

## DEVON EDUCATION FORUM

21 June 2023

### Present:-

#### Schools Members

##### Primary Headteachers

Ms R Saim	Cedar Tree Federation
Mr C Tribble	Honiton Primary
Mr P Walker	First Federation Trust (Academy)

##### Primary Governors

Mr J Clements	Cranbrook, St Martin's CE Primary
Ms K Brimacombe	Whitchurch Primary, First Fed'n (Academy)

##### Secondary Headteachers

Ms F Bowler	Braunton Academy
Ms J Fossey	West Exe School, Ted Wragg MAT (Academy)
Mr G Hill	Pilton CC, Ventrus MAT (Academy)

##### Secondary Governors

Mr A Hines	Education SW Trust (Academy)
Ms G Sanders	Athena Learning Trust (Academy)
Mr A Walmsley	The Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust (Academy)

##### Nursery School

Mrs S Baker	Westexe
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##### Special Headteacher

Mr K Bennett	Marland School
Ms S Pickering	Mill Water School, Substitute (observing only)

##### Special Governor

Mrs F Butler	Marland School ( <b>Chair</b> )
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##### Alternative Provision

Mr R Gasson	WAVE Multi Academy Trust
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##### Non-Schools Members

Ms H Brown	RC Diocesan Schools, Plymouth (Faith)
Mr B Blythe	PETROC, 16-19
Mrs B Alderson	Teachers Consultative Committee (TCC)
Ms G Rolstone	Early Years, Private & Voluntary Independent

##### Observer

Councillor A Leadbetter	Cabinet Member – Children's Services and Skills
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Apologies

Mr G Chown  
Mrs S Crook  
Ms S Channel

Ventrus MAT (Academy)  
Tiverton High, Fed'n of Tiverton Schools  
Tiverton High, Fed'n of Tiverton Schools

**93**      **Minutes**

**DECISION:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2023 be signed as a correct record.

**94**      **Matters Arising from the Last Meeting and Report back on Issues Raised with Cabinet/f40**

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**95**      **Membership**

**DISCUSSION:**

The following membership changes were noted:-

Mrs Sue Lockwood, Diocesan Director of Education (CE) had been appointed as the faith schools substitute member (replacing Ms Claire Platt, former Diocesan representative).

**ACTION:**

Legal and Democratic Services (Fiona Rutley)

**96**      **Head of Education Update**

**DISCUSSION:**

The Chair welcomed Ms Donna Manson, DCC Chief Executive to her first Forum meeting.

(a) The Forum considered the Report of the Head of Education (DEF/23/10) on:-

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Attendance, Exclusions, Elective Home Education (EHE) and Children Missing Education (CME)  
Alternative Provision  
Ofsted  
Staffing Changes

SEND Conference  
SEMH Partnership Project  
School Effectiveness.

Discussions and Members' comments included:-

- whilst the KPI data for Attendance, Exclusions, EHE and CME was stark particularly within the secondary sector, it was important to have this level of detail available to all stakeholders. SEMH was a significant factor within these KPIs and would be included in targets/more detail for the next Forum meeting;
- the Early Years representative advised that working parents were finding the part time timetables for children starting reception (particularly where lengthy and e.g. extending as far as the first half term) were difficult to manage in terms of leave and significantly increased child care costs;
- clarification was required for schools that Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) Basic Entitlement funding, which followed a pupil who needed an Education other than at School (EOTAS) package, was not given to Torlands School (medical provision academy) but used by the Local Authority to commission education packages. Schools remained responsible for examination arrangements for any student who remained on their roll. This should further be reviewed by the Schools Finance Group;
- concern that the most vulnerable pupil groups had the poorest attendance data, both unauthorised and authorised, requiring a consistent approach in cases of authorised absence. (Noting Devon's continuing work and progress to date to improve outcomes for its vulnerable children to address Ofsted concerns, social care provision, Early Help multi-agency working and High Needs DfE Safety Valve intervention);
- assessing both pupils presenting with SEMH/SEN needs in mainstream education and the quality of teaching provision in place;
- SENCO and school bids for improved SEN provision within Devon;
- Devon SEN case studies to be widely communicated; and
- clarity required to concerned school staff regarding the current review of school effectiveness and school structures.

(b) The Forum received the additional SEND Update document as published.

**DECISION:**

(i) that the transfer of AWPU (Basic Entitlement) funding to support Education other than at School (EOTAS) be further reviewed by the Schools Finance Group and report back to the Forum; and

(ii) that the Head of Education follow up other points raised by Members above as appropriate.

**ACTION:**

Head of Education (Rachel Shaw)

**97 Finance Update**

**DISCUSSION:**

**(a) Schools Finance Group Minutes – 7 June 2023**

The Forum considered the above minutes, including the respective minutes relating to the Finance Update Report at (b).

Also available at

[Schools Finance Group \(SFG\) – Education and Families \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/schools-finance-group)

**DECISION:**

(i) that the minutes of the Schools Finance Group (SFG), 7 June 2023 be received;

(ii) that in respect of SFG note 5, information to all schools on how to access various funding for asylum seeking children, to help reduce the burden on school budgets, would be welcomed.

**ACTION:**

- (i) Director of Finance and Public Value (Adrian Fox)
- (ii) Head of Education (Rachel Shaw).

