

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Schools Forum held on Wednesday, 18 January 2017 at 4.30pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Karen Stocks	Head Teacher	Nursery
Jackie Collins	Head Teacher	Primary
Sue Wilson	Head Teacher	Primary
Sarah Sadler	Head Teacher	Primary
Gareth Hughes	Head Teacher	Secondary
David Jeapes	Head Teacher	Secondary
Ian Hunkin	Head Teacher	Special
Steve Labeledz	Academy	Secondary
Alison Beane	Academy	Special
Fiona Calderbank	Academy	Secondary
Ruth Nabholz-Duncan	Governor	Nursery
Clive Good	Governor	Primary
Steve Sheehan	Governor	Primary
Bruce Marr	Governor	Secondary
Colin Galloway	Councillor	UKIP

49. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Hockaday, Councillor Stagg and Joy Waeland.

50. Declarations of Interest

Ian Hunkin declared an interest in item 5 regarding recommendation 'h'.

51. Membership Changes.

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

- Steven Labeledz has been reappointed to represent, secondary academies.
- Lee Miller's tenure has come to an end and the position is now currently vacant.

Vacancies:

Secondary Academy Representative
Governor, Maintained Special School Representative
Labour Party Representative
Roman Catholic Diocese Representative
Anglican Diocese Representative

52. Minutes and matters arising from the previous meeting held on 7 December 2016.

DECISION: the Schools Forum agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2017.

Matters Arising

A letter had been sent to six schools with decreasing budget. Four responses had been received. The responses had provided reassurance that the schools and their Chair of Governors were aware of their financial situation and taking actions accordingly.

Responses from the other two schools will be chased.

53. 2017-18 School revenue funding arrangements and dedicated schools grant budget.

The mainstream schools revenue funding formula.

The Chair thanked members for the comments and questions received from Forum Members. He also reminded them that a decision must be made this afternoon as the funding Proforma has to be submitted to the Department for Education on Friday.

Councillor Neill Young, Cabinet Member for Education explained that at his Portfolio meeting on 16 January, he had approved an amendment to the recommendations to enable Schools Forum members to consider possible alternative proposals for the funding formula; but which must remain within the overall funding allocation of £107,561,752.

Richard Webb, Finance Manager introduced the report and explained that he in response to the feedback received; alternative proposals to the funding formula had been modelled for Members consideration this afternoon.

The forum discussed the following additional papers that were circulated:

1. Summary of other options to balance the DSG.
2. Variation analysis of additional options compared to the proposed 2017-18 budgets (post MFG).
3. Comparison to 2016-17 approved budget shares

Each of the five options presented were affordable within the overall funding allocation of £107,561,752.

The Forum discussed each of the proposals in depth and in response to questions, Richard Webb explained that:

- Due to the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) protection arrangements, no school would see a reduction in funding of more than minus 1.5% per pupil as a result of the funding proposals.
- However, schools continue to see a fluctuation in funding (up or down) as a result of changes in pupil numbers.
- It would not be possible to change the funding formula in a way that exceeded the funding allocation to schools, of more than £107,561,752, as a balanced budget must be produced.
- There are gains and losses for each option and he could not say which would give the best outcomes.

- He could not support a proposal that would utilise the carry-forward to fund the forecast financial pressures. As the carry-forward is a one-off funding source it should be utilised to fund one-off expenses. In addition, the current financial forecast indicates that the carry-forward will amount to only £1m by the end of the next financial year.
- Provided details of the potential funding reductions each school would experience under option 1. (school names were not provided)
- In respect of the financial pressures being reported, it was highlighted that other neighbouring Local Authorities are also experiencing similar pressures with post-16 responsibilities, out-of-city placements and top-up funding for pupils in mainstream schools. Examples referred to included: Dorset, Isle of Wight, Hampshire and Southampton.
- In respect of the proposals relating to ESG, it was confirmed that the de-delegation was only being requested from maintained schools. Officers had sought to reduce the contribution requested from schools as much as possible. Alison Jeffery highlighted that originally a £400k contribution was being sought from schools, but this had been reduced to £150k with the Council now funding the difference. A comparison was provided to other neighbouring Local Authorities proposed de-delegation rates. (Isle of Wight - £32, Hampshire - £9.74, etc.)
- The EFA is providing transitional protection arrangements for academies in respect of the cessation of the ESG funding. However, schools that convert to academy status after 1 September 2017 will not receive ESG funding.

During the discussion, members expressed concern that there was not more time to consider the options that had been tabled at the meeting and that the Forum had already provided a significant amount of money for Special Schools, through the financial support for the reconfiguration of Clifffdale and Redwood Park Special Schools, together with the additional financial support for Redwood Park approved earlier this year. They also noted that being fair is important and that the comparison with other local authorities was useful. The Chair noted that the timescale for this decision was difficult

A short recess was agreed to allow Members time to consider the proposals before making a decision.

The Chair also suggested that the Forum receive a presentation at a future meeting regarding high needs; in order to better understand the pressures developments and changes taking place in this area.

Julia Katherine, Head of Inclusion explained that there are three areas of pressure as highlighted within the report:

- I. Post-16 responsibilities, since the duty of care was extended to 25.
- II. Although the number of pupils placed out of city has remained relatively low, the cost of each placement has increased because of the introduction of the minimum wage and the increasing high needs of the children.
- III. The financial support for pupils in mainstream settings.

Julia Katherine also pointed out a correction to section 5.7 in the report:

During 2015-16 the number of requests for Education, Health and Care Plan assessments from mainstream schools has doubled (from 130 to 260) when compared to 2014-15.

