

DEVON EDUCATION FORUM

15 March 2017

Present:-

Schools Members

Primary School Head teachers

Mr J Bishop	Cornerstone Academy Trust (<i>Academy Member</i>)
Mr A Dobson	Marwood Primary
Mr J Stone	Denbury Primary
Mrs J Reid	Yeo Valley Primary (<i>Substitute Member</i>)

Primary School Governors

Mrs A Blewett	Kings Nympton Primary
Mr M Dobbins	Exmouth Marpool Primary
Ms M Wallis	Whimble School (Chairman)
Mr A Walmsley	First Federation (<i>Academy Member</i>)

Secondary School Head teachers

Ms M Marder	The Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust (<i>Academy Member</i>)
Mr G Roscoe	Barnstaple, The Park School (<i>Substitute Member</i>)

Secondary School Governors

Ms J Elson	Exmouth CC (<i>Academy Member</i>)
Mr M Juby	Braunton (<i>Academy Member</i>)

Nursery School

Mrs S Baker	Westexe
-------------	---------

Special School HeadTeacher

Ms B Caschere	Exeter Southbrook
---------------	-------------------

Special School Governor

Mrs F Butler	Marland School
--------------	----------------

Alternative Provision

Ms S Acland	Schools Company Devon Academy
-------------	-------------------------------

Non-Schools Members

Mr N Willams	Teachers Consultative Committee
Councillor John Hart	Leader
Ms G Rolstone	Early Years Private, Voluntary & Independent
Mr W Forster	Substitute Early Years Private, Voluntary & Independent
Mrs T de Bernhardt Dunkin	16-19 West England School & College

Apologies

Ms B Alderson	Teachers Consultative Committee
Mr M Boxall	Exeter Countess Wear
Mr D Chapman	The Dartmoor Federation
Councillor J McInnes	Cabinet Member – Children, Schools and Skills
Mrs J Phelan	Cullompton CC
Mr J Searson	Exeter Diocesan Board of Education

35 **Minutes**

DECISION:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2017 be signed as a correct record, subject to the addition of apologies Mr J Bishop, and to insert the word “Substitute” member against Mr P Walker and Mr N Williams.

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

Nil.

37 **Membership**

DISCUSSION:

The Chairman welcomed new members and the following membership changes were noted:-

Ms Sarah Acland (Executive Principal, Schools Company Trust)
Elected as Alternative Provision member

Mr Justin Davey (Principal, Schools Company North Devon)
Elected as Alternative Provision substitute member.

Mr Gareth Roscoe (Principal, Barnstaple The Park School) had replaced Mr David Fitsimmons as the Maintained Secondary substitute member.

38 **Head of Education & Learning Update**

DISCUSSION:

The Head of Education & Learning reported (summary tabled) on:-

Early Help – wef 1 April 2017 the new staffing structure would be implemented to include:-
direct report to leadership team;
linking social care, SEN, schools and education;
practice close to point of delivery;
a broader single point of contact;
ensuring a consistent approach to Early Help across the county whilst making better use of resources.

An Early Help structure map would be circulated to members and schools when available.

SEN – analysis showed since 2010 an increase in the overall school population 5 – 16 years of 3.7%, but with Sen pupils increasing by 12%.

SW LAs meeting with DfE on 14 March 2017 was attended by the Head of Education & Learning which also discussed that the proposed new National Funding For would not provide a satisfactory solution, with 61% Devon school children projected to receive lower funding. Additionally 1 SW LA was having to meet its' overspend on the High Needs budget by every school receiving Minimum Funding Guarantee at minimum level only.

Schools Company Academy (Alternative Provision) data from September 2014 to date, with a significant rise in exclusions between March 2015 and March 2017. Members wanted a clear understanding of how much exclusions were costing the High Needs Block.

A full annual exclusion report would be sent to all Forum members when available.

Babcock Joint Venture Contract – Current contract (flexible) had been extended to give stability and avoid a new procurement process during uncertainty around the LA's role and impossibility to specify. Forum members requested dialogue around significant future contract changes. Schools would also have increased direct contact with Babcock to ensure services met with school expectations.

Last year's and the current year's annual performance report (and future reports) and Key Performance Indicators for the contract would be made available to schools.

Education Performance – separate summary made available to members for information. Performance data would continue to be shared regularly with this Forum.

ACTION:

Head of Education & Learning (Dawn Stabb) - circulate Early Help chart, Exclusion and Babcock annual reports/KPIs when available.

39 **Children's Centres Re-Commissioning**

DISCUSSION:

Members received the report of the Chief Officer for Children's Services (DEF/17/07) in which the recommissioning of Children's Centres was a key component to strengthen early help within an improving Social Care Service and deliver integrated, community based services, improved health and wellbeing and improving children's readiness for school.

