

SCHOOLS ORGANISATION, CAPITAL AND ADMISSIONS GROUP

Notes of meeting on 26 September 2017 at Larkbeare

		Attendance		
		26/9/17	6/6/17	28/2/17
DCC				
Chris Dyer (Chair)	Head of Built Environments	✓	✓	✓
Andrew Brent	Policy Officer	✓	✓	✓
Fran Butler	EY Childcare Sufficiency Lead	✓	✓	✓
Christine McNeil	School Organisation Policy Manager	Apologies	✓	✓
Heidi Watson-Jones	Service Support Officer (Education)	✓	✓	✓
DAPH				
Hilary Priest	The Grove Primary	✓	✓	✓
Caroline Boothe	Hatherleigh Primary	✓	Apologies	✓
Alun Dobson	Marwood Primary	✓	✓	✓
Jan Reid	Yeo Valley Primary	✓	✓	Apologies
DASH				
Daryll Chapman	Okehampton College		✓	
Paul Cornish	Newton Abbot College	Apologies	Apologies	✓
Rob Haring	Ivybridge Community College		✓	✓
SENTient Heads				
Karen Rogers	Lampard School		Apologies	Apologies
Sarah Pickering	Mill Water School	✓	✓	
DAG				
Ian Rogers	DAG	✓	✓	✓
Diocesan Representatives				
Mary Cox	Plymouth CAST	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies
Christina Mabin	Exeter Anglican Diocese (Admissions)	✓	✓	✓
Richard Power	Exeter Anglican Diocese (Capital)			
Union Representatives				
John Staddon	TCC	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies
Steve Ryles	JCC		✓	-
In Attendance				
Nigel Coleman	NPS	✓	-	-
Simon Niles	DCC	✓		

1. Item/Focus: Minutes and Matters Arising from meeting on 6 June 2017

Discussion:

- Information on first and second preference admissions had been circulated. Noted 96% first preference, and 99% any preference achieved with September 2017 admissions.
- Noted complex issues around Foundation Stage framework. FB will issue signposting through DAPH and the Digest, and is available for schools who wish to discuss directly.
- Noted Alun Dobson is representing Schools on sponsor selection process for new Okehampton Primary.

Key Decision/ Issues for DEF:

- Minutes of previous meeting agreed as an accurate record.

Action:

- Phase Associations** to repeat reminder to schools re. timeframe for Governor determination of admissions arrangements
- FB** to reissue information re. Foundation Stage Statutory Framework through DAPH and the EY Digest

2. Item/Focus: SEND Strategic Review (Simon Niles)

Discussion:

- Questionnaire being prepared, and will be circulated as soon as finalised.
- It was felt that the DfE recognises the SEND Code of Practice has been particularly challenging for all LAs and schools.
- Funding has been made available by the DfE for LAs to carry out their SEND strategic review. This is being used for demographic modelling (particularly for ASC and Speech & Language), reviewing the special schools estate, and commissioning an accessibility strategy, supporting Devon Inclusion Project.
- Noted that in Devon, children with SEND are performing and achieving above national average. Data for post 16 students not as comprehensive, and post 19 is patchy.
- Devon will still aim to retain most SEND learners within mainstream schools where possible, although mindful of capacity constraints.
- Will look closely at out of county placements, costs, curriculum offer and physical buildings capacity.
- Strategic Plan will require annual approval, on a rolling programme, with capital funding attached to it. Likely to have recommendations for future areas of review.
- The group discussed funding challenges, which will be highlighted within the review.
- Noted schools are particularly challenged where learners whose SEND includes behavioural issues, and those with complex home situations.
- Noted work in Exmouth area focusing on speech and language progression.
- Noted negative impact on recruitment and retention of good quality school staff is already being felt; this is a national issue.

Key Decision/ Issues for DEF:	Report noted SOCA/Phase Associations agreed to support the consultation process.
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Action:	SN to circulate questionnaire via SOCA when available. SN to provide update at next SOCA meeting.
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3. Item/Focus: School Organisation Update (Simon Niles)

Discussion:

- LA receiving conflicting advice on priorities for new Free School development. SN to meet soon with Regional director for Free Schools.
- Funding for Charlton Lodge (Special Free School) has been approved by DCC – funded 100% through basic need. SENtient Heads have been approached re. partnership arrangement.
- RSC looking at process re. Route 39's Inadequate Ofsted outcome.
- Noted Burrington Primary has closed.
- Noted outstanding capital shortfall re. Tipton St John Primary
- SOCA congratulated the LA on securing additional capacity across the maintained Special Schools. Expected to be particularly beneficial for post 16 provision (Bodley House).
- Greater Exeter Strategic Plan will benefit from engagement with Phase Associations who were encouraged to take part in consultations. This will cover Exeter, Teignbridge, Mid and East Devon.
- Considered provision for excluded pupils. Expecting to exceed 124 (total for 16/17) permanent exclusions this year. Serena Worth is Inclusion officer assigned to Schools Company provision, SOCA welcomed the appointment to this temporary role. Primary provision for excluded pupils in Exeter to be reviewed, to remove the youngest learners from Stansfield Centre to more appropriate environment. Discussed how an overarching review of placements into Schools Company is required; noted that processes are now being looked at.

