

## SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Schools Forum held on Wednesday, 4 December 2024 at 4.30pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

### Present

Dave Jones (Chair)	LA Maintained	Primary Phase
Carina Jacobs	LA Maintained	Primary Phase
Share D'All	Governors	Primary Phase
Jo Cooper	Academies	Primary Phase
Sean Preston	Academies	Primary Phase
Nys Hardingham	Academies	Secondary Phase
Nathan Waites	Academies	Secondary Phase
Nick Giles	Academies	Secondary Phase
Teresa Cole	16-19 Education	
Suzy Horton	Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education	Observer

### 27. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Sharon Burt, Simon Graham and Jack Jones.

### 28. Declarations of Interest

Declarations of interests are outstanding from Christian Down and Heather Smith.

### 29. Minutes of the Previous Meetings - 22 May and 9 October 2024

#### DECISION

The minutes of the meetings held on 22 May and 9 October 2024 were approved as correct records.

### 30. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

### 31. Membership Update

The forum welcomed:

- Carina Jacobs, maintained primary head teacher representative.
- Teresa Cole, post 16 education representative.

These members renewed their tenures as primary academy representatives:

- Sean Preston, Hamwick Trust.
- Jo Cooper, Stamshaw Infant Academy, University of Chichester Academy Trust.

There are three vacancies:

- One secondary governor.
- One secondary academy.
- One conservative party.

### **32. Dedicated Schools Grant 2024-25 Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring**

Angela Mann, Finance Manager introduced the report.

In response to a question from Share D'All about work to address the pressure on the High Needs Block and consultation with Schools Forum Members, Mike Stoneman Deputy Director for Education clarified that a detailed action plan has been prepared internally covering a whole range of areas including funding, specialist school places, supporting mainstream schools, early years, workforce development, data, the EHCP Recovery Plan, etc. He said that officers would be consulting with Schools Forum Members and headteachers in the Spring Term about the work and the proposed actions, particularly with respect to how better to support mainstream schools so they are able to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.

In response to questions, Angela Mann explained that Portsmouth has just received the indicative allocation for the High Needs Block; it increased by slightly over £3 million. Officers are currently analysing it.

They are also working on the numbers, including the backlog. It is challenging considering the commitments for next year, but all the activities and recovery plan are being incorporated. The post 16 funding will be included in the calculations. £2.5 million of the reserve has been used in this year's budget. The operational guidance is also being reviewed for 2025-26. Therefore, it is work in progress to determine how much of the DSG reserve will be required. No further transfer to the High Needs Block to that in the consultation, was being considered for 2025-2026.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted.**

### **33. School Funding Arrangements 2025/26.**

Alison Egerton, Group Accountant introduced the report and highlighted the following corrections:

*Paragraph 2.1.2*

Second bullet point refers to 5.19.

Third bullet point refers to 5.21-5.24

*Paragraph 2.1.3* The values are set out in paragraph 5.11 and the proposed revision is set out in 5.13.

Angela Mann clarified that the pass-through rate for providers of early years is moving from 95% to 96%.

In response to questions, Alison Egerton clarified that

There is no additional funding attached to the local Notional SEND factors, but it is a guide that recognises that there will be pupils with high needs within the school, but it is for the governing body to agree the amount the school will set for pupils with SEN Support or with High Needs, within the school budget. The first £6,000 that a school is expected to fund for a SEN pupil has been raised with the Department for Education by the Southeast Education Finance Officers Group as it is recognised that pupil numbers are growing and that £6,000 has not increased and there has been no additional funding to recognise the growing pressure for schools.

## **DECISION**

### **The Schools Forum:**

- 1) Noted the Department for Education's proposed changes to school revenue funding arrangements for 2025-26, as set out in this report.**
- 2) Endorsed the proposals for implementing the local funding formula arrangements as set out in this report to:**
  - Implement the National Funding Formula rates for both primary and secondary schools in 2025-26 as set out in Appendix 1**
  - Implement a minimum funding guarantee (MFG) at the top of the range published by the DfE, subject to affordability, for 2025-26 as set out in paragraph 5.15.**
  - The methods of managing affordability as set out in paragraphs 5.17 to 5.20**
- 3) Approved the de-delegation of funding to support the Education Functions as set out in Section 7.**

The meeting concluded at 5pm.

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Dave Jones  
Chair