

Report of Chief Executive to the Board

March 2017

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to cover areas which are not covered in other reports. Hence I shall avoid repeating issues in detail which have been covered in sub committees or elsewhere.

Trust Development.

Whilst the development of further Free Schools or other academies is likely to be stymied by the Ofsted gradings of Pinetree and more recently SSSFN, we do have considerable development through EES.

As a result of the pressures on places at the SSSFN the LA has indicated its decision to commission upto another 120 places for short stay type provision. The proposal will be that they provide buildings and funding and we then operate the provision on a two year temporary basis.

A more detailed paper outlining the proposals will follow in due course.

Developing the Trust Team

The Trust team has considerable change imminent with the departure of Sue Grant from the Operations Manager role.

We have taken this opportunity to shift responsibilities around somewhat within the team to recognise that the amount of work and responsibilities centralised in Sue G was unlikely to be manageable for the new candidate.

We successfully appointed a new Operations Manager, Shelly Webb who has been able to start early so that she has four weeks of handover with Sue. In addition we have re-organised some staff from Finance and Justine the Data Resources assistant so that they concentrate on HR admin. Ian Wooltorton will be taking increased responsibility for MIS and we have a new Data assistant to pick up the work that Justine can no longer do.

In addition EES has now employed a member of staff to manage the supply staff work which Sue also undertook.

It is evident that replacing Sue G has involved 4 other people taking on work which underlines the hard work and efficiency we have somewhat taken for granted (pun !) I strongly suggest that the Trust would wish to recognise the long service and hard work of Sue in some way before she leaves at the end of term.

Premises Development

Due to Financial Difficulties most premises work is on hold. However the following projects continue

1. Belton Boiler – Asbestos removal should happen in April with the replacement of the boiler in Summer vacation.
2. Commissioning of new Voc Building for Locksley site. Planning permission is being sought as a precursor to a final decision being taken by the ARP sub committee.

3. Contamination of water at Earthsea. After considerable work, the water supply at Earthsea school passed its most recent test and the boil notice has been rescinded.

Finance

Issues around Trust finance have been comprehensively covered in the ARP committee, however for summary purposes :

The Trust's cashflow position remains precarious despite the payment of the £435k invoice to Norfolk.

Ongoing high costs for AP and the delayed impact of staffing changes means we are now predicting a very large short fall in the summer.

In light of this we have taken the following measures

Short term	Long term
Restrictions on all ordering Cancellation of as much Alternative Provision as possible Restrictions on recruitment	Preparation of options for further large scale savings or increase in income Arranging meetings with RSC and LA.
Preparation of early invoices for some summer charges	
Careful use of funds provided for newly commissioned projects.	

The spending restrictions currently in place have implications for the quality of provision and our ability to respond in a timely manner to some of the issues raised by Ofsted. We need to recognise that there is a tension between the things we feel we need to do and the things we can afford to do. This is likely to lead to ongoing tensions over the next few months which Directors and Senior managers will need to manage sensitively.

National and Local Developments

There has been little additional National development (other than more money for Grammar Schools !!!!!) However there is some movement locally, of which Directors need to remain aware

The proposals to remove a large amount of money from mainstream schools to address the issues in the High Needs Block was somewhat watered down – but there is still to be a transfer of some £1.8million.

Additionally the LA has committed to introducing a penalty charge for permanent exclusions, which will hopefully also have a beneficial impact on PEX figures.

With the number of children without a school place now over 100 – the LA has finally acted. They have commissioned us to manage the list of kids and try to put in interim measures, and are commissioning the new 60 place base. They are also introducing a supposedly new Managed Moves scheme - which is actually the same as the current managed move scheme but without the

safeguards currently in place to avoid schools just swapping kids around randomly.

The local authority currently has a Peer review into SEND ongoing as well as a lot of adverse EDP publicity. There is also a shortage of senior managers as two are currently signed off sick. Hence actually getting any answers from NCC is very challenging and we should be pleased with what we have been able to achieve.

Des Reynolds
March 2016