

SCHOOLS ORGANISATION, CAPITAL AND ADMISSIONS GROUP
Notes of meeting
on 25 September 2018 at Larkbeare House

ISSUE FOR DEF ON 20 NOVEMBER 2018

New Chair - SOCA Please note that Neil Pateman, as the recently appointed *Built Environments Capital Programme Manager*, will Chair SOCA meetings from 25.9.18.

		Attendance			
		25/09/18	5/6/18	27/2/18	9/1/18
DCC					
Neil Pateman (Chair)	Built Environments Capital Programme Manager	✓			
Andrew Brent	Policy Officer	✓	Apologies	✓	✓
Fran Butler	EY Childcare Sufficiency Lead	✓	✓	✓	✓
Christine McNeil	School Organisation Policy Manager	Apologies	✓	✓	Apologies
Heidi Watson-Jones	Executive Personal Assistant				
Heather Bingham	Service Support Officer (Education)	✓	✓	✓	✓
DAPH					
Hilary Priest	The Grove Primary	✓	✓	Apologies	-
Alun Dobson	Marwood Primary		✓	✓	✓
Colin Butler	Otter Valley Federation	✓			
Mel Smallwood	Bishops Tawton Primary	✓			
Penny Hammett	Payhembury Primary	✓	✓	✓	✓
DASH					
Daryll Chapman	Okehampton College	✓	Apologies	✓	✓
Paul Cornish	Newton Abbot College		No longer DASH rep	Apologies	Apologies
Rob Haring	Ivybridge Community College	Apologies	✓	Apologies	✓
SENTient Heads					
Karen Rogers	Lampard School	-	-		Apologies
Sam Barham	Lampard Community School	✓	✓	✓	-
Sarah Pickering	Mill Water School	-	-	-	✓
DAG					
Ian Rogers	DAG	✓	✓	✓	✓
Diocesan Representatives					
Mary Cox	Plymouth CAST	-	-	-	-
Christina Mabin	Exeter Anglican Diocese (Admissions)	✓	✓	Apologies	✓
Sarah Owen	Diocesan Education Officer	-	-	Apologies	✓
Richard Power	Exeter Anglican Diocese (Capital)	✓	Apologies	-	✓
Union Representatives					
Nigel Williams/Bev Alderson	Joint NASUWT reps	-			
Timothy Hodge	Devon NEU-NUT rep	-			
In Attendance					
Nigel Coleman	NPS	✓	✓	Apologies	✓
Simon Niles	DCC	✓	-	Apologies	✓

1. Item/Focus: Minutes and Matters Arising from meeting on 5 June 2018

Discussion:	
Key Decision/ Issues for DEF:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes of previous meeting agreed as an accurate record.
Matters arising on Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AB – confirmed FAQs re: delayed admissions can be updated and that the 'applications during holidays form' will have space for schools to provide 2 school contacts in future. SN – advised that, as an independent school, Totnes, is not subject to age range Regulations. SN – still waiting on the Government as to how changes in the new school presumption guidance is going to work, although possibly now in Spring 2019.
Actions from 5.6.18:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AB – will send data out to schools shortly re: delayed admission FAQs and applications during holidays form 280 schools returned data at the end of term – around 80% of schools. SN – will send out more detail but no major changes to presumption process. NPS Update - to be covered under agenda item 6 below.

2. Admissions Policy (Andrew Brent)

Discussion:

- Composite Prospectus September 2018** – As the LA has to publish this, members again asked to look at 2 elements of the prospectus, namely the Step by Step booklet and the Schools Information webpages. SOCA colleagues are asked to look at the Information specific to their school and notify AB of any changes now and as any arise throughout the year. Also, any suggestions for things to go into the Step by Step guide to be put forward via AB please.
- LA Annual Admissions Report** – The LA has to provide this every June. This is an opportunity for anyone to make comments and to ask DCC to investigate any particular issue of concern, so now is a good time to think about this ahead of the 2019 report.
- Admissions Round 2018** – This Report provides statistics on places available, percentage of children offered the first preference school, comparison data with previous years, etc.

