

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

21 January 2015

Present:-

Schools Members

Primary School Headteachers

Mrs J Baker

Mr A Dobson

Mr J Stone

Mr P Walker

Primary Acadamies Trust (*Academy substitute member*)

Marwood Primary

Denbury Primary

Sidmouth CE Primary

Primary School Governors

Mrs A Blewett

Mr M Dobbins

Mrs P Furnival

Mrs M Wallis

Kings Nympton Primary

Exmouth Marpool Primary

Ivybridge, Woodlands Park Primary

Whimble Primary

Secondary School Headteachers

Mr D Chapman

Ms L Heath

Mr M Smith

The Dartmoor Federation

Uffculme (*Academy substitute member*)

The Axe Valley CC

Secondary School Governors

Mr I Courtney

Mr A Walmsley

Ms J Elson

The Dartmoor Federation **Chairman**

Exeter, St James

Exmouth CC (*Academy member*)

Nursery School

Mrs G Brown

Chestnut Nursery (*substitute member*)

Special School Headteacher

Ms C May

Pathfield School

Special School Governor

Mrs F Butler

Marland School

Pupil Referral Units

Mrs V Skelton

North Devon Personalised Learning Centre

Non-Schools Members

Mrs B Alderson

Mrs G Rolstone

Teachers Consultative Committee

Early Years Private, Voluntary and Independent providers
(EY PVI)

Ms T Wilson

Exeter Board of Education (*substitute member*)

Apologies

Mr J Bishop

Mr R Haring

Mr P Mantell

Mr M Shanks

Councillor J McInnes

Broadclyst Primary (*Academy member*)

Ivybridge CC (*Academy member*)

Exeter Diocesan Board of Education

Coombeshead CC (*Academy member*)

Cabinet Member - Children, Schools & Skills

719 Minutes

DECISION:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2014 be signed as a correct record.

720 Matters Arising from the Last Meeting and Report back on Issues Raised with Cabinet - Broadband for schools (DEF minute 717)

DISCUSSION:

Members enquired further to the last meeting on the share of funding when broadband provision transferred to SW Grid for Learning (SWGfL) for schools who could not afford to remain with SWGfL/were receiving ongoing poor internet coverage.

DECISION:

(i) that while recognising that this was no longer under the LA's control, the Forum records that it understands that when this had passed to SW Grid for Learning the funding had been intended to help all schools;

(ii) that schools take up their case individually with SWGfL as appropriate.

ACTION: -

721 Membership

DISCUSSION:

The Forum recorded thanks to retiring members for their service to the Forum:-

Mrs Sarah Baker (maintained nurseries)

Mrs Fiona Collier (primary maintained governor substitute member)

722 Head of Education & Learning Update

DISCUSSION:

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

Devon Landscape - current LA maintained and academies;

Children's Alliance priorities and feedback from children and young people/children with disabilities, strategic action plan;

Virtual School - Phase Learning Advocates (new role to drive better outcomes and support individual Children in Care (CiC));

Ofsted Comparisons Autumn Term 2014 – 1 Devon primary academy and 28 Devon primary maintained schools inspected with some disappointing results. Measures required to bring new knowledge and a change to the system, all partners contributing to value added and to ensure a clear direction of travel for all schools. Babcock Learning & Development (LDP) Partnership representative (Eileen Barnes-Vachell) also presented developing a self-improving school system to secure excellent outcomes for all pupils.

Review of the Targeted Intervention of Schools Programme (TISP) and Introduction of an 'Excellence for All' Programme;

Child Sexual Exploitation New Strategy – briefings for phase associations to be held, in February.

Across all these issues the voice of the child was paramount as highlighted in the Ofsted Peer Review report to Cabinet 12 November 2014.

