

# Minutes of a Meeting of the Schools Forum

## Monday, 8 December 2014

### Shaw House Church Road Newbury RG14 2DR

#### Present:

Patricia Brims	Governor Brimpton School	Primary Schools
Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Finance Manager (Communities)	Finance Manager - C&YP
Jacquie Davies	Headteacher Alternative Curriculum	Pupil Referral Units
Paul Dick	Headteacher Kennet School	Academies
Mary Harwood	C of E Diocese of Oxford Representative	Church of England Diocese
Jon Hewitt	Headteacher The Castle School	Special Schools
Peter Hudson	Governor Mortimer St Johns Infant School	Primary Schools
Brian Jenkins	Proprietor Jubilee Day Nursery	PVI
Carolynn Loosen	Schools Funding Officer	Schools Funding Officer
Councillor Irene Neill	Executive Portfolio - Children and Young People, Youth Service, Education, Safeguarding	Executive Portfolio Holder for C&YP
Sheilagh Peacock	Winchcombe School Business Manager	Primary Schools
Ian Pearson	Deputy Corporate Director (Communities) & Head of Education Service	Head of Education
Chris Prosser	Headteacher	Secondary Schools
David Ramsden	Headteacher Little Heath School	Secondary Schools
Jane Seymour	Service Manager, SEN & Disabled Children's Team	Education Officer
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
Keith Watts	NUT	Union Representative
Claire White	Finance Manager (Schools)	Schools' Finance Manager
Charlotte Wilson	Headteacher Trinity School	Academies

#### Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:

Councillor David Allen	Council Member, Shadow Portfolio - Children & Young People, Education, Youth Service, Culture & Leisure Officer	Shadow Portfolio Holder for C&YP
Cathy Burnham	Deputy Principal Newbury College	Education Officer
Fadia Clarke	Governor St Bartholomew's School	Further Education
Jeanette Clifford	Headteacher The Ilsleys	Academies
Kate House	Headteacher Theale Primary School	Primary Schools
Catherine Morley	Headteacher Park House School	Primary Schools
Derek Peaple	Headteacher Streatley Primary School	Academies
Chris Prickett	Governor John O'Gaunt School	Primary Schools
Clive Rothwell	Headteacher Reintegration Service	Secondary Schools
Stacey Williams		Pupil Referral Units

## PART I

### 1. Minutes of previous meeting dated 29th September 2014

The minutes of the meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> September were approved.

**Action**

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### 2. **Actions arising from previous meetings**

All the action points that were due for completion from the last meeting have been completed or are on this meeting's agenda.

**Action**

Matters arising from the last meeting:

#### Schools Formula 2015/16

The formula for 2015/16 has been submitted and agreed by the Education Funding Agency. The EFA also agreed the exceptional premises factor for the joint use of leisure centres where 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. The factor will be included in the West Berkshire formula from 2015/16 onwards (although no school actually qualifies in 2015/16).

#### Ethnic Minority Support

The recruitment process is on track for a Portuguese Support Officer from 2015/16.

### 3. **Declarations of Interest**

Keith Watts declared an interest in item 7 relating to Trade Union funding as he is the Trade Union Representative on the Schools' Forum.

**Action**

### 4. **Membership**

Eileen Selsey has retired from her role as a Governor at Park House School and therefore as stated in the Forum's terms of reference Eileen's post on the Schools' Forum also comes to an end.

**Action**

**ACTION: Academy schools to elect a new Governor Representative.**

**Academy  
Reps**

Nathan Butler Broad has resigned from his Schools' Forum post so there is a vacancy for a Maintained Schools Primary Headteacher Representative.

**ACTION: Replacement representative to be nominated by the Primary Heads Forum. To be added to the PHF agenda for the next meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2015.**

**I Pearson**

### 5. **Draft DSG Budget 2015/16 - Overview**

Claire White presented the report on the DSG budget 2015/16.

**Action**

The DfE is due to announce the school funding settlement 2015/16 by mid December 2014.

West Berkshire will receive a small increase in per pupil funding of £8

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per pupil after taking into account a change in the method to recover the Carbon Reduction Commitment. However as the actual school budgets 2014/15 exceeded the Schools Block funding 2014/15 some of the increase has already been committed.

Once the October census data has been received the 2015/16 schools formula will be run based on the October pupil data to determine whether there is any headroom to allocate, which will be on a per pupil basis.

For the first time 2 year olds will be funded on a pupil count (5/12ths January 2015 census and 7/12ths January 2016 census). This is the same method used for 3 year olds and is likely to have a detrimental impact of the level of funding that we receive for 2 year olds in 2015/16.

The Early Years Steering Group will be requesting a carry forward of the funding 2014/15 under spend to maintain funding rates to providers in 2015/16.

The High Needs Block is likely to be fixed at the 2014/15 level although a bid has been made for additional places and there may be additional funding if there is any headroom nationally.

The draft estimate of funding and budget 2015/16 (assuming no carry forward from 2014/15) is Headroom of £237k in the Schools Block (based on 2014/15 pupil numbers), a shortfall of £258k in the Early Years Block (based on the 2014/15 funding rates and funded hours) and a shortfall of £1931k in the High Needs Block.

