

**REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
**Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2010**  
**9.30 to 12.30**  
**MINUTES**

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

Barry Payne was in the Chair

**Present were:** Barry Payne, Sue Upson, Steve Lord, Richard Milligan, Jackie Mullan, Judith Chamberlain, Peter Skingley, Jennie Moran and Denis Baldry.

**Apologies from:** Malcolm Reeve (In Shanghai), Angela Scott

**Not attending:** Ron Babbage, Diane May, Richard Byers and Grant Bage

The agenda was suspended to allow Denis Baldry to demonstrate the new FLSE web site [flse.org.uk](http://flse.org.uk) which is scheduled to 'go live' on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2010.

Members commented very positively about the qualities of the new site and the range of information that is proposed to be offered, DB confirmed that this 'work in progress' would require input from members to supply the necessary detail and key information that will make the Federation successful.

On-line membership and banking arrangements are still to be added and may take until March.

The meeting continued to consider some key questions for membership and further development of the Federation as noted on the **agenda at Item 12 –**

o **FLSE and national/regional development**

1. What does FLSE need/need to do next to grow the region?
2. What are members and prospective members looking for from FLSE? – What do members see as the 'big issues' that FLSE should take up?
3. What are the 'good news stories' from this region?
4. Are members involved in national/regional developments which, through our newsletters and web site, might be helpfully explained to a wider membership?

The following comments, broadly expressing the view of the meeting as a whole, were recorded:

- ✓ FLSE should encourage SIPs to become active members
- ✓ Careful consideration needs to be given to how membership is to be broadened. The quality of the membership and potential to make an impact must not be 'diluted' simply by a desire to expand rapidly.
- ✓ FLSE is about 'strategic' management/leadership as opposed to 'operational' management.
- ✓ FLSE must be the voice of 'Leaders'. Questions were asked about, e.g. SENCO's as to their comparative status to be seen as 'leaders'.
- ✓ The potential of FLSE to develop further the links now made with other key SEN groups could be pivotal to its status and ultimate success.
- ✓ The idea that FLSE might convene a 'National Summit Meeting' of all the principle players, perhaps on an annual basis was strongly supported.
- ✓ The web-site document library is felt to have great potential but it must stay focussed on the key aims/aspirations of the federation – principally Leadership.
- ✓ FLSE needs to be able to 'headline' its successes and achievements to encourage more cautious schools to join – not just 'what we can do' but 'what we have achieved'.
- ✓ LA representatives within each region should be listed and, perhaps, have a 'local news' option for their LA on the web site.

Several members spoke positively about a web-site - <http://www.usethekey.org.uk/> - suggesting it already offered a good level of service to school leaders. FLSE, with its emphasis on special education, nevertheless must aspire to this level and quality of service.

Richard Milligan commented upon the recent SSAT advertisement for 'leaders in SEN' to develop 'regional networks'. Are FLSE aware of this development?

Barry Payne commented on the process and product of becoming a Trust and Foundation School. Barry agreed to share paperwork developed at Parkside School with FLLSE colleagues.

Judith Chamberlain asked whether any consideration had been given to raising money by allowing/selling advertising space on the web-site. DB said he had not heard this idea before.

### **Summary of Key Points from this discussion.**

1. There are numerous and influential SEN 'interest groups' that already have strong and regular contacts with DCSF, OfSTED and other key decision and policy making bodies.
2. The SUMMIT CONFERENCE idea – an annual event involving all key organisations to discuss the current agenda. Such a move would, in part, overcome the need for FLSE itself to be widely representative of somewhat disparate groups as well as signalling FLSE as a 'strategic thinking and leading body'..
3. DCSF should be approached to request that FLSE are regularly consulted about the membership of Consultative Groups. The meeting had a view that 'the same names' occur all too regularly and that 'practitioners' are not strongly represented.
4. Following DES 'pump-priming' by Lord Adonis (2006) we now need a clear re-affirmation from DCSF that the role of FLSE is substantial and valued as a key player in SEN developments.

