

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

19 March 2014

Present:-

Schools Members

Primary School Headteachers

Mr M Boxall	Exeter Montgomery Primary
Mr J Stone	Denbury Primary
Mr P Walker	Sidmouth St Nicholas CE Primary

Primary School Governors

Mrs A Blewett	Kings Nympton Primary
Mr M Dobbins	Exmouth Marpool Primary
Mrs P Furnival	Ivybridge, Woodlands Park Primary
Mrs M Wallis	Whimble Primary

Secondary School Headteachers

Mr M Smith	The Axe Valley CC
Mr R Haring	Ivybridge CC (<i>Academy member</i>)
Mrs L Heath	Uffculme School (<i>substitute Academy member</i>)

Secondary School Governors

Mr I Courtney	The Dartmoor Federation Chairman
Mr A Walmsley	Exeter, St James
Commander M Bamborough	Gt Torrington School (<i>Academy member</i>)
Ms J Elson	Exmouth CC (<i>Academy member</i>)

Nurseries

Mrs S Baker	Westexe
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Pupil Referral Units

Mrs V Skelton	North Devon Personalised Learning Centre
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Special School Headteacher

Mr B Pugh	Oaklands Park
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Special School Governor

Mrs F Butler	Marland School
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Non-Schools Members

Mr M Gurney	Teachers Consultative Committee
Mr P Mantell	Exeter Diocesan Board of Education (CE)
Mrs G Rolstone	Early Years Private, Voluntary and Independent providers
Mrs T de Bernhardt-Dunkin	16-19

Apologies

Mr J Bishop	Broadclyst Primary (<i>Academy member</i>)
Mrs J Baker	Barnstaple Orchard Vale (<i>Academy substitute member</i>)
Councillor W Mumford	Cabinet Member - Children, Schools & Skills
Mr D Chapman	The Dartmoor Federation
Mr D Fitzsimmons	Holsworthy CC (<i>substitute member</i>)

682 Minutes

DECISION:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2014 be signed as a correct record.

683 Membership

DISCUSSION:

The Chairman welcomed new members:-

Mrs Tracey de Bernhardt-Dunkin - 16-19

Mrs Paulette Furnival, - DAG primary maintained (previously substitute member)

Mrs Fiona Collier - DAG primary maintained, substitute member.

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

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685 Early Help Strategy (for Children and Families) - Director of Public Health Update

The Director of Public Health updated members on progress in designing the new Early Help service, with the roll out of the Devon Assessment Framework (DAF) for Early Help via the SEND Pathfinder with one common website, planned to commence use on 22 April 2014. To support the roll out was the Early Help Co-ordination Centre with early help advisers based alongside MASH, with the team also planned to be operational by 22 April. There had been very rapid implementation of the Early Help Strategy in response to the Ofsted Inspection on Child Protection and this strategy would be closely monitored to ensure it worked effectively. As part of the Early Help implementation plan all services for children and young people had been scrutinised with particular attention to high risk areas (eg adult mental health, domestic violence, drugs and alcohol).

One of the four main priorities of the plan was tier 2 mental health and emotional wellbeing services for children and young people, with a new task & finish group now in place looking at the needs of children, young people and schools and the use of counselling and support services by schools. There was a one-off opportunity to use some of the additional public health grant funding for a new 2 tier service, for which a modest contribution was also sought from schools. However whilst supporting this much needed initiative DASH expressed reservations at contributions from schools. Members also commented on:- achieving more for less with partnership funding, whether any contributions could be made via local learning communities and the effectiveness of some low cost measures eg addressing low level long term anxiety with examples of schools funding themselves.

686 Ofsted Inspection on Child Protection – Update on DCC response

DISCUSSION:

The Head of Children's Social Work and Child Protection reported on progress with the restructuring of Children's Services implemented in early February 2014. There was now a settling in period as staff had moved posts. Some children's cases had moved with staff and others assigned to different social workers. Children and families teams were now in place. Social worker vacancies were covered by agency workers, with recruitment and retention and high caseloads ongoing. The redevelopment of MASH alongside early help with social

workers answering calls was more responsive,. There was no significant backlog of referrals to MASH and cases only pending allocation dependent upon information awaited.

687 Finance Update

DISCUSSION:

The Forum considered the joint report of the Head of Education & Learning and County Treasurer (DEF/14/05).

The Forum also noted the respective minute of the Schools Finance Group (SFG) of 5 March 2014.

The report (DEF/14/05) covered:-

- National Funding Formula consultation
- Month 10 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget monitoring

Month 10 DSG was forecast to be underspent by £5.8m (including factors planned to take forward to 2014/15), LLC budgets were over an academic year, High Needs top up was demand led.

Devon's representation at the f40 fair funding conference in February 2014 at the House of Commons was noted and subsequent announcement from government allocating £350m nationally to move towards a more equitable funding for all pupils nationally welcomed. Several members regretted that the proposals did not go as far as a national funding formula and noted that even after the 2015/16 proposals, Devon would remain one of the least well funded authorities. However, the proposals would mean that schools block funding would go up by an average £189 per pupil on the government's indicative figures, other things remaining the same and this was a good first step. This was an increase of £16.2m, again on the indicative figures and this represented 40% of the gap between Devon's current funding per pupil and that of the average authority.

