

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Schools Forum held on Wednesday, 21 January 2015 at 4.30pm at the Civic Offices, Portsmouth.

Present

Mark Mitchell, Governor	Special (Chair)
Clive Good, Governor	Primary
Jackie Collins, Head Teacher	Primary
Julie Cragg, Head Teacher (<i>substitute for Sue Wilson</i>)	Primary
Krishna Purbhoo, Head Teacher (<i>substitute for Margaret Dunford</i>)	Special
Gareth Hughes, Head Teacher	Secondary
David Jeapes, Head Teacher	Secondary
Sarah Sadler, Head Teacher	Primary
Karen Stocks, Head Teacher	Nursery
Margaret Beal	Primary Academy representative
Alison Beane	Special Academy representative
James Humphries	Secondary Academy representative
Steve Labeledz	Secondary Academy representative
Lee Miller	Secondary Academy representative
Cllr Ken Ferret	Labour Party
Cllr Colin Galloway	United Kingdom Independence Party
Steve Frampton	16 - 19 Representative

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from:

- Margaret Dunford (substituted by Krishna Purbhoo)
- Sue Wilson (substituted by Julie Cragg)
- Bruce Marr
- Stephen Sheehan
- Councillor Lynne Stagg
- Councillor Neil Young

2. Declarations of interests

No interests were declared.

3. Membership changes

Richard Webb informed the Forum of the following changes:

Leavers

The membership tenures of Sue Wilson and Karen Stocks had come to an end and both have been re-appointed at the Primary Phase Conference this week.

New Members

The following members have been elected by the Secondary Academy Proprietors to join the Schools Forum to represent the Secondary Academy Proprietors:

Lee Miller - The Thinking Schools Trust
Steve Labedz - Salterns Academy Trust
James Humphries - Bohunt Trust

There remains one vacancy for a Nursery Governor Representative.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 October 2014 and matters arising.

Matters Arising.

Mark Mitchell noted that the top up rates for funding alternative provision places were only for Harbour School Local Authority funded places.

Richard Webb confirmed that this was correct and that further details would be provided in the budget report in February.

5. School Revenue Funding Arrangements 2015-16

Richard Webb introduced the report and informed the forum about the updates that had occurred since the meeting papers had been published:

- The Cabinet Member for Children & Education had approved the proposals funding formula and proposed contained within this report at the Portfolio meeting on 19 January. The Forum is now being asked to endorse the approved proposals.
- The Department for Education had notified the Council of an error in its data for the Free School Meal factor for one school. This has been corrected and had resulted in an increased funding requirement of £20,000.

In response to questions he clarified the following points:

The table in section 4.1 was extracted from the report that was considered at the July meeting and shows the estimated financial funding requirement at that time compared to the original 2014-15 budget; whereas Appendix 1 shows the estimated funding requirement changes for 2015-16 against the revised 2014-15 budget.

Mark Mitchell noted that consultation with mainstream schools regarding Outreach services is important. Julian Wooster agreed to feed this back to the Inclusion Support Commissioning Manager.

Schools Members:

- a) Endorsed the proposed changes to the mainstream schools revenue funding formula as set out in paragraph 5.6.**

- b) Endorsed the de-delegated unit values for 2015-16 as shown at Appendix 2.
- c) Endorsed the amount of the growth fund for 2015-16 at £200,000.
- d) Endorsed the school funding pro-forma at Appendix 3 for submission to the DfE on the 20th January 2015 subject to the inclusion of amendment regarding free school meals factor to correct the DfE data error.

Note: all the above were approved unanimously.

The Schools Forum:

- e) Noted the financial context and challenges facing the Dedicated Schools Grant budgets as well as the wider Council as set out in section 4
- f) Endorsed the proposals in respect of the funding for Outreach services (also known as PSENSP) as set out in section 7.
- g) Endorsed the decision to cease the operation of the Exceptional Circumstances Fund from 1st April 2015.
- h) Noted that the overall indicative Dedicated School Grant budget for 2015- 16 will be presented to a meeting in February for approval before the statutory deadline of the 28th February.

Note: all the above were approved unanimously.

6. School Modernisation Capital Programme - Capital Contributions From Schools

Mike Stoneman introduced the report and circulated an updated appendix two, together with the anonymised written responses from schools.

As discussion took place and in response to questions, Mr Stoneman and Mr Webb clarified the following points:

- If the majority of schools decide not to contribute to the scheme the viability of the scheme would be severely affected.
- The mechanism has been adjusted to ensure that school contributions would be reduced if it would mean that their overall revenue and capital balances would be reduced to less than £25,000.
- Financial modelling based on the 2014-15 data showed that the majority of schools (36) would contribute less than £20,000. 10 schools would contribute between £20,001 and £100,000. With two schools contributing over £100,000 (although one is now an Academy and would not be part of the scheme).
- An amended appendix two was circulated which showed that 14 responses had been received; 9 agreed with the new methodology; 6 were against.
- The principle of the scheme was agreed at the Forum meeting in October 2014 and this report and the proposals are based on the comments received in October.
- Without a collaborative approach, the number of schemes that could be completed will be reduced.

Members of the forum expressed the following concerns:

- Schools might decide to decrease their balances in order to reduce their contribution to the scheme.
- Schools felt that the 25% contribution rate for those schools that did not join the scheme was a penalty charge.
- Last February, the Forum discussed school balances and expressed some concern about the large amounts carried forward and maybe this should be revisited.

David Jeapes explained that he agreed with the principle of larger schools assisting smaller ones which is in the best interests of all the children in the city. However, as he represents all the secondary schools he would abstain from voting based on the feedback from the other Secondary Head Teachers.

The Schools Forum:

- a) Noted the principles adopted in determining the proposed contribution methodology, as set out in section 4 of this report.**
- b) Noted the response and feedback to the consultation, as set out in Appendix 2.**
- c) Considered and approved the proposed methodology for implementation from 1 April 2015 (*i.e. whereby all maintained schools contribute, as set out in section 5 of this report*).**

Note: Voting: 10 for; 1 against and 5 abstentions).

Actions

It was agreed that Mike Stoneman:

1. Would write to Heads and the Governing Bodies of maintained schools requesting that they endorse this proposal.
2. Bring a report back to the Schools Forum meeting in February to update members on the number of schools that agreed to join the scheme and its viability.

7. Budget Monitoring Report as at 30 September 2014

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

- The costs of some High Needs placements are expensive, particularly where children are placed in Out of City placements.
- The city is not unique in terms of the pressures it is experiencing which are partly due to changes to the funding model.
- Richard and Alison will be attending the DfE - 'Call For Evidence' seminar in relation to the proposed developments for High Needs funding.

Mark Mitchell noted that needs have become more complex nationally. The only options available are to increase the number of places or build more special schools. It is important to reduce the number of out of city placements and increase the level of inclusion especially at primary schools.

Julian Wooster, Director of Children's Services and Strategic Director, Education and Strategic Commissioning explained that although there were

historically low levels of out of city placements, it has been difficult in recent years to find placements in the city. It would not be possible to build more special schools. He offered the Forum more information on these issues at a future meeting.

The Schools Forum noted the forecast budget position for the financial year as at the end of September 2014.

Any Other Business.

The Forum agreed that the meeting provisionally scheduled for 22 April would be removed from the calendar.

The future 2015 meeting dates are as follows:

- 25 February
- 15 July
- 21 October

The meeting concluded at 6.15pm.

Mark Mitchell
Chair