

Minutes of a Meeting of the Schools Forum

Monday, 14 July 2014

Shaw House Church Road Newbury RG14 2DR

Present:

Patricia Brims	Governor Brimpton School	Primary Schools
Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Finance Manager (Children & Young People)	Finance Officer
Jon Hewitt	Headteacher The Castle School	Special Schools
Brian Jenkins	Proprietor Jubilee Day Nursery	PVI
Carolynn Loosen	Schools Funding Officer	Finance Officer
Robert O'Reilly	Head of Human Resources	Human Resources Officer
Sheilagh Peacock	Winchcombe School Business Manager	Maintained Primary Schools
Ian Pearson	Deputy Corporate Director (Communities) & Head of Education Service	Education Officer
Chris Prickett	Headteacher Streatley Primary School	Primary Schools
Clive Rothwell	Governor John O'Gaunt School	Secondary Schools
Eileen Selsey	Governor Park House School	Academies
Graham Spellman	RC Diocese of Portsmouth Representative	Roman Catholic Diocese
Suzanne Taylor	Headteacher Hungerford Nursery School	Nursery Schools
John Tyzack	Governor Falkland Primary School	Primary Schools
Andy Walker	Head of Finance	Finance Officer
Keith Watts	NUT	Union Representative
Claire White	Finance Manager (Schools)	Finance Officer

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:

Councillor David Allen	Council Member, Shadow Portfolio - Children & Young People, Education, Youth Service, Culture & Leisure	Shadow Portfolio Holder for C&YP
Sarah Brinkley	Headteacher John O'Gaunt School	Secondary Schools
Nathan Butler-Broad	Headteacher Spurcroft School	Primary Schools
Fadia Clarke	Deputy Principal Newbury College	Further Education
Jeanette Clifford	Governor St Bartholomew's School	Academies
Paul Dick	Headteacher Kennet School	Academies
Mary Harwood	C of E Diocese of Oxford Representative	Church of England Diocese
Kate House	Headteacher The Ilsleys	Primary Schools
Peter Hudson	Governor Mortimer St Johns Infant School	Primary Schools
Catherine Morley	Headteacher Theale Primary School	Primary Schools
Councillor Irene Neill	Executive Portfolio - Children and Young People, Youth Service, Education, Safeguarding	Executive Portfolio Holder for C&YP
Derek People	Headteacher Park House School	Academies
David Ramsden	Headteacher Little Heath School	Secondary Schools
Stacey Williams	Headteacher Reintegration Service	Pupil Referral Units
Charlotte Wilson	Headteacher Trinity School	Academies

1. Minutes of previous meeting dated 9th June 2014

Action

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The minutes of the meeting on 9th June were approved.

2. **Actions arising from previous meetings**

Report on investing in West Berkshire High Needs Provision
On this meeting's agenda.

Mid-Year Review of Pupil Referral Unit Funding Arrangements
To be considered in the Autumn Term.

Trade Union Facility Time Annual Report and Proposals for the Arrangements and Budget in 2015/16
On this meeting's agenda.

Investigate Levels of Special Schools and Pupil Referral Unit Surplus Balance Limits in other Local Authorities
To be carried out by year end 2014/15 when surplus balances will be next considered.

Action

3. **Declarations of Interest**

Keith Watts who is the NUT representative and represents the Trade Unions on the Schools Forum and Eileen Selsey who is a Governor at Park House which employs two union representatives both declared an interest in Trade Union Facilities de-delegation report contained within item 9.

Action

4. **Membership**

The election to fill the School Business Manager vacancy was concluded on 30th June and Sheilagh Peacock who is Schools Business Manager at The Winchcombe School was elected by the Primary Headteachers. Sheilagh was welcomed to her first meeting by the Schools Forum members.

Action

5. **Schools Forum Membership and Constitution**

The Schools Forum remains proportionately representative of the number of pupils in each type of school and no legislative changes have been made that affect the constitution.

DECISION: No changes are to be made to the structure of the membership or the constitution.

