

# Schools Organisation, Capital and Admissions Group: Notes of meeting on Tuesday 7 June 2022

## Key Issues for DEF to Note:

**Capital Programme:**  
**School Organisation:**  
**Admissions:**

## Attendance

### DCC

Neil Pateman (chair)	Built Environments Capital Programme Manager
Shona Meek	Senior School Organisation Officer
Andrew Brent	Senior Policy Officer
Fran Butler	Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency Lead
Heidi Watson-Jones (notes)	Service Support Officer (E&L)

### Devon Schools Leadership Services

#### Primary

Colin Butler	Otter Valley Federation
Penny Hammett	FORT Federation

#### Secondary

Phil Randall ( <b>apologies</b> )	St Peters C of E VA School
Graham Hill	Pilton Community College

### Special School Heads

Sam Barham	Lampard Community School
Stuart Allman	Pathfield School

### DAG

Ian Rogers

### Diocesan Representatives

Vacancy	Diocese of Plymouth
Christina Mabin	Exeter Anglican Diocese (Admissions)
Richard Power	Exeter Anglican Diocese (Capital)

### Union Representative

Nigel Williams	Corporate Forum (Education) NASUWT
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### In Attendance

Nick Cook - <b>part</b>	South West Norse
Simon Niles	Strategy, Schools Planning and Admissions

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## 1. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 1 March 2022

### Outstanding actions:

- All actions complete.
- Minutes agreed as an accurate record.

### ACTION:

PH to follow up with DSLS office on any interest in a training/ briefing session for Heads re. admission and determination process and timeframes.

## 2. Admissions: Admissions Cycle

- Normal round admissions analysis report being prepared and will be circulated to SOCA when complete.
- High pressure on secondary places, many schools full with waiting lists and appeals being submitted, particularly at secondary; some schools have agreed to take more children on roll, however recruitment difficulties are impacting on schools' ability to take on additional classes particularly in secondaries.
- Falling birth rates impacting on primary admissions.
- Concerns were shared around arrangements for incoming year 6 Ukrainian children unable to secure a place at a local secondary school. Places for these children are being treated as late applications into Year 7 as no amendment has been made to the Admissions Code to change priority of this group.
- 123 Devon schools have applied to the LA for interim funding to support Ukrainian students already on roll.

## 3. Admissions: Admissions for overseas children

- Schools must remain mindful of the rights of local children to a place in their local school when prioritising requests for admission of Ukrainian students.
- Guidance on DfE website on admissions for overseas children has recently been updated, and Devon advice will be amended if necessary.
- Noted the ongoing need for a right of abode or permissive visa before access to state education may be secured for an overseas student.

## 4. Admissions: Composite Prospectus

- Composite prospectus to be published by 12 September 2022.
- Schools are asked to review their online information at: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/schools/school/> and inform Andrew Brent of any changes required.

### ACTION:

DSLS to ask schools to review their school information online and inform Andrew Brent of any changes required.

## 5. Admissions: Report of the OSA

- Annual report of the Office of the Schools' Adjudicator has indicated potential support for mandatory coordination of in-year admissions arrangements by LAs to better safeguard children out of school and to ensure a fair and consistent process for schools and children and parents.
- Andrew Brent would welcome any conversations with schools concerned about the impact of the report on their local admissions policy.

## Schools Organisation, Capital and Admissions Group: Notes of meeting on Tuesday 7 June 2022

### 6. Early Years Update

- Provider survey has been circulated, with a focus on recruitment and retention concerns in the sector.
- Noted that a number of providers are still not registered to provide tax-free childcare, which can make childcare costs more affordable and accessible for families.
- Feedback was shared from the termly Parent survey to establish demand for childcare around the county.
- Parents are now seeking childcare provision closer to their home, rather than near a school or workplace.
- Take up of full 2-year old childcare entitlement has fallen. Schools encouraged to discuss with parents why they are choosing not to take up all the hours they are entitled to.
- Take up of full universal entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds has increased and represents the highest take up since the introduction of funding in Autumn 2017.
- Take up of Early Years Pupil Premium has risen to over 15%; the highest take up recorded. Noted change to information requested on citizens portal flags eligibility to all education funding entitlement.
- Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme ran successfully over Easter holiday providing free activities and meal for children over 5 year olds entitled to Free School Meals.
- Bookings for Summer holiday HAF schemes expected to go live shortly. Schools are encouraged to share information on their websites and encourage eligible families to apply for places.
- Noted that Pinhoe and Lifton schools have changed their age range to 2-11, and Ilfracombe Infant school is now taking 2 year olds.
- Noted that governor-run provision needs to be taken into account earlier in the process when schools are considering academy conversion.
- Weekly Early Years digest continues to be published with important information and updates.
- Concerns were raised that some Community and VA schools with nurseries are not using the agreed DCC nursery admissions policy; this will be refreshed in the autumn term.

