

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

26 June 2013

Present:-

Schools Members

Primary School Headteachers

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Mr M Boxall | Exeter Montgomery Primary |
| Mr A Dobson | Marwood Primary |
| Mr P Walker | Sidmouth St Nicholas CE Primary |
| Mrs J Baker | Barnstaple, Orchard Vale (<i>Academy member</i>) |

Primary School Governors

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|---------------|-------------------------|
| Mrs P Barnard | Sandford Primary |
| Mrs A Blewett | Kings Nympton Primary |
| Mr R Butler | Musbury Primary |
| Mr M Dobbins | Exmouth Marpool Primary |

Secondary School Headteachers

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| Mr D Chapman | The Dartmoor Federation |
| Mr M Smith | The Axe Valley CC (<i>Substitute member</i>) |

Secondary School Governors

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|------------------------|---|
| Commander M Bamborough | Gt Torrington School (<i>Academy member</i>) |
| Mr I Courtney | The Dartmoor Federation Chairman |
| Mr G Watts | The Axe Valley CC (<i>Substitute member</i>) |
| Ms J Elson | Exmouth CC (<i>Academy member</i>) |
| Mr S Baber | Chulmleigh Academy Trust (<i>Substitute Academy member</i>) |

Special School Headteacher

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| Mrs J Warne | Ellen Tinkham School |
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Special School Governor

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| Mrs F Butler | Marland School |
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Nurseries

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|-------------|---------------------|
| Mrs S Baker | Westexe (Nurseries) |
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Non-Schools Members

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| Mr M Gurney | Teachers Consultative Committee |
| Mrs G Rolstone | Early Years, Private Voluntary & Independent (PVI) |

Observers & Attendees

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|----------------------|---|
| Ms R Line | Education Funding Agency |
| Councillor W Mumford | Cabinet Member - Children, Schools & Skills |

Apologies

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Mr A Lovett | Tiverton High School |
| Mr P Mantell | Diocese |
| Mr D Sharratt | Braunton CC (<i>Academy member</i>) |
| Dr C Woodhouse | The Axe Valley CC |

645 Minutes

DECISION:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2013 be signed as a correct record.

646 Membership

DISCUSSION:

The Chairman welcomed Ms Rosie Line, Education Funding Agency (EFA) observer and new members Mr Steve Baber (DAG academy secondary substitute), Mr Graham Watts (DAG secondary substitute), Mr Martin Smith (DASH substitute) and Cllr Will Mumford (Cabinet member – Children, Schools & Skills) to the meeting. Ms Emma Morris had also recently been appointed as substitute PVI representative. The Chairman also thanked retiring members for their time and commitment to the Forum and in particular, Mrs Jan Baker (DAPH academy) who had served on the Forum from its beginning in 2003.

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

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648 Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Arrangements for the Protection of Children/Devon's Children's Safeguarding

DISCUSSION:

The Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Skills and the Head of Child & Adult Protection reported on the final Report of the unannounced OFSTED inspection published 29 May 2013, governance and progress of the improvement plan. A Safeguarding Improvement Board had now been established to oversee the delivery of the improvement plan with the final format and composition of the Board dependent upon the Department for Education.

Staff briefings had been held around the County to explain both the nature and seriousness of the findings and action needed, to be followed up by weekly updates/bulletins. Briefings and discussions had also been held with principal stakeholders and partners to secure their engagement in the process.

The OFSTED report recommended areas for improvement that were required to be addressed immediately, within 3 months and within 6 months. A comprehensive audit process had already been put in place to scrutinise daily decisions from the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), identify variances and amend decision making processes where necessary. This had already been highly effective in improving and moderating decisions to ensure better consistency and improve outcomes. The number of decisions for further assessment by the MASH had, not unsurprisingly, increased since the publication of the OFSTED Report.

A detailed improvement plan had been developed and included a range of specific actions to improve the arrangements for the protection of children. Independent Advisors and the Council's Officers had been identified to lead work streams related to the key themes of quality assurance, quality of practice, early help and on inter-agency arrangements which would report to the Delivery Improvement Group under the leadership of the Strategic Director, People; with the plan being driven by a Safeguarding Improvement Board. Mr David Taylor had been appointed as an interim independent chairman of the Devon Children's Safeguarding Board.

