

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Schools Forum held on Wednesday, 25 February 2015 at 4.30pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

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| Mark Mitchell, Governor | Special (Chair) |
| Clive Good, Governor | Primary |
| Bruce Marr, Governor | Secondary |
| Steve Sheehan, Governor | Primary |
| Jackie Collins, Head Teacher | Primary |
| Gareth Hughes, Head Teacher | Secondary |
| David Jeapes, Head Teacher | Secondary |
| Sue Wilson, Head Teacher | Primary |
| Alison Beane | Special academy representative |
| Margaret Beel | Primary academy representative |
| Steve Labeledz | Secondary academy representative |
| Carole Damper | Early Years provider |
| Councillor Colin Galloway | United Kingdom Independence Party |

8. Apologies

Apologies were received from: Margaret Dunford; Councillor Ken Ferrett; Steve Frampton; James Humphries; Councillor Lynne Stagg and Councillor Neill Young.

9. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

Members were reminded to send their annual declarations of interest forms to Richard Webb if they had not already done so.

10. Membership Changes.

There were no changes to the membership.

11. Minutes and Matters Arising From the Previous Meeting held on 21 January 2015

School Members agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January.

Matters Arising.

There were no matters arising.

12. Appointment of Chair.

The Chair explained that he intended to stand down as Governor and Chair of the Harbour Schools and would therefore stand down as a Member and Chair of the Schools Forum with effect from the end of this meeting.

Richard Webb explained that he had contacted all members before this meeting to request nominations for this position and only David Jeapes had been put forward. There were no further nominations.

David Jeapes left the meeting whilst voting took place.

The Schools Forum appointed David Jeapes as Chair

Note: this was approved unanimously.

Mark Mitchell continued to Chair the remainder of the meeting.

13. Appointment of Vice Chair.

Richard Webb explained that he had contacted all members seeking nominations but had not received any.

David Jeapes nominated Steve Sheehan who indicated that he was happy to take on this role. There were no further nominations.

Steve Sheehan left the meeting whilst voting took place.

The Schools Forum appointed Steve Sheehan as Vice Chair.

Note: this was approved unanimously.

Richard Webb, Finance Manager said that it had been a pleasure to work with Mark Mitchell and that he looked forward to working with the new Chair and Vice Chair.

14. 2015-16 Dedicated Schools Grant Budget.

Richard Webb introduced the report and in response to questions from members, clarified the following points:

- The 2 year old funding would be based initially on the January 2015 census count. A further voluntary census count will take place in the Autumn term, but specific details about these arrangements and the funding adjustments are not yet available.
- A revised budget with any proposed changes will be considered at the July meeting, which may include a request to carry forward any unused 2 year old trajectory funding from 2014-15 to 2015-16.
- He is confident in the budget that had been presented, though the financial pressures highlighted both in this report and the January report remain areas of uncertainty and challenge for 2015-16.
- The out of city placements are funded dependent on the needs of the child through contributions from education, health and/ or children's social care.

Julia Katherine, Inclusion Commissioning Manager, Education and Strategic Commissioning explained that:

- A review of early years SEN provision had been carried out as part of Priority G of the Children's Trust strategy.
- Whilst there is no intention to increase the number of SEN specialist placements, the council is carrying out a number of reviews to inform its SEN place planning and ensure that the specialist places available are

targeted at the areas of greatest need (e.g. the increase in demand for specialist places for children with autism).

- Out of city placements are also currently being reviewed to ensure that we are able to meet the needs of children locally, where possible.
- Special school provision is almost running at full capacity. However Portsmouth is the 4th highest local authority nationally for placing children with statements in specialist provision and so there is a need to ensure we have a continuum of good quality SEN provision across the board from mainstream to additionally resourced provision to specialist provision.
- The placement of pupils from other areas in Portsmouth schools is not an opportunity to bring in additional funding.

The Schools Forum:

1. Endorsed the determination of the 2015-16 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:

- The amended growth fund
- The early years central expenditure and
- The Admissions Service and Schools Forum.

2. Endorsed the 2015-16 Element 3 Top-up rates for the Special Schools and Resourced Units as set out in Appendix 2.

3. Endorsed the 2015-16 Element 3 Top-up rates for the Alternative Provision settings set out in paragraph 6.12.

4. Endorsed the decision that any carry-forward balances from 2014-15 be used to assist with the continued introduction of the funding reform changes and fund any potential financial pressures arising during 2015-16.

15. School Modernisation Capital Programme - Capital Contributions From Schools.

Mike Stoneman Strategic Commissioning Manager introduced the report and tabled an updated paper showing that a further four responses had been received; bringing the total number to 26. In response to questions from members, he clarified the following points:

- The local authority still has the duty to ensure that the schools are in sound condition with due regard to the health and safety of children and staff.
- The report to the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People on 5 March 2015 includes the proposed allocation of corporate funding for projects that will be undertaken during the summer and autumn 2015. This will be shared with members.
- Schools with balances of less than £25,000 would not be expected to contribute.
- The methodology for the contribution (as set out in appendix 1) will apply a multiple based on the school's balance in the year that the scheme would start. If the scheme takes more than one year, the contribution would not be reassessed regardless of whether the balances have changed.

The Chair made the following observations:

- It is a shame but not a surprise that the majority of schools had rejected the proposed scheme.
- Schools with higher balances would contribute more.
- The academies programme complicates things as schools that are planning to convert may be reluctant to join the scheme.
- Schools are responsible for non-emergency repairs.

During the discussion, members noted the following points:

- If the scheme is looked at again next year, it is important that the implications of not joining are clearly set out. A list of the projects that would not be carried out if the scheme is not adopted could be sent to schools.
- Schools must remember that the priority is the needs of the pupils.

It was agreed that details of the schemes approved for 2015/16 would be sent to all schools, including details of high priority schemes that the council has been unable to support due to the decision of schools not to support the proposed collaborative contribution methodology.

The Schools Forum:

- a) Noted the response and feedback to the request that was sent out to school Governing Bodies to confirm whether they would support the new methodology, as set out in Appendix 2 of this report;**
- b) Acknowledged that the proposed new methodology (as set out in Appendix 1) is unviable, due to the fact that nearly half of the schools that responded confirmed they would not support the proposal;**
- c) Endorsed the alternative methodology (as set out in section 6 of this report), whereby only maintained schools having capital schemes delivered will be expected to contribute financially to the schemes.**

Note: all the above were approved unanimously.

16. Any Other Business.

Mark Mitchell was thanked for his commitment in his role as Chair and wished well for the future.

Julian Wooster informed members that this was his last meeting as he was leaving the council and explained that an interim Director of Children's Services would be appointed. He was wished all the best in his new position.

The meeting concluded at 5.40pm.

Mark Mitchell
Chair