



# The Taunton Learning Partnership

## MINUTES OF A "BROKERING "TLP MEETING HELD ON Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2011

Present: Moira Hope (CPD Coordinator), Mike Snowden (North Town), Sarah Watson (Castle)  
Apologies: Heather Cunningham (Trull), Sue Brewer (Holway Park)

Moira outlined the remit of the group - i.e. to explore further at whether the TLP should commission its own staff and, if so, to explore ways that this could best be achieved. This had arisen as a result of the discussion at the TLP meeting on 17th March.

She outlined the three options -

- (i) leave things as they are with individual schools commissioning their own services individually - mostly with the Local Authority
- (ii) Small groups of schools commissioning services out with the Local Authority egg to share an Educational Psychologist and / or Speech Therapist. This could be done using the Secondary schools as a hub with links to interested feeder schools - similar to Tone partnership \*\*
- (iii) The TLP to act as the Employer for a range of Staff who are then utilised by schools - e.g. Speech therapists , Educational Psychologists etc

Mike and Sarah felt that, in this time of much change, option (i) was not a way forward as they believed that in twelve months there would not be Local Authority as we know it currently and that the TLP needed to respond proactively for meeting this situation.

Sarah felt that Option (ii) was the closest to Castle's current practice. She detailed that they had recently appointed a SENCO who would also be working with Primary feeders. Castle also has plans to appoint a Business Manager who can offer support. Mike felt that the Secondary Schools had an important role in supporting commissioning as well as the larger schools in the partnership.

Sarah and Moira both felt that there could be a number of difficulties in Option (iii) - the TLP acting as the Employer -e.g. redundancies , sickness, insurance etc and they would be reluctant to go down that route. Moira outlined the current issues which the TLP have been met with re the PFSA's who, although still employed by the LA, are being line managed by Helen Millard (TLP) supported by Ali Cackett (Localities Team). Although all recognised that the TLP is currently an employer, as it employs Alan Boxer and Helen Millard.

Mike questioned what the TLP was planning to do when the current arrangement with the PFSA's finished in March 2012. Moira explained that the Steering Group are currently discussing this so that the situation we were faced with (where we were not informed about what was going to happen until the end of March) would not be replicated next year. Issues such as the management of monthly expenses, sickness lines and deployment of duties are still under discussion with Mike Hemmings at County Hall.

Mike felt that savings could be made in all TLP schools by Bursars/ Finance assistants meeting and being given the remit of saving, say, 20% of school budgets. This money could be used to support school improvement and commission new staff.

Mike suggested that the future organisation of the employment of the PFSA's should act as a starting point for the TLP to explore how Commissioning worked. Sarah and Mike asked how the structure of the TLP would support that. It appeared that staffs new to the TLP were not clear about the management of the TLP and its plans for the future.

Moira clarified that the TLP had a shared Vision - to improve the quality of learning experiences for the children of Taunton and overarching aims:

## **TLP Aims**

- 1. Develop and nurture a shared vision for all aspects of education in the TLP*
- 2. Increase the quality and range of children's learning opportunities*
- 3. Provide enhanced targeted staff development matched to individual and shared objectives*
- 4. Continue to develop leadership working collaboratively*
- 5. Engage with and involve parents and the wider community in the activities of the TLP*
- 6. Encourage schools to work together*
- 7. Enable all children to recognise and develop a sense of community in Taunton and beyond*
- 8. Act as a pressure group for change and improvement in support services*
- 9. Review and evaluate the work of the Taunton Learning Partnership*

Groups were set up within the group to achieve these aims - currently CPD, Learning Vision, SEN and Behaviour and Attendance. Each group had a plan to deliver which was costed and then could be evaluated against the plan.

Chairs of each group sat on the Steering Group. The current plans for the Learning Vision group are confirmed yet and it requires a new Chair. Moira suggested to Mike that he might like to consider filling the role and he agreed to consider it. It was felt the management of the PFSA's needed to be added to the remit of one of the groups. Given the current changing climate Mike suggested that the plan for the TLP might also need to change to reflect current changes - e.g. new curriculum, leadership, the White Paper, The SEN Green Paper, School 2 School Support.

There was discussion about Dave Bullock and the future of the SSP. Sarah's understanding of the SSP is that secondaries will have their own SSCO for one day and the new posts are Games Coordinator posts to be centrally held at possibly Hestercombe. The current PDMs etc will be able to apply for those posts. The secondary schools are not going to be hosts for these posts. Sue Bullock will continue at The Castle as she is a FT teacher there and Sarah thinks they can probably deliver most of what was already on offer. Plans have not yet been made and we probably need some meetings with Sue and Sarah about what is possible.

We also discussed the proposal raised at the TLP meeting by Karen Milton that Rick Beaver had suggested TLP schools might wish to employ trainee Educational Psychologists - with schools making a contribution of £17 000. It was unanimously agreed that the cost of this did not contribute to good value for money. Moira agreed to contact Rick Beaver to clarify the arrangements.