

Schools' Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd October 2012 at the Civic Offices

Attendance

Members:

Suzy Horton
Bruce Marr
Mark Mitchell (Chair)
Steve Sheehan
Justeen White
David Wilson

Representative:

Gov – Primary
Gov - Secondary
Gov – Special
Gov - Primary
Gov – Primary
Gov - Primary

Alison Beane
Jackie Collins
Sarah Sadler
Mike Smith
Karen Stocks (*for Irene Baldry*)
Sue Wilson (*for Louise Linscott*)

HT – Special
HT – Primary
HT – Primary
HT - Secondary
HT – Nursery
HT - Primary

Carol Damper

EY – PVI

Emily Fletcher

Diocese

Observers:

Cllr Rob Wood
Bev Pennekett

Cabinet Member
Education Funding Agency

Officers:

John Bean
Di Mitchell
Maria Smith
Richard Webb
Julian Wooster

Head of Building Maintenance
Head of Education
Senior Accountant
Finance Manager
Strategic Director

Item**Action**

1. Apologies: Tom Blair, Lynn Evans, David Jeapes, Jayne Pratt

2. Declaration of interests:

Declarations of interest forms were included in the meeting papers. It was requested that members complete and sign the forms and return to Richard Webb.

Action: All members to complete this if not done already.

All

It was confirmed that there were no conflicts of interest to items on the

agenda.

3. Elect Chair

Mike Smith nominated Mark Mitchell to continue as chair of the Schools Forum and this was seconded by Justeen White. There were no other nominations and the Forum unanimously agreed to re-elect Mark Mitchell. Mark Mitchell accepted the nomination.

4. Minutes and Matters Arising from last meeting on 11th July 2012

There were no actions arising from the previous meeting.

AMP Meeting Programme. John Bean was asked to confirm if all AMP meetings were still expected to be complete by the end of October 2012. He stated this was the case.

Funding for Exceptional Additional Pupil Numbers. Mark Mitchell highlighted that we need to come up with criteria as to what defines 'significant and sustained increases' with regard to additional funding being made available to schools.

Action: Richard Webb to bring back proposals to either the next meeting or the December meeting.

RW

Pupil Premium. Mike Smith highlighted that the pupil premium figure for 2012/13 had been increased to £619 per eligible pupil.

Additional Meeting. Mark Mitchell reminded members that an additional meeting had been called for 24th October 2012 primarily to discuss the School Funding Reforms. Members were reminded that the proposals were out for consultation and that they needed to be endorsed before 31st October. It was requested that if there were other things on the agenda that the Schools Funding Reform was dealt with first.

5. Schools Forum Constitution

Richard Webb presented a report on the revised Schools Forum Constitution reflecting the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012 which came into force on 1st October 2012.

The main changes to the regulations relate to the membership and proceedings of schools forums.

The requirement that schools and Academies should have broadly proportionate representation according to pupil numbers in each category is

maintained. However, there is no longer a requirement to have a minimum of 15 people on schools forum. Currently, schools forum has 24 members and no changes are proposed to the membership at this time. Membership composition will need to be reviewed again if more schools convert to Academy status.

The following constitutional criteria remain valid:

- schools forum are required to meet at least four times per year; and
- schools forum is only quorate if 40% of the membership is present.

One of the main changes under the new regulations, is that all meetings of the schools forum must be public meetings and all papers considered by the forum and the minutes of their meetings will be published on the Council's website.

There will also be a restriction on local authority members and officers who are not members of the Schools Forum taking part in its meetings. The Education Funding Agency (EFA) has been granted observer status at Schools Forum meetings. This is intended to provide support to the local process and provide a national perspective.

With regards to voting, all Members are entitled to vote on all matters put to a vote. However, only school members and those who represent early years providers, are able to vote on matters relating to the funding formulae.

