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This report was to be considered at a special meeting of the Community Learning Committee on 27 March 2000

CHANGES TO HEAD OF SERVICE POST: EDUCATION AND EARLY YEARS SERVICES

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report proposes changes to the Head of Service Post: Director of Education and Early Years Services.

2. Summary

- 2.1 This report is about changes to the post of Director of Education and Early Years Services.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Subject to the decisions of the Community Learning Committee, the Committee is asked to agree the establishment of a revised Head of Service post to manage the advisory and school support services, early years and childcare and pupil services (MK14, subject to evaluation); and the changes to the management of Education Planning, as set out in this report.

4. **Background**

- 4.1 Andrew Flack, the Director of Education and Early Years Services has been appointed as Director of Education for Derby City Council. When any senior person leaves, it is important to look at their role and functions, and whether any changes might be introduced to make working arrangements more effective.

5. **Issues and Choices**

- 5.1 As Director of Education and Early Years Services, Andrew Flack is currently responsible for the Advisory and School Support Service, for Pupil Services, for Early Years and Child Care and for Education Planning. There are currently two main areas of priority for this group of services. One is the standards agenda and the other is the review of the school system, which was recently agreed by Education Committee. Of these the standards agenda is a higher priority, simply because of the work that will be required to meet many of the targets in the Education Development Plan (EDP). It is of concern that someone coming new to Andrew Flack's existing post of Director of Education and Early Years Services would find it hard to balance these two priorities among their spread of functions, and would possibly not do justice to either.
- 5.2 There are also issues about the structure, in that the post of Director of Education and Early Years Services relates to education to the age of 18/19. It does not cover the lifelong learning agenda, which is the responsibility of the Community and Economic Development Department within the Learning and Development Directorate. The post is also equivalent in grading and status to the other two Heads of Service in the Directorate Management team: Paul Sutton, Head of the Children's Service and Vanessa Gwynn, Head of Community and Economic Development. Because of the lifelong learning element, and also because of overall responsibility for all the work of the Directorate, the post of Strategic Director, Learning and Development is designated as the Chief Education Officer. Though the Strategic Director Learning and Development has taken a close interest in significant issues relating to schools, notably budgets and the EDP, in practical terms Andrew Flack has been the main reference point for schools and all those interested in education in schools. This is to a degree in recognition of his long standing association with schools in Milton Keynes. His departure may provide an opportunity to clarify our structure and this also relates to the point about focus made above.
- 5.3 In order to strengthen the focus on standards and achievement it is therefore proposed to replace the post of Director of Education and Early Years Services with a new post. The working title of which is currently "Head of School Effectiveness and Foundation Learning". This would have responsibility for early years and childcare, special needs and pupil services and advisory and school support. The post would have the same grading and status as Andrew Flack's current post.

- 5.4 The emphasis would be on securing the highest quality support to promote achievement for all children and young people, including both issues of social inclusion, and support for able children. It is likely that the balance of work would be with the early years and primary sectors; with the focus in secondary on disaffection, under-achieving groups of pupils (including able pupils) where appropriate and social inclusion.
- 5.5 The post would be much broader in remit than the Advisory and School Support Service, which would continue to manage specific services related to the curriculum and management of schools. This new post would be very much about raising the profile of the Council's collective commitment to raising standards in all settings.
- 5.6 These arrangements would mean that Education Planning and responsibility for the review of the school system would transfer to the line management of the Strategic Director Learning and Development direct. This would be initially for the period from Andrew Flack's departure to the meeting of the School Organisation Committee in the summer term 2001. By then the Council would have a much clearer understanding of the nature of the task, and officers would be in a more informed position to advise on management arrangements to take forward the review, including the corporate, as well as Directorate, implications.
- 5.7 If these changes were to occur there would be implications for the post of Strategic Director Learning and Development and relations with schools. Most obviously this would be in the area of school planning. However, the Strategic Director Learning and Development would also want to take this opportunity to have a closer relationship with schools about how the Directorate as a whole can help to raise standards, and about how we can use schools more effectively for community activities and as centres for other kinds of service delivery. The new postholder with the remit for school effectiveness and pupil support, would be the principal contact for schools on an operational basis.
- 5.8 All schools have been consulted about this change and the Strategic Director Learning and Development has had discussions with the head of Ousedale School, as Chair of the Milton Keynes Secondary Headteachers' Group, with the Headteacher of Loughton Middle School, as Chair of the Headteachers' Consultative Group and with the Secretary of the local NAHT Branch. There have also been discussions with representatives of the Diocesan Boards. Schools have welcomed the opportunity to comment on proposals.
- 5.9 The comments have been generally understanding of the need for change. They support the emphasis on standards as the focus of the new post, although there will be issues about how the post relates to the different sectors of primary, secondary and special schools. Schools have been re-assured that the arrangements are deliberately planned to maintain the momentum of the review of the school system. This is a particular concern of the secondary sector. There have also been comments about this being an opportunity to open up a wider dialogue between schools and officers in the Council about the relationship between schools and the community, which will be helpful as part of the integration agenda. There are however concerns about diluting the

importance of the education function within a wider Directorate and this focuses in particular on budget allocation. There has been one objection to date on the grounds that this appeared to be a cost cutting exercise, but reassurances have been given that this is certainly not the case. Comments have also reflected that there is confusion among schools about the current structure, and the arrangements now proposed are intended to clarify roles and responsibilities.

5.10 The title of the new post has given rise to a lot of discussion. It needs to reflect both the close links with schools, and also a responsibility for improving learning opportunities and raising standards, not just in schools, but in a wide variety of settings to the age of 18/19. The title which best reflects these elements to date is "Head of School Effectiveness and Foundation Learning". Foundation learning relating to the relevant stage in the National Learning Targets, which the Council is signed up to alongside partners. Any further comments on the title will be reported to Committee.

5.11 The Chief Officer Board and officers within the Directorate are supportive of the changes proposed.

6. **Implications**

6.1 Environmental

None.

6.2 Equalities

None.

6.3 Financial

None.

6.4 Legal

None.

6.5 Staff and Accommodation

The Trades Unions have been consulted on the proposed changes.

7. **Conclusions**

- 7.1 The report seeks approval to changes to the post of Director of Education and Early Years.

Background Papers: Letter to schools on the Head of Service post: Education and Early Years Services