

Forcing Schools To Become Academies

The government recently announced that all state schools must become academies by 2020 or have plans to do so by 2022. The Green Party strongly believes that Academies should be re-integrated back into the Local Authority in order to put them back under democratic control.

North Lincolnshire Green Party's Election Coordinator & Treasurer, Neil Jacques responded to the latest Government proposals by writing to the Scunthorpe Telegraph Viewpoint.

Letter written by Neil Jacques

Dear Editor,

I have been a school governor for over 20 years and I am horrified by the Government's proposals to force all schools to become academies and to abolish the parent governor role. There is no evidence to suggest academisation is guaranteed to improve standards and it is estimated to cost £55,000 per school - a total of £1.3 billion for the transfer process alone. Gambling that amount of public money on uncertain outcomes is, to say the least, irresponsible. If the Government has that sort of money to invest in education then I am sure most schools would welcome the additional cash.

Enforced academisation is sold by the Government as freeing schools from Local Authority "control". This is a complete misrepresentation of how Local Authority maintained schools work. The Council does not control what goes on in schools. The curriculum is set by the Government and the role of the Local Authority is to support schools, with specialist services in areas like school improvement, HR, finance and governor training. All schools require these services whether an Academy or not. Academies either have to employ their own experts or buy expertise from the Academy Chain.

Academy Chains are not accountable to local people as Local Authorities are, and the removal of the parent governor role removes the last bit of local accountability the Governing Body would have. Instead of governors with roots in the community, the Academy Governors are expected to be business people, accountable only to the Academy Chain.

Forcing schools to go down this route will divert the attention of Senior Staff and governors from their prime purpose of ensuring a well-rounded education for all our young people, inspiring and enabling them to achieve their potential.

Neil Jacques