

## **SCHOOLS FORUM**

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Schools Forum held on Wednesday, 30 April 2014 at 5pm in the Civic Offices.

### **Present**

Mark Mitchell, Governor - Special (in the Chair).  
Clive Good, Governor - Primary  
Suzy Horton, Governor - Primary  
Bruce Marr, Governor - Secondary  
Jayne Pratt, Governor - Nursery  
Steve Sheehan, Governor - Primary

Fiona Calderbank, Head Teacher - Secondary.  
Jackie Collins, Head Teacher - Primary  
Margaret Dunford, Head Teacher - Special  
David Jeapes, Head Teacher - Secondary  
Sarah Sadler, Head Teacher - Primary.  
Mike Smith, Head Teacher - Secondary.  
Karen Stocks, Head Teacher - Nursery  
Sue Wilson, Head Teacher - Primary.

Alison Beane - Academy Representative.  
Margaret Beel - Academy Representative  
Steve Frampton, 16-19 Representative.  
Councillor David Fuller

### Officers.

Jane Di Dino, Local Democracy Officer  
Alison Egerton, Group Accountant  
Julia Katherine, Child Support Commissioning  
Manager  
Gemma Limburn, Head of HR - Strategy.  
Mike Stoneman, Strategic Commissioning  
Manager  
Richard Webb, Finance Manager  
Julian Wooster, Strategic Director

#### **14. Apologies (agenda item 1)**

Apologies were received from Councillor Ken Ferrett.

#### **15. Declarations of Interest (agenda item 2)**

The following people made declarations of interest regarding item 10: Steve Frampton; David Jeapes; Mike Smith and Steve Sheehan.

#### **16. Membership Changes (agenda item 3)**

Richard Webb informed the Forum that at the Governors Forum on 10<sup>th</sup> March, the following representatives were agreed:

- Mark Mitchell was reappointed as the special school Governor representative.
- Bruce Marr was reappointed as the Secondary Governor representative

The Forum was also informed that it was necessary to appoint a new 'Chair'. Mark Mitchell indicated that he would be happy to be reappointed as 'Chair' and left the room whilst this was discussed. Mike Smith agreed to act as Chair in his absence and David Jeapes nominated Mark Mitchell. There were no other nominations.

**The Schools Forum appointed Mark Mitchell as Chair** (approved unanimously).

**17. Minutes and Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting Held on 26 February (agenda item 4).**

The minutes were agreed.

The Chair noted that the report on the options available for utilising school balances to support initiatives to raise educational standards in Portsmouth would be brought to a future meeting.

**18. Living Wage for Portsmouth (agenda item 5).**

Gemma Limburn introduced the report that was considered by the Employment Committee in March and explained that:

- Her role is to manage the HR Schools Team.
- She started in this new post in September and has experience in further and higher education and local authorities.
- At the Employment Committee meeting in March it was agreed that the Council would not go forward with the implementation of the living wage for PCC or schools staff without the agreement of schools due to the risks of equal pay litigation. She was therefore asked to discuss the implications with schools and gauge whether they would wish to implement it. Initial feedback from the meeting with primary school Head Teachers indicated that they were nervous about timescales as budgets had already been set. Primary Head Teachers also felt that they needed more information about the future financial implications.
- The implementation date was originally suggested for November 2014 but this could be phased.
- It is anticipated that the living wage will increase by 3% per year with the possibility of reaching £10.10 by 2018. Pay awards will not increase at the same rate.

In response to questions, clarified the following points:

- She has met with primary Head Teachers and will meet with secondary and special school Head Teachers as well as the Governors forum.
- Some local authorities have compelled schools to introduce the living wage by changing the bandings. However, Portsmouth City Council is not seeking to do that.
- The introduction could be introduced on a phased basis.
- Schools could go it alone and implement it immediately, but would be mindful of possible equal pay issues.
- Unlike the minimum wage, there would be no difference in pay for 18 and 21 year olds.
- The only exemptions for the living wage are genuine apprenticeships.
- If a school or council wanted to apply for full accreditation, it would be required to pay an annual £400 fee and to ensure that contractors pay the living wage to its

staff. The council does not intend to apply for full accreditation, but would encourage its contractors to do so.

