Briefing for Pershore Town and Parish Councils on School Sufficiency and Organisation for the Pershore Education Planning Area

At Worcestershire County Council's Cabinet Meeting on 23rd September 2021, Marcus Hart, Cabinet Member for Education will be recommending that Cabinet:

a) approve a pre-publication consultation with stakeholders on the proposal for a coordinated change of age range to align schools in the Pershore Education Planning Area to a single, two-tier (primary and secondary) system of education;
b) support WCF to continue to manage this change and coordinate the consultation with families, residents and other stakeholders; and
c) consider a report of the consultation findings and full proposals in February 2022.

The full report is available on the Council's website as of 15th September 2021 at https://worcestershire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=131&MId=3728&Ver=4

Following a direct approach from schools in the Pershore area in Autumn 2020, there has been a technical analysis to evaluate the risks and issues relating to the current organisation of the schools in the planning area. Between July and September 2021, the schools' governing bodies and Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) confirmed their agreement/intentions to consult on the change to a two-tier Education Planning area, seek changes of age range (where necessary) and in the instance of the Middle Schools amalgamate with the First Schools. This proposal is to consult on change of age ranges not to close schools. All relevant county councillors and MPs have been briefed in advance of the report being published.

Until 2019, the education provision in this area has followed a three-tier journey, where pupils attend first schools from age 4-9, transfer to middle schools at age 9-12 and then transfer to high school at age 12 to complete their education. From 2018, some schools in this area converted to primary and secondary schools and these schools therefore are not proposing any further age range changes. By 2023, we anticipate that two of the middle schools in the Pershore area will be operating at around 50% capacity.

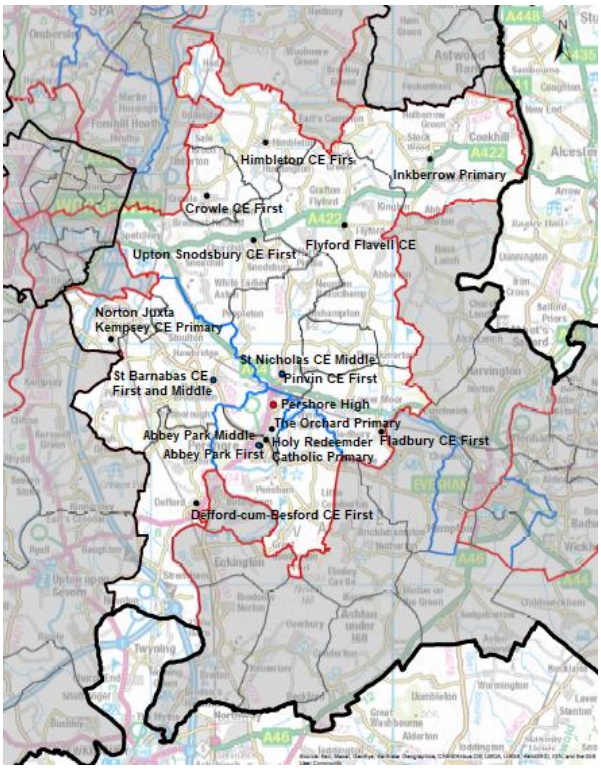
Proposed Timeline:

a) September 23rd Cabinet consideration of public consultation on the recommendations outlined

b) If approved by Cabinet, October 11th – November 26th Public Consultation, including consultation on all proposals with parent carers, children and young people

c) February 2022 Cabinet consideration the approval of school organisation and admissions changes at maintained (community) schools following public consultation feedback

The Pershore Education Planning Area incorporates part of the Wychavon District, made up predominantly of small rural villages.



There are multiple decision-making bodies required to coordinate an area-wide change including Worcestershire County Council, the DfE, and School Governors. The relevant decision-making body for each school is determined by the status of the school. The Local Authority is the decision maker for Community Maintained Schools, Governing Body are the decision maker for age range changes of up to two years for their school, and the Regional Schools Commissioner is the decision maker for Academy Schools.

If you have any questions or feedback regarding this, please email PershoreReview@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk

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