Due to the fact that there were likely to be a number of academy conversions over the next 12 months it was questioned how the number of academy representatives on the forum would be addressed. It was confirmed that academies don't need to be represented by phase just by proportion of pupils. It was also confirmed that if a school of an existing member were to convert to an academy then that member would need to resign as they would no longer hold the office for which they were nominated. If individuals have a dual role they can only represent one role on the forum.

It was decided to review the constitution regularly and specifically when there is a significant increase in the number of schools converting to academy status.

Action: Richard Webb to add a sentence into the constitution to state that membership will be reviewed regularly to reflect the number of academies in the city. RW

An updated schedule of the 'Schools Forums Powers and Responsibilities' was issued by DfE on 1st October and it was proposed that this replaced the table in Appendix 1.

The Schools Forum approved the constitution with the inclusion of the above sentence and the revised schedule the 'Schools Forums Powers and Responsibilities'.

6. AMS Matters October 2012

John Bean presented a report informing Schools Forum of current issues within the AMS service.

The Repairs and Maintenance Service Level Agreement (SLA) for 2013/15 is currently being prepared and 2/3 head teachers are being sought to assist with the SLA review.

The Managing School Premises guide is being redrafted to take account of changes in legislation and PCC corporate standards and consultation/assistance from secondary and primary head teachers would be welcome prior to re-issue in 2013. It was felt that school bursars may be more appropriate than head teachers to assist with this work.

A letter was attached to the paper that had been sent to schools regarding changes to the energy contract with Laser. The changes will lead to more favourable tariff rates which will hopefully net off the impact of increasing energy costs. It was queried who in the school the letter was sent to and John Bean stated that he believed it would have been sent to finance officers.

Salix have announced a new wave of funding for energy projects. The focus of this is energy saving projects such as roof/wall insulation, double glazing and lighting. An interest free loan is available with no capital upfront expenditure. Repayment of the loan will be based on the energy savings. The closing date for applications to Salix is the 31st October. Alan Barber, AMS Energy Engineer will assist schools with application calculations. As a rule schools are not allowed to take out loans however the Secretary of State has made an exception regarding Salix.

Under the terms of the new Kitchen Catering SLA contract, Churches Limited are responsible for servicing equipment and responding to any equipment failures. KKA are responsible for any fabric/drainage reactive repairs. Any failures in kitchens should be reported to the AMS Help Desk.

The Catering SLA will be reviewed during Autumn and tabled at the Schools Forum meeting in December. 2/3 Head teachers are sought to assist with the SLA review. Sarah Sadler offered to assist with this.

During the summer holiday period AMS undertook and satisfactorily completed 42 education projects at a cost of c£2.571m. The average level of school satisfaction with AMS was 92.5% and 85% satisfaction with contractors. John Bean thanked all the schools who had work done over the Summer.

Action: John Bean to contact schools to find

- 2/3 head teachers to assist with the Repairs and Maintenance SLA
- 2/3 bursars to assist with the Managing School Premises guide
- 2 further head teachers to assist with the catering SLA

JB

The Schools Forum noted the report.

7. Pupil Place Planning

Di Mitchell gave a verbal update on the current consultation regarding the School Organisation Plan. A schedule of meetings has been arranged and details will be going out to schools tomorrow. The meetings will be taking place from mid-October until mid-November. The consultation is available on the website.

Carol Damper stated that the latest statistics from the ONS suggested that there was going to be a 24% increase in the population of Portsmouth between now and 2024. This is one of the largest increases in the country and higher than our comparators.

Julian Wooster stated that although the modelling is still being done and that current projections show a fall off in the number of 0-5 year olds in a few years time that this is unlikely to happen. He stated that the current admission criteria will have to be reviewed but there is no current plan to change catchment areas.

The Schools Forum noted the report.

8. DSG 2012/13 and use of Contingency Provision

Richard Webb presented a report informing and updating the schools forum of the final Dedicated Schools Grant settlement and the latest position regarding the contingency funding available. It also sought schools forum approval to the intended use of the available funding.

