

Crewkerne & Ilminster school structure change proposals
Question & Answer Factsheet – school staff



Q1. Would I be consulted with in relation to any restructure?

A. Yes, you would be consulted in relation to any restructure that may take place. Your Headteacher will keep you informed and your views are important to us. We will review all feedback and this would be taken into consideration in any final decision.

We have a legal obligation to consult with staff regarding any proposed restructure.

Q2. If a restructure goes ahead, would there be any changes to my terms and conditions as a result?

A. It is not anticipated that there would be any changes to your existing terms and conditions. However, in the event that a member of school staff accepts redeployment to a post within an Academy, they may have different terms and conditions. This would be made clear as part of the consultation process.

Q3. Would the unions be involved in any restructure?

A. Yes, unions would be informed and involved in every step of the process if a restructure were to take place. The employer also has a legal obligation to consult with unions regarding any proposed restructure. Unions have been informed of the proposal and we will continue to consult with the unions throughout the consultation process and beyond should the proposal go ahead

Q4. Would my pension be affected by any restructure?

A. No, your pension would remain unaffected. There would be no impact on your pension, whether you are a teacher or support staff. If a restructure took place, you would continue to be a member of your current scheme.

Q5. I am currently on a fixed-term contract, would the proposed restructure impact on this?

A. Your school would continue to manage your employment during the restructuring programme. Your fixed-term contract would be managed in the usual way based on operational need.

Q6. If the restructure goes ahead, would I be at risk of redundancy?

A. Whatever happens, our staff are our most valuable asset and we want to retain our people within the area. One of the key principles which is supported by all employers and would underpin any future process is the desire to avoid redundancy. Though every effort would be made to avoid it, if a reorganisation process resulted in a duplication of roles, however, redundancy could be unavoidable. In the event posts are identified as being "at risk", our redundancy policy for schools, (which was agreed with the unions), would be applied.

Q7. What measures are being taken to avoid redundancies if the restructure goes ahead?

A. The guiding principles of the redundancy policy seek to avoid compulsory redundancy where possible. Where this is unavoidable, consideration for redeployment would always be a priority. All schools have signed-up to this principle.

Q8. What happens if my post is declared "at risk" and I do not wish to take redeployment?

A. Measures would be taken to identify posts for redeployment that match skill sets and experience to avoid redundancy. Any decisions regarding redeployment would be taken in full consultation with those individuals whose posts have been identified as being "at risk".

Q9. If I accept redeployment in another setting, would I be paid redeployment mileage?

A. If your new place of work results in an increased commute of more than a 5 miles return journey than your existing place of work, you would be eligible to receive redeployment mileage expenses for a period of up to two years under our redeployment policy.

Q10. If I accepted redeployment to a post that is on a lower salary than I am currently being paid, would I be eligible for salary protection?

A. Yes. Under our redundancy and redeployment policy and the provisions within the School Teachers' Pay & Conditions Document, you would be eligible for salary protection for a period of up to three years.

Q11. I have a disability and have specialised equipment to enable me to fulfil my role. Would I be able to retain this equipment if I was redeployed to another setting in the area?

A. Yes. Any equipment or resources you currently require enabling you to fulfil your role would continue to be available to you.

Q12. How would you ensure any future decisions taken in relation to staffing in the schools within the proposed review are made fairly and in an open and transparent way so there is equality of opportunity for all?

A. All parties have signed up to guiding principles that they would operate in a fair and transparent way and that any key staffing decisions would need to be shared with, and approved by, representatives of the Project Board before any appointments were made.

Q13. What provision would be made for staff to access training and Continued Professional Development (CPD) where the restructuring process resulted in them having to undertake new roles?

A. Access to appropriate training and CPD would be made available to staff to ensure that they had the correct skills to fulfil their role in the new structure and to provide the best education experience for the children and young people in the area. This would include a managed process to help staff become familiar with other schools. Issues that have been raised that would be given specific focus in an area-wide CPD offer would be phase-specific training (such as formal assessment) and subject knowledge.

Q14. What provision would be made to induct staff where they have moved settings?

A. It would be the responsibility of each school, as it is currently, when appointing new staff. However, because of the scale of the change, we would work closely with those schools in the area to ensure there is as smooth a transition as possible for all involved. There may be instances where it would be useful for induction activities to take place in a coordinated way as part of an overall CPD programme across the area, and this will be considered in planning.

Q15. If the restructure goes ahead, what do I do if I have concerns about how processes and decisions are being made?

