



## **Review of Supplementary Language Classes**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 To approve the process for future grant distribution to support language classes.
- 1.2 To approve the allocations for 2005/06, subject to checking pupil numbers, financial information and the match to funding criteria.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

2. The budget for 2005-2006 includes additional funding for supplementary language classes, to address the shortfall of recent years and make some provision for any new groups. The approach to the allocation of funding has therefore been reviewed, in order to propose an appropriate formula, and to determine the allocations from 2005/06 awards.

### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Financial support has been provided to supplementary classes since 1997 by the City Council and previously by the County Council.
- 3.2 The purpose of the grant is to enable minority communities to develop structured opportunities to pass on language and cultural values to their children. It is considered that such classes complement the education provided by schools, affording opportunities for children to develop understanding and pride in their culture, consistent with the Council's Equal Opportunities policy.
- 3.3 A diverse range of linguistic, cultural and religious heritages and over 50 languages are now represented in Derby. The breadth of languages spoken adds great value to the richness and diversity of the community through the medium of developing bilingualism, or in some cases, multilingualism. Being bilingual should be a positive advantage intellectually, socially and culturally. It is clearly important for pupils to become confident and fluent users of English. However, it is equally important for pupils not to be discouraged from using their first language, which is important for maintaining family relationships and for cognitive development.

- 3.4 The National Curriculum states the importance of diversity in language teaching and learning and emphasizes that the selection of languages taught should be in response to local factors and to languages used in the local communities. Explicit religious instruction, in line with current procedures, is not supported under this grant.
- 3.5 Currently, some 890 pupils benefit from supplementary language support in mother tongue and significant numbers of pupils continue their studies in the secondary phase. Community languages provision to GCSE level in Punjabi and Urdu for example, is available in four secondary schools. In all, some 902 pupils are currently studying community languages within the secondary mainstream curriculum. In 2003, 212 pupils were entered for GCSE examinations in either Punjabi or Urdu. Of these, 76% of pupils gained GCSE A\*-C grades, boosting the overall examination performance of schools.

### **Reasons for the review**

- 3.6 The base budget has been under pressure for some years, largely due to the rent cost of two groups. Council Cabinet approved on 10 August 2004 that only the agreed budget level of £12,445 would be available for allocation for 2005/2006 - subject to future budget setting.
- 3.7 Since the grant was established, the diversity of groups in Derby has increased and there are concerns that the needs of new groups are not being met. There is a need to allocate funding on the basis of equity and to identify training needs.

### **Community Consultation**

- 3.8 The process of reviewing support and the use of available funding was undertaken during the autumn term 2004. The consultation included community groups represented on MECAC, the Council's Cultural Diversity Group which includes some of the new groups in the city, the Education Service's Community Reference Group and Derby Racial Equality Council. Questionnaires were sent to 37 organisations and the overall response rate either through written feedback or meetings with group representatives was 58%.
- 3.9 More details of the background to the grant, the review and the key messages from the consultation process are outlined in Appendix 2.

### **Future Models of Funding**

- 3.10 The model proposed is based on pupil numbers with provision for the rental costs where organisations have to use alternative premises (normally schools), and a reserve for new groups coming forward.
- 3.11 The new level of proposed grant is outlined for each group presently receiving grant and is compared to the current grant (Appendix 3). The mechanism for future grant distribution is more transparent. The emphasis on pupil numbers reflects overall education funding principles, moving away from the current historical distribution.

3.12 The proposed basis of grant distribution can be summarised as follows:

- each group receives an initial basic grant, determined by the threshold band within which pupil numbers fall
- any remaining balance is then distributed based on the pupil numbers within individual groups as a percentage of the total numbers of pupils
- for most groups this model allows for an increase above the current basic grant depending on the total numbers of pupils in each group and allows some reserve for new groups. Where the formula results in a drop in funding, some transitional support can be provided in this first year.
- the model ensures that the total budget cannot be exceeded
- an increase in groups and pupil numbers in future years may result in the reduction of the level of the grant to individual groups in order to accommodate new groups
- current rental costs are met, capped at the current level, but with provision for review. Rental costs of any groups would be negotiated as necessary, in the light of the available funding
- a reserve is held for emerging new groups.

3.13 Grant applications for 2005/2006 have been received from the 8 existing groups currently receiving grant, and additionally from two groups which previously received grant. At the present time, no new groups recently established in Derby have expressed an interest in developing supplementary language classes. The proposed allocation process ensures that emerging new groups can also be supported.

3.14 Once approved, it is proposed that allocations in future years will be made through this formula, subject to periodic review.

## OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

3. Variations to the proposed formula have been considered, and one option has been to allocate all of the funding through a formula, without separate rent allocations. This would result in significant variations in grant for three groups and cause particular problems for groups which do not have access to free, appropriate accommodation.

