

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF A MEETING of the Schools Forum held on Wednesday 25 September at 4:30pm in the Guildhall, Portsmouth.

(NB These minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting which can be found at www.portsmouth.gov.uk).

Present

Tom Blair, Governor - Secondary
Clive Good, Governor - Primary
Suzy Horton, Governor - Primary.
Steve Sheehan, Governor - Secondary
Justeen White, Governor - Primary

Councillor Ken Ferrett, the Labour Party's shadow spokesperson for Children & Education.

Carole Damper, Early Years Provider

Alison Beane, Headteacher - Special
Fiona Calderbank, Headteacher - Secondary
Jackie Collins, Headteacher - Primary
David Jeapes, Headteacher - Secondary
Mike Smith, Headteacher - Secondary
Karen Stocks, Headteacher - Nursery

Councillor Rob Wood, Cabinet Member for Children & Education - Observer

Officers

Richard Webb, Finance Manager
Richard Harvey, Education Officer
Julian Wooster, Strategic Director
Jane Di Dino, Local Democracy Officer

15 Apologies for absence (AI 1).

Bruce Marr, Mark Mitchell, Jayne Pratt, Neill Young, Di Mitchell and Sarah Sadler sent their apologies.

16 Declarations of interests (AI 2).

Clive Good declared an interest in item 4.
Alison Beane declared an interest in item 8.
Steve Sheehan declared an interest in item 8.

17 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 July 2013 (AI 3).

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Schools Forum meeting held on 17 July 2013 be confirmed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

Steve Sheehan - primary governor not secondary and declared an interest in item 7 not 8.

Matters arising.

The report on schools with significantly high uncommitted balances will be presented to the December meeting.

Two-year old funding update:

- Catherine Kickham will provide an update on the actions listed.
- The early years underspend related to the budget for Nursery Quality Assurance and was due a small underspend in both the salary budget and non-pay budget. The budget for 2014-15 remains at the same level as in 2013-14.

18 School Loan Scheme (AI 4).

Richard Webb, Finance Manager presented the report that was circulated with the agenda and in response to questions clarified the following points:

- Schools are not required to inform the Local Authority when they are considering conversion to Academy status.
- Alternative sources of funding are potentially available to maintained schools, in the absence of the loan scheme, these include, the Council's capital programme, accumulated school balances and the Salix Loan scheme.
- It is not mandatory requirement for Local Authorities to operate a School Loan Scheme.
- The highest individual loan outstanding is for £150,000. There is a total of £427,800 outstanding.

The Schools Forum agreed to discontinue the operation of the loan scheme for new loans with immediate effect (option A). *(10 members voted for option A; 1 member voted for option B).*

19 Funding of Outreach Services (AI 5).

Richard Webb, Finance Manager presented the report that was circulated with the agenda and in response to questions from the forum the following points were clarified:

- Most of the allocated outreach funding is used to support the employment of staff to deliver the services; therefore the Special Schools will need time to adjust if the Schools Forum were to decide to implement a traded outreach service.
- Last year it was identified that Outreach Funding would be reviewed in more detail, following implementation of the new funding formula arrangements. Therefore this report is being presented to Schools Forum today.
- Outreach funding is currently allocated from the high needs budget.

Schools Forum Members agreed option A - to continue to allocate funding of outreach services to the individual special schools from the high needs budget. *(11 members voted for option A; 1 member voted against).*

20 Funding of Behaviour Support Services (AI 6).

Richard Webb, Finance Manager presented the report that was circulated with

the agenda. Eric Bell (Interim Head Teacher - Harbour School) was invited to speak to members and asked them to consider the following points:

- Discussions had been held with the teachers' union and school governors.
- Governors will decide on how to move forward to the consultation phase, which would require at least 90 days.
- If a fully traded behaviour support service was to be introduced, Mr Bell asked members to consider introducing this from September 2014 (option c).

A discussion took place regarding the potential implications of the three options.

Primary Phase Schools Forum members agreed option A - to de-delegate funding from maintained schools for behaviour support services to central control. (Approved unanimously).

Secondary Phase School Forum members agreed option C - to de-delegate funding from maintained schools for the period April 2014-August 2014 and implement a fully traded behaviour support service from September 2014. (Approved unanimously).

21 School Funding Reform 2014-15 (AI 7).

Richard Webb, Finance Manager presented the report that was circulated with the agenda.

a. Primary Schools Forum members agreed unanimously for the de-delegation proposals set out in section 4.4. Secondary Phase Schools Forum members agreed unanimously for the de-delegation proposals set out in section 4.4 but did not vote on museum and library services.

Additionally, the Schools Forum:

- b. Noted the proposal to establish a contingency fund in 2014-15 as set out in paragraphs 4.5 and 4.6.**
- c. Agreed the proposed treatment of the centrally retained expenditure budgets as set out in paragraphs 4.7 to 4.9.**
- d. Noted the consultation document issued to schools in Appendix 2 and that responses to the consultation document will be reported to the Schools Forum at the meeting on 23 October 2013.**

22 Craneswater Annex (AI 8).

Richard Harvey, Education Officer introduced the report and in response to questions and explained that some pupils are placed out of the city for schooling.

Councillor Rob Wood noted that there are approximately 20 Portsmouth pupils placed outside the city.

Alison Beane noted that:

- As high needs pupils reach adolescence, sometimes their needs change.
- The pupils whose needs are best met in a specialist provision such as that proposed for Craneswater require a lot of space; normally 2:1 adult support to manage their behaviour. If they had a residential placement, they would

- probably have an even higher level of adult support.
- Special schools have had many discussions regarding how to manage the increasing demand for places. There is currently a waiting list for places at Mary Rose School and managing provision is very difficult.
 - The aim is to keep pupils in education locally for as long as possible.

Mike Smith expressed concern that this issue had not been discussed prior to this meeting and that a wider debate is required.

Julian Wooster noted that:

- Difficult decisions had to be made about education, welfare and health needs by a range of panels and that these schools cater for high end needs.
- A number of pupil placements are funded by health and social care.
- Out of city provision is a significant resource issue.
- There is an increased demand for specialist provision within the city.
- A future directions paper could be provided to the forum if required.

Steve Sheehan observed that it is important to see the wider picture.

The Schools Forum

- **Approved the establishment of a resourced unit with 6 places, which will be managed by Mary Rose School in the Craneswater Annex.**
- **Approved the element 3 'top up rate of £25,448' for pupil places in the resourced unit.**
- **Noted that the funding for 2013/14 will be identified from within the high needs block and acknowledged that a sustainable funding source will need to be identified for 2014/25 onwards, which may require reallocation of funding from other areas with the Dedicated Schools Grant. (Unanimous) Alison Beane did not vote.**

23 Any Other Business (AI 9).

David Jeapes informed the forum that plans are progressing for the development of Mayfield School into an all-through school and indications show that it will be very popular.

Carol Damper explained that 600 families in Portsmouth (400 council tenants and 200 housing association tenants) have not paid the rent top up required following the introduction of the bedroom tax. Once they fall into eight weeks rent arrears, eviction proceedings could start which will have an impact on pupils.

24 Dates of Future Meetings (AI 10).

23 October 2013
18 December 2013
15 January 2014

The meeting concluded at 6pm.