The only member coming to the end of their term is Graham Spellman who has been re-nominated by the Diocese and will therefore continue on the Schools Forum for another term.

John Tyzack agreed to be the Chair of the Schools' Forum for a year in September 2013 and so the Forum will need to elect a new Chair.

Action

All

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ACTION: Nominations for Chair to Carolynn Loosen and Claire White.

6. Funding Bid - Primary Schools in Financial Difficulty

A bid from Bradfield Primary School for Primary Schools in Financial Difficulty Funding was presented to the Heads Funding Group on 1st July.

The bid meets the required criteria and is for £74k to meet one off redundancy costs, compensation payments and the cost of the Executive Head for the Summer term (this cost was met from the school's balances in 2013/14).

The school was placed in special measures in 2013 and earmarked for academy conversion, although this has not progressed due to problems in securing a sponsor. The uncertainty and being placed in special measures resulted in a decline in pupil numbers which has adversely affected the 2014/15 funding whilst at the same time the school required short term additional leadership and staff restructuring in order to bring the school out of special measures.

The small deficit in 2013/14 will increase significantly in 2014/15 and beyond without the funding.

DECISION: The Schools Forum agreed bid from Bradfield Primary School.

ACTION: Payment to be made to Bradfield Primary School.

7. School Formula 2015/16

Claire White presented the report on the schools' formula 2015/16. The Department for Education (DfE) has yet to announce the arrangements for the 2015/16 funding formula.

It was proposed that the following changes are considered in principle:

Use of the Sparsity Factor

It was proposed that the distance criterion is reduced from the current 2 miles to 1.5 miles or more for primary schools with 90 pupils or less if this is allowed in the 2015/16 funding arrangements.

This would cost £279k in the primary sector in 2015/16 (excluding the MFG saving and based on the October 2013 pupil numbers) and benefit 8 out of 10 of the primary schools with less than 90 pupils.

The treatment of the federated primary schools would need to be considered.

Cap on Gains

Action

C Loosen

Action

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It is likely that the MFG will continue, however some schools may have taken into account that the cap would end in their 2015/16 budgets. It is therefore proposed to no longer operate the gains cap in 2015/16. This would cost £52k using the current pupil numbers.

Deprivation and Prior Attainment Funding Rates

It is proposed to keep the same funding rates for 2015/16 although this may require additional funding and changes to the primary / secondary ratio. This will be reviewed once the October 2014 census data has been received from the DfE and the final decision will be made by the Schools Forum in the January meeting subject to funding being available.

Exceptional Premises Factor

The criteria set by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) is that the nature of the premises cost is greater than 1% of the school's total budget allocation and that such costs affect fewer than 5% of the schools in the authority.

It is proposed to ask schools whether they meet the criteria and provide evidence that this is the case. To be included in the consultation with schools and considered at the next Schools Forum meeting in September.

Allocation of Additional Funding

If the LA benefits from any additional funding this will be allocated on a per pupil basis after allocations for the above circumstances have been made.

ACTION: The funding arrangements 2015/16 are to be communicated with the schools once they are received from the DfE. The schools are to be informed that the consultation with schools will be emailed to the Headteacher the week before the start of the Autumn Term.

C White

8. De-delegations 2015/16

Ian Pearson presented the report on the proposed de-delegations for 2015/16.

The Primary and Secondary school representatives on the Schools' Forum are required to make the pooling decision for their own school phase.

The services where maintained schools have the option to pool the funding so that the services can continue to be provided centrally and benefit from economies of scale are as follows:

Behaviour Support

Ian Pearson presented the report on Behaviour Support.

The anticipated budget requirement for 2015/16 is £212k (excluding academies).

Action

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Both primary and secondary maintained representatives recommend the pooling of funding. However the final recommendation will be considered by the Schools' Forum members at the September meeting following the consultation with the schools.

Ethnic Minority Support

Ian Pearson presented the report on the Ethnic Minority Support.

English language assessments and training for teachers and teaching assistants to support pupils where English is an additional language and pupils from a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller heritage continue to be in demand particularly in the primary schools.