A. You should follow the school's current process by raising any concerns initially with your Headteacher. Where the concerns relate to the Headteacher, raise these with the Chair of Governors. They would determine whether your concerns need to be escalated to the named contact on the Project Board.

Q16. I feel very anxious about the whole process, what support is available to me?

A. We appreciate this may be an unsettling time for staff and would always encourage you to share any concerns with your Line Manager or Headteacher so that they can work with you to try to resolve these. All schools have access to our Employee Assistance Programme provided by Care First, an independent and confidential information, advice and guidance service, by calling T: 0800 174 319. If you are a member of a trade union or professional association, you could also contact them for support.

Q17 What does the ring fencing of jobs look like in real terms?

It is too early in the process to give precise details as we are still in a consultation phase and no decision has been taken about whether proposals might progress. If at a future time this decision was taken, the detail of a process would be worked through. Proposed staffing structures would be created by the individual schools and processes and principles would be negotiated with employers and trade unions.

Negotiations cannot take place in the absence of a decision about the way forward. The principle of ring-fencing which has been agreed is to secure vacancies for existing staff and take every step to avoid external recruitment. How this would be achieved would be the subject of negotiations.

Q18 When would this process move forward?

In the event the decision is taken by Cabinet in the new year to go ahead with the restructure, the draft HR timeline would start by looking at staff structures across all schools in the Autumn term 2021. Once these were agreed it would be anticipated the process of appointing to the structure would commence in the spring term 2022 so that staff would know the outcomes of this stage of the process by May half term 2022.

Q19 What HR support would be offered and when?

HR would work with school leaders to support them through the process and ensure due process is followed that is transparent and fair and in accordance with the HR principles and protocols. Staff would be consulted throughout the process with opportunity for individual and collective consultation. Work would also be done across the area to ensure transitions to new roles/ schools is as smooth as possible.

Q19 What would be the involvement and action of trade unions?

The LA are keeping the recognised unions informed and updated in relation to this process. All documents that have been shared with staff as part of the

consultation process have also been shared with the recognised unions. Regular discussions are taking place at Joint Consultative & Negotiating Committee meetings (JCNC) and the area review would continue to remain as a standing agenda item at these meetings. Bespoke meetings outside of JCNC would be arranged as required.



Q20 How have you addressed the unique issues for middle school teachers who are facing a change of educational phase as a result of proposed 2 tier restructuring and what timescale have you allowed for preliminary discussions to take place with staff and implementing resulting training needs?

If a decision was taken to proceed with implementation, then the aim would be to commence preparation and transition activities immediately. A training needs assessment would be undertaken in summer 2021. It would likely not be known which posts were 'at risk' and subject to redeployment until the beginning of 2022, therefore the focus in 2021 would be on general training and development suitable for all staff. In 2022 when it would become clearer which staff would be more likely to be teaching in primary or secondary phase, the training would become more focused and specific, though staff would have the option throughout to receive phase-specific training in both phases.

Q21 What assurances can you give that staff will not be employed on fixed term contracts if they are redeployed?

The status of employment contracts would be determined by the operational needs of the school, however, we do not envisage the use of Fixed Term Contracts (FTC) to be any greater than they would be ordinarily. Advice regarding the use of FTC's within the proposed new structures would be provided by HR. Where staff are at risk of redundancy and redeployment is being considered as an alternative to redundancy, we would endeavour to redeploy staff to posts without any detriment to their existing terms & conditions except where unavoidable.



Q 22 Educating children during a global pandemic is already creating significant stress and extra work for all those employed in schools. The county's plans to re-organise education at this difficult time is adding to that stress and pressure. Have you considered the effect of your timing on the health and well-being of your employees or have you deliberately chosen to do this at a difficult time in the knowledge that it will be more difficult for employees to fight it?

The health and well-being of all our staff is paramount. The decision to initiate a restructuring exercise is never an easy one and there is never a good time to do this and we fully appreciate this will inevitably create some anxieties within the community including our staff. However, the future sustainability of the existing education provision within the Crewkerne and Ilminster area is something that has been on the agenda and debated for many years now and needs a resolution to secure the quality provision for the children and young people in the area.

Serious consideration was given to the timing of this and it was felt on balance that it would be unfair to wait until the current pandemic is over or under control and things had returned to "normal" to then initiate the process. Everyone is under pressure and tired but creating uncertainty just when normality was returning would be indefensible.

