

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING HELD ON 13 MARCH 2014 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Mr N Baker (Chairman), Mrs Aileen Bates, Mr Andy Bridewell, Michelle Chilcott, Amanda Christopher, Tracy Cornelius, Mr J Hawkins, Mrs Sue Jiggins, Rob Parsons, Mr J Proctor, Ms I Sidmouth, Mr Martin Watson (Vice-Chair) and Mrs C Williamson

Also Present:

Grant Davis, Cllr Richard Gamble and Elizabeth Williams

14 **Chairman's Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting.

15 **Apologies and Changes of Membership**

The Forum noted apologies from the following:

Jan Hatherell (Academy)

Steve Clark (WASSH)

Rev Alice Kemp (Observer)

Peter Biggs (WGA)

Claire Shaw (Wiltshire College)

Julia Cramp (Associate Director: Quality Assurance, Commissioning and Performance, School and Early Years Effectiveness)

The Forum noted the following changes to the membership:

out Alice Kemp (observer)

out Peter Biggs (WGA Secondary)

out Anne Ferries (WGA Primary)

out Claire Shaw (Wiltshire College)

in Amanda Burnside (Wiltshire College)

in Tracy Cornelius (PHF).

The Forum noted that Anne Ferries would advise in future on filling the vacancies for Primary and Secondary Governors.

16 **Minutes of the previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held 16 January 2014 were presented and it was;

Resolved:

To agree and sign the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting held 16 January 2014.

17 **Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest to note at the meeting.

18 **Children and Young People's Trust Board Update**

No update was made at the meeting.

19 **Budget Monitoring 2013-14**

The Budget Monitoring 2013-14 report was presented to the Forum, focusing on key variances for the following:

- Early Years Free Entitlement for 3 & 4 year olds
- Early Years Free Entitlement for 2 year olds
- Independent Special School (ISS) placements
- Top Up Budgets for maintained schools and academies
- Top Up Budgets (Post-16)
- Named Pupil Allowances (NPAs)

Resolved:

To note the budget monitoring position for the overall School's Budget to the period April 2013 to January 2014.

20 **Reports from Working Groups**

20a **School Funding Working Group**

The Head of DCE Finance gave an update on the findings of the Schools Funding Working Group.

Resolved

- 1) **To note the Schools Funding Working Group report and minutes of the previous meeting.**
- 2) **The Head of DCE Finance to circulate the Terms of Reference of the Schools Funding Working Group to Schools Forum members.**

20b SEN Working Group

The Head of DCE Finance gave an update on the findings of the SEN Working Group which included a consideration of the top up values for 2014-15. The Forum discussed residential provision for High Needs pupils and discussed the pupil premium also. The Forum discussed the impact of reduced funding for residential provision across the County.

Resolved

- 3) To note the SEN Working Group report and minutes of the previous meeting.**
- 4) The Head of DCE Finance to circulate the Terms of Reference and a summary of the SEN Working Group to Schools Forum members.**
- 5) To receive a report at a future Schools Forum, detailing the review of residential provision, and its impact on the School's and other budgets, for example the Social Care budget.**

20c Early Years Reference Group

A verbal update was given to the meeting by the Head of DCE Finance.

Resolved

- 6) To note the Early Years Reference Group update.**
- 7) The Head of DCE Finance to circulate the Terms of Reference and a summary of the Early Years Reference Group to Schools Forum members.**

20d School Services Group

A verbal update was given to the meeting by the Head of DCE Finance, who noted the SSWG's first meeting since 2013. The Head of DCE Finance highlighted the need to review the Terms of Reference to identify where it fits into the structure, and to ensure it was fit for purpose.

Resolved

- 8) To note the Schools Services Working Group report and minutes of the previous meeting.**
- 9) Agreed to review and update the Terms of Reference for the School Services Working Group at the SSWG meeting.**

21 **Schools Budget**

21a **Update on the Schools Budget for 2014-15**

The Head of DCE Finance discussed the Schools Budget report updated Schools Forum on the progress in relation to the school's budget for 2014-15 and the issues that had arisen since the last meeting.

