

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Schools Forum held on Wednesday, 20 January 2016 at 4.30pm in the Civic Offices, Portsmouth

Present

David Jeapes, Head Teacher	Secondary (Chair)
Gareth Hughes, Head Teacher	Secondary
Jackie Collins, Head Teacher	Primary
Karen Stocks, Head Teacher	Primary
Krishna Purbhoo, Head Teacher	Special
Sue Wilson, Head Teacher	Primary
Claire Stevens	Academy - Secondary
Margaret Beal	Academy - Primary
Alison Beane	Academy - Secondary
Fiona Calderbank	Academy - Secondary
Steve Sheehan, governor	Primary
Clive Good, governor	Primary
Ruth Nabholz-Duncan, governor	Nursery
Steve Frampton	16-19 Representative
Abigail Eales	Anglican Diocese
Councillor John Ferrett	Labour Party
Councillor Lynne Stagq	Liberal Democrat Party

38. Apologies

Apologies were received from Bruce Marr, Councillor Galloway, Sarah Sadler and Lee Miller (Claire Stevens deputised for him).

39. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

40. Membership Changes.

Beverley Pennekett reported that:

- Ruth Nabholz-Duncan had been appointed as the nursery representative governor.
- Fiona Calderbank had replaced James Humphries as the secondary academy representative.
- Councillor John Ferrett had replaced Councillor Ken Ferrett as the Labour Party representative.
- Jackie Collins and Sarah Sadler had been reappointed as primary head teacher representatives.
- Abbie Eales is the new representative for the Anglican Diocese

41. Minutes and Matters Arising From the Previous Meeting held on 21 October 2016.

DECISION

The Schools Forum agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2015.

Matters Arising

The Governors Forum meeting in November was well attended, thanks to forum members reminding governors.

The Chair and Carole Damper met to discuss how head teachers could support parents who would be affected by the forthcoming revision to the tax credits scheme. The Chair reported that although this scheme had been delayed in the House of Lords, work would continue and an update would be provided to the forum at a future meeting.

An email had been sent to phases seeking views on the reduction of the school revenue funding arrangements 2016/17 lump sum in future years.

The Chair noted that closer links were required between the forum and the schools and providers that it represents.

42. School Revenue Funding Arrangements 2016/17.

Alison Egerton, Group Accountant introduced the report and then in response to questions she and Beverley Pennekett Finance Manager explained that:

The Contingency Fund

- The fund currently stands at approximately £140,000.
- There was a £10,000 call on it this year (2015-16).
- The fund enables the local authority (LA) to deal with any deficits that arising from school closures or when there is an unacceptable cost to a school.
- It is very difficult to predict the amount that would be required in any year.
- If the fund were to reduce, the local authority's flexibility would be limited.
- Only maintained schools can call on the fund.

Administration of free school meals.

- There are two members of staff who carry out free school meals' eligibility checks. There has been no increase in staffing levels.
- Academies can buy in to the traded service.
- If there were no de-delegation, the LA would not be able to provide the service and schools would need to perform their own eligibility checks.
- The de-delegation unit rates have been calculated on a full cost recovery basis.
- The service costs £43,000 overall, of which approximately £28,000 is funded by maintained schools. There are fixed costs and some overhead costs included.

- Last year nine schools converted to academies, which meant there were fewer schools paying into the fund via de-delegation; the contributions from individual academies would be likely to increase accordingly.
- It would be possible to hold the de-delegated rate at the 2015-16 level and subsidise the overall cost from the de-delegated contingency. The charge to academies cannot be subsidised in this way as the de-delegated contingency is available only for maintained schools.
- In previous years, the charges did not fully cover the cost of the service.

Members discussed the proposals and made the following comments:

- Not all academies have moved away from the service.
- It would be useful to know the number of schools paying it to the service.
- The proposed increase in cost is significant.
- The rationale for the proposed increase requires clarification.
- It is disappointing that members were not given early warning of the increase in cost and are required to make an immediate decision since the deadline for submitting the proforma to the Department for Education is so tight.
- Academies generally buy-in services at the same rate as maintained schools.

