

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF A MEETING of the Schools Forum held on Wednesday 18 December at 4:30pm in the Civic Officers, 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

Mark Mitchell, Chair, Governor - Special (Chair)
Tom Blair, Governor - Secondary (left at 5.50pm)
Jackie Collins, Governor - Primary
Clive Good, Governor - Primary
Suzy Horton, Governor - Primary (left at 5.40pm)
Bruce Marr, Governor - Secondary
Jayne Pratt, Governor - Nursery
Steve Sheehan, Governor - Primary

Carole Damper, Early Years Provider

Councillor Ken Ferrett, Labour

Fiona Calderbank, Head Teacher - Secondary
Margaret Dunford, Head Teacher - Special
David Jeapes, Head Teacher - Secondary
Mike Smith, Head Teacher, - Secondary
Karen Stocks, Head Teacher - Primary
Sue Wilson, Head Teacher - Primary

Councillor Rob Wood, Observer

Officers

Jane Di Dino, Local Democracy Officer
Julia Katherine, Child Support Services Commissioning Manager
Mike Stoneman, Strategic Commissioning Manager
Richard Webb, Finance Manager
Julian Wooster, Strategic Director (arrived at item 5)

Beverley Pennekett, EFA Observer

32 Apologies for absence (AI 1).

Justeen White and Councillor Young sent their apologies.

The Chair welcomed Margaret Dunford who replaced Alison Beane as the special school head teacher representative. The forum asked that their thanks be sent to Alison Beane for her work on the forum.

33 Declarations of interests (AI 2).

Tom Blair declared the following personal, non-prejudicial interest in item 8: he is a school governor at St Edmunds School.

34 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 October 2013 (AI 3).

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Schools Forum meeting held on 23 October 2013 be confirmed as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

Steve Sheehan is a primary governor representative.

Matters arising.

Richard Webb informed members that the report on the proposed contingency fund will be presented at the January meeting.

28 Schools Forum Membership and Constitution (AI 4).

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

- There are currently vacancies for the following positions: 14-19 partnership; 1 primary school head teacher and an academy representative.
- Two academy representatives will be sought following the approval of the revised constitution.
- The schools forum papers and minutes are published on the council's website.

Mark Mitchell noted that it is important that academies be represented and that the membership will be reviewed annually.

Beverley Pennekett noted that if a member leaves their post through which they were appointed they would need to leave the forum. David Jeapes sought clarification as to how this requirement would affect his position on the Forum when Mayfield School becomes an all-through school next year.

Julian Wooster suggested that academies be asked how they would like to appoint their representatives.

The Schools Forum approved the revised constitution which was attached at appendix 1 of the report.

29 School Funding Reform (AI 5).

Richard Webb introduced the report that had been circulated with the agenda and in response to questions, clarified the following points:

- A further report with details about hospital education would be brought to the February meeting.
- The Department for Education top-slice of £440,000 referred to in section 7.2 for hospital education and individual tuition provided by Harbour School was enhanced with a one-off allocation of £220,000 in 2013-14. In addition to the 17 hospital places, there were also approximately 35 individual tuition places.
- The council can commission further places if required later in the year.
- The impact on Mary Rose School of the extra places at Highbury and Portsmouth Colleges is not yet known.

A discussion took place in respect of the Special School places and the current capacity in the city.

Julia Katherine noted that discussions are underway regarding the forecast trends for places.

Mike Stoneman explained that the aim is that in the future, fewer pupils from Portsmouth will have to go to school outside the city.

Mark Mitchell noted that disabled pupils now have the right to stay in education until the age of 25. This will have a significant impact on resources.

Julian Wooster noted that attending a mainstream school may be a better option for pupils who have mild needs and will relieve some pressure for special schools

A submission will be made to the Department for Education (DfE) for revenue funding to support the additional post 16 places.

The Schools Forum:

- **Noted the contents of the report**
- **Endorsed the proposals within the report in respect of the future requirement for high needs places and the submission of the return in December 2013 to the DfE.**
- **Recognised that this report has been submitted at an early stage in the process and that numbers are still being finalised, in particular with post-16 providers.**

30 Pupil Premium - Looked After Children (AI 6)

Richard Webb and Julian Wooster introduced the report and in response to questions, clarified the following points:

- The Children and Families Bill which is currently being considered by Parliament will require every local authority to appoint a virtual school head to champion the education of children in the authority's care, as if they all attended the same school. Guidance will be published in due course.
- Local authorities who have pupils attending schools outside their area will be required to keep in contact.
- Each Looked After Child (LAC) has a personal education plan.
- Dudley Council uses this model with very good results; 15 LAC went to university.
- The government will consult with a number of local authorities (not including Portsmouth) on the proposals referred to in section 6.2.

Carole Damper expressed concern that children with less serious needs may not receive the support that they require.

Bruce Marr noted that other professionals also support LACs e.g. foster carers, social workers and school staff.

The Schools Forum noted the proposals within the report.

31 Budget Monitoring (AI 7)

Richard Webb introduced the report that had been circulated with the agenda.

Mark Mitchell expressed concern that although the number of two-year olds taking up places was increasing the amount of provision available is limited.

Carole Damper noted that the providers are not always able to expand in the areas with the increasing demand.

The Schools Forum requested that a paper be brought to a future meeting to provide an update on the use of the 2 year old funding.

The Schools Forum noted the forecast budget position for the financial year as at the end of October 2013.

32 School Revenues Balances (AI 8)

Richard Webb introduced the report that had been circulated with the agenda and in response to questions, clarified the following points:

- The report refers only to maintained schools balances.
- The forum has the option to reintroduce the claw-back provision

Concerns were expressed regarding schools holding significant balances that were meant to be spent on current pupils.

Beverley Pennekett explained that the Schools Forum decided to remove the clawback mechanism when it was no longer compulsory.

In response to a question, Julian Wooster explained that when a school is under preforming, questions would be asked about spending on pupils.

The Schools Forum requested that a paper be brought to a future meeting detailing the proposal to reinstate the clawback provision.

The Schools Forum noted the contents of the report.

33 Free School Meals (AI 9)

Mike Stoneman introduced the report that had been circulated prior to the meeting and asked the forum to note that:

- Earlier that day details of the funding allocation to the Council were published, however further clarification in respect of academies is being sought.
- A contribution from schools may no longer be required towards the capital investment. However, voluntary contributions may be sought from schools across the city for the trial period.
- The working group which includes two headteachers and two governor representatives will oversee the work from January until September.
- Some schools have the capacity to be production kitchens.

- The contractor has the capacity to respond to the level of demand that will be required.
- The trial week will be advertised in Flagship.

The Schools Forum endorsed the principle of seeking a voluntary revenue contribution from Primary and Infant Schools towards any capital shortfall for the new investment / infrastructure that will be required to implement the new free school meal arrangements, subject to clarification of the funding and the methodology by which it will be allocated.

34 Date of Future Meetings (AI 10)

The Schools Forum agreed the following dates of future meetings:

**15 January
26 February
23 April
9 July
15 October
10 December**

It was agreed that the papers for the 15 January would be published by the 10th January, slightly later than usual in order to allow officers additional time to finalise the school funding pro-forma.

35 Any Other Business (AI 11)

The Schools Forum agreed that a vice chair would be appointed at the January meeting.

The meeting concluded at 5:10pm.