

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Schools Forum held on Wednesday, 15 October 2014 at 5pm in the Civic Offices, Portsmouth.

Present

Mark Mitchell, Governor - Special (in the Chair)
Clive Good, Governor, Primary
Bruce Marr, Governor - Secondary
Steve Sheehan, Governor - Primary

Fiona Calderbank, Head Teacher - Secondary
Jackie Collins, Head Teacher - Primary
Gareth Hughes, Head Teacher - Secondary
David Jeapes, Head Teacher - Secondary
Sarah Sadler, Head Teacher - Primary
Karen Stocks, Head Teacher - Nursery
Sue Wilson, Head Teacher - Primary

Alison Beane, Academy Representative
Steve Frampton, 16-19 Representative
Councillor Lynne Stagg

Councillor Neill Young, Cabinet Member for Children & Education attended as an observer.

36. Apologies

Councillor Ken Ferrett sent his apologies.

37. Declarations of Interest

Sarah Sadler and Mark Mitchell declared non-prejudicial interests in item 8 in relation to the behavioural support service.

38. Membership Changes

Richard Webb informed the Forum of the following changes:

Leavers.

The membership tenures of Mike Smith, Secondary Head Teacher and Suzy Horton Primary Governor had come to an end and they have stepped down. Richard Wharton, from the Anglican Diocese had left his role at the Diocese and had now stepped down.

New Members.

- David Jeapes, (re-appointed) and Gareth Hughes have been appointed by the phase conference as Secondary Head Teacher representatives.
- Steve Sheehan, Primary Governor (re-appointed).
- Jeff Williams, Anglican Diocese.
- Councillor Hannah Hockaday, Conservative representative.

Members' approaching the end of their tenure.

- Sue Wilson
- Karen Stocks
- Carole Damper.

Mark Mitchell asked that it be recorded on behalf of the Forum that Mike Smith be thanked for being an long standing active, informed and useful member of the Forum.

39. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 July 2014 and matters arising

Matters Arising.

Mike Stoneman, Strategic Commissioning Manager provided the Forum with an update on the catering contract negotiations and the new Universal Infant Free School meal (UIFSM) provision.

Over the past few months the council had been re-negotiating a variation to the contract on behalf of all those schools that form part of the contract. These discussions have been concluded and an extension to the existing contract has been offered until August 2019. The re-negotiated contract offers significant benefits to schools and academies, pupils and parents / carers. The key benefits can be summarised as follows:

- Cost of school meals to remain at £2.00 until August 2016, rising to £2.05 from September 2016. This price will be held until August 2019.
- Payback mechanism to generate an additional £600,000 over the remaining five year period of the contract (in addition to the £500,000 that would have been generated if the contract had remained unchanged). The total investment of £1.1m will be re-invested in the service.
- For secondary schools, the Council has agreed a profit share arrangement based on a ratio of 60:40 in the Council's favour when this sector reaches breakeven.
- Agreement by ISS to an additional investment worth £295,000. The investment will be used to modernise the school meals service and make school meal payments easier for all.

In response to questions, he clarified the following points:

- Overall feedback had been positive to the new UIFSMs. Issues that have arisen have been addressed promptly. These include some schools that had insufficient equipment and some where it had not been possible for all pupils to have their lunch in the allocated time.
- The new contract and the payback mechanism will be introduced retrospectively from 1 September 2014

Members agreed that the quality of the catering provision had improved over the last couple of years.

40. School Funding Reform 2015 - 2016

Richard Webb introduced the report and circulated a summary of the seven responses received to the funding formula consultation with schools and Academies (attached). In response to questions, clarified the following points:

- The seven schools that responded did not reply to every question..
- Between 1 April 2013 and 1 April 2015, the contributions to the Maternity pooled fund are expected to decrease by £129,000 (30%) as a result of schools converting to Academy status. 5 schools have converted to Academy status so far this year, resulting in a loss of funding to date of c.£43,000 (part year). The loss of funding to the fund will not necessarily correlate directly to a loss in expenditure.
- There were seven respondents who responded in relation to the proposal to cease the operation of the Maternity pooled fund. As at 31 March 2014, those seven schools had revenue balances of £1.018m. The value of the de-delegated funding from those seven schools was £46,558, which the schools would retain in 2015-16 if the de-delegation for this fund ended. As at 31 August 2014, the seven schools had only been reimbursed £8,159 from the pooled fund.
- David Jeapes suggested that Academy sponsors be asked with whom they are insured. Alison Beane replied that she would be willing to share their information.

