



Department
for Education

APPENDIX C

Consultation Response Form

Consultation closing date: 24 October 2013
Your comments must reach us by that date

Changes to the System of School Organisation

If you would prefer to respond online to this consultation please use the following link: <https://www.education.gov.uk/consultations>

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reason for confidentiality:	

Name: Debbie Barnes, Executive Director of Children's Services	
Please tick if you are responding on behalf of your organisation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Name of Organisation (if applicable):Lincolnshire County Council	
Address: County Offices, Newland LINCOLN LN1 1YQ	

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Ministerial and Public Communications Division by e-mail: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the Department's ['Contact Us'](#) page.

Please mark one box that best describes you as a respondent, and/or the type of organisation in which you have an interest.

<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Carer	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintained school	<input type="checkbox"/> Representative of childcare or early years intermediary organisation
<input type="checkbox"/> Academy/free school	<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> SEN provider
<input type="checkbox"/> Nursery or other pre-school provider	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Early years professional
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

Please Specify:

Lincolnshire County Council

Changes to the School Organisation System

As set out in the consultation summary document, the aim of the proposed changes is to enable schools to be more in charge of their own decisions about size and offer, and to be able to respond to what parents want locally without being unduly restricted by process.

1 Please use the box provided to comment on the proposals to enable maintained mainstream schools to make the alterations below without following a statutory process.

- Expansion (enlargement of premises).
- Changes to a school's lower and upper age range (except adding or removing a sixth form).
- Adding boarding provision.

Comments:

The LA understands the benefits of reducing bureaucracy but this should not be at the expense of a thorough and open process.

The LA believes consultation to be a vital part of the process and it is imperative that the opportunity be provided for the local community to be involved in what is happening in their own locality. This is particularly important where changes such as expansion and changes to age ranges are likely to impact on other schools and should not be made without considering the views of those affected.

It should be highlighted that such changes would also cause difficulties for the authority to fulfil its duty of providing sufficient school places if a school can expand its capacity or change the age range without full consultation. The LA will continue to have a statutory obligation to plan school places but without the strategic overview where changes could be made by schools over which the LA would have no control or input. There would be similar difficulties in monitoring the sufficiency of Early Years Provision in the county

Whilst for expansions the LA appreciates that the planning application process exists, this is often much later after the principle of expansion has been decided. Also the planning process does not take account of various factors relating to educational provision and the impact on other providers. As a two tier authority planning applications submitted directly by schools would go through district planners not county planning and as such the LA may not always have the opportunity to respond to district applications.

To summarise therefore the LA believe that a process involving consultation should be maintained and this should incorporate a requirement for the LA to be consulted regarding the sufficiency of places and the need to expand

2 Please use the box provided to comment on the proposals below to streamline the statutory process for making other changes to maintained schools (as set out in the draft regulations and *Who can do what?* table).

Reducing the length of the statutory process by:

- removing requirement to consult before publishing proposals;
- reducing the statutory representation period from 6 to 4 weeks.

Reducing the level of prescription for:

- the detail that proposals must contain;
- publication requirements;
- the prescribed list of bodies to whom proposals must be sent.

Comments:

As already detailed in the response to Question 1 the LA believes consultation to be a vital part of the process and it is imperative that the opportunity be provided for the local community to be involved in what is happening in their own locality. The LA does not object to the streamlining of the process but is against reducing the opportunity for consultation.

The LA believes therefore that the consultation period should be retained in the streamlined process although is happy to accept a reduction in the Representation Period from 6 to 4 weeks.

In addition, in order to ensure that the local community is fully engaged in the process, the LA believes that both the publication requirements and the prescribed list of bodies to whom proposals should be sent should be retained as in the current statutory process.

3 Please use the box provided to comment on the proposals to enable academies to make the alterations below without the need to have a business case agreed by the department.

- Expansion (enlargement of premises).
- Changes to an academy's lower and upper age range (except adding or removing a sixth form).
- Adding boarding provision.
- Changes in admissions arrangements for the first academies where this was written into their funding agreements.

Comments:

The LA believes that the process which applies to maintained schools should also be applied to academies and would like to reiterate the importance of full and open consultation.

Therefore a thorough process of consultation should be retained to ensure that the local community has the opportunity to be fully involved in what is happening in their own locality.

This process should include a requirement for the academy to consult with the LA prior to agreeing any significant changes. As already referred to in the response to question 1, the LA would experience difficulty in fulfilling its statutory obligation to plan school places without the strategic overview and involvement in any consultation process as changes would be likely to be made over which the LA has no control or input.

4 Please use the box provided to comment on what further changes, if any, the government could make to enable schools to be more in charge of their own decisions about school size and composition.

Comments: Response to section 3 Establishing and discontinuing maintained schools. Following the introduction of the Academy Presumption the LA appreciates that the circumstances when a new maintained school can be established are very limited. However this makes it even more important that a thorough process should be followed and believes that the level of prescription for the current process should be retained and not streamlined. The LA believes that public consultation is vital and must be included in some form but would accept that a public meeting may not be essential if consultation is carried out by other means eg by offering individual appointments to interested parties with LA officers. The discontinuation of a school may have a significant impact on a community and therefore the LA supports the retention of the statutory consultation period as proposed. However, bearing in mind the importance of the closure of a school, and to enable the local community to be fully engaged, the LA believes that the current process should be retained and not reduced although the LA does support the principle of the reduction of any unnecessary bureaucracy.
--

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply.	X
E-mail address for acknowledgement: Linda.duffield@lincolnshire.gov.uk	

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, please confirm below if you would be willing to be contacted again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
------------------------------	--

All DfE public consultations are required to meet the Cabinet Office [Principles on Consultation](#)

The key Consultation Principles are:

- departments will follow a range of timescales rather than defaulting to a 12-week period, particularly where extensive engagement has occurred before
- departments will need to give more thought to how they engage with and consult with those who are affected
- consultation should be 'digital by default', but other forms should be used where these are needed to reach the groups affected by a policy; and
- the principles of the Compact between government and the voluntary and community sector will continue to be respected.

Responses should be completed on-line or emailed to the relevant consultation email box. However, if you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Carole Edge, DfE Consultation Coordinator, tel: 0370 000 2288 / email: carole.edge@education.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed responses should be sent to the address shown below by 24 October 2013

Send by post to:

Education Choice and Access Division,
4th Floor
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Send by e-mail to: schoolorganisation.consultation@education.gsi.gov.uk