

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Schools Forum held on Wednesday, 8 July 2020 at 4.30 pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Jackie Collins	Head Teacher	Primary Phase
David Jeapes	Head Teacher	Secondary Phase
Share D'all	Governor	Primary Phase
Alison Beane	Academies	Special Schools
Steve Labeledz	Academies	Secondary Phase
Natalie Sheppard	Academies	Secondary Phase
Nathan Waites	Academies	Secondary Phase
Mike Gaston	Representative	16 - 19 Education
Kara Jewell	Representative	Early Years
Terry Norton	Councillor	Conservative Party
Lynne Stagg	Councillor	Liberal Democrat Party
Claire Udy	Councillor	Progressive Portsmouth People Group

50. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Sean Preston, Dave Jones, Simon Barrable (represented today by Mike Gaston), Jason Crouch and Councillor Judith Smyth.

51. Declarations of Interest

Alison Egerton, Group Accountant informed the forum that there were two outstanding declaration of interests from Councillor Udy and Kara Jewell, although as she had not been into the office she could not confirm whether these had come into the office. She would confirm with both members whether the forms were still outstanding over the course of the next week.

Councillor Norton declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest as his partner works at Mayfield Secondary School, his Daughter attends Mayfield pre-school and he works as a supply teacher for Mayfield School.

52. Membership Changes

Alison Egerton gave an update on membership since the last meeting. She explained that:

- The Special School representative Alison Beane's membership expired on 28 February. As the only Special School Academy Trust in the city, Alison has agreed to continue to stand as a representative.
- Maintained School secondary head teacher representative David Jeapes' tenure ended on 20 June. Following a conversation with the headteacher of St Edmunds, David has agreed to stand again.
- Natalie Sheppard has resigned from the Schools Forum and today would be her last meeting. She thanked Natalie for her input to the Forum.
- As a result there are two vacancies for secondary academy representatives. All secondary academy reps were asked for volunteers by 10th July and to date Alison had received no responses. She asked academy representatives of the forum to talk to their colleagues to encourage volunteers as come September the Forum would be two representatives down. The volunteers do not need to be headteachers as long as they are at the Academy Trust.

Following the cessation of David Jeapes' tenure, the role of Chair to the Forum also ceases and a new Chair needed to be elected. Alison had emailed all Schools Forum members yesterday to see if anyone else wanted to be put forward for Chair. She asked Forum members if anyone wanted to take over this role. David indicated that he was happy to continue as Chair but equally was happy if anyone else wanted to take over the chairmanship. No other Schools Forum members put themselves forward therefore a vote was taken to elect David Jeapes as Chairman.

Following a vote, Schools Forum members unanimously agreed to appoint David Jeapes as Chair of the Schools Forum

RESOLVED that David Jeapes be appointed as Chair of the Schools Forum.

53. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2020 and matters arising

It was proposed by Nathan Waites and seconded by Share D'all that the minutes be agreed as a correct record.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 February 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

There were no matters arising from the last minutes.

54. Dedicated Schools Grant Outturn 2019-20

The Chair introduced this item and said that he was aware there may be some questions later on this regarding the £1 billion funding from the Government that had recently announced to support schools and colleges.

There was no reason to believe that this funding was not coming however at the moment there was no further details on this. As soon as this is received it would be shared through the headteacher briefings and it would come to the Schools Forum in due course.

Angela Mann introduced the report. She explained that table 1 in the report had some errors in it and a revised version had been circulated to Schools Forum members which corrects the 2018/19 carry forward figure. A copy of the revised table 1 is below. She drew attention to two areas. There was an underspend in the early years budget due to a reduction in the number of pupils over the course of the year. This was reflected in the January 2020 census and it is expected to lead to a reduction in the early years block funding in July as there is a lag of approximately £1.5 million. The high needs block overspend was mainly due to mainstream education Education Health Care Plans (EHCP), out of city provision and post 16 pupils with EHCP's.

Table 1 - Dedicated Schools Grant				
	Original budget 2019-20 £000's	Revised Budget 2019-20 £000's	Projected outturn 2019-20 £000's	Projected over / (under) spend £000's
Income				
DSG Brought forward 2018-19	0	(3,280)	(3,280)	0
DSG and other specific grants	<u>(72,309)</u>	<u>(70,263)</u>	<u>(70,212)</u>	<u>51</u>
Total Income	(72,309)	(73,543)	(73,492)	51
Expenditure				
Primary ISB	28,753	26,672	26,493	(179)
Secondary ISB	11,680	11,680	11,680	0
Special school place funding	1,578	1,411	1,348	(63)
Inclusion Centre Place funding	302	307	307	0
Alternative provision place funding	<u>1,090</u>	<u>1,090</u>	<u>1,090</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Delegated	43,403	41,159	40,918	(241)
De-delegated and central budgets	1,580	1,746	1,254	(493)
Early Years	14,138	14,176	13,796	(379)
High Needs	13,189	13,652	14,410	758
Total Expenditure	72,309	70,734	70,377	(356)
Net forecast position	0	(2,809)	(3,115)	(305)
DSG Carried forward	0	2,809	3,115	305

