

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

28 September 2011

Present:-

Schools Members

Primary School Headteachers

Mr M Boxall	Exeter Montgomery Primary
Mrs H Nicholls	South Brent Primary
Mr P Walker	Sidmouth St Nicholas CE Primary
Mrs L Wells	Lydford Primary
Mrs J Baker	Barnstaple Orchard Vale Primary (<i>Academy member</i>)

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
Mrs Y Short	Newton Abbot Bearnas Primary

Secondary School Headteachers

Mr D Fitzsimmons	Holsworthy CC
Mr A Lovett	Tiverton High School

Secondary School Governors

Mr I Courtney	The Dartmoor Federation Chairman
Mrs C Williams	Newton Abbot Coombeshead CC
Dr C Woodhouse	The Axe Valley CC
Commander M Bamborough	Gt Torrington School (<i>Academy member</i>)

Special School Headteacher

Mr M Dean	Bidwell Brook School
Mrs J Warne	Ellen Tinkham School

Special School Governor

Mrs Faith Butler	Marland School
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Nursery

Mrs S Baker	Westexe
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Non-Schools Members

Ms D Booth	Officer with responsibility for Vulnerable Children
Mr M Gurney	Teachers Consultative Committee
Mr P Mantell	CE Exeter Diocesan Board of Education

Observers

Councillor C Channon	Cabinet Member - Schools & Learning
Mr A Dobson	Marwood Primary (<i>DAPH substitute member</i>)
Councillor V Newcombe	Chairman – People's Scrutiny Committee

Apologies

Mr M Canham	Barnstaple The Park School
Mr D Chapman	Okehampton CC
Councillor A Davis	Cabinet Member – Health & Children's Services
Mrs M Govier	Tavistock CC (<i>DAG secondary substitute member</i>)
Ms E Lincoln	Private Voluntary and Independent Early Years
Mr J Peart	14-19
Mr D Sharratt	Braunton CC

556 Minutes

DECISION:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2011 be signed as a correct record.

557 Membership

The Chairman welcomed new members:-

SHAD Mr Martin Dean (Dartington, Bidwell Brook)

DAPH Substitute Member: Mr Alun Dobson (Marwood Primary)

DAG Substitute Primary Member:

Mrs Paulette Furnival (Ivybridge, Woodlands Park Primary)

DAG Substitute Secondary Academy Member:

Miss Jill Elson (Exmouth Community College)

(ii) Existing members appointed as academy members wef September 2011 were:-

DAPH Mrs Jan Baker (Barnstaple, Orchard Vale Primary),

DAPH Substitute Primary Member: Mr Paul Jones OBE (Blackpool Primary)

DAG Secondary: Commander Mike Bamborough (Gt Torrington School)

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

DISCUSSION:

(a) Minute 552 (a)(c) Audit Review (Stepping Stones)

Cabinet had received the Forum's minutes of 29 June 2011 including the Forum's recommendation to provide dedicated leadership and project staffing as a priority for strategic projects on which there would be a further report to Cabinet's next meeting. The Head of Education & Learning also updated members on measures to ensure multi-agencies worked together when considering bringing children back to Devon from stable out of county placements. DAPH sought a reassurance that there would be dedicated leadership to have responsibility for the overview of the Stepping Stones project given its complexity as considered at the Forum's last meeting. There was currently no resource at this level available but the Head of Education & Learning would look at this again in light of DAPH's comments.

DECISION:

(i) DAPH maintains its view that there should be dedicated leadership to provide an overview of the Stepping Stones project;

(ii) that the Head of Education & Learning would review resource levels and report back to the next meeting.

ACTION: Head of Education & Learning (Sue Clarke), Forward Plan

(b) Minute 553 (a) Learning & Development Partnership (LDP) Joint Venture Company (JVC)

DISCUSSION:

The Head of Education & Learning updated members on the profit share from the LDP and how the fund would operate to give added value to the children in Devon. The money was to be ring fenced for Education & Learning and the Forum would need to consider the mechanism for the allocation of funds and priorities for that fund. It was also suggested that an allocation for research and development would be welcome.

DECISION:

that the mechanism for the allocation of funds and priorities for that fund be further considered by the Forum.

ACTION: Head of Education & Learning (Sue Clarke)/County Treasurer (John Holme)

(c) Cabinet meeting 14 September 2011

DISCUSSION:

The Cabinet Member - Schools & Learning reported matters considered at the last meeting of the Cabinet including the closure of Dalwood School and Primary School Place Planning in Exeter Schools 2011/14.