All of the issues raised by OFSTED and at this meeting would be rigorously addressed within the key areas already identified to ensure a robust and sustainable outcome for the future.

Against the backdrop of a consistently changing and tougher inspection regime, the OFSTED Report had contained a number of complimentary, welcome, remarks about the quality of aspects of the Council's services, with good practice to build upon.

Members comments included:-

-Whilst welcoming the desire for rapid improvement, timescales and costs of improvement were to be realistic;

-The Safeguarding Board should focus on outcome for children and families rather than being too strategic;

-Early years and PVI settings should be considered within any changes eg early help and intervention.

649 Back to Social Work

DISCUSSION:

The Head of Child & Adult Protection reported on the restructuring progress since the Forum's last meeting which was now proceeding in conjunction with the OFSTED implementation plan. It was still the intention to align with Local Learning Communities (LLCs), engage on an inter-agency basis including schools and early years, at a local level with local bases.

650 Head of Highways, Capital Development & Waste Management Update

DISCUSSION:

The Head of Highways, Capital Development & Waste Management reported on the published capital programme available at <http://www.devon.gov.uk/loadtrimdocument?url=&filename=CT/13/11.CMR&rn=13/WD91&dg=Public>

It was noted that £9.2m had been allocated for capital maintenance 2013/14 including a number of larger programmes. £32m had been invested in school maintenance backlog since 2011/12. Greater emphasis was being given to driving down costs, sustainability and energy efficiency.

The County Council's contract with Norfolk Property Services (NPS) was kept under review and particularly fees were looked at on a regular basis. There was now strong governance to manage performance and review customer feedback.

651 Head of Education & Learning Update

DISCUSSION:

The Head of Education & Learning updated members on educational issues including the following (as tabled):-

(a) OfSTED Inspection Update – results for all Devon schools by phase, compared to national data. Devon had 86% “good” or “better” schools compared to 79% nationally; Devon had 19% “outstanding “ schools compared to 22% nationally. Devon had 0.5% inspections finding schools inadequate compared to 3% nationally. Devon's figures under the new OfSTED framework (September 2012 – March 2013) showing schools that had improved, same and declined schools inspection were also better than the national average. There had been a national trend towards more “satisfactory”/“requiring intervention” judgements;

(b) Diverse Educational Landscape – by school type in Devon June 2013;

(c) School Improvement – Lord Nash, education minister had recently written to local authorities stating that schools found to be inadequate would become a sponsored academy, without choice of sponsor. Outstanding academies may become sponsors. Devon and the Learning Development Partnership (LDP) continued to support maintained schools with a rapid improvement action plan through the Targeted Intervention and Support Programme (TISP). Devon schools remained committed to all pupils achieving at least their expected/higher attainment levels and schools found OfSTED and keystage data useful in analysing and monitoring pupil performance;

(d) Children Missing Education – As part of the Devon's Children's Safeguarding Ofsted Inspection, children missing education ie not on school roll had a specified tracking process to ensure the most vulnerable and mobile were located by education welfare officers (with other agency help where appropriate);

(e) Elective Home Education (EHE) – Some 490 Devon children were educated at home, managed through EHE staff/Education Welfare Officers to ensure any safeguarding issues were taken account of as part of the Devon Children's Safeguarding Ofsted implementation plan. Only 10% of parents reported that life style choice was the reason for EHE;

(f) An Academy Protocol – had been drawn up with the involvement of the phase associations in order to try to work through and establish practices at a local level eg statutory responsibility for vulnerable children.

652 Finance Update

DISCUSSION:

The Forum considered the report of the Head of Education & Learning (DEF/13/10) on:-

2014/15 schools funding arrangements
New schools funding – growth fund criteria
High Needs Block funding update
Schools Broadband subsidy and future arrangements
Devon Mutual Fund Partnership
2012/13 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) outturn position and allocation of carry forward

The Forum also noted the minutes of the Schools Finance Group (SFG) of 12 June 2013 relating to the above.

Discussions included:-

The published 2014-15 School Funding arrangements (with key changes relating to the schools, high needs and early years blocks) had a tight timescale for modelling and consultation. It was therefore proposed that a broad representation SFG task group would examine the formula in detail and agreed formula factors on which to consult schools on behalf of the Devon Education Forum (DEF). DEF would however consider the consultation responses and formula proposals before recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Children, Schools & Skills in accordance with the Council's normal procedures and submission to EFA.

