

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**DERBYSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM**  
**Minutes of the Meeting Held on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2012**  
**At 6.00 pm at County Hall**

Chris Allcock welcomed the new secondary heads to the Forum (David Brindley, David Baker & Jonathon Fawcett). David Channon who replaces Phil Moncur as the Derby Diocesan representative was also welcomed. Chris also informed the Forum that Patrick Cook and Barry Wyman have now resigned.

**Present:**

Brendan Hickey, David Baker, Mike Davison, Peter Crowe, Julie Bloor, Peter Hamer, Joe Birkin, Peter Thorne, Martin Brader, Barry Thacker, Julie Cadman, Lesley Hartley, Andrew Cartledge, Shirley Harvey, Roger Tomlinson, Andrew Wild, Linda Du-Roe, Penny Pennington, Angela Colmar, David Channon, John Holmes, John Crofts, Chris Wayment, Cathy Tattersfield, John Partington, Jonathan Fawcett, Cllr M Longden.

**Apologies:**

Denise Cunningham, Lyndsey Partridge, Paul Mason, Philip Sunderland, Rosemary Mackenzie, Carole Nelson, Cllr Lewis, Cllr Ellis, Ollie Pardo.

**Observers:**

Chris Allcock, Mary Murkin, Elizabeth Hazelwood, Karen Gurney, Chris Tilley, Ruth Lane, Paul Livingstone, Ian Robinson.

Martin Brader chaired the meeting.

The Chair invited Cllr Longden and Peter Crowe to inform the Forum of the news regarding Tibshelf School. Cllr Longden reminded the members that the Forum gave approval to use part of the DSG under spend towards building the new Tibshelf Secondary School. Work has now started with the foundation stone laid for the building on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2012. Peter Crowe thanked the Local Authority and Schools' Forum for their innovative funding of the project following the loss of the Building Schools for the Future programme.

**12/14 Minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2012**

The minutes were agreed as a true record and there were no matters arising.

**12/15 Changes to Forum Constitution and Membership**

This was an information item presented by Chris Allcock summarising the changes to the Schools Forum's Constitution. The Forum's Constitution is a matter for the Council. The changes directed by the DfE include: allowing the Education Funding Agency to attend as an observer and allowing one place for a representative from the Pupil Referral Units to reflect their impending receipt of delegated budgets.

In addition, due to an increase in the number of pupils attending Academies in Derbyshire, Academies' representation on the Forum had been increased by one governor place. This increase should have been offset by a reduction in the number of maintained secondary representatives, however the Authority has agreed to retain the current number to allow existing representatives to continue their period of office during this time of significant change to schools' funding.

The number of secondary governor places will be reduced by one if (a) any of the current secondary governors resign from the Schools Forum or (b) at the next general Forum election in 2014; whichever is the sooner. The new arrangements come into place from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012.

Comments were requested from the Forum but none were received. The Forum agreed to note the report.

### **12/16 Schools' ICT Systems update**

Paul Livingstone presented the report. He stated that at this date there is an approx. 80% take up for Broadband from the EMPSN framework thus securing the prices quoted. He informed the Forum that 20% of these schools have already transferred their provision.

The time constraints of the Government framework have resulted in the Learning Platform and Management Information System (MIS) contracts being extended for one year to August 2014. This extension was due to lack of time to complete a tender exercise and Cabinet agreed this extension on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

The Forum was also informed that the DSAS system is to be replaced. The pilot project has now started to assess whether SAP will be suitable for use in schools. The Forum will be informed of the progress with the pilot schools at a future meeting. The Authority proposes to set aside £300k of DSG underspend from 2011-12 to ensure that the supply cover costs of schools are not a disincentive to attend training on any replacement system.

It was raised from the floor that schools were unhappy that the Learning Platform and MIS contracts had been extended as it had been stated at a previous meeting that this would not happen without Schools Forum agreement. It was felt that the Forum decision making process has been undermined by this. It was also asked why the contracts were being extended when they are not to continue on a long term basis. Paul replied that there had been no choice in this matter as it was felt important that schools should have continuity until they have time to procure alternative systems suitable to their school. Another member of the Forum stated that as over half of schools are not using the systems, extending the contracts appears not to be cost effective and asked whether this decision be reconsidered. This decision was made by Cabinet due to the June 2012 Forum meeting being cancelled at short notice.

A member of the Forum wished to thank Paul Livingstone and the team for their support to schools.

It was queried from the floor as to how long the transition process from DSAS to SAP will take, could this be quicker and what is the rationale for this prolonged period of transition? Paul replied that the system needs to be tested to ensure connectivity speeds are available to all types of schools. Also functionality with the web browser will be specific to each school and therefore needs to be tested. Training will also need to be undertaken in schools.

It was raised by a union representative that the reply was quite technical and the concern was that SAP does not recognise teachers' pay and conditions. So will SAP be piloted specifically regarding school staff contracts? Paul Livingstone stated that this would be taken to HR colleagues as he could not answer this. Chris Allcock said that SAP must

cover all functions that schools will need. SAP is being piloted in a number of schools and this should establish any problems with connectivity and functionality.

A member of the Forum asked why in some cases the invoices received by schools were higher than the initial indicative quotes. It was replied that the invoices are based on final costs including actual distance from the nearest telephone exchange.

