy programme for 2007 will incorporate a succession planning programme</p> <p>Consultation is underway for a hard federation between 3 schools in Hastings which will include a federated middle</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There has been successful recruitment to the large majority of vacant headships in the county, including to headship in schools in more challenging areas</li> <li>• The strategy for seconding serving or aspiring headteachers to act as interim leaders in schools in need has been successful in helping to stabilise and turn around a number of schools requiring additional support, and has also led to promotion or substantive new headteacher positions for several of the interim leaders</li> <li>• The Senior and Middle Level Leaders' Progression Programmes have been very positively evaluated by participants</li> <li>• So far, one participant in the</li> </ul>

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				<p>the secondary consultant team. Both the senior and middle level leader courses have carried the possibility of accreditation from the University of Brighton so that participants can write up their findings as either part of a masters degree or simply as a free standing postgraduate certificate;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. identifying future leaders through the <b>Fast Track</b> programme: discussions are taking place to plan a workshop on Fast Track at the Primary and Special School Headteachers' conference in January 2008 – the whole theme of the conference being “Leadership for Learning : Grow Your Own Leader – Leadership from Within”. This conference (as previous conferences) is organised by CfBT/SIS and supported by the active involvement of effective headteachers from East Sussex schools;</li> <li>4. the Small Schools Adviser is continuing to support the “New Headteachers of Small Schools” programme through an allocation of funding to the established headteacher facilitator of this group;</li> <li>5. encouragement and identification of potential amongst middle and senior leaders for future senior leadership and headship positions, plus identification of the progression steps required for headship and selection of a range of appropriate development programmes at each step;</li> <li>6. encouragement to schools to ensure staff at the appropriate level undergo training with the <b>National College of School Leadership (NCSL)</b> on established NCSL programmes, such as National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) and the Leading from the Middle programme;</li> <li>7. active identification of <b>interim headteachers</b> for placements in schools where temporary robust leadership is required – these may be existing headteachers but, where appropriate,</li> </ol>	<p>level leadership structure</p>	<p>Fast Track programme has obtained a headship in East Sussex</p> <p>several of these interim headteachers have subsequently been appointed as</p>

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				<p>they can be experienced deputies with proven track records in their roles who are aspiring to headship – interim positions meet the need of the receiving schools (which often are facing challenging circumstances) while also extending and developing prospective headteachers' experience –the development of expertise amongst teachers via the <b>Advanced Skills Teachers</b> and other <b>Leading Professional</b> Programmes;</p> <p>9. facilitating and coordinating the establishment of <b>networks</b> for leadership teams to promote more collaborative working.</p>		<p>substantive headteachers at the school where they have provided temporary leadership;</p>
2.	<p><b>Newly Appointed Headteachers: An increase in the capacity to provide additional support and mentoring for newly appointed headteachers</b></p>	Ongoing	<p>Helen Kenward/ Nina Siddall/ Regan Delf</p>	<p>Progress in this area has been good overall although it has become more difficult to source funding for some successful programmes. The SIS has enhanced its published leadership and management development programme to include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. a comprehensive <b>Early Headship Programme (EHP)</b> which includes an Early Headship File, new headteacher welcome and induction meetings, additional school development adviser support and support from a trained mentor who is a serving experienced headteacher</li> <li>2. <b>the Headteacher Mentoring Programme</b>, designed to offer confidential colleague support to new headteachers, has been improved to include new protocols and a specific training programme for mentors</li> <li>3. support is available to new headteachers from experienced '<b>consultant headteachers</b>' contracted by the SIS to provided focussed advice and consultancy as required – funding for this initiative has had to be reduced this financial year but a highly effective team of consultant headteachers continues to provide excellent development opportunities based on a coaching model.</li> </ol>	<p>A New Headteacher Network was established in the summer of 2006 to engage new and experienced headteachers in developing a network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New headteachers have evaluated the Early Headship Support Programme very positively</li> <li>• 80% of mentors have attended mentor training to date and all receive telephone support and guidance from the SIS team of advisers</li> <li>• A SIS review demonstrated that new Headteacher wished to continue with the New Headteachers' Network in the next academic year. However, it may not be possible to source funding to continue this</li> <li>• In secondary schools that were at risk of failing an Ofsted inspection, 4</li> </ul>

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						schools receiving consultant head support were judged as satisfactory
3.	<p><b>Raising Standards of Attainment: An action plan developed to lift East Sussex Schools significantly above the 'National Average' on Key Stage targets</b></p>	On-going	Bill Lyttle	<p>Comprehensive action plans to raise standards above the national average are in place.</p> <p>The overarching <b>School Improvement Service Performance Improvement Plan (SIS PIP)</b> focuses on raising standards significantly above the national average. A new PIP has been finalised for the financial year 2007/2008 with a key focus on raising standards. Detailed supplementary plans support this, tackling the national strategies agenda and specific interventions in individual schools. This very comprehensive body of work is the subject of various reports to Members, the Director of Children's Services, the Senior Regional Director of the National Strategies and to schools, and is subject to quarterly monitoring and evaluation.</p>	<p>A newly developed 'Closing the Gap' strategy led strategically by the SIS in partnership with key CSA services focuses on closing the gaps in attainment and achievement between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• different geographical areas of the county (notably between Hastings and Eastbourne and the rest of the county)</li> <li>• different groups of pupils (such as boys and girls, pupils who are LAC, pupils eligible for Free School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools are identified and supported according to explicit criteria related to tackling underachievement</li> <li>• The service is able to demonstrate significant impact on standards in schools with which it has worked intensively to date - see impact of the 'Intensive Support Programme' (ISP) and reports on the progress of intensive support schools at Key Stage 3</li> <li>• Comments in the APA and the reports from the National Strategies on the impact of the service's intervention programmes are positive.</li> </ul>

