DEVOLVED SCHOOL MANAGEMENT: MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Purpose of Report

The attached paper brings forward proposals for a management framework in which a strong scheme of Devolved School Management will operate that will sustain and enhance the delivery of a responsive and quality education service that reflects the key values and policies of Stirling Council.

Summary

Stirling Council is committed to decentralisation which aims to:-

- improve responsiveness to local needs
- match resources with policy implementation and local circumstances
- promote accountability
- increase efficiency and effectiveness
- enhance the quality of education

For a scheme of devolved school management to operate successfully it is essential that this is done within a clear management framework that:-

- sets the objectives of the education service as they relate to the strategic objectives of the Council
- clarifies the role of the education authority and its relationship with schools
- determines the manner in which the overall resources available will be allocated to schools ensuring equity of distribution, whilst recognising the resourcing needs for tackling disadvantage
- guarantees minimum standards across the authority, eg protection with regard to the basic number of staff employed and their conditions of service
• maintains and provides easy access to a range of central support services such as education development services, psychological services and supporting the rights and needs of individual students
• establishes mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the scheme of devolved school management

Consultation

Stirling Council has already strengthened the framework for decentralisation within education in the following ways:

• the introduction of a linear formula for staffing standards
• the streamlining of appointment procedures
• the decentralisation of visiting specialists
• the increasing delegation of staff development funds

The papers sets the framework for all of the above and will enable discussions to be taken forward with staff associations and heads of establishment regarding a devolved scheme for the management of resources including, as previously agreed by the Children's Committee, absence cover. For a scheme of decentralised management to be effective there is a need for detailed negotiation with staff. Every effort will be made to implement these principles during the current financial year but in this crucial area consultation must come first and the scheme is unlikely to be in full operation prior to financial year 1997/98.

Recommendations

The Children's Committee is asked to:-

• approve the proposed management framework for the Scheme of Devolved School Management, subject to further consultation with staff associations and heads of establishment
• request that the Director of Education develop the full details of the scheme in consultation with staff associations and heads of establishment

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Director of Education Services

9 May 1996
STIRLING COUNCIL
EDUCATION SERVICES

Scheme of Devolved School Management

MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

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Rationale

1.1 Stirling Council is committed to an education system which is responsive to the needs of individuals, schools, educational establishments and local communities.

1.2 The purpose of devolved management is to enhance the quality of education by enabling more informed decision making and more effective use to be made of the resources available to support teaching and learning.

1.3 The scheme for devolved management should ensure that there is a balance between democratic accountability in delivering an important public service and the managerial freedom and flexibility which will release individual initiative and ensure the efficient and effective use of resources.

1.4 Clear advice should be provided throughout the system to ensure that decision are taken at the most appropriate level. The authority will give clear guidance to schools and educational establishments regarding how much is to be spent on schools, how the budget is delegated and how contingency funds held at the centre will be spent by the authority.

1.5 The scheme for devolved management will also provide opportunities for some decision to be taken collaboratively within and across schools and educational establishments.

1.6 Consultation is a key element in the whole process of devolved decision making. A flow of advice from all levels should ensure that those actually taking decisions are supported by the expertise that resides in the system as a whole.

1.7 Fundamental to the whole process of devolved management of resources and devolved decision making should be the commitment to raising achievement. The commitment to improving learning and teaching is often expressed in the statement of aims of the school.

1.8 School development plans provide a tool to assist schools realise their aims by prioritising developments and costing such developments over time. Decisions about priorities and the means of addressing these priorities will be enhanced within a scheme which gives greater flexibility to local decision makers within a strong local authority strategic framework.

1.9 The local authority will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme for devolved management to ensure that the following principles of devolved management are being addressed:-

(i) Devolved management should be linked to raising achievement;

(ii) Delegated funding should be linked to school development plans;

(iii) Headteachers should be effectively accountable for school achievement and accountable for the effectiveness of consultative procedures;

(iv) Partnership with parents, the local authority and other agencies should be a key element in raising achievement and maximising support for schools;
(v) The roles of central government, the local authority, school boards, headteachers and staff should be clearly understood in the scheme of devolved management;

(vi) The local authority should provide the support and advice which will assist in the achievement of school aims.