### **2. Minutes of the meeting on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2009**

Correction to the draft minutes was made at:

7. Feedback from LA reps. Cambridgeshire – para 1.

Last sentence should read: **She reported patchy experiences [re-SIPS] gathered from comments made at a southern area meeting held by the National Strategy.**

Item 7. Suffolk – line 3 should read: **Belstead School**

Item 7. Norfolk – line 1 should read: **Churchill Park School**

Thus amended the minutes were approved on the proposal of Jennie Moran, seconded by Jackie Mullan

### **3. Matters arising (and not on the following agenda)**

Item 11. DB drew attention to the slight increase of £10 in the FLSE (E) conference delegate fees. This is due to having secured another speaker who requires his fees to be met.

### **4. Identify any additional business for this agenda**

There was no other business.

### **5. Feedback from FLSE National Steering Group, SDG, and related activities DB**

DB reported briefly on the further work of the SDG, incorporating comment into the demonstration of the new web site (as above). He mentioned the work of the CEO in relation to forging links with key organisations and association. Funding of the Federation cannot be met simply from subscription: the CEO has presented a paper exploring many other avenues to secure 'multiple funding streams'.

### **6. Web Site**

See minutes above

### **7. Feedback from Local Authority representatives on local issues LA reps**

Cambridgeshire – Jennie Moran

- i) The LA has recently held a conference for Headteachers from all sectors. The theme was around the development of Federations and Partnerships.
- ii) Special schools are 'very full' and growing concerns are being voiced about capacity and health and safety issues. Jennie offered a 'Violence and Aggression Staff Check List', a response to recent developments in her own school. This is seen as an addition to advice gained from completing a risk assessment. In discussion on this issue, Steve Lord offered to share a 'numerically quantified' RA format which has been used to reinforce the extreme needs of some pupils.
- iii) The LA is developing Service Level Agreements for Outreach Services to be provided by special schools.
- iv) The LA SEN Strategy, and school's capacity to meet expectation, is threatened by financial constraints.
- v) There is a move to cut costs by bringing 'out-county' placed pupils back into local schools.

Hertfordshire – Judith Chamberlain

- i) The LA is looking to 'build provision locally'. This is to build capacity and therefore to restrict the use of 'out county' provision in the future.
- ii) The LA is looking for an increase in SEN pupils remaining in inclusive mainstream provision to create capacity in the special schools.
- iii) There is a debate around the definition/description of 'Complex Needs'.
- iv) The BSF programme is being extended to another area of the county. This may impact on changes of service providers (e.g. internet access) for all LA schools and services.
- v) Feedback from schools recently Inspected by OfSTED has been positive. Colleagues report a willingness in inspectors to engage in a meaningful dialogue.
- vi) Herts and Essex have both pulled out of E2BN, an ICT service provider, as benefits are less tangible.
- vii) Hertfordshire CAMH services have been commissioned to develop work in other regional authorities.

#### Thurrock – Richard Milligan

- i) The final tender for BSF projects within the Borough is being scrutinised 'as we speak'.
- ii) Richard reported 'intelligence' suggesting an antipathy toward special schools observed in the background career of the current Chief Inspector of Schools.

#### Independent School experiences – Steve Lord

- i) Regarding CAMH services, Steve indicated his experience that other potential providers were not being evaluated and considered. He suggested that LAs lacked a 'strategic vision' about service development.
- ii) Regarding LA's wishing to limit the use of 'out county' schools, his experience and information gathered suggested that pupils placed in these schools are now the most extreme of the complex needs, He argued strongly that very specialist provision would always be needed for such pupils and that 'generic complex needs' provision would not prove adequate.
- iii) On funding, the independent sector is being asked to take a cut in its annual charges in the coming year. Beyond that, the sector is anticipating 'surgical cuts' in the order of 20% in the next 2 – 4 years.