Schools Members:

- Agreed that following confirmation of the 2015-16 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), officers will amend the unit values to minimise the impact of fluctuations in funding at the school level and to maintain overall affordability. In order to provide schools with some certainty, where possible any changes will be limited to the following formula factors:**
 - **Basic Per Pupil Entitlement**
 - **Prior attainment**
 - **Lump Sum**
 - **The percentage of the financial cap**
- Agreed the proposed changes to the mainstream funding formula factors, together with the choices that the Council has made in implementing these factors locally, as detailed at paragraph 4.6.**
- Approved the submission of the draft proforma to the DfE as the first stage of the 2015-16 school's funding formula process.**
- Agreed by phase, (maintained primary and secondary schools) the de-delegation of the following budgets for central administration in 2015-16.**

Expenditure Item	De-Delegation Proposed	
	Primary	Secondary
Administration of free school meals eligibility	Yes	Yes
Licences	Yes	Yes
Special Staff Costs: Union Duties only.	Yes	Yes

Expenditure Item	De-Delegation Proposed	
	Primary	Secondary
Schools Contingency Fund	Yes	Yes
Behaviour Support	Yes	No
Museum & Library Services	Yes	No

- e. **Agreed the proposed Growth Fund criteria for 2015-16 as set out on page 15 of the attached consultation document.**

Note: all the above were approved unanimously. Item 'd' was voted on by phase.

- f. **Agreed that Portsmouth will not operate a Falling Rolls Fund in 2015-16, for the reasons explained within the attached consultation document.**
(11 members voted for and 1 against).
- g. **Noted that subject to the government's consultation on the Finance Regulations, the DfE are proposing to increase the funding for Alternative Provision places from £8,000 to £10,000 from 01 September 2015.**
- h. **Noted that if it is agreed to increase the funding for Alternative Provision places, the top-up rates for Flying Bull Primary and the Harbour School would need to be reduced as follows, in order to maintain overall affordability.**

	The Harbour School	Flying Bull Primary Academy
Element 3 Top up rate 1.4.2015 to 31.8.2015	£5,273	£6,638
Element 3 Top up rate 1.9.2015 to 31.3.2016	£2,714	£4,638

41. Schools Forum Constitution

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

- Academy Proprietors must be represented on the Forum and they can choose to be represented by their head teacher, chair of governor, finance officer or other individual representing the proprietary body.
- Vacant positions are excluded when calculating whether the forum is quorate.

It was agreed Academies will be contacted by the clerk to request representatives to join the Schools Forum to fill the vacancies created in the proposed membership structure.

The Schools Forum approved the revised constitution to take effect from 1 November 2014 subject to the following amendment: that membership include a Head Teacher to represent the maintained special schools.
(Approved unanimously).

42. School modernisation and capital programme - capital contributions from schools

In response to questions, Mike Stoneman, Strategic Commissioning Manager, Maria Smith, Senior Accountant and Richard Webb, Finance Manager clarified the following points:

- The proposal is that schools with balances below £25,000 would not contribute.
- If all maintained schools revenue balances reduced below £25,000 there would be no contributions under the proposal. However, this is unlikely as the currently surplus balances total over £10million.
- On page 53 the footnotes are the wrong way round
- A school might convert to an academy after having work completed.

Mark Mitchell reminded the Forum that a list of approved works are prioritised in the new year and the pooled money generated is used to fund them. He also commented that it is worth considering reviewing the amounts every two years rather than annually.

Julian Wooster asked the Forum to note that pooling resources is beneficial to schools.

The Schools Forum agreed in principle that all maintained schools should contribute for essential capital works to maintained schools irrespective of whether the school was in the capital programme, and that a report is re-presented to the Forum following consultation of the options with schools.

43. Traded services - The Next Steps (presentation)

Steve McIntyre, Traded Services Manager gave a presentation and in response to questions, clarified the following points:

- Potential competitors include Hampshire County Council, academy chains and commercial companies.
- The unique selling points are that it is locally based and driven by Head Teachers.
- There is potential to offer the service to Hampshire colleges.

Julian Wooster, Strategic Director explained that head teachers choose which services are included. He also noted that a group of schools in Bradford had set up a limited company.

Members discussed the inclusion of an ethics statement.

Mark Mitchell commented that the company encompasses many traded services that are currently offered in the new brochure. The benefits to schools could be significant if there is sufficient buy-in.

..... **The Schools Forum noted the presentation.**

44. Dates of future meetings

The Schools Forum agreed the following meeting dates for 2015 (all starting at 4.30pm):

21 January

25 February

22 April

15 July.

45. Any other business.

None.

The meeting concluded at 7:10pm.

Mark Mitchell
Chair, Schools Forum.