

SCHOOLS FORUM

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING HELD ON 23 JUNE 2011 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, BROWFORT, DEVIZES.

Present:

Mr N Baker, Mrs Julia Bird, Mr C Dark, Mrs A Davey, Mrs A Ferries, Mrs J Finney, Mrs C Grant, Mr T Hatala (Substitute), Mr J Hawkins, Mr M Keeling, Ms I Lancaster-Gaye, Mr M Watson and Mrs C Williamson

Also Present:

Mr Andy Bridewell and Cllr Bill Moss

142. Public Participation and Questions

The Chairman welcomed those present to the June meeting of the Schools Forum. There was no public participation.

143. Apologies

Alice Kemp
Tina Pagett
Carol Grant
Sarah Lund
Ann Ferries
Tim Gilson

Cllr Lionel Grundy

Phil Cooch

144. Minutes of the previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held 03 March were presented.

Resolved:

To approve as a correct record, and sign the minutes of the Schools Forum meeting held 03 March 2011.

145. **Declaration of Interests**

None

146. **Chairman's Announcements**

At the request of the Chairman, it was agreed that a report into the constitution and future set-up of the Schools Forum be brought back to the next meeting to clarify and determine the groups approach to vacancies and sub-committees.

147. **Update from Children's Trust Board**

Julia Cramp, Service Director Commissioning and Performance, DCE gave a verbal update on the work of the Children's Trust Board since the last meeting of the Schools Forum.

It was explained that there were two key components to the Children's Trust board from an organisational point of view – the Commissioning Executive, and the Stakeholder partnership. Both of these bodies had representation from primary and secondary schools and governors, in addition to officers of Wiltshire Council and partner organisations.

Two strategies had been developed by the Trust in recent months namely:

- 13 to 19 Commissioning Strategy (draft). Consultation ends 5th August 2011
- Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health Strategy (draft) – consultation on this strategy open to mid-July.

It was explained that the Trust was also working on a new set of multi-agency threshold documents for school-age children, which would give clear and authoritative guidance on when and how to intervene.

These documents would be available for comment within the next two weeks.

Additionally the Trust was revising the Children's Plan, which now had three central aims:

- ✓ Early Intervention
- ✓ Raising Aspirations
- ✓ Living Healthily

A separate strategy and plans were in development for Children in Care.

Further information can be found at the partnership's website: www.wiltshirepathways.org

148. **Young People's Support Service (YPSS) Update**

The Committee received a verbal update from Martin Cooper, Manager for Behaviour & Attendance, DCE.

Martin explained that he had assumed his role in April, and his priority was to revisit the YPSS Review undertaken by Colin Smith last year. The report included 30 recommendations, some which had already been adopted as part of the restructure of DCE earlier in the year.

A retiring Headteacher from Clarendon had been seconded to produce an implementation plan and agree which recommendations should be pursued.

Since the report was issued the YPSS team have undertaken some internal evaluations and also have received an OFSTED inspection, results of which are currently awaiting publication.

These actions have established the fact that structural changes will be necessary to achieve the goals that Wiltshire Council has in mind for the YPSS. There will need to be a new way of managing the Virtual School / Pupil Referral Units.

Four options have been investigated with a view to implementing any chosen plan from September. The options are as follows:

- 1) To enter into an agreement with an existing (already identified) special school to provide the services
- 2) To enter into an agreement with an outside provider.
- 3) To separate the function along geographical lines and enter into an agreement with the local school federations in the regions of Wiltshire to provide YPSS services in each area.
- 4) A mixed-economy of the options above.

At the current point in time only the West Wiltshire federation is in a position to offer services immediately. YPSS staff were currently being consulted on these options and an entrustment document was being prepared by legal services.

149. **SEN Forward Plan**

The Schools Forum noted the SEN Forward Plan

150. **SEN Equipment Budget**

Karina Kulawik, Team Manager (Central SEN Services), summarised her report for the committee. It was explained that following the transition to unitary status, the arrangements for funding for equipment were extremely fragmented and inconsistent.

The new approach aimed to provide a common understanding of when a school should purchase an item from its delegated budget, and when it should expect the Council to provide certain items. Feedback from the PHF and SEN working group gave an initial indication that a list format would be preferred by schools, with examples of how certain common high and lower value items should be purchased. It should also help staff to work more efficiently.