#### Central Bedfordshire – Peter Skingley

- i) Following the division of Bedfordshire, (Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire) indications of a slipping away of expected collaborations and shared arrangements are becoming evident.
- ii) Special schools in Central Beds. are receiving very little clear advice/guidance about future developments from 'the centre'.
- iii) Hitchmead (formerly MLD) and Sunnyside (formerly SLD) Schools in Biggleswade will merge on the Hitchmead site, subject to the outcomes of public consultation.
- iv) The arrangement for funding of special schools is under review.
- v) The Bedfordshire Autism Training Programme (based upon TEACCH) is evaluating the possibility of working 'at arms length' from the LA.
- vi) Links with University of North Carolina (home of the TEACCH programme) are significantly changes. The university plans to focus on research rather than provision.
- vii) Central Bedfordshire special schools have been asked to comment on the Community Cohesion agenda.
- viii) There is some debate about the provision and organisation of school transport.

#### Suffolk – Sue Upson

- i) The LA's SEN review is ongoing. Emerging policy is to place pupils in their local school wherever possible. Special provision is being developed on co-located sites.
- ii) New provision is proposed for 'high functioning' ASD pupils and those with severe/complex SEBD.
- iii) Special schools have no 'school nurse' service through the NHS. They have access only through a 'helpline'.
- iv) There is no NHS funding for SALT provision other than in nursery provisions in 2 of the 4 areas of the county.
- v) Sue reported a clash of dates for Suffolk schools with the FLSE (E) conference dates.

#### Southend- Jackie Mullan

- i) Southend special schools are also facing issues of capacity. Her own school currently is at 188/185 capacity.
- ii) Financial planning based on 'proportionality' has led to reduced funding levels per place as the school has numbers have increased.
- iii) No major changes in Borough policy are currently in prospect.
- iv) The inability of the Borough to appoint advisory/inspection/quality assurance staff continues, despite endeavours to link these roles with the needs of neighbouring

unitary authorities. Jackie suggested a potential to develop a regional strategic support service.

Norfolk – Barry Payne

- i) Norfolk similarly affected by NHS school nursing issues.
- ii) County Council have appointed Price Waterhouse Cooper to complete a review of senior management positions within the LA.
- iii) The Boundary Commission continues to deliberate on proposals relating to Norfolk and the major conurbations.
- iv) The LA review/implementation of SEN Strategy is ongoing.
- v) There has been/will be a re-classification of some special schools.
- vi) Implementing the Single Status agreement continues to raise issues.
- vii) BSF involvement of the LA is now getting underway.
- viii) Norfolk has introduced a 'home-grown' programme to replace 'Team Teach' on the grounds that costs and time demands have become excessive. The new programme 'STEPS' has been approved by BILD. Further detail on this situation from;
- ix) Angela Wadham on 01603 433276.
- x) Barry is looking into the issue of Trust and Foundation status for his school. He will make papers available to interested colleagues.

**8. Feedback/Update from SEN Hub activity**

Angela gave her apologies.

**Angela Scott**

**9. Feedback/Update on HE related developments**

Not available.

**Richard Byers**

**10. ELC updates**

Not available

**Grant Bage**

**11. FLSE East – business issues and year planning.**

**Issues for consideration may include:**

- o **FLSE and national/regional development**  
See notes at the top of these minutes
- o **Annual Conference 2010 – Theme, speakers and programme planning**  
DB reported that detailed arrangements with the conference venue are all in hand. Conference publicity has been widely circulated. Initial response has been slow (22 delegates confirmed at this time). LA reps urged to encourage their colleagues to attend. No response yet from PRU and services sectors. Further publicity via Newsletter 6 to be published before half-term and through other email 'shots'.

**12. Any other business**

DB to speak to Lorraine Dupen at Ashley School regarding her involvement in the DCSF report card project. To invite Lorraine to speak to the Executive if this seems appropriate.

The meeting ended at 12.40 p.m.

**Date and time of next meeting.**

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March at Wyboston Lakes (the Conference venue) from 1.30 to 4 p.m.**