

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Schools Forum held on Tuesday, 17 December 2019 at 4.30pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

David Jeapes (Chair)	Head Teacher	Secondary Phase
Jackie Collins	Head Teacher	Primary Phase
Dave Jones	Head Teacher	Primary Phase
Matthew McLaughlin	Head Teacher	Special Schools
Share D'All	Governor	Primary Phase
Jo Cooper	Academies	Primary Phase
Sean Preston	Academies	Primary Phase
Nys Hardingham	Academies	Secondary Phase
Natalie Sheppard	Academies	Secondary Phase
Steven Labeledz	Academies	Secondary Phase
Nathan Waites	Academies	Secondary Phase
Alison Beane	Academies	Special Schools
Simon Barrable	Representative	16-19 Education
Kara Jewell	Representative	Early Years
Terry Norton	Councillor	Conservative Party
Lynne Stagg	Councillor	Liberal Democrat Party
Judith Smyth	Councillor	Labour Party

30. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Jason Crouch, Sonia Nickerson, Stewart Vaughan and Councillor Udy.

31. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

Alison Egerton, Group Accountant informed the forum that she was expecting declaration of interests forms from Natalie Sheppard and Kara Jewell.

32. Membership Changes.

Alison Egerton gave an update on membership:

Councillor Terry Norton replaced Councillor Hannah Hockaday as the representative from the Conservative Party. Sean Preston and Jo Cooper are new primary academy representatives.

The following representatives' tenures are due to expire after the next meeting:

- Jackie Collins
- Jason Crouch
- Liz Hardingham

Alison Beane's tenure ends on 28 February.

33. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2019 and matters arising.
DECISION: the minutes for the previous meeting held on 10 July 2019 were confirmed as a correct record.

34. School Funding Arrangements 2021-21

Angela Mann, Finance Manager introduced the report and in response to questions, she and Alison Egerton clarified the following points:

The indicative funding shows that schools are likely to receive different rates of increases in funding because their starting points are different

The teachers' pay and pension grants are ongoing.

The council is working with the schools that are predicting deficits next year. To support them to move to a more sustainable position.

Officers explained that the disapplication requests for Charter and Mayfield meant that they would not get as much funding as they would have done if the requests were not made, and that freed up funding for other schools.

The Chair noted that:

- It is not within the forum's remit to comment on individual schools; they will take action as appropriate.
- The funding arrangements are in a better position than might have been suggested six months previously. There is more money in the system.
- The timetable for launching the consultation had been very challenging.

Some members expressed concern that

- The consultation was confusing and that insufficient information was provided.
- The consultation did not present a full argument and the decision is not in
- Not presenting a full argument. Decision: not in the best interests of the children.

Officers explained that:

It was acknowledged that the wording of the consultation could have been improved. The council would work more closely with primary and secondary heads regarding the direction of travel, and would work with others to try and make it clearer in future.

Feedback from primary Heads' Briefing was submitted the day before the consultation was due to end. In order to address the concerns raised, the consultation deadline was extended, everyone was invited to two workshops and information was sent out to everyone. No further feedback on the consultation had been received.

It is important that feedback is given during the consultation; it is very difficult to address concerns afterwards.

It would not be possible to launch the consultation afresh with amended questions.

The Department for Education have provided a financial model that enables the Council to model the potential growth funding it will receive using indicative pupil numbers using the October 2018 census and October 2019 census.

One of the options in the consultation was to reduce the central support to Early Years providers from the Early Years DSG, to increase the funding available to the Early Years Complex Needs Inclusion Fund. However, since the consultation, the additional High Needs DSG we will get mean that this is not necessary for 2020/21. There was concern expressed that there was not enough consultation with Early Years providers over this suggestion. Officers apologised, as this was recognised within the council and some steps had been taken to try and allow for this, but checks hadn't been made to ensure it had happened. The point was taken, and in the future checks would be made.

Consultation with the Early Years providers will take place in January and the subsequent report will be considered at the February Schools Forum meeting.

There was a question about how DSG carry forwards were treated, and in particular Early Years. It was confirmed that everything is transferred to the following year, as per the DFE guidelines and there is no ring fencing. The carry forward protects any Early Years or High Needs overspend. The central funding from the Early Years DSG pays for the Early Years support team. The previous year the contingency fund was too high. This has since decreased considerably.

Concern was expressed that the consultation gave the wrong impression that the Solent Academies Trust would be carrying out a major restructure. In fact, their budget had been examined by the SRMA and that no savings were identified that had not already been identified by Solent Academies Trust. The officers in attendance apologised for this.

A question was raised as to whether The Solent Academy Trust's funding was the same as the other maintained schools. It was confirmed that it was covered by the Council's special school arrangements, so it was different to mainstream schools.

The overspend in the High Needs Block budget at the end of quarter 2 is £780,000 and for the Early Years it is £66,000.

A query was raised about the Growth Fund and whether it should be ring-fenced only to growth. If the Growth Funds were to be ring fenced, the contingency levels would be a lot lower. This could be looked at for the future.

Actions

- The APT would be brought to the forum on 15 January.

- Briefings at the primary and secondary head meetings would be arranged.
- The growth fund policy would be reviewed.

DECISIONS

The Schools Forum:

1. Noted the Department for Education's proposed changes to school revenue funding arrangements for 2020-21 as set out in this report.
 2. Noted the outcome of the Autumn consultation with schools as set out in Appendix 2.
 3. Endorse the proposals for implementing the local funding formula arrangements as set out in this report; in particular:
 - To implement the minimum per pupil funding levels at the Department for Education recommended rates for 2020-21 as set out in paragraph 5.6 and Table 2;
 - To implement the National Funding Formula rates for both primary and secondary schools in 2020-21, as set out in Appendix 5;
 - To implement a minimum funding guarantee (MFG) of at least +0.5% and up to +1.84% subject to affordability, for 2020-21 as set out in paragraphs 5.8 to 5.9
 - To utilise the additional funding provided as part of the Dedicated School Grant High Needs Block for 2020-21 to meet the forecast high needs pressures in the order of priority as set out in section 12 and Table 5;
 - To implement the disapplication requests as set out in section 6.
35. **Dedicated schools grant 2019-20 quarter 1 budget monitoring.**
Alison Egerton introduced the report. There were no questions from forum members.

DECISION

The Schools Forum noted the forecast year-end budget position for the Dedicated Schools Grant as at 30 June 2019, together with the associated explanations contained within this report.

36. **Dedicated schools grant 2019-20 quarter 2 budget monitoring.**
Alison Egerton introduced the report and in response to questions explained that when a pupil is excluded, the funding follows them to the interim placement and then to the permanent placement. The necessary adjustment is made at the end of the academic year.

Alison Jeffrey asked the forum to note that the policy is currently being updated.

DECISIONS

The Schools Forum:

1. Noted the forecast year-end budget position for the Dedicated Schools Grant as at 30 September 2019, together with the associated explanations contained within this report.
2. Endorsed the necessary adjustments to Dedicated Schools Grant to reflect Early Years budgets and DSG income budget, to reflect the

adjustment in grant funding due to pupil number changes, as set out in paragraphs 3.30 and 3.31 of the report.

37. Any other business.

Members agreed the dates of the next meetings:

15 January 12 or 26 8 July 16 September 21 October 2 December
 February¹
13 January
2021

¹ Post-meeting note: The meeting will be held on 12 February 2020.