

Minutes of a Meeting of the Schools Forum

Monday 10th June 2013

Shaw House

Present:	Bill Blythe	(substitute)	Finance Director	Newbury College
	Fiona Bridger-Wilkinson		Headteacher	Victoria Park Nursery School
	Jeanette Clifford		Governor	St Bartholomews School
	Kathryn Cockar		Headteacher	Kennet Valley Primary School
	Paul Dick		Headmaster	Kennet School
	Peter Fry		Headteacher	The Willink School
	Reverend Mary Harwood		Church of England Representative	Oxford Diocese
	Peter Hudson		Governor	Mortimer St Johns Infant School
	Brian Jenkins		Early Years PVI Representative	Jubilee Day Nursery
	John Micklewhite	(Vice Chair)	Headteacher	Birch Copse Primary School
	Chris Prickett		Headteacher	Streatley Primary School
	David Ramsden		Headteacher	Little Heath School
	Clive Rothwell		Governor	John O'Gaunt School
	Pam Slingsby		School Business Manager	Basildon Primary School
	Graham Spellman		Roman Catholic Representative	Portsmouth Diocese
	Maria Tillett		School Business Manager	Theale Green School
	John Tyzack	(Chair)	Governor	Falkland Primary School
	Glyn Whiteford		Headteacher	Denefield School
	Charlotte Wilson		Headteacher	Trinity School
		Councillor David Allen		Shadow Portfolio Holder for C&YP
	Councillor Irene Neill		Executive Portfolio for C&YP	
	Shannon Coleman-Slaughter		Finance Manager Communities	
	Ian Pearson		Head of Education	
	Clare Warren		Schools' Finance Advisor	
	Claire White		Schools' Finance Manager	

Action

1. APOLOGIES RECEIVED

Nick Breach	Governor	Shaw cum Donnington Primary School
Fadia Clarke	Deputy Principal	Newbury College
Jane Headland	Headteacher	Brookfields Special School
Catherine Morley	Headteacher	Theale Primary School
Carolynn Loosen	Schools' Funding Officer	
Keith Watts	NUT Representative	
Stacey Williams	Headteacher	Reintegration Service

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING DATED 4TH MARCH 2013

The minutes of the meeting on 4th March were approved.

3. ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

There were no action points outstanding.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Reverend Mary Harwood declared an interest in agenda item 8 regarding the Scheme for Financing Schools, reporting on and control of the use of surplus balances.

5. MEMBERSHIP

Richard Blofeld, representing the Trade Unions has resigned from the Schools' Forum and has been replaced by Keith Watts.

The Forum welcomed Peter Hudson, the new primary governor representative.

6. SCHOOL FORUM MEMBERSHIP FROM SEPTEMBER 2013

Claire White presented three membership options to consider from September 2013, taking into account the approximate expected proportion of pupil numbers in maintained primary schools, maintained secondary schools and Academies. The options were based on a total membership of 24, 20 or 18. It was felt that the current membership of 24 worked well and was not too unwieldy, and it was rare for the full membership to be able to attend every meeting. 18 would be too small and may not generate as much debate on major issues. It was also noted that it was useful to have a SBM representative on the Forum, which may not be possible with a smaller membership number.

DECISION: The Schools' Forum agreed unanimously to the membership structure of Option 1 with a total membership of 24.

ACTIONS:

Primary Heads Forum to elect 3 representatives (including a SBM)

Secondary Heads Forum to elect 2 representatives

Governors to elect 3 representatives (2 primary and 1 secondary)

Academies to elect 1 governor representative

Nursery schools and special schools each to elect their own representative

Early Years Steering Group to elect 1 representative

I Pearson
I Pearson
I Pearson
Academy Reps
Nursery/Special
School Rep
EYSG

7. SCHOOLS FORUM CONSTITUTION

Claire White presented the proposed West Berkshire Schools' Forum constitution for 2013/14 which has been revised to incorporate changes in The Schools Forum Regulations 2012 which reflect the school funding reform changes. There were also amendments advised by the legal department.

DECISION: The constitution for 2013/14 was approved

ACTION: Website to be updated with revised constitution

C Loosen

8. SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS 2013/14

Claire White presented the proposed West Berkshire Scheme for Financing Schools for 2013/14. The scheme had been sent to all Headteachers, Chairs of

Governors and School Business Managers for consultation and one response had been received (which had been approved by the Governors at that school), which objected to the inclusion of the clause “where schools in a federation operate a single budget, the sum/percentage threshold refers to a single budget and is not calculated for each individual school within the federation”. Their argument is that the federation operate a single budget for administrative ease but they are still two separate schools and should not be penalised for operating more efficiently. Much discussion followed, and Members felt that federated schools benefit from cost savings as they operate as one school. Members were also reminded that claw back is not automatic, and would be considered by the Forum after all circumstances are taken into account. A vote was taken with 1 eligible member voting to remove the clause, and 10 eligible members voting to leave this clause in.