#### **ACTION:**

- **DSLS** to encourage schools are encouraged to share Summer HAF information on their websites and encourage eligible families to apply for places.
- **DSLS / FB** to share summary briefing highlighting complexities of schools who have a governor run pre-school converting to academy status.

### 7. Schools White Paper discussion

- Place Planning and Admissions officers have had discussions with the DfE about the impact of proposals within the White Paper.
- Concerns were shared about a perceived reduction in local democratic decision-making processes and the role of the LA and elected members around school expansion decisions.
- LA has been asked to prepare case studies including asset management planning for buildings taking into account demographic changes.
- Further information still awaited on LA MATs and timescale for implementation.
- Understand that there are ongoing expectations that LAs will continue to oversee fair and consistent approaches to admissions, including in-year coordination, administration of appeals, fair access protocols and support

## Schools Organisation, Capital and Admissions Group: Notes of meeting on Tuesday 7 June 2022

to schools to continue to deliver their admissions policies as own admissions authorities.

- Admissions is key to Inclusion and will impact on the increased responsibilities around attendance from 2023.

### 8. School Organisation Update

#### Covid update

- Schools no longer reporting outbreaks or needing to move to remote learning.
- Initial concerns around impact of Monkey Pox have not been realised.
- Public Health team is preparing a survey to collate learning around pandemic management.
- Schools Reference Group now considering non-Covid matters.

#### School Organisation

- Devon Moors Federation governors have consulted formally on closure of Chittlehampton. Proposed changes in catchment areas have been consulted with the Local Learning Community. Cabinet to consider on 8/6.
- Resource base at Marpool Primary is now formally established. The CAIRB at The Castle Tiverton has now closed.
- Proposed term dates for 23/24 are expected to be formally approved and published on DCC website shortly.
- Local planning authorities are now actively working on local plans which will require engagement with schools and the LA. The LA will need to establish how best to secure strategic planning and consultation on an area-basis as LLCs are not operational across all the county. Simon Niles offered to discuss the impact of local planning process and approach with DSLS Schools Executive.

### 9. SW Norse Update

- Devon Maintenance Partnership (DMP) remains stable with 138 schools. Devon Academies Maintenance Agreement (DAMA) arrangements may reduce as MATs grow and develop in-house property teams. Membership of VA Promise scheme remains static.
- Compliance levels for VA Promise and DMP schools remain acceptable.
- Noted issues with the Air Conditioning maintenance contract managed through Cannings; compliance has been affected by staff recruitment issues.
- Noted ongoing difficulties monitoring contractor compliance in academies.
- New Joint Venture contract has been implemented under the new name of South West Norse.

### 9. Capital Programme Update

- Programme for 24 capital maintenance schemes has been approved with a value of £3.8m. Tenders are out but concerns around the expected costs due to issues in the supply chain, labour and energy costs.
- Basic Needs schemes (special schools) ongoing at Okehampton, Barnstaple and Dawlish.
- Condition Data Collection (CDC 2) round process is now underway by DfE. Schools are encouraged to review data on their school estate when received as this data will impact on future funding decisions. Schools may contact Neil Pateman if they have any queries about the completion of the CDC documentation.

## **Schools Organisation, Capital and Admissions Group: Notes of meeting on Tuesday 7 June 2022**

- Concerns were raised around the difficulties in highlighting areas of particular concern on site and challenging the condition data subsequently received.
- Noted the significant variations in funding received by the LA, Diocese and MATs receive dependent on the grade of condition arrived at.

### **Future meeting dates:**

- **Tuesday 27 September 2022** (9.30 – 11.30)
- **Thursday 5 January 2023** (9.30 – 11.30)
- **Tuesday 7 March 2023** (9.30 – 11.30)