It was proposed, seconded from the floor and agreed unanimously that Cabinet be requested to reconsider their decision in respect of the extension of the Learning Platform (LP) contract.

The report's recommendations, excluding the LP contract extension, were agreed.

### **12/17 Further Delegation to schools – responses to consultation**

Chris Allcock informed the Forum that in April 2012 a consultation document was sent to schools seeking their views on the further delegation of budgets to schools and the potential re-pooling of some budgets. The number of responses was very high compared to previous consultations and he wished to thank the schools that took time to respond.

All of the budgets in the document have to be delegated but some can be re-pooled if maintained school representatives for each sector agree.

For primary schools, the views of schools were generally very supportive of the re-pooling of the budgets for contingency, insurance, library and museum and cover costs for maternity, public duties and trade union time. The primary school representatives on the Forum voted unanimously in favour of the LA recommendations to re-pool these budgets.

For the secondary sector, a union member stated that the re-pooling of the Trade Union cover costs allows for any cases to be dealt with quickly. If schools, as is the case in some other authorities, have to wait for a regional Trade Union representative, then the process can be delayed. There is real value to this money being held centrally.

The Chair mentioned the split in the consultation document in respect of Trade Union Staff costs. Chris Allcock said that the LA felt that it was beneficial to communicate with unions quickly on strategic items. This would be made more difficult if the secondary and primary sectors have different delegation of this funding, particularly as some union representatives deal with issues across both sectors.

A vote was taken on whether the secondary trades union cover time should be re-pooled and there were seven votes in favour and one against. The Forum therefore agreed that this budget should be re-pooled.

Following consultation the Authority proposed to re-pool the insurance and contingency funding for secondary schools. Both of these were strongly supported by schools.

The secondary school representatives voted unanimously to re-pool these funds. The report's recommendations were agreed.

### **12/18 Formula changes for April 2013 – update**

Chris Allcock presented this update. The Secretary of State has now confirmed the funding regulations for 2013-14 and these were published at the end of June 2012. A consultation document is being finalised and it is hoped that this will be published by

Monday 17<sup>th</sup> September. This will be discussed in detail at the Forum's next meeting in October. The timeline for consultation with schools and the Forum is less than ideal but this was due to the DfE requiring the LA to have determined its mainstream formula by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2012. Special Schools, ERS and PRU budgets are not subject to the same time constraint.

Chris reminded the Forum that the budget turbulence resulting from the formula changes should be minimised by the national Minimum Funding Guarantee arrangements over the next two years. The MFG essentially limits losses to no more than 1.5% per pupil but this does not apply to losses resulting from the further delegation of budgets.

Chris also confirmed that currently £4 million is retained within the DSG for capital maintenance. DfE guidance has now confirmed that this budget will have to be delegated to schools from April 2013 and cannot be re-pooled. The Authority also retains £600k for redundancy costs and this will no longer be allowed and will have to be delegated to schools. In normal circumstances the local authority will continue to meet the costs of redundancies in schools but this will have to be from outside of the DSG.

There were no questions from the floor.

The Forum noted the report.

#### **12/19 Further Delegation – Catering and Broadband**

Chris Allcock presented this report. He stated that the Minimum Funding Guarantee only applies to funding already delegated and does not apply to new delegation. Catering and Broadband are proving problematic to delegate and schools may receive more or less than actual costs. The Authority has written to the DfE asking for these budgets to be included in the MFG calculation but this had been refused.

The proposed approach is to offer schools the opportunity to request that their catering budget is delegated to them for the remainder of this year. The Authority would then offer to provide a service for the remainder of 2012-13 for a fee equivalent to the budget delegated. For schools that agreed to this it would allow the Authority to include catering in the MFG protection arrangements for 2013-14. A member of the Forum asked if schools could retain the delegated catering funding and not purchase the catering service. It was stated that this would be up to the school to decide, as it is at present.

It was asked by a member of the Forum if the example shown could be modelled for every school. It was replied that this would have commercial sensitivity and would therefore be problematic.

It was also asked if Special Schools would be involved in this delegation. Chris replied that this would not be necessary as Special Schools' 2013-14 budgets will be calculated on a different basis which avoids this particular problem.

For Broadband, the Forum had previously been advised in January that an in year delegation of funding was likely as a result of the ending of the current contract on 31<sup>st</sup> October. Delegation for 2012-13 is now proposed on the basis of the gross cost of each school's new contract for the period November 2012 to March 2013 less the amount the school would have paid under the current contract for the same period.

No further questions were raised from the floor.

Forum agreed the report's recommendations.

**12/20 DSG out-turn including schools' balances**

This paper was presented to the Forum by Chris Allcock. The 2011-12 DSG out-turn has now been completed and a summary circulated to the Forum. Chris summarised the document and stated that the under spend was broadly in line with the projections. Given the imminent changes to schools' funding and a range of new cost pressures on the horizon it was proposed that no further allocations of funding be made at this time.

No questions were raised from the floor.

The report was noted and the proposal to hold the resources as unallocated was agreed.

**12/21 Date of Next Meetings**

The next meeting will be held at 6pm on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2012 at County Hall.