The Growth Fund was an important issue nationally with the f40 local authorities group very active to seek to ensure factors to cover exceptional growth. It was also hoped funding for new schools might be influenced at an early stage of the local planning process and the Education Infrastructure Plan.

High needs block funding work was needed urgently to clarify the position for Special Educational Needs and the future sustainability of the special schools sector with a task & finish group to be established as soon as possible. Special schools events and consultation were planned for 16 – 20 September 2013.

Major Unforeseen Maintenance in Schools (MUMIS)- school eligibility to use this fund (eg VA schools) needed clarification to ensure fairness against those schools contributing and to ascertain where there was a safety net for ineligible schools.

The DSG outturn 2012-13 had an under spend of £21.2 - £16.9m from school balances. There was no pattern and size to schools holding large balance but it was noted that in difficult times schools tended to retain greater balances. The Financial Intervention Panel for Schools (FIPS) played an important monitoring and active role in assisting schools with vulnerable budgets in the current climate.

DECISION:

(a) that the key changes to the 2014-15 schools formula announced by the DfE (as set out in Section 2 of report DEF/13/10) be noted;

(b) that a Schools Finance Group task-group be authorised on behalf of this Forum to agree the formula factors for consultation with all schools and providers in September (paragraph 2.3 of the report);

Vote: all phases maintained and academy, PVI

(c) that the DEF October meeting be deferred until 16 October 2013 (instead of 2 October) to enable full consideration of the consultation responses and formula proposals before submission to the EFA 31 October (paragraph 2.3 of the report);

Vote: all phases maintained and academy, PVI

(d) that in respect of the Growth Fund (paragraph 3.4 of the report):-

(i) the principle that start up pre-opening development and post-opening funding required to address diseconomies of scale would need to be found from the Growth Fund within the Dedicated Schools Grant be noted;

(ii) the capital costs for new schools will in the main be secured through either section 106, basic need funding or a combination of the two funding streams be noted;

(iii) that Cabinet be recommended:-

(A) the principles for allocating funding for new schools as described in paragraph 2.2 of Appendix A to report DEF/13/10 be approved;

Vote: all phases maintained and academy, PVI

(B) the principle of developing and implementing a revenue strategy to finance planned future growth as described in paragraph 2.3 of Appendix A to report DEF/13/10 be approved;

Vote: all phases maintained and academy, PVI

(e) that the update on the High Needs funding review (Section 4) be noted;

(f) that the DSG subsidy for broadband costs for 2013/14 be increased from the £2m in 2012/13 to £2.071m for one year only (80% of the estimated costs for 2013/14), funded from the DSG under spend brought forward from 2012/13 (paragraph 5.5 of the report) be approved;

Vote: all phases maintained and academy, PVI

(g) that the broadband subsidy for future years be agreed annually by DEF, but not to exceed £2m and if it continued the subsidy be fixed for each establishment at the value equal to 80% of the scaled back costs for 2013/14. (In other words, future year's subsidies would be cash flat and any increase in costs would need to be met from the school budget share) (paragraph 5.5) of the report be approved;

Vote: all phases maintained and academy, PVI

(h) that 90% of the Devon Maintenance Partnership forecast surplus balance to be returned to contributory schools, including academies, on the basis of AWPU (paragraph 6.4) be approved;

(i) that 10% of the Devon Maintenance Partnership forecast surplus balance be retained as a contingency to manage unforeseen circumstances (paragraph 6.4 of the report) be approved;

(j) that SOCA consider the forecast balance on the MUMIS fund and the level of any required contribution for 2013/14 from the DSG, and bring the matter to the September Schools Finance Group meeting for consideration, along with clarity from the County Treasurer on the contribution rules and recommendation to DEF (paragraph 6.4 of the report);

Vote: all phases maintained and academy, PVI

(k) that Cabinet be recommended:-

to approve the allocation of the DSG under spend brought forward from 2012/13 totalling £21,291,000 (paragraph 7.3 of the report).

