

Please ask for Dave Farrow  
Our Reference DF/0319s010dfI  
Your Reference  
Direct Dial 01823 355830  
Email [dfarrow@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:dfarrow@somerset.gov.uk)  
Date 21 March 2019

Dear Parent or Carer

### **Review of Education Provision in the Ilminster and Crewkerne Area**

As I am sure you are aware we have been meeting with Headteachers of schools in the area for some time now discussing the need to review the school structure in and around Ilminster and Crewkerne. This is about making sure it is financially viable and has the capacity to provide the range of curriculum opportunities to equip the children and young people in the area with the skills and qualifications that they will need for the future.

We have now asked an organisation called Futures for Somerset to carry out a review of education provision in the area and to produce a report that looks at a range of alternative structures, setting out the pros and cons of each. They will look at a number of factors including the educational impacts of each model at each Key Stage. They will also look at the impact on pupils with Special Educational Needs, early years provision (pre-school and nursery), staffing implications, transport costs, impact on communities and the costs of making any change.

The intention is that Futures for Somerset will produce an Options Appraisal by the end of May which will help us decide which model(s) we want to take forward for further consultation. By the end of the Summer Term we expect to be able to identify a preferred option and a timescale for putting it in place.

We recognise that there will be a period of uncertainty for children and families until a decision is made but it is important that the review is as thorough as it can be and that proper process is followed. I would like to reassure you that no changes can be made without going through a legal process which involves consultation with parents and carers, staff, children and anyone else who may have an interest. Once a decision has been made we will work closely with Headteachers and Governors to ensure that any change is managed well.

Finally, we are aware that the two Middle schools in the area have applied to join The Bridgwater College Trust. We expect the processes for that to be completed by November this year for Swanmead and probably earlier for Maiden Beech as it is already an Academy. We also understand that there are rumours in the community about proposals for a subsequent change in age range for the schools to enable them to admit pupils through to age 16. At present, no application to change age ranges has been made to the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) who is responsible for deciding whether to agree to such an application, and we have been assured by the RSC Office that a decision in relation to any future application will be informed by the outcomes of the review. If an application is made this is deemed to be a 'Significant Change' for an academy and there is a statutory process that must be followed prior to a decision being made by the RSC which includes the need for a formal consultation process with all interested parties.

I hope you find this letter useful. If you have any questions please speak to your Headteacher.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dave Farrow', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**DAVE FARROW**  
Head of Education Partnerships