

**DEVON EDUCATION FORUM
(Devon's Schools Forum)**

29 June 2011

Present:-

Schools Members

Primary School Headteachers

Mr M Boxall	Exeter Montgomery Primary
Mrs A Ladbrook	East Worlington Primary
Mrs H Nicholls	South Brent Primary
Mr P Walker	Sidmouth St Nicholas CE Primary
Mrs L Wells	Lydford Primary

Primary School Governors

Mrs P Barnard	Sandford Primary
Mrs A Blewett	Kings Nympton Primary
Mr R Butler	Axminster Primary
Mr M Dobbins	Exmouth Marpool Primary
Mr D Tall	Meavy CE Primary

Secondary School Headteachers

Mr D Chapman	Okehampton CC
Mr D Fitzsimmons	Holsworthy CC
Mr A Lovett	Tiverton High School
Mr D Sharratt	Braunton CC

Secondary School Governors

Commander M Bamborough	Gt Torrington CC
Mr M Canham	Barnstaple The Park School
Mr I Courtney	Okehampton CC Chairman
Mrs M Govier	Tavistock CC
Dr C Woodhouse	The Axe Valley CC

Special School Headteacher

Mr K Bennett	Marland School
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Special School Governor

Mrs Faith Butler	Marland School
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Nursery

Mrs S Baker	Westexe
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Academies

Mrs L Heath	Uffculme School
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Non-Schools Members

Ms D Booth	Officer with responsibility for Vulnerable Children
Mr M Gurney	Teachers Consultative Committee (<i>substitute member</i>)
Ms E Lincoln)Private Voluntary and Independent Early Years
Ms L Higgins)
Mr P Mantell	CE Exeter Diocesan Board of Education
Mr J Peart	14-19

Observers

Councillor V Newcombe	Chairman – People's Scrutiny Committee
Mrs J Warne	Ellen Tinkham (<i>Special Schools HT substitute member</i>)

Apologies

Mrs J Baker	Barnstaple Orchard Vale Primary
Councillor C Channon	Cabinet Member - Schools & Learning
Councillor A Davis	Cabinet Member – Health & Children's Services
Mr V Game	Teign School
Mr D Paterson	Newton Abbot College
Mrs Y Short	Newton Abbot Bearnos Primary
Mrs M Street	Exeter Isca College
Mrs C Williams	Newton Abbot Coombeshead CC

546 Minutes

DECISION:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2011 be signed as a correct record.

547 Membership

The Chairman welcomed new members:-

Mr Philip Mantell, Director of Education – CE Exeter Diocesan Board of Education and
Ms Linda Higgins, Pre-School Learning Alliance – Early Years Private Voluntary and
Independent sector.

548 Matters Arising from the Last Meeting and Report back on Issues Raised with Cabinet

No matters raised.

549 Director's Update

DISCUSSION:

The Chairman welcomed Councillor John Hart, Leader of the Council and Jennie Stephens, Strategic Director People to the meeting.

The key DCC structure changes approved at the annual council meeting were outlined, particularly in relation to the Forum's work including that Anne Whitely, Executive Director for Children & Young People had now retired and included within the new DCC structure and in the Strategic Director People's remit were both the statutory education and social services functions, with five Heads of Service also supporting this. Two of these positions were still to be filled including the Head of Education & Learning, with internal candidate interviews being held on 20 July 2011. External interviews would follow if DCC are unable to appoint internally.

DAPH's concerns included:- the significant loss of knowledge and skills of staff leaving; that although a significant number of schools were converting to academies those remaining as maintained schools would still wish to receive a similar level of support from the LA; how the loss of the umbrella role would be managed; how the one council approach would work in relation to education functions spread between both the Strategic Director People and the Strategic Director Place.

The Leader and Director reassured members of the sound interim arrangements put in place until the new Head of Education & Learning post was filled. The vision for education and learning was unchanged in supporting the best opportunities for children and young people and likewise working in partnership with schools, but there would need to be a more streamlined approach focussing on core priorities.

Other points outlined in the Director's update included:-

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) – The Strategic Director People, as Chair of the MASH board had requested detailed work to be carried out prior to the next MASH board meeting in September, establishing a clear MASH function with pathways in and out and proposals of how to move forward after matters brought to the Director's attention.

Ofsted Inspection - There had also been an annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements within DCC children's services on the 15 and 16th June 2011. The results were awaited.