Vote: all phases maintained and academy, PVI

ACTION:

County Treasurer (John Holme, Karen Powlesland)

653 DfE School Funding Arrangements 2014/15 – Schools Forum Arrangements

DISCUSSION:

(a) As part of the DfE School Funding arrangements 2014/15 the DfE had included reference to the operation of Schools Forums:-

EFA 2014-15 Revenue Funding Arrangements: Operational Information for Local Authorities (June 2013), paragraphs 58-62 Document available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2014-to-2015-revenue-funding-arrangements-operational-information-for-local-authorities>

DfE School Funding Reform: Findings from the Review of 2013-14 Arrangements & Changes for 2014/15 (June 2013), paragraphs 93 – 99 Document available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-funding-reform-findings-from-the-review-of-2013-to-2014-arrangements-and-changes-for-2014-to-2015>

(b) The EFA had also published a *Schools Forum guide for schools and academies on its role and their responsibilities (June 2013)*. Paragraphs 9 – 13 specifically related to responsibilities of schools and their representatives and local authorities.

Document available at

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/s/schools%20forum%20guide%20for%20schools%20and%20academies.pdf>

Within the three documents the DfE emphasised transparency and fairness, prompt publication of agendas, minutes and decisions and consideration of whether communication within the groups represented on the Forum could be improved. A number of methods of communication were used in Devon to reach a wider audience, through the associations and LA, website, newsletters etc. The new DfE guide reaffirmed the two way dialogue between schools and their forum representative and that representatives had a responsibility to represent the interests of their peer group rather than the interests of their own individual school. Associations were reviewing their practices to see if communications with the groups represented could be improved (for schools and on behalf of academy governing bodies).

The DfE would also be making one change to the Schools Forums regulations (anticipated

autumn 2013) requiring the inclusion of one elected representative from an institution (other than from a school or academy) providing education to 16-19 year olds (but may also be providing education to 14-16 year olds and/or for 20-24 year olds with high needs). This replaced the 14-19 partnership representation.

Forum member training was reviewed on an annual basis (autumn) and in addition to training for new members and in light of the recent school finance changes, training would also be reinstated for existing members.

DECISION:

(a) that the associations be requested to review their practices in line with the newly published documents;

(b) that clarification be sought on timescale and definition of "institution" for the election and appointment of a 16-19 representative.

ACTION:

(a) Associations, (b) and training - Office of the County Solicitor (Fiona Rutley)

654 Targeted Family Support – Update

DISCUSSION:

The Forum received the report of the Head of Education & Learning (DEF/13/11) on progress with Devon's Targeted Family Support Programme (national 3 year Troubled Families Programme), aiming at getting children back into schools adults back to work, reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and overall cost to the system. Schools were playing an important part in the programme and helping identify appropriate cases. Currently some 277 families were actively engaged and early case studies showed improved attendance at school and positive impact on other areas of family life. The report also covered resourcing and payment by results, partnership working which included phase association representation. Positive views on Devon's approach had been received from the Director General of the Troubled Families Team and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, together with the most recent inspection of LA arrangements for the protection of children recognising the successful implementation of year one and that Devon was rolling out its programme to further impact on early help for children and families and offer preventative services.

655 Standing (and other) Groups

(a) The Forum received the following minutes of its standing groups:-

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

Minutes of the meetings held on 12 June 2013 (including consideration under Finance Update minute 652 above).

DISCUSSION:

It was noted that proposals for determining the governance of £50k Babcock Education Fund (SFG minute 1) would be examined by the Head's Liaison Group and recommendations made to DEF.

ACTION:

HLG - Head of Education & Learning (Heidi Watson-Jones)

(ii) Schools Organisation, Capital and Admissions (SOCA)

(replacing Schools Organisation and Policy Forum and the Local Admissions Forum)

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2013.

DISCUSSION:

SOCA had requested the reinstatement of an autumn term meeting in view of the long gap between June and January meeting and to consider carry forward deployment for Devon Maintenance Partnership and statutory annual admissions and appeals reports (SOCA minute 9). Meetings had been reduced as part of the DEF structure review in order to streamline business and more efficiently manage commitments of members and officers. Commitment required for these meetings would continue to be kept under review.

DECISION:

that a 4 pa meeting cycle for SOCA (to include an autumn meeting) be approved.

ACTION:

Head of Education & Learning (Heidi Watson-Jones)

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

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(c) Other Groups

14-19 Strategic Leadership Group

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656 Correspondence

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657 Dates of Future Meetings

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

Wed 16 October 2013 – *changed from Wed 2 October 2013*

Wed 22 January 2014

Wed 19 March 2014.