

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Schools Forum held on Wednesday, 13 January 2021 at 4.30 pm as a virtual meeting.

Present		
Jackie Collins	Head Teacher	Primary Phase
Dave Jones	Head Teacher	Primary Phase
Jason Crouch	Governor	Secondary Phase
Share D'all	Governor	Primary Phase
Sharon Burt	Academies	Special Schools
Nys Hardingham	Academies	Secondary Phase
Sean Preston	Academies	Primary Phase
Simon Barrable	Representative	16 - 19 Education
Kara Jewell	Representative	Early years
Terry Norton	Councillor	Conservative Party
Judith Smyth	Councillor	Labour Party
Claire Udy	Councillor	Progressive Portsmouth People Group

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from David Jeapes and Cllr Lynne Stagg.

Dave Jones as Vice Chair chaired the meeting today.

2. Declarations of Interest

Alison Egerton reported that there were no outstanding declarations of interests.

Councillor Udy declared a personal interest as her children attend Portsmouth schools.

Councillor Norton declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest as he is employed at Mayfield School through a cover agency, his partner is employed at Mayfield School and his daughter attends it.

Jason Crouch declared a personal interest as his children attend Mayfield School.

Dave Jones declared a person interest as his children attend Priory School and Portsmouth College.

3. **Membership Changes**

Alison Egerton reported that there were currently three secondary academy representative vacancies and two primary academy representative vacancies on the Forum. She highlighted that Schools Forum is required to consist of two thirds of school members, with these vacancies the Forum just meets this criteria.

She asked academy members to encourage colleagues to put themselves forward as representatives to ensure that the Forum had a fair representation across the city. She reminded members that academy representatives do not need to be headteachers, they can have another role within the academy trust.

4. **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 December 2020 and Matters Arising**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 December 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

Matters arising from the previous minutes

- a) **Early Years Providers Covid-19 Additional Grant 2020-21**- Officers are proposing to bring a report back to the Forum in May. With regard to considering if there is any additional support for early years providers due to the Covid-19 pandemic, officers advised that they are preparing a report for the February Schools Forum which will set out proposals.

In response to a question regarding when providers would receive the Early Years Providers Covid-19 Additional Grant 2020-21 payment agreed in December, Alison advised that the payments had been processed by the early years team so should be with providers in the next couple of days.

- b) **School Funding Arrangements 2021-22**- Officers had discussed the potential to set up a working group as requested at the last meeting. With regard to the schools block we have a hard National Funding Formula (NFF) expected to be implemented in 2022-23 and the Schools Forum had already made an agreement to follow the NFF. There are very few things that the Forum are able to change, therefore officers are proposing not to set a working group at this stage for the mainstream formula. The DfE is proposing to introduce a hard NFF potentially in 2022/23 and consultation will be taking place at some point over the next year. Once officers know the consultation timetable it was proposed to set up a small working group to add more depth to the authority's response to feed back on the NFF proposal.

School Forum members were in agreement with this proposal.

5. Wimborne Amalgamation Balances

Alison Egerton introduced the report. There were no questions or comments from the Forum members.

RESOLVED Schools Forum

- (1) Endorsed the transfer of Wimborne Infant and Wimborne Junior Schools closing balances to Wimborne Primary School from the Schools Specific Contingency.**
- (2) Endorsed the use of the 2020-21 carry forward in 2021-22 to reinstate the School Specific Contingency to the balance of £141,800 as at December 2020.**

6. Inclusion Centre Funding Arrangements 2021-22

Julia Katherine, Head of Inclusion introduced the report.

In response to questions the following matters were clarified:

Table 3 showed the potential impact and is not based on the actual assessment of children's current needs. Milton Park Primary have an inclusion centre with 14 places currently and under this modelling they would lose out. Officers had been in discussions with all schools with an inclusion centre about developing this model. Once this is agreed officers would need to look at individual children's needs to calculate the actual impact.