723 Cross Service Update (Education and Planning, Transportation & Environment)

DISCUSSION:

The Head of Planning, Transportation & Environment reported on rural/urban school place planning, consultation with schools in the local planning process, consideration of imminent housing growth, Section106/Community Infrastructure Levy contributions from developers for mainstream and special schools. He also highlighted the ongoing work with clusters of schools in respect of short and longer time planning.

The Devon Association of Primary Heads (DAPH) raised concern at a letter sent to primary schools regarding the withdrawal of LA funding for school crossing patrols at several schools, without consultation. The Head of Planning, Transportation & Environment advised that to his knowledge this had not yet been finally decided upon and, but would make further enquiries.

A meeting would also be arranged with DAPH if requested to discuss capacity issues in areas with new housing developments.

DECISION:

- (a) that a school organisation update report be sent to all schools for information;
- (b) that the Head of Planning, Transportation & Environment look into the proposed changes for school crossing patrols and advise DAPH.

ACTION:

- (a) & (b) Head of Planning, Transportation & Environment (Simon Niles)

724 Review of Children's Services/Peer Review Group Update

DISCUSSION:

The Interim Head of Children's Social Work Services & Child Protection reported that whilst there was still much work to be done good progress had been made to date as indicated in the Peer Group Review. There was now a good level of permanent staff at senior management level and a significant drop in permanent social worker posts, with both factors improving stability. The service was working towards building stable teams to provide more permanent social worker consistency for children with less reliance on agency staff. Caseload audit trends were improving. Members commented that improvements to processes for referrals to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and follow up were still patchy. DAPH was undertaking a further consultation with the primary schools that responded to its last questionnaire seeking updated feedback for the Improvement Board on safeguarding issues in addition to recent experiences of MASH and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Other primary schools would also be invited to submit responses. Headteachers were looking towards building relationships with/for referring information to staff representing schools and wished to know the local managers for early help and initial response.

In response to a further question, the Local Government Association had also offered further support for scrutiny and the development of members of the council and other further improvements and it would be helpful if senior leadership team improvements could be evidenced.

DECISION:

that the Interim Head of Children's Social Work Services & Child Protection provide local manager contacts for schools and consider comments on evidencing senior leadership team improvements.

ACTION:

Interim Head of Children's Social Work Services & Child Protection (Fiona Fitzpatrick)

LGA Children's Safeguarding Peer Review report to Cabinet 12 November 2014 available at <http://www.devon.gov.uk/loadtrimdocument?url=&filename=CX/14/01.CMR&rn=14/WD508&dg=Public>

725 Early Years and Childcare Service

(a) Two Year Old Funding Update (2GETHER Programme)

The Forum received the report of the Head of Education & Learning (DEF/15/02) implementation of its 2GETHER programme for the statutory entitlement to free early education (two year old places) for the most disadvantaged children, those in poverty, or had a special education need/disability (35% Devon two year olds). Take up in Devon for the extended September 2014 target was 65% of those eligible, with the aim of increasing reach during the spring term 2015 to 80%. The Early Years and Childcare Service (EYCS) was actively working with schools and the private voluntary and independent sector to expand quality provision and the DfE were removing the requirement for schools to apply for a separate Ofsted registration and inspection process which may encourage more schools to offer 2 year old places. Children's centres actively promoted take up and identified vulnerable families for whom early quality provision was key. 88.7% Devon providers were judged good/outstanding. Some 68% Children in Care (CiC) had been approved to take up a place (highest % take up to date) and a further seven children were being placed with links out of county. If all CiC therefore took up places there would be 100% take up of CiC placed in Devon.

Further report available for information

<http://www.devon.gov.uk/csa-annual-report-2013-16.pdf>

(b) Children's Centre Briefing

The Forum considered the report of the Head of Education & Learning (DEF/15/03) on children's centre services, the key delivery mechanism for the LA to meet its statutory duties, to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers - the key role for children's centres within the Early Help Strategy and Targeted Families Support Programme (pre-birth to 5 years old).