We are very keen to hear the voices of as many people and different groups as we can so that we can inform decision makers as well as possible about the views of people who are affected. If you have any suggestions about how we might reach people we are not reaching, please do email them to us at: CrewkerneIlminsterSchools@somerset.gov.uk

Q23. Would all staff be expected to re-apply for their jobs?

The process by which the proposed new structures would be populated is yet to be negotiated and agreed and would be determined by the final staffing models. In most cases we would not expect staff to re-apply for their posts. However, there could be scenarios where roles are duplicated in the current structure and only one role would be needed in a new structure. In such a

situation an agreed approach to how these posts would be filled would need to be determined. This could involve an interview process.



Q24. Clearly, at Maiden Beech, there will need to be redundancies, having read the Somerset policy this could fall under all three areas, financial, our pay structure is secondary based, over staffing, we run a secondary style curriculum, lack of suitability to roles, at least half of the teaching staff are secondary trained. Please can you issue each member of staff with projected figures for redundancy payouts as a matter of urgency, so we are able to make informed decisions? You will be aware that you are required to do this anyway, by law.

There is no redundancy or restructure process in place currently and this would only be implemented should a decision be taken to proceed with the proposed restructure. At the point that any redundancy procedures were formally invoked within any of the schools, staff would have the opportunity to be provided with redundancy estimates as per the redundancy procedure.

However, should a decision be taken to restructure schools, the emphasis would be on retaining staff within the area. Under current proposals, it is likely that there would be a significant number of vacancies created as well as schools with a reduced need for staff. The expectation would be that vacancies in a new secondary school would be filled by teachers from the two middle schools. Where vacancies were to arise in any new primary school, the expectation would be that these would also be open to middle school teachers. The number of pupils within the area will not change, and therefore teachers of these pupils will still be needed, in any scenario.

Q25. What are the arrangements for potential transition into other roles in different schools (notification of potential roles, qualifications needed etc.)
Should the decision be approved by Cabinet, the job descriptions and person specifications for posts within the proposed new structures, including any ring-fenced posts and vacancies identified, would be available to staff in a timely way so that they would be well informed about the requirements of the

roles. As described above, there would be a training needs analysis identified at an early stage as part of an area-wide CPD programme.



Q26. If a member of staff has to travel further to their new place of employment, will there be support for extra travel costs, and if so, for how long?
In accordance with the LA's redeployment policy redeployment mileage expenses would be payable where the commute to the new workplace is more than 5 miles return journey for a period up to 2 years.

Q27. Are there assurances of parity with other staff across schools that are in local authority control when applying for new roles?

Yes, we would have HR principles and protocols in place to ensure parity across all of the schools within the review and this is further supported by the principles within the Recruitment & Selection policy. All the employers in the area are committed to the principle that no member of staff should be disadvantaged because of which school they are employed in now, or which school they might be looking to be redeployed in.

Q28. If we are transferred to a different school, do we go on the same salary?

There would be no change to terms and conditions for staff appointed to roles in other settings, however, in the event an individual were to be redeployed to a lower graded post as an alternative to redundancy, salary safeguarding would apply as provided for within the redundancy procedure.

Q29. Would staff be given priority in applying for jobs across all of the LA schools and not just at the schools affected by the remodelling?

We would wish to retain existing staff as part of the review where possible and take all reasonable measures to avoid redundancy, including redeployment. Where staff are displaced and have been placed on notice of redundancy, we would actively support these individuals to seek alternative employment and would take active steps to highlight those staff who are under notice of

redundancy to schools who are recruiting, though the ring-fencing would apply specifically within the Crewkerne and Ilminster area.



Q30. Will cover supervisors be used in the same role or as HLTAs at Wadham if they transfer?

The roles within each school would be determined based on the individual operational needs of each school and so we are unable to confirm the types of roles within any of the structures or how they would be deployed at this stage. Any vacancies that arise would have clear job descriptions and person specifications so that it is clear what the requirements of the post are and how they would be deployed

Q31. Will staff be able to choose whether they teach in a primary or secondary setting?

The process by which the proposed new structure would be appointed to is yet to be agreed, however should the decision be taken by cabinet in the new year to proceed, the preferred option would be to directly match posts where there is little or no change to the existing role. Where this is not possible, and staff are ring-fenced for alternative roles and/ or at risk of redundancy, there would be opportunity to express interests in these roles subject to the HR Principles and Protocols. At this stage we are unable to confirm what the structures within each of the schools would be or the potential for specialist roles within these but we would be very keen to retain such specialisms within the area and this would be a significant consideration for HT's when creating their proposed staffing structures going forward.

