

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 10th FEBRUARY 2011

REPORT ON: EDUCATION DEPARTMENT: REVIEW OF DEVOLVED SCHOOL MANAGEMENT SCHEME

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 85-2011

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to propose a review of the Devolved School Management scheme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the proposed savings described in this report be approved.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The implementation of a review of Devolved School Management could result in approximate savings in 2011-2012 of £323,000.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 The DSM scheme, first implemented by Tayside Regional Council in 1994, was adopted by Dundee City Council at reorganisation in April 1996.

4.2 The overall aim of the scheme is to improve the teaching and learning process in Dundee schools and nurseries. The scheme aims to achieve this by providing appropriate delegated powers to schools to enable them to take decisions on certain matters quickly on their own responsibility, while remaining accountable to the authority. It also provides a framework for giving schools a greater degree of control over their budget.

4.3 The areas of expenditure currently devolved by Dundee City Council to Head Teachers are:

Staff Costs

- Dundee City Council staffing standard in nursery, primary and secondary schools
- absence cover for teaching staff up to 20 working days
- school-based administration and clerical staff (including nursery nurses, librarians, technicians, auxiliaries, classroom assistants and facilities staff)

Premises

- rates
- repairs and maintenance of buildings

- furnishing and improvements
- energy costs
- cleaning contract

Supplies and Services

- per capita allowances
- outwith per capita allowances
- postage and telephones

Third Party Payments

- Scottish Qualification Authority examination fees

Transport Costs

- maintenance of school minibuses

Income

- per capita income
- telephone income

4.4 These devolved elements, taken together, amount to c.82% of the total Education Revenue Budget. This is distinctly at the lower end of devolved amounts allocated throughout Scotland. Devolved budgets in the range 90% and above are now not uncommon throughout Scotland.

4.5 The areas not devolved in Dundee, for which many other authorities give responsibility to Head Teachers, include:

- staff (teaching and non-teaching) above agreed staffing complement
- bilingual support staff
- visiting specialists
- Enhanced Provision staff
- support for learning staff
- long-term absence cover expenditure
- staff travel expenses
- staff advertising expenses
- staff removal expenses

4.6 At the present time, no authority will be able to devolve 100% of their budget even if they wish because there are certain areas of expenditure which fall outwith the scope of the scheme. These are:

- school meals
- milk in nursery classes
- Education Maintenance Allowances
- clothing grants
- home to school transport
- premature retirement and severance costs
- expenditure supported by central government specific grants
- psychological and learning support services (e.g. Multi-Sensory Service)

- centrally funded support for children and young people who require significant additional support whether from education or from other agencies (e.g. Health)

- 4.7 A fundamental principle of the scheme is that it will be subject to continuing evaluation and review to ensure that, with changing circumstances, the general principles and aims underpinning it continue to be met. The last full review of the DSM scheme was carried out in 2004. It is intended to carry out a full review in 2010-11, the overall rationale of which will be to extend the scheme to give schools more control and greater accountability for their budgets. Head Teachers will thus be empowered to make decisions in the best interests of their community, working in partnership with pupils, parents and staff.
- 4.8 This is also in line with the development of the Curriculum for Excellence, with its overriding principle nationally of autonomy for schools in the design and delivery of their curriculum, and with the local Dundee principle of devolution of responsibility to clusters of schools.
- 4.9 Included in the review of the DSM scheme will be a proposal that both the long-term and short-term absence cover budgets would be devolved to schools. This would give schools greater flexibility and a more efficient use of resources, at the same time making schools more accountable. It is estimated that savings of £120,000 can be made in a full financial year.
- 4.10 In the same vein, schools would continue to have an allocation for their CPD and Study Support budgets. The former has traditionally been underspent in Dundee and is one of the largest allocations in the country, exceeding Glasgow and virtually four times as much as similarly-sized Aberdeen. Savings of 25% (£175,000) are proposed. Allocation of the latter would be linked to the budget for SQA presentations, and savings of £28,000 are proposed.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has been screened for any implications in respect of sustainability, strategic environment assessment, anti-poverty, equality impact assessment and risk management. There are no major issues. An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared and will be made available on the Council website: <http://www.dundee.gov.uk/equanddiv/equipact/>.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 This report has been subject to consultation with the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and Director of Finance.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Equality Impact Assessment.

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27 January 2011

JC/MM