The first preference for Secondary admissions was slightly down but still higher than other local LAs at 94.42%. There was discussion as to why 67 parents have not made a preference. The Admissions Team will get in touch with schools and encourage parents to apply but some parents will always remain hard to reach, as they do not read newsletters or go into schools. A letter was sent out via schools at the beginning of September and another will go out again in October; even if after the closing date, a late application is better than none. Twitter and Facebook have been helpful in reaching many more parents but it was queried whether some parents are still not aware that they need to apply?

For primary, the first preference rate was extremely high at 95.63% but schools may need to remind parents that even if their child had a nursery place, they still need to then apply for primary reception (as the statutory school age is 5).

SN referred to a significant accommodation surplus in rural schools, eg there is a 6% surplus average in urban areas but 38-40% in rural and DCC will need to look at this. For example, how many schools have temporary accommodation going back to the 1980s which may be a maintenance liability? There was discussion about schools going forward because if DCC cannot afford to maintain such a school, what is its future? Where new schools open when existing schools are not full, there is a knock-on effect of decisions elsewhere, eg Route 39 – where Holsworthy, Great Torrington and Bideford were potentially affected. Strategic conversations are needed if there is a large surplus of accommodation. SN – will bring back some case studies for future discussion, across local learning communities as well.

Section 4 – PANs referred to and schools asked to look at this so as not to create problems in the future; need to consider impact on the wider community.

4.3 – PAN number is the minimum, and although there is no need to consult on an increasing PAN this

should be done with caution so that parents and Appeal Panels are clear as to why a particular number of children have been admitted. Admitting over PAN is permitted in exceptional circumstances for 1 or 2 more children. **The request for schools to discuss admissions over-PAN (as detailed at 4.3) was endorsed by the SOCA Group.**

Admissions Arrangements – Schools are reminded that policies for 2018/19 and 2019/20 must be on the school's own website (or Academy Trust's website). The draft documents for 2020/21 have also now been sent out and responses are coming back about changes. Diocese schools want them back by 1 October in order to be reviewed by the Diocese before formal consultation in January. LA will do the consultation but it needs to be flagged up to parents. Own admission authorities must have a meeting by 28 February. All 3 academic years should be on the website, so please ensure that none are deleted (eg 2018/19). If those on the DCC website are up-to-date then a link can be provided from the school's website. Academy schools are also required to put publish their Fund Agreements on their website which includes their school capacity – this was confirmed by the DfE at a meeting on Friday 21 September 2018

In Section 3, regarding the use of exceptional needs as a priority, the LA view is this is a positive need and a supplementary information form is to be completed to avoid potential abuse of the system eg there must be supporting evidence.

Designated faith criteria – any school can do so and individual schools need to specify. CM advised that the Diocese is looking at this and guidance will be going out next year. School Inspectors now look at faith criteria, ethos and inclusivity and schools need to ensure that local children are not disadvantaged.

Similarly with nursery children – local children must be prioritised before other nursery and even out of area children – eg no priority for those who have previously attended paid-for sessions.

Admissions policy – if a need is not being met or recognised, then this can be looked at yearly.

Catchment maps – Schools are requested to look at these to check and identify any errors to AB. Folly Gate was referred to as an example of where the maps cut across the village. Some schools use parish maps. This has been raised because of a new house application where parents were asking for transport contributions. It was also pointed out that last year some schools dropped their catchment area and had not realised the impact on transport entitlement (which could result in schools losing children).

3.9 Pupil premium – Although this has been mooted by the DfE, if it is not a child's closest school, there is no transport entitlement so it is probably not sensible in a rural county.

Overseas adoption – The Diocese view is that as we do not yet know how to collect the evidence, not to put it in until clear guidance is given by Government.

Fair Access Protocol – this has now been in place for 2 terms, although some schools do not seem to know about it. AB will bring data to the January meeting for impact on the autumn term. As it is about placing a child in a school even if that school is full, some schools have reduced their PAN in order to avoid undue pressure.

Key Decision/ Issues for DEF:	
Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Re: Composite Prospectus</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o ALL – check their school's information and advise AB of any changes (and as they may arise throughout the year); o ALL – also advise AB of any suggested changes to the Step by Step guide. - <u>LA Annual Admissions Report</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o ALL – please pass any comments to AB and advise on any issues to be investigated. o SN to bring case studies, across local learning communities, to the next meeting re: accommodation surplus. - <u>Admission Arrangements</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o AB to bring data to the January meeting about the impact of the Fair Access Protocol.