The Head of DCE Finance stated that the Education Funding Agency (EFA) had confirmed that the final Wiltshire Schools Formula was compliant with the new regulations, and announced changes to Schools Delegated Budgets 2014-15 as detailed in the report. Further information was given regarding the budgets for High Needs Provision and the overall impact of funding changes.

The Forum discussed Universal Infant Free School Meal Entitlement and the guidance on revenue and transitional funding. The Forum discussed the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) and changes to payments for 'looked after children'.

Resolved

- 1) **To note the report and the Schools Budget 2014-15 position.**
- 2) **The Head of Service Virtual Schools would attend meetings of WASSH and PHF to discuss the arrangements for spending the PPG Plus in 2014-15.**

21b **Minimum Funding Guarantee 2014-15**

The Strategic Financial Support Manager outlined the role of the Minimum Funding Guarantee, drawing particular attention to the total MFG Funding decrease and the impact of MFG capping.

The Strategic Financial Support Manager discussed the amount of funding awarded to schools between 2013-14 and 2014-15, along with the size of the MFG over the two years and the percentage change in both years. The impact of capping was discussed by the Forum.

Resolved:

To note the content of the Minimum Funding Guarantee paper in relation to MFG Capping.

22 **Special School Top Up Rates 2014-15**

The Head of DCE Finance outlined the Special School 'Top Up Rates' report. The forum focussed on day and residential top up rates for special schools at the current rate, and the financial impact of amending the current rate.

Proposed changes to residential provision in Downlands school in 2014-15 would reduce the cost of residential top ups by £90k. It was proposed that the

remaining shortfall be transferred from the budget for Independent Special School places.

Resolved:

- 1) To set Top Up rates for Wiltshire Special Schools in 2014-15 as follows:

	Day	Residential
Band 1+	£18,054	£54,508
Band 1	£12,361	£40,250
Band 2	£9,514	£33,122
Band 3	£6,668	£25,993
Band 4	£2,814	£16,342
Band 5	£485	£10,060

23 **Free School Meal Pooling Scheme**

The Head of DCE Finance outlined the Free School Meal Pooling Scheme report, and gave a summary of the scheme. The Forum discussed the impact of Universal Entitlement for Infant Free School Meals and its impact on the Free School Meals budget. The Forum discussed alternative proposals and the risk factors associated with the fund. The Forum discussed cashback payments over the last 2 years and options for redistribution.

Resolved:

- 1) To amend the Free School Meal Pool from April 2014 as follows:
 - a. Following implementation of the school funding reform, and the universal infant free school meal entitlement, the FSM pool will cease to be fit for purpose and should close from 31st August 2014.
 - b. Part year quotations for premiums to be issued to schools based on the current rates per meal for those schools who may wish to join the pool from April to August 2014 (at a rate of 5/12ths) prior to the implementation of the universal entitlement for infants.
 - c. The final balance on the pool after closure will be redistributed to schools that have participated in the pool since 1st April 2012 (the last date that any cashback was applied) based on the contributions each school has made to the pool over that period.
- 2) Small school transitional funding for the implementation of the universal infant FSM entitlement to be considered alongside the allocation of capital funding.

24 **Schools Forum Regulations**

The Head of DCE Finance outlined the Schools Forum Regulations report, to bring the Forum's attention to the updated Schools Forum Regulations 2012 published by the Department for Education (DfE) on 26th February 2014 in order to consider any implications for the operation of the Wiltshire Schools Forum. Forum members' attention was drawn to changes in membership and procedures.

Resolved:

- 1) **Agreed to note the advice issued by the DfE in February 2014 and the good practice documents that have been published in relation to the operation of Schools Forums.**
- 2) **Agreed to circulate 'appendix 2' to the report attached in the Agenda Pack to all schools and Chairs of Governors to increase understanding of the role of Schools Forum and the responsibilities of schools.**

25 **Urgent Items**

There were no Urgent Items to note.

26 **Future Meeting Dates**

The next meeting date was confirmed as being: 1:30 pm on 18 June 2014, to be held in the Kennett Rom, County Hall, Trowbridge.

(Duration of meeting: 1.45 - 3.30 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Samuel Bath, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718211, e-mail samuel.bath@wiltshire.gov.uk

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