

RESTRUCTURING OF THE EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT SERVICE (EDS)

Summary

1. The Education and Inspection Bill currently awaiting Parliamentary assent includes legislation which places a different emphasis on the relationship between the LA and schools. In addition to re-enacting existing legislation on Local Authority powers of intervention, it also introduces new powers of intervention. There is a requirement for LAs to take faster and more decisive action to turn round schools causing concern.
2. In carrying out their responsibilities and powers, LAs are expected to draw on the expertise of a range of providers. In support of this approach, a national programme involving School Improvement Partners (SIPs) was introduced in secondary schools from September 2006, and will be phased into York primary schools from January 2007.
3. This will have major implications for the funding and role of the Education Development Service (EDS). It does, however, provide a valuable opportunity to reconsider the role of link advisers, as the department moves to a locality approach to working.
4. In addition to financial pressures due to the way that the SIP programme is funded, there is also a further potential pressure arising from the need to make savings in the 2007/08 budget.
5. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a restructure which clarifies the role and responsibilities, of EDS within the context of new legislation and establishes a greater emphasis on multi-agency working.

Background

6. Although the drivers for change are quite explicit about how LAs should meet their new responsibilities there is considerably less clarity about how existing responsibilities to every child and parent/carer will be discharged. Local Authorities will continue to have the statutory responsibility to promote high standards in schools (*The School Standards and Framework Act 1998*), but

will now be doing so in partnership with School Improvement Partners that are unlikely to have the kind of detailed knowledge of schools that is necessary for early identification and intervention where there is cause for concern. They are also unlikely to be familiar with local circumstances or to understand local communities. In order to maintain the quality of service provided by the EDS, the following principles have informed the restructuring proposals:

- The maintenance of sufficient capacity to meet statutory requirements,
 - Identification and retention of essential elements of the service which are crucial to an effective school improvement strategy. These include good relationships with schools, detailed knowledge about strengths and weaknesses of schools, the capacity to intervene where necessary, and high quality support,
 - The importance of continuing involvement of school leaders within the city-wide school improvement strategy and increasingly in locality working,
 - The need for a considered response to local and national changes which is coherent and enhances rather than undermines school support, challenge and intervention,
 - The priority to maintain morale and engagement of all team members through a period of change.
7. Before considering a new role for link advisers, it is necessary to establish exactly what the role of SIPs will be. There is an expectation from the DfES that although SIPs will work within the context of a national programme, the way they operate will be guided by the LA. Monitoring and challenge will be central to their work. They will be expected to make judgements and report on the following areas:
- Standards achieved and targets set
 - Priorities and targets within the school improvement plan
 - Quality of school self-evaluation
 - The school's capacity to improve
 - Headteacher performance management
 - The school performance management systems
 - Effectiveness of the Every Child Matters agenda
 - Actions that the school needs to take, and support needed in order to improve.

8. The SIPs will work under the direction of the Lead Advisers and will receive training and support from within EDS and the Management Information Service (MIS). Structures and mechanisms have been developed to support quality assurance and good communication between all those responsible for supporting schools. These arrangements are under scrutiny during the first term of the secondary programme.
9. It is intended to change the name of link adviser to locality adviser (schools) to reflect a shift in emphasis from discrete school improvement work to a broader locality role. They will continue to be the interface between schools and the LA in monitoring, supporting, challenging and intervening where appropriate. However, the work they undertake will have a different emphasis and shape. They will:
 - Be free to act as an accredited SIP outside the area where they have locality responsibilities,
 - Respond through targeted intervention and/or support programmes to recommendations from SIPs and to those schools classified as needing additional support,
 - Build on current good practice in the development of leadership and management to develop capacity within schools and across networks,
 - Develop and implement local and national strategies to meet key priorities and promote innovative practice,
 - Lead on, or contribute to priorities agreed within the Children and Young People's Plan,
 - Promote high quality professional development through the range of opportunities provided by the Training and Development Unit,
 - Support the commissioning of specialist services to enhance central resources and ensure appropriate targeted support is timely and effective,
 - Promote good quality governance through training programmes and leadership development projects.
10. In addition to the above, the locality adviser (schools) will take on the following responsibilities:
 - Lead and/or contribute to multi-agency working within a locality approach which addresses the five outcomes of 'Every Child Matters'
 - Contribute to a culture where all professionals work closely with communities in helping shape and develop local provision,
 - Use locality data precisely to identify strengths, weaknesses and needs,

