

Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum

**Contains Confidential
or Exempt Information** Yes.

Title of Report The Issue of Rent as it affects Central Bedfordshire
Community Maintained Schools.

Meeting Date: 14 October 2013

Responsible Officer(s) Dawn Hill; Gezim Leka

Presented by: Jim Smart, Head Teacher, Ridgmont Lower School

Action Required:

1. To reimburse to schools from Schools Forum "Hardship Fund" all rents paid to Landlords by Central Bedfordshire Community Schools. This to apply for one year only in the first instance.
2. To (a) apply(vigorously and on the grounds of fairness and natural justice), and successfully, to National Government for the re-instatement of "Rent" as an allowable element in school budgets. OR (b) For the LA to take on responsibility directly to pay the rent on Leases which they have negotiated with the relevant estates.

Summary

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 1. | <p>1. This paper and proposal is about the issue of who should take responsibility for paying rent to third parties for the privilege of occupying school buildings and land, some of which have been schools for 150 years. The options seem to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The pupils of the schools concerned• The LA through the budget formula(currently not permitted)• The LA directly as signatories to leases. <p>2.It is our submission that to ask the pupils to pay is manifestly unfair and that it is the responsibility of the LA to find another solution. As they have not so far been able to do so, we have submitted the above proposals for your consideration.</p> <p>3.The paper is being submitted to the Forum for immediate action.</p> |
|-----------|---|

Background

- 2.
1. Five Central Bedfordshire Lower Schools have historically paid rent. Ridgmont Lower, Woburn Lower and Husborne Crawley Lower pay to the Bedford Estate; Stondon and Southill Lower pay to the Southill Estate. Of these schools, all except Stondon are party to this paper.
2. The amounts involved are:
- Ridgmont – £11,450 p.a. to Bedford Estates
 - Husborne Crawley - £6,700 p.a. to Bedford Estates
 - Woburn - £2,100 p.a. to Bedford Estates & £5,000 p.a. Woburn Education Trust
 - Southill - £3,800 p.a. Southill Estate
3. These amounts were historically always included in our budgets but automatically reimbursed by the LA in similar fashion to Rates.
4. For 2013-14, the revised budget formula does not allow for Rent, leaving the schools concerned to pay out of pupil allocated monies. This is manifestly unfair on the pupils concerned. In spite of lobbying and correspondence, no immediate resolution to this problem has been suggested except for the proposal before you. I have attached a copy of an e-mail outlining the current LA position as I understand it.
5. In the case of Ridgmont Lower the amount is approximately 4.6% of our budget share or £286.00 per pupil. This is a significant disadvantage. It would pay for a lot of resources or one fifth of a Head Teacher, or the best part of a Teaching Assistant. If the parents were asked to actually pay that money we would very soon close! Although I am told this matter was considered when deciding the Lump Sum figure, in effect our rent money has been shared out between all the pupils in Central Bedfordshire.
6. Ridgmont Lower wrote to the Bedford Estate and requested a reduction in rent. This was denied on the grounds that it was a matter between the LA and the school, and that the lease was between CBC and the Estate.

Detailed Recommendation

- 3.
- We understand that the Schools Forum has a contingency fund set aside to compensate for “hardship” in the budget situations of individual schools. We recommend that pending the time it will take Central Bedfordshire to address the issue formally and propose a solution for 2014-15 which is agreeable to all parties, that the schools concerned be relieved by funds from the funds available to the Schools Forum.

4.	We do not believe that the only other option, namely for Rent monies to be paid from pupil funds, is a correct way to proceed.
----	--

Source Documents	Location (including url where possible)
Attached e-mail from Dawn Hill to Jim Smart. 23.07.13	n/a

Paper Presented by Jim Smart, Head Teacher of Ridgmont Lower School ,

On behalf of the Pupils, Parents, Head Teachers and Governors of Ridgmont Lower School, Husborne Crawley Lower School, Woburn Lower School and Southill Lower School.