Harbour Alternative Provision Top Up Rates.

An additional paper was presented showing 'Alternative provision top up rates - 2016-17' for neighbouring local authorities.

Jo Perry, Delta Education Trust explained that they had been brought in to support the Harbour School and undertake a review of structure of the school in terms of the curriculum offer, staffing and placements.

The alternative proposal being presented (to those included within the report) was to increase the AP top-up funding rate from £6,000 to £8,000 per annum and to reduce the number of AP commissioned places by 6 from 111 to 105 from April 2017. It is believed that the £6,000 top-up rate was low when compared to other areas.

In response to questions, she explained that

- Full time courses are also available.
- Early indications show outcomes have improved particularly with regard to attendance and exclusions and there have also been fewer violent incidents against staff. This is despite the site not being fit for purpose.
- The number of pupils placed there varies between schools.
- The objective is for pupils to return to their original school as soon as they are ready.
- The short stay and outreach services would be employed before exclusion was considered.
- Pupils' needs are assessed. If it is concluded they may not be able to successfully return to a mainstream setting, the original school and the Harbour School will work together to ensure the appropriate action is taken.
- The preferred option is option 2 but if this not possible the second best one is option 4.

Alison Jeffery explained that she supported the proposals.

Members expressed concern about the potential impact on schools.

The Chair welcomed the direction of travel for the Harbour School and wished them well.

a. Endorsed the proposed changes to the mainstream schools revenue funding formula as set out in section 5.

(Votes: 10 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions)

As the Forum voted in favour of the option presented in the report, the following alternative options presented at the meeting were rejected:

(i) Reduce the cap on financial gains from 1.5% to 0% and use the funding released to increase the Basic Per Pupil Entitlement funding rate by £30.29.

(ii) Reduce the primary and secondary lump sum by £5,000 and use the funding released to increase the Basic Per Pupil Entitlement funding rate by £10.69.

(iii) Reduce the cap on financial gains from 1.5% to 0.43% and the primary and secondary lump sum by £5,000, and use the funding released to increase the Basic Per Pupil Entitlement funding rate by £27.31.

(iv) Reduce the cap on financial gains from 1.5% to 0.19% and the primary and secondary lump sum by £2,500, and use the funding released to increase the Basic Per Pupil Entitlement funding rate by £29.78.

(v) Reduce the cap on financial gains from 1.5% to 0% and the primary and secondary lump sum by £5,000, and use the funding released to increase the Basic Per Pupil Entitlement funding rate by £39.73.

b. Agreed (mainstream school members only) to the de-delegation of:

I. funding for Behaviour Support Services for the period April to August 2017 (primary only).

(Agreed unanimously)

II. funding to contribute to the costs of services provided to maintained schools previously funded from the ESG general funding rate.

(Votes - Primary: 5 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions)

(Votes - Secondary: 2 for, 1 against, 0 abstentions)

c. Endorse the de-delegated unit values for 2017-18 as shown at Appendix 4.

(Votes: 7 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions)

d. Endorse the carry-forward of the final balance of the Schools Contingency Fund from 2016-17 into 2017-18 for use for the same purpose.

(Agreed unanimously)

e. Endorse the amount of the growth fund for 2017-18 at £275,300.

(Agreed unanimously)

f. Noted the estimated pressures on the Growth Fund for 2018-19 and the proposals to consult with schools on changes to the growth fund criteria.

g. Endorse the school revenue funding pro-forma at Appendix 7 for submission to the EFA on the 20 January 2017.

(Agreed unanimously)

h. Agreed to adopt the following option in respect of the AP top-up funding rate for the Harbour School:

i. Maintain the AP top-up funding rate at the current £6,000 per annum.

- ii. Increase the AP top-up funding rate from £6,000 to £8,000 per annum and a further reduction in the Basic Per Pupil Funding rate for mainstream schools by £4.63.
- iii. Increase the AP top-up funding rate from £6,000 to £7,000 per annum and a further reduction in the Basic Per Pupil Funding rate for mainstream schools by £2.32.

Alternative proposal presented at the meeting:

- iv. Increase the AP top-up funding rate from £6,000 to £8,000 per annum and reduce the number of AP commissioned places by 6 from 111 to 105 from April 2017.

(Votes: option 1: 0 for, option 2: 2 for, option 3 0 for and option 4: 10 for)

- i. Endorsed the determination of the 2017-18 schools budget (including the individual schools budgets) shown at appendix 1, together with the supporting explanations contained within this report and specifically agree the following budget lines:

- I. Admissions
- II. Schools Forum
- III. ESG retained duties.

(Agreed unanimously)

- j. Endorsed the 2017-18 Element 3 Top-up rates for the Special Schools Resourced Units and Alternative Provision (Flying Bull only) settings as set out in Appendix 5.

(Agreed unanimously)

- k. Endorsed the decision that any carry-forward balances from 2016-17 be used to assist with the continued introduction of the funding reform changes and fund any potential financial pressures arising during 2017-18.

(Agreed unanimously)

- l. Noted that a report will be presented in February 2017 setting out:
 - i. The local funding arrangements in respect of the 2, 3 and 4 year old early years provision for 2017-18; which will comply with the requirements of both the regulations and the operational guide.

- ii. The necessary amendments to the 2017-18 budget, in order to reflect the new Early Years allocation and the corresponding changes to the expenditure budgets; which must be affordable on an ongoing basis within the available funding allocation.

54. Any other business.

There was no other business.

The meeting concluded at 6.35 pm.

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Chair