In response to questions, the following matters were clarified:

- Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director Children, Families and Education advised he had spoken with the Quality and Sufficiency Coordinator in terms of early years settings, who was confident PCC will be in a good position. There are a number of early years providers struggling,

however there are a number of strong providers who would likely fill those gaps.

- Pupil Place Planning update the forecast every year. Mike Stoneman agreed it was a good idea to give headteachers an update on pupil forecasts and what this could mean for their future budgets. Mike would take this away as an action.
- When officers looked at the 2021 funding over £2 million additional funding was given for high needs. When officers looked at budgets this was sufficient for pressures however they will need to look at the revised activity information. Mike Stoneman added that unless the council receives additional funding there will be future pressures. There have been some actions already taken such as increasing the capacity of the SEN team to support annual reviews for EHCP in mainstream schools. The big issue is around the increasing complexity of SEND and the increasing numbers also around post 16.
- With regard to the decreased funding following recouping of high needs places for an independent provider, officers explained they had an independent provider in city that they were expecting to have a number of places taken from the high needs block and then paid to the independent provider. Officers had challenged the DfE as they did not believe this should be included within the city and they have now agreed it should not be included within the city. This will be corrected for the 2020-21 financial year. For the 2019-20 financial year PCC had to make a payment for the additional places. High needs funding received from the DfE included these pupils within the funding.
- There are a number of factors for reception pupil numbers decreasing however the overriding factor is birth rate. An update to heads will be provided.

DECISION: The Schools Forum noted the year-end outturn budget position for the Dedicated Schools Grant as at the end of March 2020 and the variance explanations contained within this report.

55. Maintained Schools Balances as at 31 March 2020

The report was introduced by Alison Egerton, Group Accountant. David Jeapes said that Mayfield School (where he is headteacher) does have a deficit, however the governors are working very hard to turn this around in a timely manner and all the usual scrutiny is being applied.

In response to questions the following matters were clarified:

- There is one school heading towards academisation with the possibility of a deficit. Officers are working with the school and the academy trust and have monthly monitoring meetings.
- Officers had received the report from the Schools Resources Management Advisor. Officers were yet to go through the comments but it was hoped to get it to schools before the end of term.
- In terms of schools with an excessive balance but under the 20% threshold, there are two schools that officers are in close conversation with. One school is about to amalgamate so they are keeping their

balance to assist with this process. Officers are talking to the other school that has a high balance as they have concerns about their in year budget. The finance officer is arranging a meeting with the headteacher at the beginning of the next term.

- With regard to the school in appendix 2 with a significant balance, officers explained that school has a large capital programme which they are using some of their balances for.

The Chair suggested that in future, if officers are aware that a school is undergoing a capital development that this appears as a committed balance rather than uncommitted balance. Officers explained that a lot of information comes from the schools themselves and they had been missing a number of statements on this occasion due to the situation with COVID-19.

The Chair thanked Alison and team for having the conversations with schools regarding their balances.

(Councillor Udy left the meeting at this point)

DECISION:

Schools Forum noted the level of maintained schools' revenue balances and capital balances as at 31st March 2020 as shown in Appendices 2 & 3 and the monitoring action taken by the council.

56. Schools Forum Constitution

The report was introduced by Alison Mann, Finance Manager.

DECISION:

Schools Forum agreed to retain the current constitution attached at Appendix A, which took effect from 24th May 2018.

57. Scheme for Financing Schools

The report was introduced by Alison Egerton, Group Accountant who advised that no responses were received to the consultation.

DECISION:

Schools Forum members representing maintained schools approved the revised Scheme for Financing Schools attached at Appendix 1, to come into force on 1 August 2020.

58. Any Other Business

The Chair gave his thanks to Natalie Sheppard for all she had done for the Schools Forum as it was her last meeting before stepping down as a representative. He asked all Forum colleagues to encourage colleagues to get a representative elected for the vacancies mentioned earlier.

The Chair thanked all officers for making the meeting possible today and all their hard work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

59. Dates of Future Meetings

Forum members noted the date of the next meeting of 16 September 2020 which was expected to be a virtual meeting, however if this changes officers will be in touch with the details nearer the time.

The meeting concluded at 5.15 pm.

David Jeapes
Chair