

AGENDA ITEM: 3

HEADTEACHERS AND GOVERNORS CONSULTATIVE GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HEADTEACHERS AND GOVERNORS CONSULTATIVE GROUP HELD ON THURSDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2000, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.20 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Buckinghamshire County Council

Mr B G Allen, Mr M C Appleyard, Mrs M A M Aston, Mrs P M A Dewar and Mr M Taylor

Headteacher Representatives

Ms C A Galloway (Headteacher Royal Latin School)
Mr W D Richards (Headteacher, Sir William Ramsay School)
Mr R Westwood (Headteacher, Stoke Leys School)

Governor Representatives

Mr P R Day (Governor, Radnage CE Infant School)
Mr P Frodsham (Governor, Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School)
Dr K Simmons (Governor, Cressex School)

Also in Attendance from the LMS Group

Mr T Andrew (Headteacher, Chesham High School)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Brand, Mr Sweatman Mrs Gowers and Mr Field and from, Mr Dooks, Mr Edgar and Mr Fiske from the LMS Group.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Mrs P M A Dewar be elected Chairman for the ensuing year.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Dr Simmons be appointed Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

MRS P M A DEWAR IN THE CHAIR

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2000 were agreed.

4 MATTERS ARISING

None were received.

5 REVENUE BUDGET 2001/2002

The Group considered a report from the Director of Education which set out the overall position for the Education Committee in the preparation of the revenue budget for 2001/2002.

It was reported that the additional cash increase over last years budget that was expected to be received by the Education Committee was £12m. In addition the Strategy Panel had requested 2% efficiency savings to be targeted outside schools which could then be passed on to schools to maximise any real terms increase. This would amount to approximately £.9m - £1.0m. The £12m identified did not include the £3m allocated by the Government which would be passed on directly to schools. The Group noted that additional spending pressures for 2001/2002 would be in the region of £10.7m (5.4%). This figure accounted for the loss of the nursery grant for four year olds, (£1.8m) and was based on an assumption of a 3% pay award for teachers with 2.5% increase in prices overall.

The Group noted a number of variables which could affect and increase the overall budget requirement, including:

- possible increase in pay awards for teachers over and above the 3%
- increased costs related to home to school transport and SEN
- final level of SSA received

Following discussion on this item, members highlighted their concern over the increasing expectations put upon governors and the shortage of new governors coming forward. It was agreed that this matter should be explored and that a report would be submitted to the next meeting for discussion.

6 FURTHER DELEGATION TO SCHOOLS/SEN FUNDING REVIEW

The Group received a report from the Director of Education on the work being undertaken to determine the implications of the Government's intentions to increase the level of delegation to schools. It was reported that the current minimum level of delegation required by Government was 80% of the Local Schools Budget (LSB). The Government was now proposing a target of 85% from April 2001.

The Group noted that following discussion with DfEE officers, it had emerged that the 85% delegation was a target for 2001/2002 and not a legal requirement. It was unclear how the LSB would be defined for the purpose of calculating the 85%. It was also important for the LEA to determine the legality of delegating responsibilities to schools and to ensure that those areas delegated were in the best interests of the LEA and schools and did not prejudice the quality of the Education Service. Members were advised that this matter would be discussed and considered by the Education Committee meeting on 19 October 2000.

The Group noted that certain elements within Buckinghamshire had a significant impact on the delegated figure, in particular home to school transport where costs in Buckinghamshire were some 50% more per pupil than the country average and the non-delegated costs of SEN provision which were approximately 14% higher per pupil.

Following discussion a number of comments were received from members which included:

- Concern over the possible delegation of home to school transport and insurance to schools. It was felt that greater economies could be achieved by the LEA than by individual schools.
- The possible use of delegated funding to clear deficits in other areas of the school budget, rather than being used as it was intended, was raised. A member also highlighted concern that most vulnerable children within schools might be affected and requested that monitoring information be submitted.
- A member expressed unease over the provision made for SEN pupils within schools. It was noted that work was being carried out into methods of determining needs within schools by using proxies, rather than by conducting an audit, using free school meals and national curriculum results. It was reported that transitional funding for schools was also being investigated and that it was not intended that schools currently receiving funding would lose their budget during the first year. The proposals had yet to be finalised and would be submitted to the Education Committee in due course.

Dr Simmons reported her understanding that the Government draft revised SEN code of practice was open to challenge. The Group noted that a response to the Government's consultation paper was shortly to be submitted from the LEA which had not taken the view that the code was unlawful.

In response to a question from Mr Richards on the provisional budget allocation, the Group noted that meetings, during the second half of term, would be held with Headteachers around the county requesting their views. A letter from the Director of Education had been sent to Headteachers on 11 October 2000 advising them of this intention..

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Richards requested information on the Modernising of Local Government. The Group expressed disappointment over the perceived lack of consultation that had been forthcoming regarding the impending changes. It was noted that the pilot would commence after the meeting of the County Council on 23 November 2000 and would run until May 2001. The final structure would be put in place following the County Council elections in May 2001. It was envisaged that the structural changes would occur gradually and that minimal changes to the officer structure would be made. The pilot period would be to test out the viability of the processes and would be altered as necessary before the final structure was in place. The Group received a copy of the report that had been submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee on 28 September 2000 which set out the progress made by the County Council's Modernising Working Group in developing the new political structure and the implementation of interim management arrangements and the developments in relation to the constitution for the modernised council.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Group would be held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 7 December 2000.

CHAIRMAN

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