The anticipated delegations for 2015/16 are £232k for primary schools and £30k for secondary schools.

Both primary and secondary maintained representatives recommend the pooling of funding. However the final recommendation will be considered by the Schools' Forum members at the September meeting following the consultation with the schools.

Trade Union Local Representation

Robert O'Reilly presented the report on the trade union facilities budget which compensates schools for release time for trade union representatives that they employ at their salary rate.

The trade union facilities outturn position for 2013/14 was 25% overspent and 2014/15 is expected to overspend again, particularly as more money is now required by the unions as one of the NASUWT representatives has been elected as a national representative which was not provided for in the budget.

The report included a proposal to change the compensation rates to schools which employ trade union representatives to supply teacher rates. However the schools are likely not to agree if the teacher is paid more than a supply teacher and any change in compensation rates would require consultation with the unions before final agreement.

Academies do not use the local representatives instead they choose to use the regional representatives who are paid for by the union.

If the decision is made to discontinue pooling arrangements by the schools then it will be difficult to reverse in the future.

At the Heads Funding Group there were no maintained secondary school Headteachers present to contribute to the trade union facilities budget discussion and the primary Headteachers present could not reach a decision and therefore were not in a position to make a recommendation.

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The Schools Forum also found the decision was complicated by the funding issue. It was therefore decided to deal with the funding issue and the pooling arrangement separately. Both the Primary and Secondary maintained schools representatives present recommended in principle the pooling of the funding.

The final decision will be made by Forum members at the September meeting.

Contingency for Schools in Financial Difficulty

£116k carried forward to 2014/15 resulting in a budget of £231k for 2014/15. Currently the £39k bid by The Ilsleys and the £74k bid by Bradfield Primary School have been approved by the Schools' Forum.

The Heads Funding Group primary school members recommended the continued pooling of the Schools in Financial Difficulty funding in 2015/16 to the Schools Forum. The secondary school member present at the Schools Forum recommended that they continue not to pool the funding.

The final decision will be made by Forum members at the September meeting.

9. ASD Resourced Provision Development

Ian Pearson presented the report on the development of West Berkshire's ASD resource provision.

Currently there are two ASD resource units one primary and one secondary both in Theale. It is proposed that in order to provide capacity for the increasing demand an additional 10 place primary resource unit and a 15 place secondary resource unit are required. The resource units are planned to open in September 2015.

The annual revenue cost 2015/16 for the primary resource is estimated to be £264k and for the secondary resource it is estimated to be £359k reducing to £164k and £209k respectively in 2016/17 (assuming that they are both full). The actual costs will be less to start with whilst the numbers build up. The unit cost of a place in a resource is significantly lower than those in a specialist independent or non maintained ASD school and some pupils will have top up funding diverted from their current placement.

DECISION: The Schools Forum agreed to allocate funds from the High Needs Block in respect of these developments.

Action

10. High Needs Funding Arrangements for Special Schools 2015/16

Action

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Ian Pearson presented the report on the high needs funding arrangements for special schools.

Currently special schools have 5 ASD funding bands and it is proposed to add a further three new bands:

ASD1a 1:6 teacher and 1:6 teaching assistant (TA) plus 25% additional TA time (pay scale C).

ASD6 1:6 teacher and 1:6 teaching assistant (TA) plus 200% additional TA time (pay scale D).

ASD7 1:3 teacher plus 200% additional TA (pay scale D).

ASD1a provides a mid-point between ASD1 and ASD2 for pupils who require more support than ASD1 but not as much as ASD2.

ASD6 and ASD7 incorporate the 2:1 TA support which is currently dealt with as an addition to the current funding bands. These bands will only be used in exceptional circumstances, usually short term, and is cheaper than placing pupils out of county.

DECISION: The Schools Forum agreed to the implementation of additional funding bands from April 2015.

11. High Needs Funding Arrangements for Mainstream Schools from September 2014

Ian Pearson presented the report on the high needs funding arrangements for mainstream schools.

