

S12. Devolved School Management System (DSM)

The committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which provided information on points previously raised by committee in relation to devolved school management. Robert Naylor and Gary Greenhorn provided an overview of the report.

The committee asked what the totality of funding devolved to schools was. Gary Greenhorn advised that £101m was devolved in some way including funds for property costs and teachers salaries which was not discretionary spend. However, there was local autonomy in relation to the use of the budget for supply teachers. Approximately £1.5m of devolved funding could be influenced by schools for matters such as photocopying and purchase of resources like textbooks.

Members asked if any devolved funding was used specifically for clusters. Gary Greenhorn stated that it was but that it would be held by a specific school for cluster use, usually the school whose Head Teacher was leading on the project.

The committee discussed the consultation on 'Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education - A Governance Review'. Robert Naylor stated that part of the review would be to ask for views on what level of control around spend head teachers should have. The initial impression received from head teachers was that the general principle of more money going to the school level was good but that extra responsibilities would arise as a result.

Following discussion on the non alignment of the financial year and school year, Gary Greenhorn stated that schools were required to submit a business case to the Service in order to carry funding forward. Examples were provided in the appendices to the report. He further advised that if schools carry forward overspend then they need to rein this back in future years.

Members asked why there were large amounts of funding devolved which schools had no control over. Gary Greenhorn highlighted that where possible budgets should reflect spend and that in order to be able to give a true cost of running a school and cost per pupil the exercise was important.

Decision

The committee requested a further report after receipt of Scottish Government proposals following the consultation on the "Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education - A Governance Review" including information on how DSM will progress going forward.