2 Role of the School Board

2.1 This scheme of delegation gives responsibility for the management of a range of functions to the headteacher or head of establishment with a consultative role for the school board. This does not override the statutory powers of school boards as set out in the 1988 Act to request further delegation.

2.2 Notwithstanding the statutory powers of the board and with the aim of encouraging parents to be more closely involved in the education of their children, headteachers should take into account the views of the school board in the following circumstances:-

• before submitting the school development plan to the authority for approval;
• when it is proposed to vary permanently the number of staff, either upwards or downwards, outlining the factors influencing the decision, the response of staff in the school to the proposals, and whether the proposals are in accordance with authority policy;
• when making significant spending proposals;
• when it is proposed to vary existing policy or practice which may impinge directly on home/school relationships, eg hours of opening, occasional holidays, parents’ meetings, school dress, homework and discipline policy;
• when it is proposed to vary significantly policy on curricular provision or assessment.

2.3 In completing the consultative process in any of these circumstances, the headteacher should take into account any recommendations made by the school board on the need to involve the wider parent body or officially recognised community representatives. As stated in Section 12 of the 1988 Act, school boards have a duty to promote contact between the school and parents and should take care that they represent the views of the wider parent body.

2.4 When consulted, the school board should provide a response to the headteacher within a reasonable timescale agreed by both parties at the outset of consultation. After discussion there may be exceptional circumstances where a school board remain unhappy with a headteacher’s proposals. In such a case, the decision would normally rest with the headteacher but the school board may refer the matter to the Director of Education for consideration and advice; this does not override the right to the school board to veto proposed expenditure on school books and equipment as provided for in Section 9 of the 1988 Act.
3 The Role of Education Authority and its Relationships with School

3.1 In order to enable effective consultation regarding decentralised management and the respective roles of all management staff including headteachers it is important to lay out here the principal roles of the education authority. Following consultation a paper will be put to the Children's Committee detailing headteachers’ delegated responsibilities.

3.2 The education authority will be responsible for:-

(i) Determining in consultation with headteachers and school boards the notional capacity and admission limit to schools;

(ii) Determining and reviewing catchment areas for primary and secondary schools in consultation with school boards;

(iii) Ensuring that an appropriate school place is available for all children of school age;

(iv) Determining in consultation with school boards, the priority criteria against which placing requests will be granted where the number of placing requests exceeds the number of places available at a school;

(v) Operating the Appeals Committee established following the Children's Committee on 23 April 1996, to enable consideration of appeals against refusals of placing requests in accordance with the provisions of the 1980 Act;

(vi) Ensuring that adequate provision is made for children whose parents decide to provide education at home.

3.3 The education authority will be responsible for:-

(i) Determining policy and an overall framework which acknowledges the partnerships between schools and parents for support, discipline and guidance of pupils and which pays due regard to reviews of pupils;

(ii) Operating an Appeals Committee to hear appeals against exclusion in terms of the 1980 Act;

(iii) Hearing complaints regarding the operation of the pupil welfare system.

3.4 The education authority will be responsible for determining the appropriate level of resources to be made available to schools to ensure that satisfactory pupil progress can be made in schools taking into account age, aptitude and other relevant factors.

3.5 The education authority will be responsible for:-

(i) Determining a policy and overall framework for the promotion of attendance at school;

(ii) Establishing a framework of attendance groups or working in conjunction with school boards for the consideration of cases of non-attendance.
3.6 The education authority will be responsible for determining policy on the provision of footwear and clothing grant and higher school bursaries and entitlement to free school meals.

3.7 The education authority will be responsible for determining policy on the breadth, balance and differentiation of the curriculum to be implemented in schools taking into account national guidelines and the level of resources available.

3.8 The education authority will be responsible for determining the start and finish dates of each term and the distribution of staff development days during each school session. On the basis of agreed parameters school boards and establishments will be consulted with regard to local holidays.

3.9 The education authority will be the employer of all staff and will determine the framework of conditions of service through national and local agreements to be applied to all staff. The education authority will be responsible for:-

(i) Determining the level of resources to be made available to schools for staffing purposes;

(ii) Determining minimum staffing levels in schools;

(iii) Establishing arrangements for consultation and local negotiation with staff association representatives;

(iv) Operating within the Council framework for appeals as required by grievance and disciplinary procedures;

(v) Determining personnel policies and procedures.