Mike Smith commented that in principle he fully supports the introduction of the living wage.

Jackie Collins explained that it would affect cleaners, dinner ladies and teaching assistants. Initial feedback from Primary Head Teachers indicated that although they felt it was morally correct to introduce this, they were concerned about the timing.

Sue Wilson explained that her schools bursar had expressed concern regarding the discretionary allowance and would prefer to change the bandings so that all staff are treated equally.

Gemma Limburn responded that PCC had supported the payment being unconsolidated to prevent impact on the integrity of the pay structure and bandings and to enable an annual review in relation to budget pressures.

#### **Schools Forum noted the report.**

#### **19. Schools Modernisation Capital Programme 2014/15 (agenda item 6).**

Mike Stoneman - Strategic Commissioning Manager, introduced the report and in response to questions, clarified the following points:

- The programme applies solely to local authority maintained schools
- For urgent works outside of the planned programme, the schools contribution would be a minimum of £5,000 for primary/special schools and £10,000 for secondary schools regardless of the price of the work.

The Chair reminded members that they had agreed the formula in February 2013 and they would review it later this year in readiness for financial year 2015-16.

#### **Schools Forum:**

- a) Endorsed the Council's £1.3m Schools Modernisation Capital Programme for 2014/15. (approved unanimously)**
- b) Approved the continued application in 2014-15 of the existing methodology for calculating a maintained school's contribution to capital schemes for condition works. (approved unanimously)**
- c) Approved a school contribution of £5,000 for primary schools and £10,000 for secondary schools\* for urgent works up to the value of £15,000 and for schemes over £15,001 that the methodology set out in paragraph 3.3 be applied, subject to a minimum contribution of £5,000. (approved unanimously)**

\*note: following amendment agreed by the Forum during the meeting: 'and £10,000 for secondary schools'

#### **20. Housing & Property Services Update (agenda item 7).**

Susan Whitehouse gave a verbal update to the forum:

- 16 schools were selected for Radon monitoring, results were submitted to the Health Protection Agency for analysis - these were all clear and schools have been informed of this by letter.

- All seven Salix (Energy Efficiency) funding bids submitted through the council were approved. One that was submitted directly by a school was rejected. If you have a scheme that might qualify or need any explanation of the Salix funding please contact Alan Barber, Energy Officer on 023 9283 4255 who is available to assist schools with their application forms and calculations. Successful schemes have included conversion of oil to gas boilers, installation of LED lighting and boiler optimisation. For more information, see Salix website: [www.salixfinance.co.uk](http://www.salixfinance.co.uk)
- Schools are reminded that if they are using facilities out of hours, emergency lighting is required. Alan Barber (contact details as above) will assist with any queries with this.
- Letters have been sent to schools identified in the 14/15 School Modernisation Programme informing them that the capital works were approved and asked to confirm that they will pay their contribution.
- Schools are reminded to inform the John Bean, Housing & Property Service, Head of Maintenance about any works planned for summer.

**The Schools Forum noted the update.**

**21. Schools Contingency & Falling Rolls Fund (agenda item 10).**

The Forum agreed to consider this item next.

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

- The formula and the criteria used are set out in the appendix to the report
- Requests for use of the 'Schools Contingency Fund' would be brought to the forum in October and February.
- In developing the Falling Rolls Fund criteria the intention was to support the Secondary Schools in the city who had seen a significant reduction in funding as a result of the change in pupil numbers.

Mike Stoneman explained that medium term forecasts indicate that there will be a shortage of secondary school places for both girls and boys.

