

## SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Schools Forum held on Wednesday, 13 July 2016 at 4.30pm at the Civic Offices, Portsmouth

### Present

David Jeapes, Head Teacher - Chair	Secondary Schools
Gareth Hughes, Head Teacher	Secondary Schools
Krishna Purbhoo, Head Teacher	Special Schools
Alison Beane	Special Academies
Fiona Calderbank	Secondary Academies
Steve Labeledz ( <i>from item 7</i> )	Secondary Academies
Clive Good, Governor	Primary
Steve Sheehan, Governor	Primary
Carole Damper	Early Years Providers
Councillor Colin Galloway	UKIP
Councillor Lynne Stagg	Liberal Democrat Party

### 20. Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Jackie Collins, Abigail Eales, Councillor John Ferrett, Councillor Hannah Hockaday, Bruce Marr, Lee Miller, Ruth Nabholz-Duncan, Joy Waelend and Sue Wilson.

### 21. Declarations of Interest

Richard Webb, Finance Manager circulated declarations of interest forms to some those members who had not completed them.

Clive Good and David Jeapes declared non-prejudicial interests in item 7 as their schools are named in the report.

### 22. Membership Changes.

Richard Webb, Finance Manager informed members of the following membership changes:

Gareth Hughes and David Jeapes had been reappointed by the maintained Secondary School Head-Teachers

Steve Sheehan had been reappointed at the recent Governors Forum meeting.

There remained a vacancy for a Special School Governor.

### 23. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair.

Richard Webb, Finance Manager explained that as the positions of Chair and Vice Chair had come to the end of their tenures he had contacted all members to request nominations. Other than David Jeapes and Steve Sheehan who had indicated that they were happy to continue in these roles; no further nominations were received.

David Jeapes left the meeting whilst voting for the position of Chair took place.

**DECISION**

**The Schools Forum appointed David Jeapes as Chair.**

Steve Sheehan left the meeting whilst voting for the position of Vice Chair took place.

**DECISION**

**The Schools Forum appointed Steve Sheehan as Vice Chair.**

**24. Minutes and matters arising from the last meeting held on 25 May 2016.**

**DECISION**

**The Schools Forum agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2016.**

Matters Arising.

- Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director of Children's Services - Education will bring a report to the next Schools Forum meeting regarding the fair distribution of pupils and future proofing, as well as the plans for Cliffdale and Redwood Park.
- Richard Webb visited primary and secondary school Head Teachers to explain the proposed future school funding formula changes.
- The letter had been sent to the DfE setting out the Schools Forum's concerns
- The funding reform working group would be discussed later on in the meeting.

**25. 2015-16 Dedicated schools grant outturn report and revised budget 2016-17.**

Alison Egerton, Group Accountant introduced the report. In response to questions she was joined by Richard Webb and Mike Stoneman to clarify the following points:

- It was expected that there would be an increase in the number of pupils in specialist provision. However, the final outturn position showed lower than expected placements, possibly as a result of pupils being supported to remain in mainstream settings.
- The proposals in respect of the funding changes for the Harbour School were based on a commissioning-led review.
- Parts of the Harbour School activities are due to move in September 2017 to the Vanguard Centre.

Alison Beane explained that she believed that funding for additional placements in special school settings was not available. Members sought reassurance that pupils were receiving the education in the appropriate settings.

Mike Stoneman and Richard Webb responded that they were not aware of any pupils that had been prevented from receiving the placements they required because of budgetary constraints. As the budget monitoring reports have shown throughout the year, sufficient funding had been set aside and was clearly available to meet the needs of pupils in high needs settings.

The Chair noted that:

- £2m of the £5m surplus would be used for capital works at Redwood and Clifffdale Schools with supplementary funding provided by the council.
- The forum would carefully monitor the number of pupils having to travel out of the city.

Action - The forum requested a further report be presented by the Inclusion Commissioning Manager in respect of the strategy for supporting pupils with SEND.

## **DECISIONS**

### **The Schools Forum**

- 1. Noted the year end outturn budget position for the Dedicated Schools Grant as at the end of March 2016 and the variance explanations contained within this report.**
- 2. Endorsed the revised DSG budget for 2016-17 as set out in appendix one.**

### **26. Maintained schools balances as at 31 March 2016**

Alison Egerton introduced the report and in response to questions, she and Richard Webb clarified the following points:

- The information contained within report was based on the responses received from Head Teacher and Finance Officers.
- The majority of the schools reviewed in detail within report had clear plans for the use of their balances.
- As part of this year's review of the specific schools mentioned within the report, officers had sought confirmation that proposed of use of the balances reported last year had been implemented.
- The Cabinet Member for Education had expressed concern regarding the high balances at the recent Portfolio meeting.
- There are now an increasing number of schools with low or reducing balances.
- Schools are expected to contact the council for support, in line with the Scheme for Financing Schools if they anticipate financial difficulties.
- Financial training is available for school staff and governors. The training brochure for the Academic Year 2016-17 has been sent to Head Teachers, Finance Officers and Governors. Reminders of the courses available are set out in the governors' and schools' newsletters.

There followed a discussion by members regarding the increase in costs to schools including pay awards and apprenticeships' wages. Members agreed that school governors should access the financial training that the council provides.

The Chair noted that as all schools would be converting to academies in the next few years, it was important that any deficits are addressed promptly.

Action

It was agreed that a letter would be sent to the Chairs of Governors of schools with excessive balances and those with clearly reducing balances; highlighting general concerns. The forum wishes to seek confirmation from Chairs of Governors that they and their schools have clear financial plans for the future.

**DECISION**

**The Schools Forum noted the level of maintained schools' revenue balances and capital balances as at 31 March 2016 as shown in Appendices 2 & 3.**

**27. Future school balances as at 31 March 2016.**

Richard Webb asked members to note the following points in his verbal update:

- The forum and the Cabinet Member for Education received a report outlining the stage one at previous meetings.
- The Department for Education (DfE) has not yet indicated when it will publish the second stage of the consultation.
- The first meeting of the working group next week has been cancelled because of the delay in receiving the second stage consultation information.

Action

A letter is to be sent to the DfE asking when consultation will be published and explaining the detrimental impact of the delay on the local authority's budgeting.

**DECISION**

**The Schools Forum noted the update.**

**28. Any other business.**

The next meeting will be held on 19 October and the following future dates were provisionally agreed: 7 December and 18 January.

The meeting concluded at 5:40pm.

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David Jeapes  
Chair