3.10 The education authority will be the owner or lessee of all school property. The education authority will also be responsible for:-

(i) Decisions on the number, distribution and size of schools in line with pupil movements over time;

(ii) Determining the use of any accommodation surplus to one school's requirements for emergency accommodation of classes displaced from another school due to major maintenance or fire restoration for other local authority purposes or for lease to other bodies;

(iii) Determining the level of resources both capital and revenue to be made available for the provision, maintenance and adaptation of school property.

3.12 The education authority will be responsible for determining overall policy on the use of school premises by the community and for determining the charges to be made. This is currently being reviewed within a working group led by community services. It should be noted that the school board has a right to exercise statutory powers accorded to them in the 1988 Act but that these operate within the framework established by the education authority.

3.13 The education authority will be responsible for determining the level of resources to be made available for supplies and services to schools.
3.14 The education authority will be responsible for determining:

(i) Policy on transport for from home to school for pupils;
(ii) Policy on the use of education vehicles taking account of legal requirements;
(iii) Level of remuneration of staff travelling expenses.

3.15 The education authority will be responsible for determining policy on provision of meals and milk and for determining the level of charges to be made. Entitlement to milk free of charge is covered by statute.

3.16 The education authority will be responsible for determining the level of resources which can be made available to school boards for the conduct of their functions.

4 Financial Arrangements

4.1 Resources Excluded from the Scheme of Devolved Management

4.1.1 The Scheme of Devolved School Management relates to revenue expenditure only. Capital expenditure will be managed by the Director of Education on behalf of schools.

4.1.2 The capital budget covers all major expenditure on new schools and sites, major adaptations to buildings and planned maintenance projects.

4.1.3 In accordance with Scottish Office guidelines Schemes of Devolved School Management must devolve a minimum of 80% of resources relating to the running of schools to headteachers.

4.1.4 In establishing what resources should continue to be managed centrally (the remaining 20%), due account has been taken of the inappropriateness to allocate budgets on an average basis from the outset where an individual school's actual needs cannot reasonably be identified from the outset, or where needs relate to particular individuals.

4.1.5 Funds for the following services will be managed centrally and will not form part of schools’ devolved budgets.

- Special needs provision within mainstream schools
- Core Education Development Services
- Psychological Services
- High School and residual Further Education bursaries
- Clothing and Footwear Grants
- Pupil distance entitled home to school and special needs transport
- Major building repairs
- Property and general insurance
• Premature retirement costs
• Capital financing costs
• Administration services
• Education Resource and Information Service
• School catering and milk income

4.2 **Resources Devolved to Headteachers**

4.2.1 Within the total resources made available to Education Services, allocations will be made to individual schools on the basis of formula and other appropriate allocation methods. Where applicable, allocations will incorporate enhancements for tackling disadvantage and inequality. All allocations will be subject to annual review to reflect any budgetary decisions or as a consequence of ongoing consultation and review of the operation of the scheme.

4.2.2 The sums allocated to schools will be at outturn prices i.e. inclusive of any pay and price increases during the course of the financial year.

4.2.3 The budget for individual schools may be varied during the year, either upwards or downwards by the Authority but reasons will be given for any such action.

4.3 **Staffing Budgets**

4.3.1 In order to avoid schools needing to consider the financial consequences of the salary of a particular teacher, staffing budgets will be managed on an average salary basis. This in effect means that schools will be asked to manage the number of staff allocated to them and any costs and savings will be calculated on a consistent, average salary basis across the Council, with no school accruing distorted savings or costs consequent of the age, experience and pay profile of their staffing complement.

4.3.2 As the financial year (April to March) spans two academic years (August to July) staffing budgets will be calculated in two parts for any financial year.

4.3.3 For April to mid August staffing complements will be for the academic session in progress; for mid August to March staffing complements will be calculated on the basis of the best available projection of pupil numbers for that academic session. On confirmation of a school's actual roll as at August, schools will be allowed to allocate their staff on the basis of the projected or actual roll whichever is the lower.

4.3.4 This in effect means that if the actual roll of the school is higher than the projected roll, schools could choose to vire the unused element of the staffing allocation. Conversely, if the projected roll is higher than the actual roll then schools will have to identify the additional resources to sustain the staffing allocation.
4.3.5 As a consequence of this arrangement schools will therefore be cautious and judicious with regard to their staffing arrangements but within the overall scheme of delegation, could take a longer term view as befits their development plans.