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					<p>Meals etc)            Additionally East Sussex has been successful in becoming a pilot authority for the <b>'Making good progress'</b> national pilot, which identifies underachieving or 'stuck' pupils in more than 50 identified primary and secondary schools in the county, and offers them individual tuition to 'catch up' –</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership of the National Primary and Secondary Strategies by the SIS has been rated as "good" by the National Strategies Team.</li> </ul> <p>this pilot has not yet begun so cannot be evaluated as yet</p>
4.	<p><b>Specialist Teaching: An increase in the supply of specialist teaching support in specific subject areas, especially for the secondary sector</b></p>	No further action currently	Janet Bowen/ Helen Kenward	<p>Progress in this area has been somewhat variable owing to the response from schools and their changing needs in the area.</p> <p>In June 2006, a potential solution to resolve the shortage of high calibre candidates for middle leadership posts for secondary schools was offered to headteachers in the Hastings and Rother area (HARAH). Hays Education proposed a nationally managed recruitment campaign for schools on an individual basis with a minimum of 5–10 vacancies for the process to be viable. Costs associated with the proposal were to be shared between schools, with some potential funding contributed by the CSA and CfBT. However, insufficient schools were prepared to sign up for this initiative to make the programme viable.</p> <p>Members of HARAH have worked with the Recruitment Strategy Manager to increase collaboration to support teacher recruitment and</p>	Consultation re a hard federation between three schools in Hastings, including the sharing of specialist teaching and learning expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fewer vacancies are arising in specialist areas. However, retention of high caliber staff, especially at Head of Department level, is a reported key issue especially for schools in more challenging areas</li> </ul>

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				<p>retention initiatives, particularly in secondary shortage subject areas, and middle and senior leadership posts, eg shared timetables across 2 or more schools.</p> <p>However, the SIS is tackling issues relating to standards particularly in core curriculum areas via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• input from national strategy consultants, targeting weaker departments and weaker leadership of departments</li> <li>• ongoing middle level leader training</li> <li>• intensive intervention and support plans for schools with specific weaknesses in standards in key subject areas</li> </ul>		<p>Overall, vacancies are reducing in specialist areas. However, concerns remain about the quality of some specialist teaching and in the quality of leadership of key curriculum areas, notably English, science and mathematics. This remains a key issue in some schools as it is undermining performance in the crucial 5A*-C including English and mathematics indicator.</p>
5.	<p><b>Exit Strategy Support: A strategy developed to enable intensive support to be phased out when a school leaves an Ofsted category, rather</b></p>	On-going	<p>Nina Siddall/ Helen Kenward/ Regan Delf</p>	<p>Progress in this area has been good.</p> <p>When schools are deemed no longer to be inadequate by Ofsted, they move to MSSR category 3s, which indicates satisfactory provision and standards but also the need for a support plan from the Children's Services Department/School Improvement Service to facilitate continued progress and to prevent any slipping backwards in terms of standards.</p>	<p>Revised standards operating procedures are in the final stages of production, taking account of the introduction of the national</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All schools which have left an Ofsted category recently (Thomas Peacocke, Hollington, Castledown) are receiving support and are continuing to make good progress.</li> </ul>



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	than ending abruptly			<p>As a school comes out of an Ofsted category a lead consultant or the school development adviser remains responsible for ensuring the school makes sufficient progress to meet targets and raise standards of achievement. This additional support, challenge and monitoring takes place over an average of 10 months. The move from intensive external support and monitoring to a position where the school holds the internal locus of control for the school's improvement agenda is managed sensitively.</p> <p>During the time a school is subject to an Ofsted 'inadequate' judgment, the SIS is concerned with building capacity and ensuring succession planning from within the school's resource.</p> <p>Governors are fully involved in the schools' improvement journey and at the time a school comes out of the Ofsted category they are consulted about support plan implementation. SIS personnel are involved, when permissible, in meetings with Ofsted inspectors during school inspections. Part of this activity is to assure Ofsted that the SIS will remain involved at a high level of intervention as the school moves forward.</p>	<p>school improvement partner agenda.</p> <p>The Positive Response Policy and Closing the Gap strategy will increase the level of inter-departmental working; communication streams are more secure and often issues are identified and solutions found in conjunction with other CSA colleagues.</p>	
6.	<b>Consultation and innovation: Consultation with schools, as part of the re-procurement process in 2009, to ascertain the type of service they would wish to see in the future</b>	From October 2006	Bill Lyttle/ Jon Brown	<p>A <b>services review</b> with schools and with SIS colleagues took place in Autumn 2006; a CfBT consultant conducted this review. The scope of this review included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• quality of traded services;</li> <li>• service level agreements;</li> <li>• communication with customers;</li> <li>• other providers of services;</li> <li>• value added by CfBT.</li> </ul> <p>The review was carried out through face-to-face interviews and questionnaires. This review complemented the ongoing evaluations of input, outcome and impact undertaken by the service with schools as part of its Quality Assurance</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of the traded services provided by the SIS was conducted in the Autumn of 2007 by an external CfBT consultant - the subsequent report provided testament to the very positive regard in which the training, consultancy and support provided by the SIS was held by</li> </ul>

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				<p>mechanisms. Several of the recommendations in the report have been implemented and others are under consideration.</p> <p>Additionally, the SIS consults regularly with schools via the cross-phase <b>SIS Consultative Group</b> ,made up of headteachers and senior SIS members.</p>		<p>schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SIS is considering implementation of a number of recommendations made in the review report</li> </ul>