The demands on the High Needs Block continue to grow. Although the top up funding is demand led the cost of the bandings could be reduced.

**ACTION: The Heads Funding Group to investigate the options regarding the High Needs Block and make a recommendation to the Schools' Forum at the meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January.**

HFG

### 6. Trade Union Facilities Budget (De-delegation)

Ian Pearson led the discussion on the Trade Union Budget Proposals 2015/16. Keith Watts and Richard Blofeld represented the Trade Unions and explained the role of the Trade Unions both in schools and working with the Local Authority.

Action

Three options were put forward to the Heads Funding Group for the 2015/16 budget:

#### Option 1:

- Schools should be reimbursed for trade union representatives release time at the rate of the cost of a supply teacher.
- A flat rate of 5 supply days to cover joint consultation meetings of the council.

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- 34 supply days for NASUWT executive representative.
- Additional Supply days allocated at 0.08 days per member.

The de-delegated funding is £29k Primary and £14k Secondary Maintained Schools, a total of £43k.

### Option 2:

- The 2015-16 budget to be reset to the 2012-13 level.
- £15k of additional funding is allocated to the reimburse release costs of elected NASUWT executive member.

The de-delegated funding is £35k Primary and £19k Secondary Maintained Schools, a total of £54k.

### Option 3:

- Cessation of pooled budget for Trade Union facilities. Schools will receive the funding and be responsible for organising their own Trade Union representation.

Whilst the local support of the Trade Unions is appreciated, both the HFG and Schools' Forum members did not feel that funding an executive representative's national duties was something that should be paid for from West Berkshire's schools' funding.

**DECISION: The Schools' Forum agreed the Heads Funding Group's recommendation that the Trade Union budget for 2015/16 should be option 1 with £43k de-delegated from primary and secondary schools but funding should not be used to cover the NASUWT representative.**

Keith Watts disagreed with the decision as all LAs with executive members traditionally pay for that member to carry out their national duties.

## 7. **Therapy Services**

Jane Seymour presented a report on the proposal to move the Therapy Services into the DSG High Needs Block. Therapy Services meets the criteria to be included in the DSG and currently approximately 91 out of 150 LAs fund Therapy Services from the DSG.

The service is provided by the Berkshire Health Foundation Trust and will cost £304k in 2015/16 which has already been included in the estimated over spend in 2015/16 of £1,931k. There is a current discussion regarding the possibility a joint commissioning arrangement the Berkshire Authorities and the option of bringing the service in house has been explored but this proved to be more expensive.

**DECISION: This service will be included in the impact analysis review of services funded from the High Needs Block.**

**Action**

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### 8. High Needs Budget Proposals 2015/16

Jane Seymour presented the report on the High Needs Budget Proposals 2015/16 (excluding PRUs), which is currently estimated to be £1,931k over the expected funding to be received in 2015/16 (excluding any carry forward from 2014/15).

This report covered the budget 2014/15, forecast 2014/15 and proposed budget 2015/16 for the current positions for mainstream schools, resource units, special schools, non maintained and independent special schools, Further Education (FE) colleges, Language and Literacy Centres, Specialist Inclusion Service, ABA & Other Educational Programmes, SEN Pre-School, Special Needs Support Team, Sensory Impairment, Equipment for SEN Pupils, ASD Advisory Service, Early Intervention, SEN Inclusion.

The budget 2015/16 for Academy Resources Units includes the new ASD resource planned to open in September 2015. The increase in Special Schools top up funding includes the additional places requested at The Castle and Brookfields and a general trend towards more complex needs pupils at higher bands but this is more cost effective than specialist providers out of county.

Increases in the Non WBC Special School top up funding is due to a general increase in ASD diagnosis and the WBC ASD Resources Units are full.

Costs to reduce placements in Non Maintained and Independent Special Schools were effective in 2014/15 however need is predicted to rise again in 2015/16 due to families moving into the area with named independent schools on their child's statement and rises in BESD and ASD diagnosis and tribunals.

These budgets will be part of the review of the budgets funded through the High Needs Block of the DSG.

**ACTION: Budget estimates to be reviewed to ensure not overstating costs. Need impact analysis against each service. HFG to make proposals at the next meeting.**

Action

J Seymour  
& HFG

### 9. PRU Review & Budget Proposals 2015/16

Ian Pearson presented the update on PRU funding.

The service is forecast to over spend by £500k in 2014/15. The current arrangement is:

- The LA meets the full cost of permanently excluded pupils transferred to PRUS; the relevant AWPU is repaid by the school to the LA.

Action

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For all other placements:

- Primary Schools pay 50% of the lowest funding band the remainder is paid from the High Needs Block. The funding is paid at a fixed daily rate by the school capped at 12 weeks. If the pupils are not ready to reintegrate after 12 weeks all further costs are met in full by the LA from the High Needs Block.
- Secondary schools using the Reintegration Service pay the lowest funding band but the cap is 6 weeks. Any provision over 6 weeks met by the LA.
- Secondary schools using the Alternative Curriculum pay £1,500 per term for a maximum of two years. The balance is paid by the LA.

