

APPENDIX 2

EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24TH JANUARY 2006

SCHOOLS BUDGET

The Committee was advised that the Schools budget and LEA budget were now formally separated. The Schools budget has been removed from mainstream funding and is now funded by the ringfenced Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) from the DfES.

The current budget is based on the level of DSG with no further contribution from the County Council. The precise amount will be determined when the pupil numbers in schools in January 2006 were known.

Under the new system the decision as to the level of the DSG to be retained centrally would be made by the Schools Forum. The County Council members were not represented on the Schools Forum and a number of members stated that they regarded this as a matter for concern. With regard to any overspend on the centrally retained budget this would be a first call on the subsequent years' DSG.

The Committee requested the Director of Children's Services (Designate) to present to a future meeting a briefing paper on the role, functions and composition of the Schools Forum and to provide updating reports to future meetings monitoring the ongoing position on the centrally-retained element of the DSG.

LEA REVENUE BUDGET - GROWTH

- **Service Units**

The growth would fund an additional 5 fte posts.

- **Mainstream Transport**

The growth of £100, 000 was to reflect the increased costs of contracts. The Integrated Passenger Transport Unit was an exemplar project under the Change Management Programme which aimed to bring the management and operation of transport services together with the aim of delivering efficiencies; no decisions had been reached as a consequence of the work on the project

LEA REVENUE BUDGET - SAVINGS

- **Restructuring in the Education Department**

It was noted that the Cabinet, at its meeting on 17th January 2006 had noted the Education Scrutiny Committee's comments that savings derived from the restructuring of the Advice and Inspection Service should be ploughed back into the new School Improvement Service Support Structure but had not supported the proposed earmarking and would seek advice from the Director of Children's Services (Designate) at the appropriate time about the best use of any savings. The Cabinet Lead Member advised the Committee that this decision had been reached to give the Director maximum flexibility in relation to the work of his Department.

It was noted that the savings from restructuring to date only took account of savings from restructuring the Education Department's Senior Management Team and the Advice and Inspection Service. The savings did not take into account the further restructuring planned for the future. The Director of Children's Services (Designate) commented that the restructuring was not aimed primarily at realising savings but to improve the Department's efficiency, flexibility and responsiveness.

- **Community Plus**

The Committee noted that the activities currently provided through Community Plus were not deemed to be a core activity for the Education Department. The proposals would mean that the current allowances paid to Community Wardens and Principals would cease. £60,000 had been retained from the budget. In answer to questions, the Director of Children's Services (Designate) advised the Committee that he was satisfied that this would enable him to deal with particular staffing issues.

The Cabinet Lead Member was asked if the Cabinet would look again at the consequences of withdrawing Community Plus for the provision of non-qualification community education courses, particularly in terms of its impact on Primary School Community Education Centres and free-standing Community Education Centres. He said that he was prepared to ask the Cabinet to re-examine this issue.

(A note giving a detailed breakdown of the budget of £862,000 on Community Plus is appended to this note)

The Committee was concerned that there should be appropriate consultation with the Community Education Centres, users and voluntary organisations about the consequences of withdrawing Community Plus. The possibility of tapering the withdrawal of funding in appropriate cases prior to complete withdrawal was raised as an issue to consider, dependent on the nature of the service and the position of the organisation concerned. In answer to a question relating to

contractual arrangements and service level agreements, the Director of Children's Services (Designate) advised that he understood that the majority of the funding so provided was not covered by such agreements.

- Other Issues

It was noted that the cessation of the award of sports grants would mean that the County Council would no longer offer financial support to the County's talented young sports people.

The Standards Fund included provision of £ 983,127 for extended schools.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2006/07 TO 2008/09

The Director of Children's Services (Designate) advised the Committee that he would report to its meeting on 27th February on the outcome of consultations on the review of educational provision in Melton and the Vale of Belvoir. He was currently in discussion with the DfES about the capital expenditure implications of the review.

It was noted that because of the need to give priority to the replacement of Integrid Schools and the development of Area Special Schools, it would not be possible to undertake further replacement of mobile classrooms until 2008/09.

It was noted that provision of £150,000 for CTSU Accommodation in 2007/08 related to work at the Wigston site

DECISION

That the proposed Revenue Budget for 2006/07 and the Capital Programme for 2006/07 to 2008/09 be noted and that the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission.

COMMUNITY PLUS BUDGET FOR 2006/07 FINANCIAL YEAR**Budget = £862,260****Items of Expenditure**

Wardens Allowances	£119,250
Principals Allowances	£44,950
DCB Apportionment	£121,170
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	£318,510
Contribution towards Care in the Community	£25,070
Contribution towards Lettings Remission	£55,360
Contribution toward Free Standing Centres	£77,600
Miscellaneous Expenses	£89,190
Commissioning Payments	£11,160