- Contribute to the development and work of Children's Centres to ensure they become centres of excellence,
 - Promote the Locality Planning Boards with schools and encourage headteachers to broaden their remit to become community leaders,
 - Support children, young people and families in developing a powerful voice within their communities.
11. The small size of the team make it essential for locality advisers to maintain a cross-city brief. They will contribute to intervention teams and support training to meet the requirements of national strategies.
 12. In addition to the complement of Senior Advisers, the EDS is responsible for a team of curriculum consultants, largely funded from the Standards Fund, who carry responsibility for the implementation of the national strategies and curriculum development in schools. Line management responsibility for the team of consultants is through the advisory service. The reduction in the number of advisers will make it difficult to discharge this function and the appointment of a senior consultant is proposed in order to take responsibility for the day to day management of the KS2 (primary) consultancy team.

Consultation

13. Consultation with headteachers on the new structure, role and responsibilities will take place in the Spring term as part of the agreed consultation procedure.

Analysis

14. To ensure compliance with the Education and Inspections Bill (2006) and to meet the local commitment to improve multi-agency working within communities, it is timely to review the role, responsibilities and operational style of the EDS. Schools have been supportive of both the implementation of the Five Outcomes approach through Every Child Matters and the structural changes resulting in the establishment of the Learning, Culture and Children's Services.
15. The LA needs to ensure that they maintain a focus on discharging their statutory responsibilities through effective working practices whilst shifting hearts and minds and gaining commitment to different ways of working. A key service like EDS has regular contact with schools. Members of the team will be able to influence the attitude of headteachers towards a multi-agency approach to locality work. Whilst their core business will continue to be raising standards and improving the quality of education provided in all schools and settings, there is tremendous scope for improvement in how schools use their resources for the benefit of the local community and this needs to be addressed by locality advisers. The establishment of Local Planning Boards will ensure that there is a strategic overview of services for children and young people in the area, and a mechanism for schools to contribute effectively.

16. The financial pressures resulting from the implementation of the SIP programme is due to the gap between the Standards Fund allocated to support it and the full cost of employing and managing external SIPs. Information from Capita who are contracted by DfES to lead and manage the programme, and briefings from pilot authorities emphasise the heavy costs of employing external SIPs. Market forces are very competitive. The directive is to have a balance between internal and external SIPs for the primary programme and 25% internal and 75% external for the secondary programme. When challenged about the funding gap Capita indicate that local SIPs should be subsidised by the LA because they will be helping them to fulfil their statutory responsibilities. Pilot authorities also report on the extent of the additional work they have had to take on to brief, monitor, quality assure and train SIPs.

Corporate Priorities

17. The work of the EDS supports the corporate objective of:
 - Improving opportunities for learning and raising educational achievement for everybody in York.

Implications

Financial

18. The expenditure budget of the Education Development Service in 2006/07 is £1,208k. The net cost to the council, after taking into account income from schools, amounts funded from Standards Fund grants and income generated from charges for specific services is £757k.
19. The introduction of the School Improvement Partners programme in City of York is predicted to cost £121k annually. The DfES has made available a new Standards Fund Grant (Grant 115 – School Improvement Partners) to assist Local Authorities in funding the programme. City of York is expected to receive approximately £64k per annum from this grant, based on a rate of £2,000 per Secondary school and £770 per Primary school. This leaves a shortfall in funding of approximately £57k.
20. The restructure of the Education Development Service as detailed will allow the SIP Programme to be delivered within existing budgets. The removal of one post will save approximately £62k. Of this saving, £57k will be redirected into funding the SIP programme.
21. In addition to the deletion of one Adviser post the restructure proposes replacing one of the Consultant posts with a Senior Consultant at an additional cost of £8k. This can be funded partly by using the remaining £5k saving from the Adviser post, with the remaining £3k being funded by a reduction in the external consultancy budget within the Education Development Service.