Children's Centres had a long history of delivering integrated services in localities however changes in government funding and expectations had made this more challenging to maintain, with LAs more recently having more flexibility for alignment to and integration with other key early childhood services eg Health Visiting and Midwifery.

High level investment would be retained to be met from the County Council's core budget with a commitment for early help and investment and stretching the age range up to 8 years old to overlap with primary age and to support vulnerable children and families with a holistic whole family approach. Accessibility and extended opening hours were being considered.

40 **Finance Update**

DISCUSSION:

The Forum considered the report of the County Treasurer and Chief Officer for Children's Services (DEF/17/06).

The Forum also noted the respective minutes of the Schools Finance Group (SFG) of 1 March 2017.

The report (DEF/17/06) covered:-

Budget Monitoring Month 10 (2016/17) Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)
Carry Forward from 2016/17 (to 2017/18)
Education Services Grant (ESG)

The Month 10 DSG forecast was an overspend of £353,000, comprising £1.6m underspend on the Schools Block and a £2m overspend on the central expenditure costs of the DSG, subject to approval to be carried forward. A detailed chronology of the High Needs budget (forecast overspend, paragraph 1.1 of the report) had been made available to members.

In relation to the Carry Forward from 2016/17 the County Treasurer explained the implications (detailed in section 2 of the report) of:-

Option 1: approving the carry forward of the Central Expenditure deficit to 2017/18 as recommended by officers; and

Option 2: declining the carry forward, where the LA would be seeking adjudication by the Secretary of State.

Discussion also included:-

Consideration of diverting more growth fund money for High Needs (based on projections this fund was anticipated to run out by mid 2018/19);

Any surplus created within the High Needs Block as a result of not agreeing the carry forward would only be considered at the end of 2017/18 as there was an inability to change budgets in-year. The opportunity to move money between schools and the High Needs block may be time limited. The New Funding Formula (NFF) proposals indicated that there may be some local flexibility to move money between blocks but in order for this to happen there would need to be an "all school" majority vote before this could be achieved;

Given a number of factors affecting the demand on the High Needs budget were beyond the LA's control and therefore unable to be fully planned for, the assurance requested by members of not being in the same deficit position next year could not be absolutely given. However increased monitoring within High Needs during the 2017/18 financial year, the management action plans to reduce spending and the intention that the reduction of £33 AWPU would not be repeated, were all acknowledged. Both the management action plans and the increased funding that had been made available from the Schools Block for 2017/18, would allow the High Needs Block to be in a balanced budget position by the end of 2 years (including the Carry Forward from 2016/17). Any further impact on schools would be minimised as much as possible;

Discussions with the DfE regarding High Needs consultation and the new proposed National Funding Formula;

Early Years PVI had greater restrictions on income than independent special schools;

A task & finish group (made up of Forum members and County Council Officers) had recently been set up to jointly to look at all areas of High Needs spending, with significant action being taken.

The meeting adjourned whilst members considered their positions regarding the Carry Forward from 2016/17.

Members remained worried that Devon would be in a similar position during the next financial year in terms of overspending within the High Needs Block.

DECISION:

(a) that the month 10 DSG monitoring position (2016/17) as set out in section 1 of report DEF/17/06 be noted;

(b) that Option 2 declining the carry forward, as set out in section 2 of the report be approved;
(vote: all phases maintained and academy, PVI)

(c) that the guidance and funding of the Education Services Grant as set out in section 3 of the report be noted.

ACTION:

County Treasurer (Julian Dinnicombe)

41 **Standing (and other) Groups**

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

(a) Schools' Finance Group (SFG)

Minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2017 (considered under Finance Update minute 40 above):-

Minute 3iii: 3 year budget planning

DISCUSSION:

Notwithstanding the recognition that schools were finding it increasingly challenging to budget based on unknown factors and uncertainty and the County Treasurer would be mindful of the reasonableness of budget planning, there was a statutory requirement for maintained schools to have a 3 year balanced budget.

DECISION:

That the County Treasurer review the wording on the School's Blog to reiterate that it is a statutory requirement for maintained schools to have a 3 year balanced budget.

ACTION:

County Treasurer (Julian Dinnicombe)

(b) School Organisation, Capital and Admissions (SOCA)

Minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2017.

42 **Dates of Future Meetings**

To be held at 10am at County Hall, Exeter:-

Wed 21 June 2017
Wed 18 October 2017
Monday 15 January 2018
Wed 21 March 2018.

The Meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 11.55 am

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

