

DEPUTY RELEASE / LEADERSHIP TIME

Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To inform members of a specific funding review requested by Primary Heads Forum relating to deputy headteacher release time, and the authority's proposed actions in response to this request.

2. Background

- 2.1 Primary Heads Forum has recently written to the Chief Education Officer requesting that consideration should be given to providing resources which would provide dedicated leadership release time for deputy headteachers in all primary schools in Hertfordshire, and possibly for all maintained schools.
- 2.2 The key issues raised include:
- The need for headteachers to share their demanding workload and to sound out strategic issues with a colleague;
 - Providing the opportunity for deputy heads to experience aspects of the headteacher's role;
 - The need to develop future headteachers and encourage those with potential to become headteachers to move towards headship; and
 - The challenge placed on deputy headteachers to fulfil both teaching and leadership commitments.
- 2.3 Primary Heads Forum requested that consideration should be given to funding these pressures through an increase in the lump sum allowance for primary schools. If a half day release time is funded the costs would be approximately £3,800 per school per year, or some £1.6 million for all primary and nursery schools. PHF also suggest that a similar allocation could be considered for secondary schools.

- 2.4 The authority recognises these pressures on the leadership of schools, and in particular agrees with the need to develop future headteachers.

3. Funding Arrangements

- 3.1 The existing primary school funding formula includes £17,285 within the lump sum and approximately £80 per pupil in order to fund the additional costs of headteacher and deputy headteacher over the costs of classroom teachers. This is in addition to general teaching allocations of £26,715 per primary school and £1,310 per pupil which include resources for deputies' teaching responsibilities. Therefore there are significant allocations which are available to address the needs for leadership time in schools, however it is not possible to identify allocations specifically for deputy headteachers. The funding formulae for other sectors of schools include corresponding allowances.
- 3.2 The underlying analysis on which the lump sum and per pupil allowances were based is now aged, but did include assessments of the ways in which the leadership structure of schools developed with increasing size of the school. This work would need to be renewed in any reconsideration of the funding for leadership.
- 3.3 The leadership and management structure of schools is a matter for the headteacher and governors to decide, though the authority has views about the need for deputy headteachers in certain sizes and circumstances of schools. Funding arrangements should not specifically identify the ways in which schools should apply funds except in the most exceptional circumstances (such as in respect of pupils with exceptional needs).
- 3.4 Analysis undertaken in the last three years and presented to previous Schools Forum meetings as reports on the funding flexibility for primary schools indicates that, after additional resource allocations to the primary sector in 2006-07 and 2007-08, all primary schools would have some funding flexibility in their school budget shares. To this can be added the resources provided through grants such as School Standards Grant and School Development Grant which provide resources to be used as the governors and headteacher decide to meet the needs of the school.
- 3.5 Funding allocations for leadership time must therefore reflect all pressures on the leadership of schools, including headteacher, where applicable deputy and assistant headteacher time, and the pressures of implementing extended services. It has not yet been possible to undertake analysis work which would show whether the existing resource allocations appropriately correlate with the pressures on leadership time within schools.
- 3.6 It is Hertfordshire County Councils' policy to consult with all schools on changes to the school funding formula before they are implemented.

4. Budget Availability

- 4.1 The cost impact of the PHF proposal to increase lump sum allowances for a half day per week release time would amount to £1.6 million per year. In order to avoid turbulence in schools budget shares, and consequent Minimum Funding Guarantee allocations, this would need to be met from new resources such as headroom.
- 4.2 The draft budget for 2008-09 indicates that there is little or no headroom available to meet this pressure in 2008-09.
- 4.3 However there is an allocation to Hertfordshire of additional personalisation funding amounting to £7.752 million in 2008-09. The requested allocation to deputy release time would require 20% of this resource.
- 4.4 The DCSF guidance which accompanies the allocation includes a priority of “ensuring that the workforce has the skills and confidence to address the needs of children from these [vulnerable] groups”. Whilst this would include developing management capacity, it is clearly intended by government that the development of skills should relate to all school staff. Therefore it would appear inappropriate to devote such a large proportion of the additional personalisation funding to deputy headteachers release time.

5. Proposed Actions

- 5.1 In view of the insufficiency of available resources, that absence of analysis and research to inform the need for allocation of additional funding, and that there has been no consultation with schools, the authority does not propose to add further resources to school funding formulae for deputy release time in 2008-09.
- 5.2 The authority agrees however that it is appropriate to carry out a broader review of the pressures on school leadership and to refresh the formula funding arrangements based on that review.
- 5.3 The authority therefore proposes to convene a working group of school representatives and officers tasked with examining the pressures on school leadership time and the need for development of future headteachers. The review will need to take into account all pressures on the leadership of schools.
- 5.4 This outcomes of this working group’s review will then enable and inform a review of the funding provided through school funding formulae for leadership time. If a need for additional funding is identified this can be built into the budget preparation process for 2009-10. The review will therefore need to report in time that any proposals arising to change school funding arrangements can be consulted on with all schools in the formula

consultation for 2009-10, and that elected members can approve the budgetary commitment required.

- 5.5 Members of the Schools Forum are asked to advise on appropriate membership of the review group so that there is adequate representation of different sizes and types of school, and also that the group is compact enough to be effective. The outcomes of the group's deliberations will be brought to Schools Forum before wider consultation, therefore it may not be necessary to have representation from all sizes and types of school in the working group.
- 5.6 The request from PHF highlights a need to be more specific about the ways in which members of the Schools Forum can bring forward matters for discussion. The authority will include an item on the agenda of a forthcoming meeting of Schools Forum which will enable a review of the way in which proposals can be made by members. It is expected that new Regulations governing Schools Forums will be made by government in the next few months, therefore it will be appropriate for that discussion to follow the making of the new regulations.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Members are asked to note the planned actions in response to the PHF request, and to advise on an appropriate process by which headteachers could be invited to join the working group.