The proposal includes streamlining the number of SEN bands to 4 from 7 by removing the least well used bands and to stop expressing a statement in terms of the number of hours of support but in terms of the monetary value. Statements / Education Health Care Plans (EHP) will cease to be expressed in terms of hours from September 2014. The change over to the new funding bands will be phased in as the statements are converted to EHP at the pupil's annual review.

DECISION: The Schools Forum agreed the changes to the funding arrangements for pupils with statements / EHP from September 2014.

12. Funding of Therapy Services

Ian Pearson presented the report on therapy services funding. If speech and language therapy and occupational health therapy services are included in part 3 of a pupil's statement as required for them to be able to access the curriculum then the cost is borne by the local authority education department rather than the health service. Currently the costs in West Berkshire, approximately £350k, are funded by the Education Service Budget but these costs are met from the DSG by some other

Action

Action

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local authorities, so that they can be protected.

ACTION: A more detailed report, including costs, is to be brought to the Heads Funding Group and Schools' Forum meetings on 25th November and 8th December respectively.

J Seymour

13. Engaging Potential

Ian Pearson presented the report on the Engaging Potential budget 2014/15.

Engaging Potential provides education for up to 14 secondary SEN pupils with severe Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties. The changing needs of the pupils means that additional staff are required to increase the pupil to staff ratio and additional training and more competitive teachers' salaries are required in order to reduce staff turnover. Engaging Potential continues to reduce their costs where possible. However this will still result in an increase of £49k in 2014/15 (pro rata) and £84k increase in 2015/16, which equates to a unit cost per pupil of £37k. This is still considered good value as the cost of a BESD school place is a minimum of £70k.

DECISION: The Schools Forum agreed that the additional costs from September 2014 will be met from the High Needs Block.

ACTION: £49k to be vired from the High Needs Block contingency.

It was noted that the previous 5 reports all contained additional funding required from the High Needs Block and if funding from this block was all spent this would impact on individual school budgets.

Action

S Coleman-Slaughter

14. School Budgets 2014/15 and Schools in Financial Difficulty

Claire White presented the report on the schools budgets 2014/15 and schools in financial difficulty.

Of the 74 budgets submitted in 2014-15 only three schools have submitted a deficit budget John O'Gaunt Secondary School (£536k), Bradfield Primary School (£75k) and Kintbury Primary School (£25k).

John O'Gaunt

The school continues to operate with pupil numbers that do not generate sufficient funding to cover their costs. Discussions are on-going to find a solution and a deficit recovery plan that is acceptable to the West Berkshire Council, Hungerford Town Council, the school, the parents and the tax payer in West Berkshire. Hungerford Nursery, Primary and John O'Gaunt are all working closely together to generate positive publicity.

Bradfield Primary School

Bid for Primary Schools in Financial Difficulty funding was agreed under

Action

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item 7 of this meeting.

Kintbury Primary School

Pupil numbers have fallen impacting on funding and the redundancy costs of a proposed restructure would take the school into deficit in 2014/15. The continuation of the Minimum Funding Guarantee in 2015/16 will allow the school to delay the restructure pending further financial modelling.

15 schools have set budgets with a contingency of £2k or less. This is expected as school balances continue to diminish, funding rates remain static but costs increase. 15 schools have also forecast a year 2 deficit of greater than £25k which will be reviewed with each school by Schools' Accountancy. None of the schools that submitted a year 2 deficit for 2014/15 in their 2013/14 budget plan have actually submitted one in 2014/15. This is due to improved financial planning and assistance from Schools' Accountancy where necessary.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The level of the trade union facilities funding is not currently sufficient.

ACTION: Finance plan to be brought to the next Heads Funding Group meeting on Thursday 18th September.

K Watts

After the meeting Eileen Selsey tendered her resignation from the Schools Forum due to her retirement from her governor role.

ACTION: The Academies need to decide on a new Governor Representative.

Academies

Meeting closed at 6.45 pm

Date of next meeting: 29 September 2014
Time: 5.00pm
Venue: Shaw House