22. The table below summarises the current budget of the Education Development Service and illustrates the impact of the changes described above.

Table 1 - Summary of Education Development Service Expenditure and Funding

	Existing Structure	Revised Structure
	£000	£000
Education Development Service Expenditure	1,208	1,151
School Improvement Partners	0	121
Total Expenditure	1,208	1,272
Less: Standards Fund Grant Income	(247)	(311)
School Buyback Income	(146)	(146)
Other Income, Fees and Charges	(58)	(58)
Net Cost to City of York Council – Base Budget	757	757

Human Resources (HR)

23. There are major HR considerations to be taken into account when decisions are made on the scale and time frame for the restructuring of this service. Initial discussions have been held between the Assistant Director (School Improvement and Staff Development) and the lead HR officer. Team members have been briefed about possible implications for them. Further discussions are planned to identify key dates to brief team members and their relevant Associations. Included in the discussions will be the proposal to make one of the consultant posts a senior with responsibility for intervention programmes and locality projects. This is essential in order to meet the requirements of the national strategies. The aim is to gain agreement for the restructure in readiness for the new financial year.

Equalities

24. Not applicable.

Legal

25. Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder

26. Not applicable.

Information Technology (IT)

27. Not applicable.

Property

28. Not applicable.

Other

29. Not applicable.

Risk Management

30. Whilst recognising the need to comply with statutory regulations supporting the implementation of the SIP programme and the opportunities provided for an improved service through multi-agency locality working, there are some significant risks to be taken into consideration. One of the main concerns centres round the capacity of EDS to take on a wider range of responsibilities and remain focused on their core business with a reduced number of advisers.
- LAs have a statutory responsibility to monitor, support, intervene and challenge schools. In order to do this effectively, it is essential to have a viable service with personnel who have the necessary skills and expertise to operate effectively.
 - When a school is categorised by Ofsted or the LA for failing to provide a satisfactory quality of education, the DfES expect rapid improvement or closure. A well targeted intervention package can only be provided through a core team supported by external consultants and leading practitioners from within the city schools. Evidence from other LAs indicates that this proves to be a very expensive operation if there isn't sufficient capacity to provide leadership, expertise and timely intervention. We are one of the few LAs in the country who have never had a school in 'Special measures' and this is due to good partnership working between schools and EDS and a policy for preventative strategies rather than waiting for failure before providing support.
 - Currently, 100% of schools buy into the EDS and report high levels of satisfaction with the service they receive. If we are no longer able to provide a universal service which meets the school improvement needs of schools at the same time as SIPs are allocated to all schools, some could understandably decide not to buy back, reducing further available capacity. The main priority of the service has to be ensuring all schools continue to provide at least a satisfactory quality of education and are striving towards becoming a good or outstanding learning community. Managing the transition will be a delicate operation and will need full commitment of all partners to ensure it results in positive outcomes.
 - Capita, DfES, Ofsted and Government Office are making increasing demands on LAs. It is already proving very difficult to meet their expectations because of capacity issues. Further reductions in the size of the team is going to add to the difficulties.

Recommendations

31. The Executive Member is recommended to approve the proposal to restructure the EDS, including: the removal of one post to keep within the existing budget
- the addition of a senior consultant post within the structure.

Contact Details

Author:

Jenny Vickers
Assistant Director
School Improvement & Staff
Development
Learning, Culture & Children's
Services
Tel 01904 55207

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Patrick Scott
Director, Learning, Culture and Children's
Services

**Report
Approved**



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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Financial: Richard Hartle
Head of Finance
Tel No 01904 554225

HR: Sue Ralph
Acting Senior HR Business Partner
Tel No. 01904 554202

Wards Affected: All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:**Annexes:**

Annex 1: current and proposed structures