4.4 **Non-Staffing Budgets**

4.4.1 Non-staffing budgets for any financial year, where these are dependent on pupil numbers, will be based on the projected pupil numbers of the academic session which starts during the financial year. This arrangement provides for a degree of stability which will enable schools to undertake resource planning effectively.

4.4.2 The only exception to the above is where there is a significant movement, up or down, in the pupil population which would seriously compromise the level of resources made available. Headteachers will require to notify the Director of Education of any significant variances in their pupil numbers to agree what, if any, action is to be taken.

4.5 **Minimum Standards and Safeguards**

4.5.1 The Scheme of Devolved School Management will incorporate minimum standards which must be adhered to ensure that health and safety, conditions of service and quality of service delivery are protected.

4.5.2 Whilst the majority of resources will be devolved to headteachers, small contingency sums will continue to be held centrally as a safety net in order to protect schools from unforeseen and/or difficult circumstances.

4.6 **Financial Control**

4.6.1 Headteachers must ensure that all payments and receipts are made in accordance with system and procedures agreed by the Authority.

4.6.2 Headteachers will require to account to the Director of Education for the management of all funds provided by the Authority.

4.6.3 Headteachers will require to maintain independently audited accounts for any monies received for the use by the school from sources other than the Authority.

4.6.4 Headteachers will require to maintain financial records to the satisfaction of the Authority for all funds held by him/her for the use by the school and to provide access to these records, or information from these records, at any time by a duly authorised officer of the Authority.

4.6.5 Headteachers will require to provide any background information or reports in relation to expenditure or income required by the Authority.

4.6.6 The Director of Education may suspend devolved financial management at any individual school if there is evidence of fraud or other serious breach of trust between the Authority and a headteacher.
4.7 Virement (Transfer) of Funds Between Budgets

4.7.1 Headteachers may transfer funds between budgets subject to any minimum standards or restrictions as set out in the detailed scheme of devolved school management.

4.7.2 Headteachers may not transfer funds that will incur any continuing liability for increased expenditure in future financial years for which budget provision may not be available.

4.8 Carry Forward of Surplus and Deficit Balances

4.8.1 Headteachers may carry forward any surplus funds from one financial year to the next subject to the surplus balance being less than 2.5% of their total delegated budgets. Any surplus balance, subject to this upper limit, will be carried forward and added to the total delegated budget made available in that year.

4.8.2 Any budget deficit incurred by a headteacher will be carried forward in full to the next financial year and will have the effect of reducing the total funds available to the school in that year.

4.8.3 Whilst current guidance from the Scottish Office allows for headteachers to carry forward surpluses and deficits legal advice requires to be sought in terms of the Local Government Finance Act in relation to headteachers’ ability to incur consciously, or otherwise, expenditure in excess of annual budgetary provision approved by the authority.

4.9 Consultation on Resource Allocation

4.9.1 Headteachers are expected, as best practice, to consult with all staff fully on the allocation of resources made available to them. The views of staff must be taken into account by headteachers when making spending proposals and their views reported to school boards when they are consulted on financial matters.

4.9.2 Whilst the School Board (Scotland) Act only requires headteachers to consult school boards on their proposals for spending their per capita allocation it is expected, as best practice, that boards will be fully consulted in the overall spending proposals of headteachers.

5.0 Monitoring Arrangements

5.1.1 The development of the detailed scheme of devolved school management will be undertaken in full consultation with staff associations and heads of establishment.

5.1.2 In order for the scheme of devolved school management to operate successfully in supporting effective teaching and learning it is important that monitoring arrangements are put in place that examines, appraises and reviews all facets of the scheme.
5.1.3 To ensure that there is the widest representation of views on the effectiveness of the scheme, a standing Devolved School Management Review Group will be set up with heads of establishment, teaching and support staff and trade union representation.

5.1.4 The remit of the group will be to review the ongoing performance of the scheme and to make recommendations to the Director of Education on any changes or amendments that would enhance or improve the aim of supporting quality learning and teaching. Any proposed amendments to the scheme will be reported to the Children’s Committee for their consideration.