The County Treasurer was preparing a response to the DfE national funding formula consultation (ending 30th April 2014) to be circulated to the phase associations and schools. It was important that schools responded to the consultation.

It was noted that even where schools would not benefit from additional funding, because they were in receipt of minimum funding protection, reduction in the necessity for that would immediately give schools in this position more certainty in planning for the future. It was also noted that Devon's response should include reference to the absence of a top slice for unusual growth, which had been an important part of Devon's lobbying.

The County Treasurer also reported on the universal infant free school meals advice by the DfE on 6 March 2014 (as tabled). The full DfE document could be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-infant-free-school-meals> Devon had been allocated £1.2m for capital (eg kitchens) and Local Learning Communities had been preparing for its introduction from September 2014. Initial allocations (revenue) would be based on January 2014 census data and adjusted for actual take up.

DECISION:

- (a) that the month 10 DSG monitoring position be noted;
- (b) that the County Treasurer circulate a draft response on the National Funding Formula consultation to the phase associations and schools and the phase associations encourage schools to respond;
- (c) that the DfE Universal Infant Free School Meals advice be noted.

ACTION:

County Treasurer (John Holme, Karen Powlesland), Phase Associations (b)

688 Targeted Intervention and Support Programme (TISP)

DISCUSSION:

The Forum considered the report of the Head of School Effectiveness, Babcock Learning Development Partnership (LDP) (DEF/14/08) on the TISP programme, part of Devon's maintained schools' school improvement strategy commissioned through Babcock, with options for academies to buy in. More recently TISP had focused on supporting schools to move from Ofsted's requiring improvement (RI) to good and preventing good schools falling back. Wider school improvement/self improving schools used a range of school support measures with DCC and LDP developing this, brokering support and encouraging school collaboration. The report also covered:- school performance with an upward trend although plateauing since summer 2013 due to the impact of the more demanding Ofsted framework; numbers and progress of schools supported with particular attention to the small number remaining on the TISP programme for a longer period; financial support (average size primary £5600); external evaluation of TISP and next steps.

Further discussion included:-

- priority for supporting and monitoring special schools through SHAD, with a different approach than that adopted for maintained schools);
- developing the sharing of good practice;
- partnership welcomed, recognising the very positive experience of schools who had used the TISP, but with different solutions for different contexts determined at the local level for local need;
- importance of early intervention;
- governance and support of/and for governors;
- broader view and approach welcomed to support Devon's ambition for all learners to attend a good or better school within two years.

Babcock confirmed priorities for both discussions with SHAD and the sharing of good practice as above.

ACTION: Head of School Effectiveness (Bob Hooper)

689 Standards and Performance of Schools (by keystage)

DISCUSSION:

The Head of School Effectiveness, Babcock Learning Development Partnership (LDP) was submitting a report to the People's Scrutiny Committee on 3 April 2014, which would be circulated and also considered at the next Forum meeting.

ACTION: Head of School Effectiveness (Bob Hooper), Forward Plan

690 SEND Pathfinder

(Mr Gurney declared an interest by virtue of partner's involvement as a parent with SEND pathfinder pilot).

DISCUSSION:

The Head of Education & Learning reported on the rapid implementation of this statutory programme which had to be in place by September 2014, including the introduction of single plans (EHCP) for ages 0-25. A full report would be brought to the Forum during the autumn

on the new ways of working around Early Help, Targeted Families and SEND and measures taken to ensure a smooth and coherent transition for children with complex needs and their families. Devon had a significant task with 3700 statemented children, twice that of the national average, with work on personal budgets also a priority.

DECISION:

(a) that any comments on the draft Changes to Assessment & Support for SEN & Disability FAQs be forwarded to the Head of Education & Learning as soon as possible;

(b) that a full report be made to the autumn 2014 Forum meeting.

ACTION:

Head of Education & Learning (John Peart), Forward Plan

691 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 5 March 2014 (also considered under Finance Update minute 687 above).

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

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

DISCUSSION:

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2014:-

Item 2 - Admission Arrangements 2015/16

(Ms Elson declared an interest by virtue of being Chairman of a community transport group).

SOCA had requested DEF to consider the implications of the establishment of new schools within the county, with particular regard to statutory transport provision.

It was noted that there was to be a working group to consider changes to school transport as new schools were established.

However this was to be a policy decision for the County Council's Cabinet to consider.

The Head of Education & Learning reported on the County Council's significant school transport budget in the region of £22m and need for financial restraint within the current difficult climate. Devon's policy of transporting statutory school age students to the nearest appropriate school and not to fund parental preference, particularly for new providers, was likely to continue to be the most equitable and have the least impact on resources. Devon had to balance aspirations against funding and find the most equitable solution.

Members comments also included transport implications of extended school days and post 16 transport.

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

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692 Dates of Future Meetings

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

Wed 25 June 2014

Wed 1 October 2014

Wed 21 January 2015

Wed 18 March 2015

The meeting started at 10am and finished at 12.25pm.

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