DECISION: The Schools’ Forum agreed the scheme as presented and without the removal of the clause as put forward through the consultation with schools.

ACTION: Website to be updated with revised scheme

C Loosen

9. DSG OUTTURN 2013/14 AND USE OF UNDERSPEND

Shannon Coleman-Slaughter and Ian Pearson presented a report on DSG outturn for 2013/14. The total underspend was £2.2m, and £1.451m had already been allocated out to schools in March 2013, leaving a further balance of £0.756m. It was proposed that this should be held in the high needs budget due to the volatility of this area of spend and that spend in a number of new areas of responsibility including top up funding for PRUs and further education was still unknown.

A written question had been received from Stacey Williams (who was unable to attend the meeting) regarding Appendix A which showed that the Support Service Recharge for PRUs was £257k, and she had requested a breakdown of this charge. Shannon was compiling a response and would get back to her shortly.

DECISION: The Schools’ Forum agreed to the underspend being retained as a contingency in the High Needs Block

ACTIONS:

The £0.756m underspend to be added to the high needs contingency budget

S Coleman-Slaughter

A written response to be provided to Stacey Williams and copied to all SF members

S Coleman-Slaughter

10. SCHOOL BALANCES AS AT 31 MARCH 2013

Claire White presented a report on school balances as at 31 March 2013. Overall, balances have gone up by £325k from £3,991k to £4,316k, but this is largely due to John O’ Gaunt school having its deficit cleared at the end of 2012/13.

Generally school balances have stayed much the same with an average balance of 6% for primary and 3% for secondary.

One school closed with a deficit but has set a balanced budget for 2013/14. Two

schools had an excess surplus balance but these schools had contacted the Schools' Finance Manager early in the Spring Term and were deemed to be exceptional circumstances.

DECISION: The Schools' Forum agreed to the two schools with an excess surplus balance carrying forward their full surplus with no clawback. This is subject to the schools not retaining an excess surplus at the end of 2013/14.

11. ALLOCATION OF 6th FORM TEACHERS PAY GRANT FUNDING FROM EFA

2013/14 is the final year of the Teachers Pay Grant for 6th forms. Previously, schools received funding within their main formula allocation based on actual teachers receiving upper pay scale/leadership, and not based on the actual grant received. This funding has now been rolled into the AWPU. Therefore as a one off, this grant will be shared out to all schools with 6th forms. Ian Pearson presented the report and proposed that the allocation be based on actual 6th form pupil numbers as at January 2013 census.

DECISION: The Schools' Forum agreed to the allocation of the grant as proposed, but to also include PRUs (The Porch) in the distribution.

ACTION: Payments to be made to the relevant schools by the end of June

C Loosen

12. SCHOOL FORMULA 2014/15

Claire White presented a report setting out the main changes, actions required, and timetable of work following the publication by the DfE on 4th June of "School Funding Reform: Findings from the review of 2013-14 and Arrangements and Changes for 2014/15". It was noted that DfE deadlines gave very little time to review the formula options for 2014/15 in order to send a proposal out to schools before the end of the Summer Term. The main areas of remodelling to be carried out are in respect of the new sparsity factor for small rural schools, and a review of the lump sum. The impact of the new measures for prior attainment will also be reviewed. The level of deprivation being funded through the formula will also need review, and there was concern expressed regarding the accountability/impact of funding given to schools for deprivation and whether it was being used appropriately to close the attainment gap. It was asked why Forum Members had not been made aware of exceptional premises formula factors that can be applied to the DfE for permission to use (such as joint use of leisure centres), and it was explained that none of our schools are eligible as the cost would need to represent at least 1% of the total school budget and affect fewer than 5% of schools in the authority.

DECISION: The Schools' Forum agreed the actions required and timetable to complete them.

ACTION: Models will be considered at the next meeting of the Heads Funding Group on 4th July, with a proposal brought to the next meeting of the Schools' Forum.

C White

13. REVIEW OF SCHOOL FINANCIAL VALUE STANDARD 2012/13

Clare Warren introduced the report reviewing the School Financial Value Standard and responses received from schools. All schools had made a submission, and overall it was seen to have gone very well, with Governors using the standard as intended, as a self assessment tool to develop their statutory role of financial management. Most schools had identified actions. Where it was considered that a school had submitted a poor response, they had been contacted and given feedback and further advice.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

There was no other business

Meeting closed 6:30 p.m.

Date of next meeting: Monday 15th July 2013

Time: 5pm

Venue: Shaw House