3. Early Years Update (Fran Butler)

Discussion: Fran talked through her Reports as follows:

- General update report – includes schools which have extended their age range; voluntary and private nurseries which have closed (mostly personal reasons in latter case). Please contact FB if more information needed.
- Announcement around capital funding for nurseries in schools, looking at schools with Good or Outstanding Ofsted, and evidence of need, so probably looking at urban areas. The application form from the DfE is still awaited but currently looking at data for which schools are eligible. Schools will be informed through Digest. It was suggested that DCC sift through and send out to schools who may be eligible.
- Still waiting for NHS data re: take-up of funded entitlements.
- The link to the annual survey of providers analysis is now available to get an idea of capacity, quality, opening times, etc.
- Annual Childcare Sufficiency Assessment going to Cabinet for approval in October. It is a statutory requirement to ensure there are enough childcare places. Link provided to access the report.
- Nursery Admissions Report- Policy applies to community and voluntary controlled. There are no major changes but some points are emphasised, eg:
 - o requirement to return the Provider Agreement form which is linked into funding;
 - o Need to register with HMRC;
 - o Clarification eg schools registered for 3-11 year olds, cannot take 2 year olds;
 - o Nursery admission numbers need to be completed;
 - o Restricted hours made clearer.

This Report has been brought to this meeting for comment before going back to DEF. FB requested that if people had not yet had a chance to read through it, please get back to her in the next couple of days with any comments.

Early Years and the Admissions Team spent a lot of time this summer on staggered entry to schools to get the message out about starting full-time on the first day of term. There have been lots of phone calls about this whole issue, so it is still not really clear. Part-time attendance is only an option and if parents do not want this for their children it can have a significant impact. The legal position is that they are entitled to attend school full-time from their first day. A lot of these children have already been used to full-time so, therefore, do not need staggered attendance. A survey of schools was suggested – AB will organise this.

Key Decision/ Issues for DEF:	
Action:	FB – contact schools who may be eligible for capital funding for nurseries in schools. AB – organise a survey about staggered entry to primary schools.

4. School Organisation Update (Simon Niles)

Discussion:

- SN talked through this paper and thanked Richard for the amendment re: St Leonard's School.
- Free Schools/Academies – layered where there is lots of need. Has suggested schools do not bid for free schools but wait until the next round in the Spring.
- SEN free school round is now opened but this is a different proposal, sifted by DfE and the Government will then invite bids. However, there is an indication that LAs who previously benefited from free school (which we did) may not be supported. We are trying to tie up with other LAs on our borders, especially Cornwall and Somerset.
- Route 39 (now Atlantic) Academy - in a new building at Bucks Cross, Bideford.
- Wave Multi-Academy Trust essentially managed our AP provision and will be formal sponsor from 1

November 2018.

- St John's have gone to Torbay-based ACE – building work has started – they will probably stay with their current PAN.
- Charlton Lodge – Headteacher Board has met and made a decision; opening September 2019 but work starts in earnest on Monday (1.10.18).
- Sherford opened this month (September 2018) with 51 on roll.
- Marland project completed.
- Bishop's Tawton have not, in fact, converted to an Academy – so will stay as they are.
- St James Primary, Okehampton – will open on its new site in February 2019.
- Local District Council Plans: North Devon/Torrige – few minor amendments; Teignbridge next area of strategic planning.
- Gender separation in mixed schools raised – but not a major issue in Devon per se – this related to a special school with mixed day pupils but not mixed for residential.

**Key Decision/
Issues for DEF:**

Actions:

5. Healthy Pupils Capital Fund (HPCF) (Simon Niles)

DCC has been allocated £463,000 for the maintained schools sector and this funding is intended to improve children and young people's physical and mental health, wellbeing and medical conditions. Larger Academies might get a formulaic allocation but smaller ones might not get anything. This funding equates roughly to £10 a student and it is capital funding. DCC considered linking it to public health priorities and, as such, have asked those colleagues how they would best like to use and prioritise such funding, and how they would expect to work with schools. Essentially DCC have a priority list of schools and will go out to them asking how they will be using the money to improve health, mental health, obesity, healthy eating and impact of the sun – asking for proposals and evidence for them – based on the indices recommended by public health.