An extensive consultation was undertaken in 2014 for future re-commissioning to ensure services were delivered cost effectively whilst achieving outcomes required by Devon, DfE and Ofsted, targeting the most vulnerable and those in greatest need whilst achieving a 20% reduction to local authority budgets (£9.1m to £7.3m by 2017). As a result centres were reducing across Devon from 43 to 8 children's centre clusters with no outreach facilities, thus reducing overhead accommodation and staffing costs, whilst remaining accessible to families in greatest need within their community. The restructure was commencing in North Devon, to be rolled out across Devon over the next two years.

Members expressed some reservation at the significant reduction in the number of centres, and that considerable revenue and capital had gone into the current structure and investment in buildings. Members emphasised the need for accessibility for vulnerable families and questioned whether the new structure would support need, both geographically and within revised staffing levels. Members would like to be kept informed of the new structure proposals as these develop over the next two years and would welcome early contact from children centre staff responsible for liaising with local schools.

DECISION:

- (i) that members be advised of the ongoing new structure proposals;
- (ii) that children centre staff responsible for liaising with local schools within the new structure be requested to make early contact.

ACTION:

(Education & Learning/EYCS – Claire Rockcliffe)

726 Finance Update

DISCUSSION:

The Forum considered the report of the Head of Education & Learning and County Treasurer (DEF/15/01).

The Forum also noted the respective minutes of the Schools Finance Group (SFG) of 7 January 2015. Members noted in respect of the growth fund (SFG minute 1, that SFG had agreed in principle that a £25k start up funding allocation would be available for newly established schools such as maintained VA to mirror the start up funding available from the EFA to an academy (in addition to £75k start-up grant for primary schools). This had been included in the growth fund criteria (Appendix A of report DEF/15/01, paragraph 18).

The report (DEF/14/15) covered:-

- Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2015-16 announcement
- DSG budget allocation 2015-16
- Growth Fund criteria
- Month 8 monitoring position
- F40 local authority group proposals for national schools funding formula

Members also considered how best to combine lobbying by schools and the council before and after a general election to maintain momentum. The associations were minded to lobby direct with a headteacher and governor steer but co-ordinating with the council's lobbying. The national governors association were also lobbying. Lobbying letters sent by individuals or schools were also welcome. The LA and Devon Education Forum were lobbying via f40 and by representations made by the Cabinet Member for Children, Schools & Skills.

DECISION:

(a) that the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2015-16 announcement as at 17 December 2014 as set out in section 1-9 of report DEF/15/01 be noted;

Vote: all phases maintained and academy, PVI

(b) that in respect of the DSG 2015-16 budget allocation as set out in section 10-15:-

(i) that the local formula factors as set out in section 10 and that the final unit rates are subject to change upon completion of the school block pro-forma be noted;

Vote: all phases maintained and academy, PVI

(ii) that the de-delegated budgets as set out in section 11 be approved, also noting that the final budgets may vary slightly on finalisation of the schools budget pro-forma;

Vote: maintained primary and

Vote: maintained secondary only

Service	£'000
Schools in financial difficulty and unforeseen events	913
Behaviour support	809
Maternity	1,134
Inclusion – Ethnic Minority Achievement	421
Inclusion – Gypsy Roma Traveller Achievement	147
Licenses and Copyrights (includes national licences but not yet the additional cost of the new licences)	410
Facilitation and representation	141
Total de-delegated budgets	3,975

(iii) that the retention of central funding for the services as set out in section 12 be approved;

Vote: all phases maintained and academy, PVI

Service	£'000
Admissions	325
Termination of Employment Costs	873
Local Learning Communities	930
Servicing of Schools Forum and Phase Associations	292
Growth fund/ falling rolls fund	1,550
Emotional, psychological, social wellbeing service (contribution)	60
Access for the Disabled	104
Devon Children's Safeguarding Board	9
Strategic management (contribution)	76
Surplus properties	34
Total centrally retained budgets	4,253

