

## SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Schools Forum held on Wednesday, 16 September 2020 at 4.30 pm as a virtual meeting.

### Present

|                           |                |                                     |
|---------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Jackie Collins            | Head Teacher   | Primary Phase                       |
| David Jeapes              | Head Teacher   | Secondary Phase                     |
| Matthew McLoughlin-Parker | Head Teacher   | Special Schools                     |
| Jason Crouch              | Governor       | Secondary Phase                     |
| Share D'all               | Governor       | Primary Phase                       |
| Sharon Burt               | Academies      | Special Schools                     |
| Jo Cooper                 | Academies      | Primary Phase                       |
| Nys Hardingham            | Academies      | Secondary Phase                     |
| Steve Labeledz            | Academies      | Secondary Phase                     |
| Sean Preston              | Academies      | Primary Phase                       |
| Simon Barrable            | Representative | 16 - 19 Education                   |
| Terry Norton              | Councillor     | Conservative Party                  |
| Lynne Stagg               | Councillor     | Liberal Democrat Party              |
| Judith Smyth              | Councillor     | Labour Party                        |
| Claire Udy                | Councillor     | Progressive Portsmouth People Group |

### 60. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Kara Jewell and Dave Jones.

### 61. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 62. Membership changes

Alison Egerton advised that Sharon Burt, Solent Academies Trust, had joined the Forum as a Special Schools Academy representative following the retirement of Alison Beane at the end of the summer term. She was welcomed to the Forum.

There were a number of tenures which were due to expire after this meeting as follows:

- Ian Hunkin, Maintained Special School representative.
- Kate Keller, Primary Academy School representative.
- Sonia Nickerson, Primary Academy School representative.
- Simon Barrable, Post 16 representative.

Alison explained that she had written to all of the above to ask if they would be happy to stand again. Once she had received all responses she would write to the appropriate sectors accordingly.

Sonia Nickerson had indicated that she wished to stand down and Alison wished to place on record her thanks to Sonia for her work on the Forum over the last few years.

Ian Hunkin had occasionally been represented at Forum meetings by Matthew Mcloughlin-Parker who is the interim head at the Harbour School and they have agreed that Matthew will take over as maintained Special School representative officially from the next meeting. She wished to place on record her thanks to Ian for his work on the Forum in recent years. When the Harbour School converts to an academy, Matthew's tender will cease and the number of academy special school representatives will need to be reviewed as part of the 2021 constitution.

There are now two vacancies within the secondary academy representatives. After the last meeting Alison had emailed out to all, however there had been no response. Alison would contact all secondary academy representatives to see if anyone would like to volunteer and asked colleagues in the academy sector for help encouraging volunteers if possible.

### **63. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 July 2020 and matters arising**

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 July 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.**

There were no matters arising from the last minutes.

### **64. Dedicated Schools Grant Quarter 1 2020-21 Budget monitoring and budget revision**

The report was introduced by Alison Egerton, Group Accountant.

In response to questions the following matters were clarified:

- The £56,000 on the high needs block overspend relates to the Harbour School. Over the summer term the authority commissioned an additional three places at Harbour School and the top up funding was for those three places. Officers have assumed that these three places will remain for the rest of the financial year, but obviously this could change going forward into the new academic year. In addition there are the pupils who are near to school and the authority has agreed to fund those pupils for the one term, in line with the funding guidance

provided by the Department for Education regarding the funding of Alternative Provision during the Coronavirus lockdown.

- Within the high needs block the authority receives funding for high needs places for special schools and independent specialist providers. The funding is then removed and the DfE pay this directly to those settings on the authority's behalf. For the last three years there has been an independent setting within the high needs block which Portsmouth City Council was told it was responsible for, however the provider is not based in Portsmouth. Officers had been disputing this with the DfE and they have now confirmed the setting has been removed from Portsmouth. The funding has been taken away from Portsmouth City Council but the authority is now not paying that funding therefore it is a nil impact.
- The additional high needs spend in the revised budget is due to additional special school places and the associated Element 3 costs.