The estimate of Portsmouth's DSG allocation for 2012/13 is £123.138m (excl. Charter). The final DSG allocation for 2012/13 was published on the 4th September at a value of £123.171m [excluding Academy recoupment], a variation of £33,000.

The current position of the contingency is set out below:

	£'000's	£'000's
Contingency provision 2012/13		500
Add:		
Increase in DSG brought forward	560	
Additional DSG from final settlement	33	
		593
		1,093
Less:		
Grants to voluntary organisations approved 27/04/11	-26	
Provision to meet central LACSEG recoupment	-28	

"underspend" brought forward relating to "Every Child a Reader" allocation	-82	
Provision for reduced income and growth in requirements for "out of city" placements	-221	
		-357
Retained contingency provision		736

The budget report to Schools Forum in January 2012 identified that the budget, and hence the allocation to schools, incorporated the balance brought forward of £1.6m and identified the risk this posed by incorporating "one off" funding into a core allocation to schools.

The school funding reform proposals are also going to present a period of funding instability for schools and it was proposed that the remaining contingency, together with any additional savings that may materialise during the year, should be carried forward to 2013/14 to assist the introduction of the new arrangements.

Further information was required on the increased call on contingency to support out of city placement.

Action: Richard Webb to bring back details to the next meeting on the cost of out of city placements. RW

Members also discussed potential alternative uses for the contingency.

The Schools Forum agreed the proposed use of contingency.

9. Review of Special Staff Costs

Richard Webb presented a report explaining the Special Staff Costs that are charged to the centrally held element of Dedicated Schools Grant.

The budgeted level of charge for 2012/13 is £247,800, representing 2.75% of the total central spending of £8,983,957 identified in the Central Expenditure Limit calculation. The provision meets a variety of costs that do not fall evenly across schools.

The budget supports the costs of union representation. In future this will have to be delegated to schools. Schools Forum will by phase be able to agree de-delegation. In practice it was felt that this would only operate effectively if there were agreement from both phases.

The Schools Forum noted the report.

10. Review of Nursery Quality Assurance

Richard Webb presented a report explaining the Nursery Quality Assurance costs charged to the Dedicated Schools Grant.

The budgeted level of recharge for 2012/13 is £105,200 and is part of the central spending on Under 5's. It represents just over 1% of the total central spending of £8,983,957 identified in the Central Expenditure Limit calculation.

The costs relate to 3 employees [1.9 fte] together with associated contributions to costs for transport, telephones, office supplies etc. The total staffing costs amount to £93,800 [89%] of the total costs.

Carol Damper stated that the views of the PVI sector suggested that the quality of service had gone down. However it was recognised that this was a very large task for 1.9 fte. It was also noted that the pressure on the service would increase in future with the introduction of free nursery provision for two year olds.

The Schools Forum noted the report.

11. Any Other Business

Councillor Wood brought an issue to the forum as a result of the recent tragedy where a man lost his life in the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour trying to save the life of a child in the sea. A question has been raised over what the Local Authority is doing to keep children safe in the sea.

An initiative has been put together by the community, police and lifeguards where they are trying to make children aware of the dangers of tombstoning and develop water safety advice and materials. They were looking for pilot schools or people to give feedback on the material being used to determine whether it was using appropriate language for the children.

Action: Julian Wooster to contact primary schools to ask if any are willing to assist with the production of new material appropriate for use in schools.

JW

The meeting closed at 6.10 pm.

Dates of Future meetings

(all Wednesdays, 4.30pm – 6.30pm, to be held in the Civic Offices)

24th October 2012 – Additional Meeting re Funding Reforms

12th December 2012 – Budget update (Leader & S151 Officer invited)

13th February 2013 – Budget setting

24th April 2013 – Central Expenditure Limit

17th July 2013 – Final DSG allocation

***Schools Forum members - please contact Richard Webb
(023 9284 1203) if you would like to add any items to future agendas.***