Q32. Would there be an opportunity for specialist teachers in the Ilminster primary school e.g. a PE specialist?

The organisation of any new school would be the responsibility of the leadership of that school. If a new school in Ilminster were to be the outcome of this process, this would be the same. It is a priority for every school in Somerset to provide a full and rich curriculum. A new school in Ilminster would have 18 classes which is a large enough school to look creatively at staffing and the use of specialism.

Q33. Would the application process for new roles be transparent (i.e. the jobs not already 'given' to LA staff to avoid potential redundancy payments incurred by the LA).

All schools involved in the area review would sign up to the HR Principles and Protocols which seek to promote and ensure a fair and transparent process for all staff whether they are employed within a LA school or an academy. The Financial Principles for the project agreed by all employers, including the LA, are that all staff within the area would be given parity, and that unavoidable redundancy costs as a result of any reorganisation would be met by the LA, regardless of whether the member of staff was employed in an LA or trust school.

Q34. In a time of significant teacher shortage and uncertainty within the profession, has the LA considered the impact on staff regents and future recruitment, and what does it intend to do to ensure that our students are not disadvantaged?

It is inevitable that any restructuring process will result in raised anxieties amongst staff and there is always a risk associated with implementing restructures that staff will choose to leave that would not have ordinarily chosen to do so. It is very much hoped that through the regular sharing of information and updates going forward and through further consultation events, staff will feel reassured of the intentions to minimise the impact on staff by seeking to retain the skills and expertise of the existing staff as much as possible and support them through the transition phase and in doing so minimise any detrimental impact on the provision for the children and young people in the area.

HR principles



The following principles are to be negotiated with school, trust, diocesan and local authority leaders involved in the area review. These principles are intended to complement the Voluntary Code of Conduct all parties have signed up to and recognises the impact the review will have on those staff working in the schools.

- School, trust, diocesan and local authority leaders will uphold high standards of conduct and integrity at all times.
- School, trust, diocesan and local authority leaders will take all reasonable measures to avoid redundancies throughout the process.
- School leaders will facilitate activities and communications to introduce their school community to staff in other schools likely to most affected by the restructure to assist the transition process and enable staff to make informed decisions about the options open to them.
- Any decisions taken regarding the appointment of staff to the new structure will be based on objective assessment, ensuring the most suitable candidate is appointed. Assessment and selection criteria will be common across schools wherever possible and negotiated with all relevant employers.
- A vacancy freeze will be implemented at the earliest opportunity once a decision to effect the change has been taken place. School leaders will take recruitment decisions during the consultation period under advisement. Recruitment within the freeze period would be approved by a joint panel of HR advisors by exception and negotiation only.
- An HR helpline/dedicated mailbox will be established to respond to individual HR matters related to the restructuring process.
- Where vacancies are created as a direct result of the restructuring process, these posts will be ring-fenced to those postholders who have been identified as being at risk. The details of how the ring-fence would operate will be negotiated with employers and trade unions, however, as a general guide, common areas for negotiation relate to the criteria for determining:
 - Appropriateness of the role relative to the existing postholders responsibilities
 - Thresholds for redeployment upwards and downwards from current grades
 - Training needs for postholders whose current roles are not a precise match but where training could enable them to fulfil the role

- Where vacancies are created as a direct result of the restructuring process, external advertisement of roles will only be permitted when all avenues for placing postholders at risk have been exhausted.
- All decisions affecting staff will be made based on operational need and within the financial capabilities of each setting to ensure the future structure is affordable and sustainable.
- All decisions affecting staff will be made having considered the impact of these on any staff group with a protected characteristic as defined within the Equalities Act 2010.
- School leaders will operate within the framework of the school's HR policies which have been consulted on and agreed with the recognised Trade Union and Professional Associations. Any variation to these policies during the area review must be consulted on with staff and recognised Trade Unions & Professional Associations, having sought advice from HR first.
- School leaders will seek advice from their designated HR Adviser on staffing matters that cannot be resolved via standard HR process and procedure.
- School leaders will share relevant HR information with key parties as part of the area review process as appropriate to ensure a fair and transparent process, having due regard to GDPR requirements.
- School leaders will share information with their staff at the agreed stages within the project programme to ensure information is cascaded in a controlled and timely manner.
- School leaders will support their staff throughout the process and provide a forum where staff are able to discuss their individual concerns/employment situation in a confidential environment.