Key Decision/ Issues for DEF:	Report noted
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4. Item/Focus: Fair Access Protocol 2017 (Andrew Brent)

Discussion:

- Fair Access Protocol in place to enable vulnerable pupils to access a local school place as quickly as possible. Children with EHCPs and Children in Care are not included under the Protocol as the Admissions Code requires them to be admitted.
- Two elements: fair access and fair distribution to schools.
- Protocol introduces clearer expectations around primary schools accepting up to 2 additional children into each class (Primary). Expectations unchanged for secondary schools.
- LA would expect to confirm a decision under the Protocol within a week's timeframe although most cases should be resolved more quickly.
- Noted exemptions would be schools opened within 2 years, and schools within Special Measures.
- Agreed it would be helpful to convene a task group of SOCA members to include their views.
- Schools would not be asked to go over admission number if there is a school closer to the student's home with vacancies.
- Considered circumstances where schools are encouraging parents to consider alternative schools, further away from the child's home, if they felt unable to meet the child's needs. Heads were encouraged to contact the Admissions team when this happens to enable the LA to contact the catchment school to address what support would need to be put in place to facilitate admission into the closer school.
- Concerns around transport issues, including lengthy journeys for young children admitted to schools further from home and increasing costs for the LA.
- DAPH recognised that there were some difficult issues, particularly for KS1 classes, and understood fair access would be a permitted exception for ICSL.
- Considered what categories constitute 'a challenging child'.

Key Decision/ Issues for DEF:

Report noted

Action:

AB to contact Phase Association colleagues to convene a task group to consider the issues raised within the Fair Access Protocol. *Meeting with DAPH on 11/10/17 with DAG & CE Diocese on 9/10/17; DASH tbc.*

5. Item/Focus: Admission Arrangements & School Websites (Andrew Brent)

Discussion:

- Draft documents have been circulated to C of E, VA and former VA Academies to confirm and agree 2019/2020 admission arrangements with the Diocese. Christina Mabin will need these by early October 2017.
- Consultation 1 Nov – 5 Jan. Schools will need to confirm that the PAN is sustainable and that the arrangements have been considered.
- Policy documents will be available on DCC Sharepoint for all schools to check. <http://devon.cc/schoolpolicy>
- Admissions information including policies should be easily accessible on school websites. Governors' meeting for own admissions authority schools must take place before 28 February 2018 to determine policies for 2019-20.
- Guidance and advice available from Policy Officer and Admissions Team.
- Separate sixth form admissions arrangement policies are advised.

Key Decision/ Issues for DEF:

Update noted

Action:

- **Schools** to check documents on Sharepoint and confirm to Admissions Team that PANs and Catchments are sustainable and workable.
- **Schools** to note Governing Body meeting to take place by end February, with notification to Diocese where applicable

6. Item/Focus: Admissions- Composite Prospectus (Andrew Brent)	
Discussion:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools Information website will now enable all schools to review admissions details alongside general school details at any time. Entries for individual schools and admissions guides should be updated regularly . Statutory requirement to inform the LA by 8 August annually. Notice sent in Schools Communications to ask schools to check their own entries and use the Update button as necessary. 	
Key Decision/ Issues for DEF:	
Action:	Schools to check their entries at https://new.devon.gov.uk/schools/school/
7. Item/Focus: LA Annual Admissions Report (Andrew Brent)	
Discussion:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note that impact of Fair Access is changing and this will be reflected in the annual report. Invitation to Members to consider whether any particular issues should be explored during the coming year. Suggestions by January SOCA meeting. 	
Key Decision/ Issues for DEF:	
Action:	
8. Item/Focus: Nursery Admissions Policy (Fran Butler)	
Discussion:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nursery Admissions Policy has been updated to reflect increased 30 hour entitlement. There has further consideration around the need for parents to fill out the full declaration form when applying for a nursery place as this includes a lot of detailed personal information. FB to review the parent declaration and application forms. Proposed implementation from January 2018. Will be considered at DEF on 23 November. Noted that schools need to be increasingly aware of need for parity across nursery and reception application forms. Noted that 34% of group EY provision is now within schools, and there are 48 schools with EY provision on site. 	
Key Decision/ Issues for DEF:	Report noted
Action:	FB to prepare revised application forms for circulation to SOCA. FB and AB to discuss aligning nursery applications with forms already in place for other Key Stages.
9. Item/Focus: Early Years Update (Fran Butler)	
Discussion:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted new Early Years representative to be appointed for Devon Education Forum and Schools Finance Group. Extended Entitlement – EY team has been in touch with a range of partners to ensure information is shared on how parents may use the available hours, and the process to follow. Note LA is being monitored on how quickly the 11-digit codes are being validated. Assuming that almost all providers who have responded to accept the funding will be offering some provision under the extended entitlement. Noted difference between Universal and Extended entitlement, which may be taken throughout the year, not just during term time. Looking at sustainable provision in rural areas, and sustainability of provision for 2 year olds. 	