(iv) that the budget summary as set out in section 15 be noted;

Vote: all phases maintained and academy, PVI

(v) recommended to Cabinet:-

(l) recommended that the allocation of the High Needs Block as set out in 13 (subject to final confirmation of the high needs block by the Education Funding Agency in March) be approved;

Vote: all phases maintained and academy, PVI

Service	£'000
Top up funding (including High Needs Targeted Funding)	15,428
Maintained special schools	22,501
Independent special schools, including joint funded placements	5,914
Support centre funding, including Primary Support Partnerships	3,445
Support for under 5's with additional educational needs	750
Targeted Specialist Services	1,743
Other SEN support (includes parent partnerships; outreach, children with complex needs)	1,614
Alternative Provision (including PRU's and hospital education)	5,041
Social inclusion for children in care, including pupil premium for looked after children	1,175
Total High Needs Block (after new delegation, including pupil premium and post 16 funding)	57,611

(II) recommended that the allocation of the Early Years Block as set out in 14 (subject to final confirmation of the early years block by the Education Funding Agency in June 2015) be approved;

Vote: all phases maintained and academy, PVI

Service	£'000
PVI's – 3 & 4 year olds, including pupil premium	17,264
Early Years in schools, including pupil premium	4,113
2 year old place funding	5,734
Direct provider support	817
Central management and support	317
Sub Total Early Years Block Allocation	28,245
Early Years Action Plus – high needs	350
Total Early Years Block Allocation	28,595

(c) that the revised Growth Fund criteria as recommended by Schools Finance Group and set out in section 16 and Appendix A be approved;

Vote: all phases maintained and academy, PVI

(d) that the month 8 DSG monitoring position as set out in section 17 be noted;

Vote: all phases maintained and academy, PVI

(e) that the F40 proposals for a national schools funding formula as set out in section 18 be approved and lobbying before and after a general election by the associations, LA, f40 (and this Forum via f40) and individuals be encouraged to maintain momentum.

Vote: all phases maintained and academy, PVI

ACTION:

County Treasurer (John Holme, Karen Powlesland)

727 Standing (and other) Groups

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

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

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 January 2015 (also considered under Finance Update minute 726 above).

Babcock Learning & Development Partnership (LDP) Commissioning Process (SFG item 2) - In response to school concerns raised at SOCA at schools' dissatisfaction with the lack of engagement with schools during the commissioning process, the Head of Education & Learning suggested the involvement of the associations at an early stage for the next round of service shaping.

Special Educational Needs Update (SFG item 4) - Special school representatives brought the Forum's attention to the very difficult budget issues special schools were facing and the County Treasurer advised she would continue to work closely with special schools to find a solution with as much flexibility as possible.

Local Learning Communities (SFG item 6) – noted £930k centrally deployed LLC funding had been allocated on current allocation methodology (30% per school allocation and 70% per pupil), with modelling £1750 lump sum + AWPU against current LLC allocations carried out by the County Treasurer.

DECISION:

That the Associations provide names of four representatives reflecting a cross section of phase and setting (Early Years PVI) as aspects of DCC commissioning covers all settings, for participation in preparation for the Commissioning cycle.

ACTION:

Representative groups to provide names to Head of Education & Learning so school representatives can be included in commissioning cycle.

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

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

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2015.

SOCA minutes cover page item 3 Devon Maintenance Partnership – noted the expectation was that a charge to schools “*would*” (*delete “not”*) be made during 15/16 financial year.

ACTION:

Head of Education & Learning (Heidi Watson-Jones)

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

-

728 Dates of Future Meetings

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

Wed 18 March 2015

Wed 24 June 2015

Wed 21 Oct 2015

Mon 18 Jan 2016.

729 Mr Ian Courtney, MBE

The Forum congratulated the Chairman on receiving an MBE in the New Year’s Honours 2015, for Services to Education.

The meeting started at 10am and finished at 12.45pm.

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