

QUESTION 2

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 22 JULY 2010

**Question to Mr. I.M. Parry, Deputy Leader of the Council and
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People**

By Mr. D. Nixon

Question

The Conservative/ Liberal Democrat coalition now wishes many schools to opt out of L.E.A. control. Swedish free schools now get Grade Point Average scores 20 points higher than in state schools. Swedish free schools improve standards across the local authority by leading the competition. Parents, as consumers of education are happier with free schools (92%) compared to state schools (63%). Charter schools (free from L.E.A. control) in the USA also have higher standards than state schools. If schools free from L.E.A. control bring higher standards is Staffordshire County Council going to push schools into becoming free, seeing that the clarion call is always, 'we must raise standards'?

Reply

We support any governance model that will offer improvement. It is perhaps worth noting that state schools already have a very high degree of freedom and autonomy, through devolved budgets and LMS, which empowers them to target all aspects of performance improvement. The County Council holds a strategic and supportive role. Whilst we have many outstanding schools in Staffordshire, and many which are rapidly improving, we are aware of the need to support schools that are coasting or not satisfactorily improving. We are by no means complacent about raising attainment in our schools.