Sharon Burt said she was concerned on the potential impact to Milton Park as this was a significant amount of funding to lose. Julia explained that the impact is based on the assumption that 70% of pupils are on the core band. In order to look at the actual impact officers would need to look at the complexity of needs of children. She believed that a number of children at currently at Milton Park would potentially meet the criteria for a higher band of funding.

Milton Park Primary is currently funded at the highest top-up value but the admission criteria for that inclusion centre is now the same as a number of other inclusion centres. In addition children move on from Milton Park Primary when they reach secondary school to Trafalgar School where the funding is less. Officers would like to introduce a model that is reflective of the child's needs rather than a level of funding that is unique to each individual school and the aim is to move to this needs-led model.

The council lets schools with an Inclusion Centre know in January the number of places to be commissioned from the following September. The SEN team have to confirm phase transfer placements by 15th February which is a national deadline, for the following September. The aim is always to give schools as much notice as possible about placements so that they can plan staffing.

With regard to the impact of lockdown and increased complexity of needs of children, Julia felt that the real challenge would be school attendance once all schools are open for all children. Inevitably officers are seeing huge pressure on colleagues within CAMHS in terms of mental health needs. Some children will find making the transition back to school difficult, particularly those with additional needs. Officers are working closely with school colleagues to minimise the impact as much as possible.

RESOLVED that Schools Forum endorsed the funding arrangements for mainstream schools with an Inclusion Centre, as set out in this report.

7. School Funding Arrangements 2021-22

The report was introduced by Angela Mann, Finance Manager

In response to questions, the following matters were clarified:

With regard to the Published Admission Numbers (PAN), Alison Egerton said from a finance perspective the Growth Fund is paid where the increase in PAN meets the basic need requirement of the local authority and the school is increasing both its PAN and its planned intake of pupils in the current financial year (1 April to 31 March).

Sharon Burt said she was concerned that there was no increase in the Element 3 top up for special schools from April 2021, particularly as there had been no consideration given for the cost of living increase. Alison Egerton said that officers are still working through the high needs budgets. She explained that whilst there had been an increase in funding there had also been a considerable increase in planned expenditure. There are a large number of new high needs places required from September 2021 and growth in both mainstream pupils with an EHCP and out of city placements. Officers said as they were still working on the budget they could bring the banding rates to the 10 February Schools Forum meeting.

The DSG budget needs to be endorsed on 10 February and this will then go to the Cabinet Member for decision to ensure that the Council

meets the statutory deadline of informing schools of their budgets by 28 February. School Forum members felt this was a sensible idea.

Officers advised that they complete regular updates on forecasting for both mainstream and special school places to see what is needed to meet demand. In the medium to longer term schools place numbers are decreasing however for pupils with complex needs the authority has seen a year on year increase. This is set to continue for the next few years which is why there is a five year strategy in place.

Officers clarified that when infant and junior schools merge to become a primary, the 85% protection on the second lump sum lasts for one year and then is removed.

RESOLVED School Members of the Schools Forum:

- 1. Endorsed the proposed changes to the mainstream schools revenue funding arrangements as set out in Section 5.**
- 2. Endorsed the school revenue funding pro-forma at Appendix 5 for submission to the ESFA on 21 January 2021.**

RESOLVED Schools Forum:

- 1. Endorsed the budget to be held centrally for the payment of central licences negotiated nationally for all schools by the Secretary of State.**
- 2. Approved the Growth Fund Criteria for 2021-22 as set out in Appendix 3**
- 3. Approved the budgets to be held centrally specifically:**
 - Schools Forum**
 - Admissions**
 - Duties retained by the local authority for all schools**
- 4. Following the funding announcement from the Department for Education, endorsed the proposed hourly rates to Early Years providers for 2021-22 as set out in section 7 and Table 5.**
- 5. Agreed that the decision on the Element 3 Top-up values for Special Schools, Alternative Provision settings, Inclusion Centre and Mainstream Education, Health and Care Plan banding for implementation in April 2021 would be deferred until the 10th February meeting.**

The meeting concluded at 5.20 pm.

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Chair