

CHESHIRE EAST CABINET

EXECUTIVE

Date of meeting: 21 May 2008
Report of: People Block
Title: Trade Unions Facilities Time for Teachers' Unions

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise members of the situation regarding Trade Unions facilities time for Teachers' Unions and to gain agreement to the extension of the current County Council arrangements until 31.8.2009.

2.0 Decision Required

- 2.1 The extension of the current Trade Union facilities arrangement for Teachers' Unions until 31.8.2009. Arrangements to apply beyond that date would need to be determined by the end of March 2009.

3.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs

- 3.1 None.

4.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond

- 4.1 The current annual cost of the Trade Unions facilities agreement for the teaching unions across Cheshire is £183,400. This would need to be replicated for each of the new authorities. This amount is funded from Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) – it is not delegated to schools but held within the Central Expenditure element of DSG. There is therefore no impact upon the budget of the new authority that is funded from Council Tax.
- 4.2 To extend the current agreement until 31.8.2009 would cost Cheshire East £37,877, which would be charged to the DSG. This is based on 5/12 of the annual total, disaggregated between east and West on pupil numbers. This figure excludes the impact of the 2009 teachers' pay award. Work is underway in discussion with the Department of Children, Schools and Families to disaggregate the total DSG and the outcome of this will be presented to the Executives in due course. However, this is affordable within the estimated Central Expenditure envelope for Cheshire East of approximately £32 million (2008-09 figure).

5.0 Risk Assessment

- 5.1 Schools and the Trade Unions need to be able to plan their staffing complement for the academic year 2008-09 – ie until the end of August 2009. This decision would enable them to forward plan sensibly and would avoid any potential for redundancies which could occur should the facilities budget not be extended. The cost of teaching redundancies falls upon the local authority, not the schools. It would also enhance relationships between the new authorities and the teaching unions.

6.0 Background

- 6.1 The County Council currently has an agreement over facilities time with six Teaching Unions across Cheshire, which currently funds the involvement of 13 representatives.
- 6.2 The budget is divided between the recognised unions/associations in proportion to each union's share of the total union membership of Cheshire teachers, with a guaranteed minimum for the smallest union. In addition, the posts of Teachers' Panel Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary attract fully funded facilities time of 0.2, 0.2 and 0.1 FTE respectively.
- 6.3 The budget is agreed annually and until recently the agreement has tended to roll forward with little change. In September 2007-08 the budget was reallocated to accurately reflect the latest membership proportions. Whilst one union has still not agreed the new allocations, this does not remove the need to ensure a smooth transition of arrangements into the new authorities.

7.0 Options

- 7.1 The options are either to terminate the current arrangements at the end of the financial year, which would leave an unhelpful gap until new arrangements could be negotiated, or to extend the existing County Council arrangements until 31.8.08.
- 7.2 It is recommended that the current arrangements are extended until 31.8.2009.

8.0 Reasons for Recommendation

- 8.1 To enable schools to plan their staffing complement for the academic year 2008-09 before the deadline for issuing contracts and notices and to facilitate positive relationships with the teaching unions.

For further information:

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Background Documents:

Documents are available for inspection at: