

## SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Schools Forum held on Wednesday, 16 July 2014 at 4.30pm in the Civic Offices.

### Present

Mark Mitchell, Governor - Special (in the Chair)  
Clive Good, Governor - Primary  
Suzy Horton, Governor - Primary  
Steve Sheehan, Governor - Primary

Jackie Collins, Head Teacher - Primary  
Margaret Dunford, Head Teacher - Special  
Sarah Sadler, Head Teacher - Primary  
Mike Smith, Head Teacher - Secondary  
Sue Wilson, Head Teacher - Primary

Alison Beane, Academy Representative  
Margaret Beel, Academy Representative  
Steve Frampton, 16-19 Representative

Carole Damper, Early Years Provider  
Councillor Ken Ferrett  
Councillor Lynn Stagg

### 24. Apologies (AI 1)

Apologies were received from Fiona Calderbank, David Jeapes, Bruce Marr and Karen Stocks.

### 25. Declarations of Interests (AI 2)

The following interests were declared:

- Steve Frampton declared an interest in item 11
- Mark Mitchell declared an interest in item 9 in relation to the Special School funding.
- Sarah Sadler declared an interest in item 9
- Steve Sheehan is president of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers.

### 26. Membership Changes (AI 3).

Richard Webb informed the committee of the following changes to membership:

- Jayne Pratt, Governor - Nursery, membership tenure of the Forum has come to an end.
- Councillor Lynne Stagg had replaced David Fuller as the Liberal Democrat representative.
- As the Cabinet Member for Children & Education, Councillor Neill Young is now an observer rather than a Forum Member. The tenures of David Jeapes, Mike Smith and Carole Damper are coming to an end.

**27. Schools Forum Constitution (AI 4)**

Richard Webb suggested that the constitution will be amended to reflect UKIP representation and a member sought.

**Schools Forum agreed that the constitution be amended to include one additional Non-Schools Member to be a Elected Member from the United Kingdom Independence Party.**

**28. Minutes and Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting - 30 April 2014 (AI 5).**

The minutes were agreed.

Matters Arising.

The consultation paper regarding the schools block funding would be resent to Sarah Sadler using a different email address.

**29. Universal Infant Free School Meals (AI 6).**

Mike Stoneman introduced the report and in response to questions from the committee, clarified the following points:

- The feedback from the trial was positive and all the schools served lunches within the lunch break, some by making the following changes:
  - a) Reducing the number of meal options in order to speed up the service.
  - b) The appointment of monitors to serve water.
  - c) Extending the lunch hour.
  - d) Provision of more bins.
  - e) Allowing for more washing up.
- According to the forms returned so far by parents, 80-90% of pupils are likely to have free school meals. The council will check the pupils' eligibility for pupil premium funding in time for the October census.
- The government pays £2.30 per meal.

Richard Webb explained the new funding arrangements in respect of the new UIFSM grant.

The Chair commented that this was a good report and that there was good evidence that there has been communication with schools.

**The Schools Forum noted the progress that has been made in implementing the Universal Infant Free School Meals initiative and requested that officers bring back to a future Schools Forum meeting a paper setting out the proposed future cost per meal to parents/carers once the re-negotiations of the existing contract with ISS have been completed.**

**30. School Balances at 31 March 2014 (AI 7).**

Richard Webb introduced the report and informed the forum that on 14 July, the Cabinet Member for Children & Education was not pleased that some schools had significant surplus amounts of uncommitted balances that had accumulated and had instructed the education service to continue working with schools on this issue.

In response to a question, Julian Wooster explained that the Education Improvement Service will issue an improvement notice to schools that are performing badly. He also noted that some schools had received large amount of pupil premiums.

Members commented that some balances are unforeseen but plans should be monitored.

Mark Mitchell made the following observations:

- Schools have a statutory obligation to publish details on how the pupil premiums will be spent on their website.
- A small number of schools have large revenue carry forward balances, some of which are increasing every year. It is reasonable that this be questioned particularly if they are also performing poorly.
- It is difficult to balance pupils' current needs and planned work.

**The Schools Forum noted the level of schools' revenue balances and capital balances as at 31st March 2014 as shown in Appendices 1 & 2.**

**31. DSG Outturn Position 2013-14 (AI 8).**

Richard Webb introduced the report.

**The Schools Forum:**

- 1. Noted the reasons for the under and overspends within the DSG budget in 2013-14.**
- 2. Acknowledge that the carry forward funding is not available on an ongoing basis**

**32. Revised Budget 2014-15 (AI 9).**

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

- Section 6.17 on page 62 refers to further education not higher.
- It is important that budget is sustainable.
- The proposals within the report in respect of the use of the two year old funding would not affect the Council's obligation in meeting its statutory duties.
- Highbury College would receive £18,000 less funding from the Growth Fund under the proposals within the report.

Julia Katherine explained that Portsmouth has slightly more pupils with statements than the national average and the council aims to reduce the number who are placed outside of the city.

Mark Mitchell observed that the complexity of pupils' needs was increasing.

Margaret Dunford reported that Alison Beane, who had left the meeting shortly before had asked that academies be represented on the SEN Strategy Group.

The forum discussed how the budget could be balanced.

Members suggested that it would not be fair to reduce the additional growth fund allocation to schools in-year as those schools had accepted the extra pupils to assist the city with the increased demand.

**The Schools Forum:**

- a) **Acknowledged the estimated financial pressures and the reasons for them as set out in sections 5 and 6 of this report; as well as the fact that the final outturn for 2014-15 may change.**
- b) **Agreed to allocate the increase in the Early Years block DSG of £114,000 to support the 3 & 4 year old Nursery provision budget.**
- c) **Noted the forecast overspend for 2014-15 of £250,000 in the 3 & 4 year old Nursery provision after allocating the £114,000, and that any underspend in the 2 year place funding will be used to offset this.**
- d) **Agreed to meet the estimated financial pressures of £1,067,000 in respect of the High Needs budgets in 2014-15 by:**
  - i) **Allocating the additional High Needs Block DSG funding of £292,000 to the High Needs budgets.**
  - ii) **Transferring the unused Falling Rolls funding in 2014-15 of £391,000 to the High Needs budgets.**
  - iii) **Transferring £384,000 on a one-off basis from the 2013-14 carryforward to the High Needs budgets**
- e) **Agreed the revised budget for 2014-15 as set out in Appendix 1.**
- f) **Acknowledged the forecast financial pressures in respect of the High Needs budget in 2015-16 of circa £1.433m and the options for balancing the budget as set out in paragraphs 7.7 to 7.11.**
- g) **Agreed that based on the options in paragraphs 7.7 to 7.11, officers develop specific proposals for balancing the budget in 2015-16 and that these be brought back to a future meeting of the Forum for approval.**

(All the above were approved unanimously).

- h) **Rejected the recommendation to amend the funding allocation methodology for the 2014-15 Growth Fund, subject to DfE approval, as follows: *'The one-off allocation from the growth fund to schools, who meet the Growth Fund criteria, will be equal to £1,100 per Primary pupil of the current academic year's increase in the Number of Roll. For secondary schools, the rate of £1,500 per pupil will be used in the calculation.'***  
(2 for and 6 against).

**33. Scheme For Financing Schools (AI 10).**

Alison Egerton introduced the report and informed members that to date the council had only received responses on the consultation from Fernhurst Junior and King Richards Schools.

Steve Sheehan noted how important it was that governors are able to scrutinise school budgets.

In response to a question about training, Richard Webb explained a new training offer for Head Teachers, Finance Officers and Governors had recently been launched by Financial Services.

**The Schools Forum approved the revised Scheme for Financing Schools.** *(approved unanimously).*

**34. Funding Reform 2015-16 (AI 11)**

Richard Webb introduced the report.

**The Schools Forum noted the report but could not vote on the recommendations because it was no longer quorate.**

**35. Any Other Business. (AI 12)**

Richard Webb informed the forum that he had been asked to raise an item by the Head of Education, but would now email this to members as the majority had now left.

The meeting concluded at 6.45pm.

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Mark Mitchell  
Chair