Mark Mitchell made the following observations:

- The cohort would increase if City of Portsmouth Boys School becomes a co-educational school.
- The most important thing is to secure the future of schools in Portsmouth. The continuing challenge faced by primary schools, due to increased demand, will impact secondary in the near future. It is not easy to expand secondary schools in the city.
- Although he did not know the details of King Richard School's balance, he would not be surprised if it had put aside some money in light of policy changes.

Steve Frampton commented that the Forum must look at meeting the needs of the city as best it can.

Bruce Marr expressed support for allocating the funding to the school, but did not know how this would be spent. He asked if the resources purchased could be used to support other schools as well e.g. sharing a teacher with another school.

Sue Wilson noted that it was important that no additional pressure was put on the school, so the funding should be allocated.

In response to a question, Mike Smith explained that his school did not have a significant carry forward balance.

David Jeapes expressed concern about the possible implications of setting a precedent for funding allocation.

Steve Frampton challenged some of the wording and assumptions in the report:

- Section 4.4 - he felt that the current surplus places in the City of Portsmouth Boys School would not necessarily be required.
- Section 4.7 - he felt that it is not certain that King Richards School could mitigate the impact of the impact of the falling roll during the 2014-15 financial year through the use of these [end of year] balances.

Schools Forum also wanted it to be noted that the allocation to City of Portsmouth Boys Schools from the Schools Contingency Fund, was not intended to set a precedent in respect of allocating funding for Falling Rolls. Rather this was a specific one-off allocation recognising that the School met all of the other Falling Rolls Fund criteria and would have received the allocation from that fund, had the timing of the recent Ofsted inspection and rating change taken place after April 2014.

Mike Smith abstained from voting.

#### **School Forum**

- a) Approved the proposals to allocate the City of Portsmouth Boys School a sum of £109,449 from the Schools Specific Contingency Fund to support the impact of falling numbers on roll. (17 Yes, 1 Abs)**
- b) Endorsed the proposal to refine the criteria for the Falling Rolls Fund for 2014-16 and present this to Schools Forum in July 2014. (17 Yes, 1 Abs)**

#### **22. Analysis of Schools Block Funding 2014-2015 (agenda item 8).**

Richard Webb introduced the papers and in response to questions, clarified the following points:

- The mobility funding factor had not been used in Portsmouth as it was decided last year that the focus for allocating funding would be 'need' rather than 'mobility' as identified in the funding consultation documents with schools.

**Action:** A copy of the consultation paper would be sent to Sarah Sadler.

Mark Mitchell noted that he was pleased to see that Portsmouth City Council is broadly in line with what other authorities are doing with regard to funding allocations. The only significant difference is the allocation of looked after children for whom Portsmouth funds schools considerably more. This is still only a small percentage of the overall funding.

**The Schools Forum noted the papers.**

**23. Fairer Schools Funding in 2015-2016 (agenda item 9).**

Alison Egerton introduced the report.

Mark Mitchell noted the issues and implications identified within the report arising from the DfE proposals, and commented that the National Fair Funding Proposals had been delayed. He observed that it was fair funding, not fairer funding.

Mike Smith disagreed as he felt that it was a move to fairer funding. All the winners were being created now and the losers would be identified at a later date.

Richard Webb expressed concern about the minimum funding level as it fails to take into account Portsmouth's high levels of SEN and deprivation funding and is based in part on historic data. He also expressed concern as to how the 'minimum funding level' may be applied in future years.

**Schools Forum:**

- a) Noted the Government's proposals in respect of the changes to the school revenue funding arrangements for 2015-16 as set out in sections 3 to section 5.**
- b) Noted the implications for Portsmouth of the proposals set out in section 6.**
- c) Endorsed the response to the consultation "Fairer Schools Funding in 2015-16" attached in Appendix 3. *(approved unanimously)***
- d) Approved the proposals to set up working groups (one for the mainstream schools and one for the special schools) to support the implementation of the funding arrangements for 2015-16. *(approved unanimously)***

The meeting concluded at 6.25pm.

.....  
Chair