There are currently a much higher number of pupils on high level top up bandings than budgeted for and the schools are being charged at the lowest bands with the remainder of the costs funded by the High Needs Block.

The proposals for consideration were:

- Current arrangements remain unchanged.
- Top up bands are reduced from April 2015.
- Top up bandings immediately reduced.
- A reduction in the schools budget 2015/16 to compensate the High Needs Block.
- An increase in the amounts paid by schools.
- PRU funding to be delegated to schools in 2016/17 based on a formula.

The recommendation from the HFG was that the report was unclear and that both the financial costs and operational risks were not fully examined. More information is required about the costs of the six strategies and how they affect other areas of the DSG. The Pupil Referral Unit Headteachers and Governors are assisting with compiling a more detailed report.

**ACTION: A more detailed report is to be presented to the HFG and Schools' Forum in January.**

C Burnham

### 10. DSG Monitoring 2014/15 - Month 7

Shannon Coleman-Slaughter presented the report on the DSG budget monitoring as at 31<sup>st</sup> October.

Action

The Schools Block is forecast to be £8k over spent for 2014/15, The Early Years Block is forecast to be on target and the High Needs Block is forecast to be £221k under spent. There has been a decrease between the High Needs Block 2014/15 forecast under spend between

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period 5 and period 7 of £391k which was mainly due to PRU top ups, Home Tuition and SEN commissioned provision.

### 11. Update in Schools in Financial Difficulty

Claire White presented the update on Schools in Financial Difficulty.

**Action**

There were 3 schools with a budgeted deficit for 2014/15; Bradfield Primary (£75k), Kintbury Primary (£25k) and John O'Gaunt (£535k).

Bradfield Primary were successful in their bid for additional funding from the primary schools in financial difficulty contingency fund to cover redundancy costs and are now forecasting a balanced budget 2014/15, though still face significant challenges in setting a balanced budget next year.

Kintbury Primary has successfully made some savings in 2014/15 through organisational changes, but benefit from the continuation of the minimum funding guarantee in 2015/16 so will continue with restructuring opportunities. No additional funding has been requested in 2014/15 however there may be a bid for funding in 2015/16 to cover redundancy costs.

Pupil numbers have not increased at JOG and the plans for an all through school faced local opposition. The school has taken the decision to suspend the sixth form from September 2015 and has not admitted any year 12 pupils this September. The school's position is being closely monitored by the Corporate Director for Communities, Head of Finance, and Council members and this is now a Council risk rather than a DSG risk.

All the schools that forecasted a deficit in 2015/16 and requested support from Schools' Accountancy are currently being supported in their strategic financial planning.

### 12. School Funding Benchmarking Tables

Claire White presented the 2014/15 benchmarking tables which show the funding West Berkshire receives compared with both its statistical neighbours and other unitary authorities in the areas of per pupil funding, individual school budgets, High Needs budgets, total school budgets and individual school budgets against GCSE results.

**Action**

West Berkshire comes top in the DSG per pupil funding it receives with £4,359 per pupil compared with a median of £4,187 against its statistical neighbours but lower than the median of £4,432 against other unitary authorities. In 2015/16 there will be significant shift in this data as there will be additional funding from Central Government for the lowest funded authorities.

West Berkshire is second highest in the funding it delegates to schools at £4,182 per pupil compared to a median of £4,057 for its statistical neighbours and lower than the median of £4,221 against other unitary authorities.

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The high needs budget is £344 per pupil compared to a median of £319 against its statistical neighbours and a median of £299 against other unitary authorities.

The total school budgets data is £4,754 per pupil compared to the median of £4,575 against its statistical neighbours and a median of £4,847 against other unitary authorities.

### 13. SEND Funding - Longer term changes - call for evidence from DfE

The Department of Education has issued a call for evidence on the future of how the LAs receive High Needs Funding and then delegate this funding to schools. They are looking for ideas on how the funding might be calculated on a formulaic basis rather than the current system of a historical fixed sum being received and the place / top up funding method in allocating this funding to schools. They will then develop proposals for consideration.

The call for evidence closes on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

**Action: A sub group is to be formed and led by Jane Seymour to put together ideas.**

Action

J Seymour

### 14. Forward Plan January to March 2015

Any further items for the forward plan should be sent to Claire White.

**ACTION: Reminder to HFG members regarding requirement to attend the 8<sup>th</sup> January meeting.**

Action

C White &  
C Loosen

### 15. Any Other Business

There was a discussion regarding the raising of interest in the issues that the members of the Schools Forum are facing, particularly concern on school budgets with no increases to funding yet increases in costs. Suggestions included a paper to management board and discussion with other Berkshire Authorities through the SE Director of Children Services Group.

**ACTION: Update from the SE Director of Children Services Group to be brought to next Schools' Forum.**

Action

I Pearson

Meeting closed at 6.50 pm

**Date of next meeting:** 19<sup>th</sup> January 2015  
**Time:** 5.00pm  
**Venue:** Shaw House