559 Head of Education & Learning's Update

DISCUSSION:

Mrs Sue Clarke, recently appointed as Head of Education & Learning presented the direction of travel for the service. Key points outlined and discussed included:-

- The context of the Open Public Services White Paper; backing local people and communities DCC Strategic Plan 2011-17 and new structure (both DCC structure and Education & Learning Structure) - The key DCC Heads of Service now delivering schools and education services were:- Sue Clarke (Head of Education & Learning), Rory McCallum (Head of Child & Adult Protection), Dave Black (Head of Planning, Transportation & Environment) and David Whitton (Head of Capital Development & Waste Management). Members requested a more detailed structure chart for school matters (to include commissioning) to be made available as soon as possible, particularly since functions were now shared between four Heads of Service;
- National drive to move towards a self improving school system of four building blocks and the local authority role, as resources move away from the centre and greater autonomy for schools;
- National Fair Funding consultation, a significant consultation, together with DfE intentions within four funding blocks;
- Local Learning Community (LLC) Action Plans initial feedback. There would be a more detailed report on this to the next Forum's meeting. Members also wished to reconsider whether the various clusters, hubs and LLCs structure was still an appropriate model. This topic may be considered for the Forum's seminar on 7 December;
- SEN Green Paper – DfE Pathfinders;
- Project ADAM.

DECISION:

(a) that a detailed structure chart for school matters be made available;

(b) that a detailed report on Local Learning Community Action Plans be made to the next Forum's meeting;

(c) that the Local Learning Community structures be considered as a potential topic for the Forum's seminar on 7 December 2011.

ACTION: Head of Education & Learning

560 Finance Update (including Funding Formula Consultation)

DISCUSSION:

The Forum considered the report of the Head of Education & Learning (DEF/11/19) on:-

Corporate Update 2011/12

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Allocation for 2011/12 confirmed 13 July 2011

School Funding Reform Consultation

Proposals for simplifying Devon's school funding formula

Month 4 Budget Monitoring position 2011/12

Stepping Stones Pump Priming

The 2011/12 DSG allocation had now been confirmed at £363.990m, adjusted for academies recoupment (from the original £430.069m). Academy adjustments included some estimated values and so the final reduction may differ slightly. The 2010/11 DSG outturn represented an under spend of £1.061m rolled into 2011/12 year and providing some contingency against the in year reductions to central budgets caused by academy recoupment.

The DfE School Funding Reform consultation was due to end on 11 October 2011. DEF's response would be sent to schools as soon as possible to encourage their individual responses to the DfE. Consultation questions discussed but not amended by members were:- Question 11: primary lump sum and Question 6: ie the working of Schools Forums where the main groups would have to separately approve a proposed formula and whether the Forum should have more decision making powers. The Forum would reconsider this if necessary depending on the outcome of the consultation.

It was also recommended that a Devon consultation was undertaken with schools this term for two changes to simplify and reduce the bureaucracy of the operation of the formula for April 2012 (2012/13 year) i.e., relating to the allocation of free school meal funding and dual use sports facilities funding. This should be a short and expedient consultation in order that schools could plan appropriately and any changes could be implemented for April 2012. A benefit of the change would be the avoidance of the need for greater contingency provision (from which retrospective adjustments were currently funded).

In connection with meals provision (but quite distinct from the consultation) schools were seeking clarification of their responsibility in respect of free school meals. The responsibility was understood to be to provide a hot meal for entitled children and upon request - however the position needed to be confirmed for the benefit of all schools.

DSG Budget monitoring 2011/12 for month 4 indicated that the DSG was likely to be in surplus at the year end, potentially by more than the £1m 2010/11 carry forward due to a number of factors, including a potential under spend of £600k for PVI and the retention of a share of business rates funding in relation to converting academies. At this early stage in the financial year the in year DSG for 2011/12 was considered likely to be no worse than break even at the year end. To any balance was added the £1.061m brought forward from 2010/11.

There had been further progress with the Stepping Stones THRIVE rollout programme however the main provider of the model and licence had substantially increased the cost of the provision following a reconsideration of their business model and so negotiations were in hand. The Stepping Stones Disinvestment Strategy was making good progress with a further update to the School Finance Group in November. DAPH however expressed concern that if the license was now going to be for two years some schools could be waiting some time for it to process. Whilst the licence was one element, training was equally important and the money should be used in the best way for the whole package. DAPH would welcome further guidance on the responsible officer contact for THRIVE, where decisions were made and the operation as soon as possible as meetings were currently taking place.

Members registered concern at the potential conflict and impartiality of school finance support team officers transferring to the LDP and then becoming part of the Joint Venture Company.