School Revenue Funding Formula.

- The IDACI index has been updated to September 2015, from September 2010. It is expected to remain the same for the next five years. The change has had a significant effect on the funding formula and if all factors remained the same, funding allocated in the formula via the IDACI factor would drop by more than £2m.
- This is in line with the national picture, which shows that deprivation is at a lower level than 5 years ago. Officers have been in touch with other local authorities facing similar issues to try to understand how they are compensating for the change in their funding formulae.
- Officers have tried to maximise stability of core funding for schools and to minimise reliance on the minimum funding guarantee. They have modelled about 40-50 options.
- All options must conform with the regulations and must use a variation on 14 pre-determined allowable factors.
- The minimum funding guarantee has ensured that no school has lost more than 1.5% per pupil. Whilst some schools may have experienced larger losses overall, this would be due to fluctuations in pupil numbers.

Growth fund

In response to question, Alison explained that approximately £295,000 of the Growth Fund was spent last year.

High needs

No changes were proposed to top-up rates for high needs pupils, although the continued pressure on the high needs budget was noted. One potential way of reducing pressure is to remodel our in-house provision which could reduce our reliance on expensive out of city provision. A further report on this will come to the next meeting.

The Chair commented that we should seek to educate our high needs' pupils within the city wherever possible and thanked officers for their hard work.

The Schools Forum:

a) Agreed the following changes to the mainstream schools revenue funding formula for 2016-17:

Expenditure Item	De-Delegation Rates			
	Phase	Basis	2015-16 £	2016-17 £
Administration of Free School Meals	Primary	NOR	1.25	1.25
	Secondary		1.71	1.71
Licences & Subscriptions	Primary	NOR	0.11	0.28
	Secondary		.11	0.28
Union Duties	Primary	NOR	3.53	3.53
	Secondary		3.53	3.53
Museum & Library Service	Primary	NOR	1.12	1.12
Schools Contingency Fund	Primary & Secondary	NOR	£10	0.00
Behaviour Support	Primary	NOR	13.52	13.52
	Primary	FSM	40.14	40.14

NOR - Number on roll

FSM - Free school meals factor.

a i) Agreed that the shortfall in de-delegated funding for the administration of free school meals will be charged to the school-specific contingency fund in 2016-17 and the criteria for allowing this will be amended and agreed at the next meeting.

b) Approved the de-delegated unit values for 2016-17 as shown at appendix 3.

c) Endorsed the amount of the growth fund for 2016-17 at £365,000.

d) Endorsed the school funding pro-forma at appendix 4 for submission to the EFA on 21 January 2016.

e) Endorsed the determination of the 2016-17 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. Early years central expenditure
 - ii. Admissions Service
 - iii. Schools Forum
- f) Endorsed the 2016-17 element 3 top-up rates for the special schools resourced units and alternative provision settings as set out in appendix 7.
- g) Endorsed the decision that any carry-forward balances from 2015-16 be used to assist with the continued introduction of the funding reform changes and fund any potential financial pressures arising during 2016-17, for example, to support remodelling of SEND provision as set out in paragraph 8.11, subject to consultation with the Schools Forum.

Note: all the above were approved unanimously.

43. Dedicated Schools Grant Budget Monitoring Report for the Second Quarter 2015/16.

Beverley Pennekett, Finance Manager introduced the report and asked members to disregard appendix one which was not relevant.

The Schools Forum noted the forecast year-end budget position as at the end of quarter 2, for the Dedicated Schools Grant, together with the associated explanations, as detailed in section 4 of the report.

44. Any Other Business.

The Chair asked members to inform him of any reports that they would like to come to a future meeting.

He also informed members that the next meeting on 24 February in the Executive Meeting Room, third floor, the Guildhall.

The meeting concluded at 6pm.

David Jeapes
Chair