#### **DECISIONS: Schools Forum:**

- (1) Noted the forecast year-end budget position for the Dedicated Schools Grant as at 30 June 2020, together with the associated explanations contained within this report.**
- (2) Endorsed the revisions to the 2020-21 budget as set out in Appendix and section 4.**

#### **65. School funding arrangements 2021-22**

(Jo Cooper left the meeting at the start of this item due to technical issues)

The report was introduced by Alison Mann, Finance Manager.

In response to questions the following matters were clarified:

- The DfE have confirmed that academy schools will receive the Teachers Pay Grant and Teacher Pension Grant until August 2021.
- The IDACI banding is based on the Office of National Statistics data. It is normally revised every five years and officers had not heard anything from the DfE with regard to any consideration of changes outside of that. In November there is a South East area finance group and Alison Egerton said she would raise this matter there to see if anything is being considered. Angela Mann added that it is worth noting that pupil information was better in 2019 than in 2018, which is why the authority was able to increase the lump sum for all schools.
- The underspend on the growth funding is a one off benefit and there are a lot of unknowns. PCC would not know what the growth funding is from Central Government until late December. If there is additional funding that comes through naturally from growth that will become part of the schools block that will be distributed. The key point is that the

growth fund currently in place is maintained which is why officers are requesting to carry forward on an annual basis.

- Charter Academy historically received a high Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) because of their pupil situation when they moved to the new formula funding. As the school was growing the MFG was paid on a per pupil basis and was increasing. The authority and the Academy Trust have now agreed to cap pupils at 600 which was the number of pupils in the school at the start of the arrangements. Any additional pupils will not receive MFG which is why officers have to ask for the disapplication request. PCC have to do disapplication requests every year to the Secretary of State. It was suggested that for reports in the future this is made clear that it is something that is done every year. Forum members agreed this would be sensible.

#### **DECISIONS: The Schools Forum:**

**(1) Noted the Department for Education's proposed changes to school revenue funding arrangements for 2021-22 as set out in this report.**

**(2) Endorsed the proposals for implementing the local funding formula arrangements as set out in this report; in particular to:**

- **Implement the National Funding Formula rates for both primary and secondary schools in in 2021-22, as set out in Appendix 1;**
- **Implement a minimum funding guarantee (MFG) of at least +0.5% and up to +2.0% subject to affordability, for 2021-22 as set out in paragraphs 5.16**
- **The method of managing affordability as set out in paragraph 5.17.**
- **Implement the disapplication request as set out in section 6.**

#### **66. Any other business**

##### **COVID-19**

Councillor Smyth asked whether the figures in the reports today had included the impact of COVID-19 and whether there were grants that schools were able to apply for to help with the additional costs. The Chair explained that from a schools perspective, grants were available depending on the size of a school, and a large school could potentially get up to £75,000. He understood that there is potentially another window about to open to give schools the opportunity to apply for funding to help with the extraordinary costs associated with COVID-19. Alison Egerton confirmed this and said that the authority had not yet seen anything from the DfE confirming there would be a second window for grants.

##### **Draft briefing to schools on school funding**

The Chair advised that Alison Egerton had emailed out to members on Friday 11 September the draft of a proposed briefing and consultation paper that officers are planning to send to all schools in the middle of September. Members of the Forum commented that they had not yet had the chance to consider this. The Chair asked members to review this and send their comments back to Alison Egerton. The intention is to send the document out on 21 September and provide schools with just over 4 weeks to respond. The outcome of the responses will be brought to Schools Forum on 2 December along with any proposals for implementation in 2021-22.

Councillor Norton thanked officers and colleagues for all their efforts in getting children back into school during this challenging time. The Chair also gave his thanks to those working on the frontline and also behind the scenes.

**Date of next meeting**

The Chair advised that it was proposed to cancel the next scheduled meeting of the Forum on 21 October given the timelines outlined in the meeting. Forum members were in agreement with this.

The next meeting would therefore be Wednesday 2 December at 4:30pm.

The meeting concluded at 5.19 pm.

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David Jeapes  
Chair