The proposal is to go out to about 8 schools with £30k and do another 5 or 6 after that and see how it runs. Schools will be notified in the next week or so. HP sought clarity on how these schools will be decided upon as all schools contribute to the sugar tax, and all, for example, require shade provision, suggesting that a very clear focus could have been agreed, eg every foundation class has to provide shade cover for pupils so the funding could have been for gazebos. The Group was advised that DCC would be targeting areas of deprivation but SOCA colleagues questioned if this was not creating an imbalance between schools? IR queried why this was not put out to schools to make a bid? It was agreed, as a compromise, to allocate to 8 schools in the first instance and when they report back, we take a view on the remaining funding, but stressed that DCC do not have capacity for 'managing' a mix of different requests. SOCA colleagues raised concerns and whilst understanding DCC's prioritisation wished to have recorded in these Minutes their disappointment that there was not a more universal offer to schools.

Discussion:

**Key Decision/
Issues for DEF:**

Action:

6. NPS Update

Discussion: NC very briefly referred to items in his report, advising that he would have a more meaningful report at next meeting as a result of some changes, eg explaining the traffic light system to help understand measurements.

Item 4.2 DAMA indicated a solid 96% performance of tolerance and NC advised that there were no changes in contractors as listed under 5.1, pointing out that schools are asked to check the installations given there.

SN advised that the contract is coming up for review (in 3 years) and that a working party is to look at the future of commissioning in order for DCC to consider its options and this board will be consulted through that process.

Key Decision/ Issues for DEF:	
Action:	

7. Capital Maintenance Programme - verbal update (Neil Pateman)

Discussion: NP advised that the Programme is ongoing this year. All schools opened in September, and 47 separate maintenance projects were completed with a few going into the autumn term. It has been more of a challenge this year due to the market, contractor availability, and the need to do work during holidays – sometimes there has been very little or no interest from contractors. For next and future years there are some works which will have to be done during the summer holidays but there may be some pre- or post-summer holiday work if it can be safely managed then. DCC will need to have conversations with schools about that approach in order to get value for money. It was pointed out that contractors cannot schedule work for the holidays when they are only coming in to quote in May or June. NPS have 4 corporate clients, so all meeting to find a programme which works for all – eg tenders by 1st April but that did not happen this year. DCC is contractually obliged to use NPS but how are they held to account?

Colleagues expressed concern at slippage, due to NPS' lack of capacity and projects being held up – schools and DCC are being let down through no fault of their own. It was confirmed that those school works which can only be done during summer, and which were not carried out this year, will be re-tendered.

Next year's programme 2019/20 - £4-4.5m of work – those commissions went to NPS in September and feedback is expected in October. Next year's proposed programme will be brought to the January SOCA meeting.

ESFA's data collection on-going and they are only writing to schools regarding the asbestos register, but not other non-compliance, eg 5 year electrical testing.

Key Decision/ Issues for DEF:	
Action:	

8. Any Other Business

- **Special Provision Fund report** – SN explained that this fund linked to the Strategic Review, with a small pot for school-based projects and £2.2m had been identified for the year (eg for Charlton Lodge, Marland, Oaklands plus something for other SEN students). The presumption for children with SEN is that they will access education in mainstream and, therefore, that this fund should be targeted in mainstream, and those with an SEN proportion percentage will be prioritised. Bids will be submitted and about £250,000 is to be allocated in the first instance. The bulk of next year's fund will be invested in SEN schools. Initially 10 schools will be allocated £25k each. The funding can be used for adapting rooms and support within the school, but not for specific individuals. Next year's focus will be on existing special schools in order to ensure that they can accommodate the student numbers.
- **Terms of Reference** – As these are dated September 2014, colleagues are asked to please read them through and note anything which is no longer relevant to raise at the next meeting. The ToR will also be sent out to DAPH, DASH and DAG for their input.



SOCA Terms of Reference - final - 2:

- SOCA colleagues wished to thank Heather for minuting these meetings in Heidi's absence.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 12.15.

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday 8 January 2019, starting at 9.30 am in the Exe room at Larkbeare House.