- Encouraging schools to increase capacity through extending hours, or working with a partner provider during school holidays.
- LA targeting parents with an 'unable to find suitable childcare' form to enable them to be contacted directly.
- Noted 'right to request' giving parents right to request that schools set up childcare or for providers to request the use of school premises. LA would like schools to inform them where this is happening.
- Discussed Delayed Entry to School – where children are staying in a pre-school setting and not taking up a reception place. Expect that the child will then move into Year 1. FB to prepare updated delayed entry report to be circulated to SOCA.

Key Decision/ Issues for DEF:	Report noted
Action:	DA PH to remind schools of the Right to Request, and to notify the LA (Fran Butler) team if they are approached. AB/FB to update delayed entry report and circulate to SOCA

10. Item/Focus: NPS Update report (Nigel Coleman)

- Discussion:**
- Noted DCC has reviewed estate following Grenfell Fire. There are no high-rise buildings, but some high risk buildings (e.g. residential schools and training centres). Noted Chris Dyer to sit on DfE working group to look at implications.
 - MATs and Academies had been asked separately to submit reports to DfE on this as the responsible body.
 - Noted small increase in number of academies subscribing to Devon Academies Maintenance Agreement.
 - Noted DMP Maintenance Scheme Dashboard, where NPS manages the maintenance contracts; supporting information is available to explain RAG ratings.
 - DAMA dashboard indicates that 53% of academies are contacting service providers directly, and not through the scheme, therefore information is not available.
 - Noted new Air Conditioning contractor to be appointed. DAPH queried whether air source heating systems are monitored under Air Conditioning or Heating:
 - *NPS have subsequently confirmed that the schemes cover air source heat pumps where the installation provides the primary source of heat. These are covered under the provisions in the scheme for the servicing of heating but the servicing would be undertaken by the contractor appointed to DCC's Air Conditioning Service Term Contract. There are currently a good number of installations that are already covered in this way as these installations have increased in popularity as a means of heating.*
 - Schools reminded to keep in touch with NPS regarding maintenance works.

Key Decision/ Issues for DEF:	Report noted
Action:	NC to clarify definitions around use of air source heating / AC in schools and circulate to SOCA

11. Item/Focus: Capital Maintenance Programme Update (Chris Dyer)

- Discussion:**
- Noted that %age of projects completed during the summer is lower than in previous years, partly due to team working on Early Years capital projects. Outstanding projects to take place over the remainder of the financial year.
 - NPS has been requested to commence planning for schemes during the 2018/19 year, mindful that funding may not be announced until later in the spring.
 - DfE formula for capital maintenance funding is due to change.
 - Grenfell Tower – Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding identified as risk. DfE requested LAs check for this material in all school buildings. NPS did not find any Devon schools within scope which were affected. Noted DfE are increasingly engaging with schools and LAs.

- All Devon special schools were also checked during the summer, no ACM found.
- Noted that at 2 residential schools, fire doors had been found to be removed, and other issues found including failing fire seals and the like . These will be highlighted in the schools' conditions reports, some of which will be delegated issues which the schools will need to address.
- Fire-safety will now be included within quinquennial inspections of maintained schools by NPS. Schools will be notified of any findings.
- Discussed DfE building survey data collection conducted during the summer. Noted that DfE is behind schedule on processing and releasing reports.

Key Decision/ Issues for DEF:	Update noted
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Action:	
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11. Item/Focus: Timeframes for SOCA meetings

Discussion:

- The group was asked to consider key times of the year when SOCA discussions will be required, to ensure that the DEF cycle is most effective.

Key Decision/ Issues for DEF:	
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Action:	Responses directly to Heidi Watson-Jones please.
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NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 9 January 2018
9.30am at Larkbeare (Exe Room)