Teachers' Planned Strike Action, 30 June 2011 – The TCC representative briefly updated members on the planned day of action over government pension proposals.

DECISION: -

ACTION: -

550 **Finance Update**

DISCUSSION:

The Forum considered the report of the Strategic Director People (DEF/11/15) on:-

Corporate Update 2010/11
Dedicated Schools Grant Outturn position for 2010/11
School Balances 2010/11
Update on budgets for 2011/12
Academies Update

The draft outturn 2010/11 for the Children and Young Peoples Directorate showed a £300k overspend. The Early Years and Families branch overspend was in the region of £2.1m and related in the main to placement costs of Children in Care and court directed Mother and Baby placements. There was a compensating underspend in the Learning and Schools branch of £1.8m relating to the cessation of the Building Schools for the Future programme and vacancy management. This outturn position was a particularly significant achievement after in-year Area Based Grants cuts of £3.1m.

The draft DSG outturn 2010/11 showed an underspend of £1.061m including carry forward requests of £392k, with a net unallocated carry forward of £669k. School balances carried forward were £14.844m. The DSG position had been reported to the Audit Committee on 25 June 2011, which showed that Devon's position was modest when compared with its other statistical neighbours, together with an explanation as to why school balances had increased for 2010/11 to £14.844m from just over £12m, equivalent to 3.7% schools budgets. 8 schools had exceeded the capping limit for the year without authorisation and had been requested to provide reasons which could result in the money being taken from the schools concerned and put back into the contingency budget.

Budgets 2011/12 remained unchanged since the last meeting of the Forum and the final allocations were due in July once pupil data was confirmed. The main risk for 2011/12 was forecasting whether provision for schools converting to academies was adequate. During 2010/11 11 schools converted, so far in 2011/12 there had been a further 10 schools and another 12 were anticipated by 1 September 2011. The number of uncertainties with the budget indicated caution at present.

DECISION:

That the DSG balance carried forward to 2011/12 of £669k remain unallocated for the following reasons:-

(a) to wait for the definitive solution from the DfE on the standards fund issue relating to the non-payment of the 5% balance;

(b) to wait until it is clearer how many schools will be looking to convert to academy status thus affecting the level of DSG top slice;

(c) to wait until final pupil numbers have been confirmed by the DfE in the summer.

ACTION: County Treasurer (Nicola Allen/John Holme)

551 PART II - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

DECISION:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business (minute 552 only) in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted and exempt information may be disclosed.

552 Audit Review (Stepping Stones)

DISCUSSION:

The Forum considered the report of the School Finance Group (DEF/11/16) containing the Head of Audit Partnership's Executive Summary of the Stepping Stones Audit Report January 2011. The Schools Finance Group (SFG) on 14 June 2011 had considered the full Audit Report and highlighted a number of issues detailed in paragraph 2.2 of report DEF/11/16. SFG was keen that measures were put in place by management for controlling strategic projects and monitoring the financial implications from an early stage.

Since the Stepping Stones concerns were recognised considerable action had been taken and SFG would continue to receive monitoring updates at each meeting. The disinvestment plan was a high priority and risk for Stepping Stones and would be considered at the September meeting of SFG. Officers were currently working on a sustainable model. SHAD emphasised that disinvestment in bringing children back to Devon from stable out of county placements could not be made to work until all the agencies were working together which the Director would address with the team.

There were still concerns that the project's long term leadership needed to be identified which the Head of Education & Learning would consider when appointed, with consistency to be maintained where possible and any changes managed in a robust and coherent way. Benefits realisation was also a significant concern to schools and the county council, which the People's Scrutiny Committee was considering further in the autumn.

DECISION:

(a) that Cabinet be recommended to provide dedicated leadership and project staffing as a priority for strategic projects;

(b) that the SFG agenda for 13 September 2011 be distributed to its members as soon as possible and prior to its usual deadline, given the complexity of issues to consider;

(c) that the Strategic Director People look into ensuring multi-agencies worked together when considering bringing children back to Devon from stable out of county placements where appropriate;

(d) that the Strategic Director People clarify the data protocol with staff moving to the LDP.

ACTION:

Strategic Director People (Jennie Stephens/Nicky Allen)

553 Standing Groups etc

(a) The Forum received the following minutes of its standing groups. Minutes discussed and/or brought to the Forum's attention included:-

(i) **School Finance Group (SFG)**

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2011.