**(b) Finance Update Report**

The Forum considered the report of the Director of Children and Young People's Futures and Director of Finance and Public Value (DEF/23/08).

The Report (DEF/23/08) covered:-

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and Schools Funding Outturn 2022/23;  
DSG Deficit Management Plan;  
High Needs;

Early Years;  
Carry Forwards; and  
Risks.

The draft DSG outturn position was an overspend of £11.5 million prior to transfers to the DSG Adjustment Account and ringfenced balances, comprising Individual School Balances (ISB) of £20.8 million, ringfenced balances of £6.7 million and deficit transfer to the DSG Adjustment Account of just under £39 million. Although an improvement of £1.7 million from month 11 position there was continued demand on SEN placements within the independent sector and the delays in implementing management actions identified within the Safety Valve / Improvement Plan. Of the revised £10 million management action expected to be delivered in 2022/23 just under £5 million of the actions had been achieved, projecting a cumulative DSG deficit to March 2023 of £125.4 million, which was £3.2 million over what was stated in the Safety Valve Submission, February 2022. The Authority had now been invited into discussions to join the next (fourth) tranche of the Safety Valve Intervention Programme, with Devon's management plan being refreshed for submission to the DfE in July 2023. A SEND refresh was held during May 2023 where Senior Officers of the Local Authority as well as school Headteachers and education staff looked at the current safety valve plan and projects aligned with the SEND Improvement plan and improve outcomes for Devon's children. The increasing DSG deficit could have a considerable impact on future education budgets within the DSG as well as impacting on the financial sustainability for Devon County Council.

Forum discussions, together with Members' comments included:-

-this was a particularly challenging time for the schools sector with a number of schools setting deficit budgets. A clear and timely communication to schools to assist them in looking at their structures and systems and in not putting off difficult decisions to produce sustainable budgets would be welcome, noting for example that DCC admissions were encouraging schools to work collaboratively in areas where falling primary school roles were projected to be more significant, to support the longer term sustainability of all schools affected;

-the current and ongoing work with other LAs, including those within the DfE Safety Valve programme, reviewing practices/trends for managing these national SEND pressures;

-noting that progress was being made in some SEND/High Needs budget areas, but recognising that a realistic timescale for more longer term sustainability was projected at 3-4 years and with vigorous ongoing monitoring required to be accepted onto the DfE Safety Valve programme. Further information intended to be shared with all stakeholders was anticipated in the autumn term;

-balancing successful SEND practice and improved outcomes within Devon schools and ultimately improving Devon's High Needs deficit budget, against challenging school budgets; and

-resources and work streams for Devon's special schools' outreach/inreach provision, to support a reduction in independent school placements.

**DECISION:**

(a) that the DSG Draft Outturn position (subject to Statement of Accounts sign off) as set out in Section 1 of Report (DEF/23/08) be noted;

(b) that the surplus budget carry forwards for Schools, de-delegated, central school services and High needs as set out in Section 5, table 6 of the Report be noted;

(c) that the Early Years surplus carry forwards as set out in Section 4 and Section 5, table 6 of the Report be approved;

**(Vote: Schools, Academies and PVI)**

(d) that the Individual School Balances carry forwards as set out in Section 5, table 7 of the Report be noted;

(e) that the DSG Deficit Reserve transfer as set out in Section 5, table 8 of the Report be noted; and

(f) that in noting (a), (b), (d) and (e) above, the Forum continued to recognise the seriousness of the High Needs deficit that had to be reduced as soon as possible as discussed above.

**ACTION:**

Director of Finance and Public Value (Adrian Fox)

**98**      **DEF Proportionality**

The Forum received the update that following consultation with DEF Members in May 2023, that in reviewing Forum representation (required to be broadly proportionate, based on pupil census data - projected to September), this remained unchanged excepting for:-

<b><u>Primary Phase</u></b>	<b><u>Maintained</u></b>	<b><u>Academy*</u></b>
Headteacher	2	2
Governor	2 (previously 3)**	2 (previously 1)**

\*academy members represent proprietor bodies, not necessarily restricted to HT/Governors.

\*\*primary phase pupil numbers projected 2023/24: Maintained 51.3% and Academy 48.7%

**99**      **Standing (and other) Groups**

The Forum received the following from its standing and other groups (excepting Schools' Finance Group (SFG) minutes, (considered under Finance Update minute above):-

(a) Standing Groups

(i) School Organisation, Capital and Admissions (SOCA)

(A) Minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2023; and

(B) The Report (for information) of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (DEF/23/09) on admissions was withdrawn. (Note: Any questions from Members on this Report to be sent direct to the Report author. This matter arose from SOCA meeting 7 March 2023, note 4).

Also available at

[School Organisation, Capital and Admissions Group \(SOCA\) – Education and Families \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/education-and-families/soca)

(ii) High Needs Funding Sub Group

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 May and 5 June 2023, together with Note for information, accompanying HNF minutes, re: SEND.

**100**      **Dates of Future Meetings**

Meetings at 10am. Please check venue/arrangements

<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>

Wednesday 22 November 2023

Wednesday 24 January 2024 (date changed from 17 January)

Wednesday 20 March 2024.

**NOTES:**

1. *Minutes should always be read in association with any Reports for a complete record.*
2. *If the meeting has been webcast, it will be available to view on the [webcasting site](#) for up to 12 months from the date of the meeting*

\* **DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 11.35 am