DECISION:

(a) that the final allocation of DSG for 2011/12 be noted and the intention to fully allocate it in support of the schools budget in 2011/12 and 2012/13 be approved;

(b) that the draft response to the DfE consultation on school funding reform be approved (subject to amending the typing error at fifth paragraph page 38) and that the response be copied to all schools as soon as possible to encourage their individual responses;

(c) that the proposed consultation with schools to simplify the schools funding formula in respect of funding for free school meals and dual use sports facilities be approved;

(d) that the allocation of additional £90k funds to secure the licence for the THRIVE programme led by Integrated Children's Services (ICS) be approved, subject to the understanding that implementation would happen quickly and not towards the end of the second year, as well as the Forum noting that further negotiation was underway to contain the additional costs associated with the revised business model adopted by the main provider;

(e) that the Forum note with concern that the school support team (finance and support officers) was transferring to the LDP from 1 November 2011 and would be included in the transfer to the Joint Venture Company from 1 April 2012;

(f) that school responsibility for free school meal provision be clarified and communicated to schools.

ACTION: County Treasurer (John Holme, Caroline Armstrong), Forward Plan (c), Head of Business Strategy & Support Services (Melanie Wellard) (f)

561 2011 Initial Pupil Performance Data Summary

DISCUSSION:

The Forum received the initial summary report of the Head of Education & Learning (DEF/11/18) by key stage (Early Years and Foundation to KS5 (Post 16)). An interim and full analysis by key stage would be presented to the December 2011 and March 2012 meetings respectively.

Members would welcome the option for schools to obtain their own school performance data in the same format as presented in the final report, although the feasibility and appropriateness of individual school data being provided in this form needed to be considered in view of data protection and confidentiality issues.

DECISION:

that the report be noted and the Head of Education & Learning look into what might be feasible in making data available where requested on a charged, individual school basis.

ACTION: Head of Education & Learning (Suzie Winter), Forward Plan

562 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 13 September 2011:-

All matters had been considered under the Finance Update report (minute 560 above).

(ii) School Organisation and Policy Forum (SOPF)

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2011:-

A3 Capital Maintenance Programme - noted;

B1 SOPF Terms of Reference and Safeguarding:

DISCUSSION:

DAPH continued to have concern at how schools could raise operational, policy and procedural issues and concern in understanding the safeguarding accountability structure within the authority. DAPH also had concerns at the Safeguarding Audit report as tabled and that last year's schools audit non-returns had not been appropriately followed up; dates for workshop training planned for after the October half term needed to be given to schools now; the proposed guidance document on record keeping, report writing and referrals for inclusion in the Safeguarding Handbook should already be available. The Cabinet Member for Schools & Learning would also be discussing DAPH's points with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Rory McCallum the safeguarding lead.

DECISION:

(i) that safeguarding remain as a standing item for DEF rather than within the remit of SOPF, but that safeguarding issues may from time to time be best reviewed by SOPF at DEF's request on a case by case basis;

(ii) that a briefing presentation on MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) be made to the next meeting of DEF;

(iii) that the Head of Child & Adult Protection consider the strategic position for safeguarding with the People leadership team and report back;

(iv) that a report back on the safeguarding training workshops be made to the next meeting.

ACTION: Education & Learning (Sue Clarke, Rory McCallum), Forward Plan

(iii) Forum for Learning and Achievement (FLA)

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2011:-

A4 LDP Joint Venture Company:

Noted that the headteacher and governor associations were to be involved with the evaluation process across the business case and not just in school areas. The preferred bidder was to be appointed on 7 October 2011.

Chairmanship of FLA - the Head of Education & Learning would chair these meetings whenever she was able to.

(b) Representations and progress from various standing and task & finish groups

nil

(c) Other Groups

(i) 14-19 Strategic Leadership Group

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2011 - noted.

Terms of Reference - noted.

(ii) Local Admissions Forum

Minutes of the meeting for information held on 14 July 2011 - noted.

563 Dates of Future Meetings

(a) Wed 7 December 2011 - half day seminar at county hall, followed by an ordinary meeting of the Forum

Topic suggestions so far were:-

Using the LDP profit share;
Amalgamating groups around Local Learning Communities;
Review of results of the funding formula consultation and possible need to reconsider the Forum's remit arising from this.

DECISION:

That any further suggested topics be submitted to Chairman as soon as possible
lan.Courtney@natwest.com

(b) Existing calendared meetings

Meetings to commence at 10am at County Hall, Exeter (unless otherwise indicated)

Wed 7 December 2011 all day - seminar for Forum members only followed by Forum meeting

Wed 18 January 2012

Wed 21 March 2012

(b) Further dates

Meetings to commence at 10am at County Hall, Exeter (unless otherwise indicated)

W 27 June 2012

W 26 September 2012

W 21 Nov 2012 all day - seminar for Forum members only and Forum meeting

W 23 Jan 2013

W 20 March 2013.

ACTION:

Office of the County Solicitor (Fiona Rutley) and Head of Education & Learning
(Heidi Watson-Jones)

The meeting started at 10am and finished at 12.40pm.

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