Review SFG Terms of Reference

DECISION: that the proposed SFG terms of reference circulated with the Forum's agenda be approved subject to the addition of a new first bullet point under section 3 Membership:-

“ that the membership be proportionate with the number of academies within each phase.”

ACTION:

Strategic Director People (Heidi Watson-Jones)/Office of the County Solicitor (Fiona Rutley)

Stepping Stones – Devon Personalised Learning Service (DPLS)

DECISION:

Noted that a letter would be sent to schools shortly explaining the recharging for schools accessing DPLS services with students remaining on school roll and backdating arrangements. Figures would need to be appropriately proportioned according to each individual young person's needs so that the money followed the pupil. Re-charges for core activities would be back dated to 1st June 2011.

Charges for non core activities would commence from September 2011 as a phased approach.

ACTION:

Strategic Director People (Deborah Booth)

Mutual Board Monitoring Report

DISCUSSION:

Members welcomed that SFG would be considering payments regarding the phased return of staff at its next meeting and that a representative of the county council's Well-Being at Work team would attend if appropriate.

(ii) School Organisation and Policy Forum (SOPF) (School Organisation Forum)

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2011.

SOPF Terms of Reference

DECISION:

That the proposed SOPF terms of reference circulated with the Forum's agenda be approved.

Capital Programme Update – A3

DECISION:

That the criteria for prioritising capital maintenance schemes be forwarded to members of DEF.

Admissions Update – A5

DISCUSSION:

The School Organisation and Policy Forum (School Organisation Forum) drew to DEF's attention their wish to see the correct resources provided for the Admissions Team to do their work.

ACTION: Strategic Director People (Chris Dyer)

(iii) Forum for Learning and Achievement (FLA)

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2011.

FLA Terms of Reference – B3

DECISION:

(A) that the proposed FLA terms of reference circulated with the Forum's agenda be approved;

(B) that the important and valued role of this group in focusing on learning, including its commissioning of research and best practise projects be recognised.

Learning & Development Partnership (LDP) Joint Venture Company (JVC) – A3

DISCUSSION:

Members were concerned that there was appropriate expertise to continue the process of establishing the LDP JVC Company for which two credible bidders remained. The Strategic Director People was meeting with the project manager and the need for consistency in the post at this time was recognised.

DECISION:

That the new Head of Service for Education & Learning when appointed look into the profit share from the LDP, how the fund operated and added value to the children in Devon.

ACTION:

Strategic Director People (Jennie Stephens)

(iv) 14-19 Strategic Leadership Group (SLG)

Minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2011.

DISCUSSION:

(A) Petroc – A1 (ie North and East Devon Colleges of FE) It was hoped that some funding could be used for preventative work amongst 14-16 year olds and the SW Regional Forum would be approached to see if further moneys were available since this was in the original specification.

(B) The 14-19 SLG would also review its terms of reference at its 12 July 2011 meeting and report to the next DEF in September.

ACTION:

14-19 (John Peart), Forward Plan

(b) Representations and Progress from Various Standing and Task & Finish Groups Taking Forward the Devon Education Forum

DISCUSSION:

Nil.

(c) **Minutes for information**

Local Admissions Forum (LAF)

No meeting.

554 Correspondence

DISCUSSION:

(a) The Chairman reported on a letter received from Mrs Judith Johnson, former Director for Learning & Schools wishing the Forum success in the future.

(b) An MBE had been awarded to Mr Ivan Godfrey, former Chairman of the Devon Education Forum (1993 – 2010) and Governor of Tiverton Two Moors Primary in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for services to education.

(c) This was also David Tall's (DAG Primary) last meeting and was thanked for all his work on the Forum.

555 Future Meetings

DISCUSSION:

The Forum reviewed the start time of future meetings following the report on constitutional changes (Taking DEF Forward) to the last meeting.

DECISION:

Future meetings to start at 10am (instead of 2pm) at County Hall, Exeter (unless otherwise indicated):-

Wed 28 September 2011

Fri 4 November 2011 - *half day meeting and half day conference – conference for members only*

Wed 7 December 2011 - **cancelled due to reduction in meetings**

Wed 18 January 2012

Wed 21 March 2012

Wed 16 May 2012 - **cancelled due to reduction in meetings**

June 2012 meeting onwards to be confirmed.

ACTION:

Office of the County Solicitor (Fiona Rutley)

The meeting started at 1pm and finished at 4pm.

The Schools Forum web is www.devon.gov.uk/schoolsforum