

Briefing note from the Strategic Director for  
Children and Young People

### **MODELS OF SCHOOL ORGANISATION AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT - COUNCIL POLICY POSITION**

#### **BRIEFING NOTE**

- 1.1 Following consultation in 2011, the Council adopted a school improvement policy labelled “Derby Winners”, which has been the basis of the work of the Quality Standards and Performance team in the last school year. A review of the policy was proposed for the summer of 2012. Policy changes at both local and national levels make that particularly appropriate.
- 1.2 Derby Winners established a level of transparency and clarity of purpose which have supported school improvement activity in the last school year. A range of strategies has been established and Derby City has worked with schools to deliver improved life-chances for children and young people.
- 1.3 The context has been schools’ autonomy, financial stringency and the need to drive up standards. Schools have developed partnership work in a number of ways. The Council has exercised its powers to work with schools and intervene formally if necessary. Intervention has also come from central government. Some schools have chosen to move to academy status; some have felt pressurised to do so.
- 1.4 At its meeting of 13 June 2012, Council Cabinet established a policy position which no longer supports the conversion of Local Authority maintained schools to academies. The decision was to explore alternative models of school organisation and improvement, such as co-operatives, focusing on collaborative working between the Local Authority (LA) and schools in Derby.
- 1.5 The school improvement policy review reflects council policy by identifying Co-operative School Trusts as a pathway for schools to follow. There is a range of such pathways, and co-operative trusts have a clear place in that range.
- 1.6 In parallel, the review addresses the question of ensuring coherent links between school improvement and the Council’s functions of community engagement and economic development. It suggests consultation with stakeholders on a strategic level of collaboration, with Derby City taking the lead in the concept of a Learning City