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<b>Background papers:</b>	None
<b>List of appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 - Implications Appendix 2 - Reasons for Review and Community Consultation Appendix 3 - Proposed Model of Funding

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial**

- 1.1 An increase in the overall base budget level of £19,000 for 2005/2006 has now been approved, within the Education Service's budget. It is proposed that the overall rent costs are capped at the current level.
- 1.2 Eligible groups must comply with the City Council's general rules and conditions on grant support. Grant is payable directly to organisations concerned, subject to submission of accounts, supported by invoices for audit purposes. Rental costs are paid directly to the schools or providers concerned.

**Legal**

2. None directly arising from this report.

**Personnel**

3. None directly arising from this report.

**Equalities Impact**

4. The activities contribute to supporting the cultural and language heritages of different groups in the city. The work also contributes to raising pupils' understanding, self-esteem and standards of attainment. The increased budget level will provide some equity in being able to fund new groups and communities in the city, where they can demonstrate the necessary need and capacity.

**Corporate Objectives and Priorities for Change**

5. This work links to the Council's objectives of a stimulating and high quality learning environment and a lively and energetic cultural environment. It supports the continuing priority of raising educational achievement.

### Reasons for the review

- Support to supplementary classes is currently allocated using criteria approved by Education Committee in 1997. The base budget has been under pressure for some years and is not able to absorb the rent costs of two supported groups. Historically, savings have been used from elsewhere within the Access Service to fund the remainder of the proposed allocations and this again happened in 2004/2005. This cannot, however, continue to be sustained.
- At the time of the review, it was expected that only the current budget level of £12,445 would be available for allocation, with implications for the two groups historically supported with rent costs over the past years. Consultation has taken place with affected groups to reduce the overall level of rent cost. As yet, no further progress has been made to reduce rent costs.
- Consideration also needed to be given to help accommodate applications from new groups during the financial year within the core budget allocation. It is likely that new groups in the city may not be in a position to establish their own community venues and would require assistance with rent support to enable mother tongue language and cultural classes to be sustained. This is now possible through an increase in the overall core budget level for 2005/06. The potential introduction of new groups applying for funding may nevertheless result in grants to existing groups being reduced in future years.
- As an explicit condition of grant, future provision needs to outline a range of Education Service training provision for supplementary schools to access. This would for example include updates on child protection, good practice in early years learning, the supportive role of parents, behaviour management, techniques to support mother tongue development and the use of ICT to promote learning.

### Community Consultation Feedback

- The process of reviewing the support and the use of available funding for these activities and the future needs of groups, including those who are new to Derby was undertaken during the autumn term 2004. This included a questionnaire to community groups represented on MECAC, the Council's Cultural Diversity Group which includes some of the new groups in the city, the Education Service's Community Reference Group and Derby Racial Equality Council. The consultation was through a process of oral and written communication including use of translations and interpreters as necessary. The questionnaires were sent to 37 organisations and the overall response rate either through written feedback or meetings with group representatives was 58%. A total of 9 responses favoured funding to be based on pupil numbers. There were 10 responses against this, although it was noted that several copies were sent by one organisation. One group remained undecided.

Key messages from the consultation process can be summarised as follows:

- the principle of equity was recognised by most groups but there was some concern that smaller groups, including new groups, would be disadvantaged in funding terms.

- the provision of training courses to improve pupil support was welcomed by all groups. Suggestions included support for developing language and assessment skills, supporting the establishment of new supplementary classes, raising awareness of teaching styles in schools, standards for co-ordinators, teaching assistants and volunteers, updates on changes in GCSE and A level provision, behaviour support/motivation techniques, access to ICT courses, use of drama/role play and support for book keeping/office management.
- all groups outlined the need to stock adequate levels of first language textbooks, dual language texts, dictionaries and audio-visual resources. Some groups indicated that current levels of grant did not stretch beyond basic class running costs.
- the use of computers and ICT as a learning tool is limited due to insufficient funding to purchase hardware and first language computer programmes. The lack of skilled ICT teachers was raised as an issue.
- many groups already use a range of role-play activities, drama techniques, fables and story telling, poetry, songs and dance, and cultural activities to support pupils language skills. Some groups commented on the need to develop techniques to improve reading, writing and grammar skills.
- many groups commented on the need to encourage pupils to actively learn first languages through better resourced provision and to bridge the 'generation gap' between young people, parents and grandparents. Groups also commented on the need to encourage and maintain cultural identity, to build pupil self confidence and supplement the work of mainstream education in tackling underachievement.
- several of the groups commented on the need to conduct surveys within their communities to determine needs, identify existing skills including teaching skills within the community. Several new groups emphasised support for training and provision of learning materials. It was also apparent that some of the new groups to Derby as yet lacked an organisational structure.