The central funding for SEN equipment had now been collected into a single source which amounted to around £108,000

Contributions from Schools Forum Members were focused on the following issues:

- The growing complexity of needs and demand for SEN services
- Contributions from the Health Authorities in Wiltshire – Officers promised to investigate and clarify the obligations of partner organisations in this area.
- The arrangements for provision of equipment for those Wiltshire Students placed out-of-county and for those placed in Wiltshire by other authorities – for which the recoupment arrangements would be very complex.

Resolved:

- 1) To return an update paper to the October meeting**
- 2) School Forum confirm the process for the provision of specialist equipment to support children & young people with access needs in Wiltshire setting, as follows:**
 - **Schools will be required to pay for auxiliary aids to support inclusion as per attached list.**
 - **high value items will be provided by the LA. This option will require continuation of a centrally retained equipment budget.**
- 3) The letter to be sent to Schools confirming and explaining the new arrangements is to make clear that individual cases will always be looked at by Central SEN Services.**

151. Dedicated Schools Budget Final Outturn 2010/11

Liz Williams updated the Forum on the Final Outturn of the dedicated schools Budget 2010/11. The figures show an underspend against DSG of £2.899 million. This was a favourable movement of £0.400 million compared with the previous report to Schools Forum.

The key contributory factors for the underspend were explained to be the following:

- The Independent Special Schools budget underspent by £0.343 million.
- The recoupment budget (for placements in other local authority special schools and non-school placements) was also underspent by £0.723 million.
- Early Years budgets underspent by £1.603 million, as a result of lower than expected take up for the extension of the free entitlement for 3 & 4 year olds from 10 to 15 hours.

Standards Funds – It was explained to the Schools Forum that the DfE wrote to Local Authorities in March stating that the final payment of 2010/11 standards funds would not be made to LAs as the funding was now included in the DSG for 2011/12. Local Authorities disagreed with this approach and the non

payment does in fact represent a reduction in grant in 2010/11. For Wiltshire the reduction is £1.088 million.

Wiltshire had complied with the DfE guidance and set up a debtor for £1.088 million in the 2010/11 accounts, noting that the risk of this approach is that the money will not be forthcoming in 2012/13 and therefore the Council will face a reduction in schools funding in that year.

A short discussion ensued wherein Stephanie Denovan highlighted the Council's attempts to reform and continue the Every Child a Reader style programmes, in a manner adapted to Wiltshire's needs.

Resolved:

- 1) To note the outturn position for the Dedicated Schools Budget in 2010/11**
- 2) To note the issues relating to the 2010/11 standards funds and to consider this further once the final DSG settlement for 2011/12 is confirmed.**
- 3) Not to commit the identified underspend at this juncture in the meeting.**

152. **Maternity Costs - Keeping in Touch (KIT) Days**

It was explained that the purpose of this item was to formalise the Council's policy regarding Keeping in Touch days, in order for guidance to be sent to Schools to clarify the matter. The current legislation permits managers to decide upon the granting of KIT days to individuals. Members were asked to consider whether individual schools or the central schools budget should fund these.

Resolved:

- 1) That KIT days be charged to individual schools.**
- 2) That this change be effective from 1 September 2011.**
- 3) That a letter of clarification be sent out to all Schools as a joint statement from the Human Resources department and the Schools Forum.**

153. **Early Years Reference Group - Membership**

Simon Burke spoke to his report on the membership of the Early Years Reference Group and invited the committee to review its membership. He also confirmed that validation of the headcount figures was undertaken, and that calculations took place once a year to identify and note the impact of children from neighbouring counties who attended an Early Years provider in Wiltshire.

Resolved:

- 1)
 - i. **To appoint Alan Butler, Fiona Webb, Lucy Waterman and Andrea Gray as members of the EYRG;**
 - ii. **To re-appoint Rosemary Collard, Mark Cawley, Mike Fairbeard and John Proctor for a further term of office;**
 - iii. **To continue to seek a representative from children's centres;**
 - iv. **Not to seek to replace Janet Stanford when her term of office expires in November.**
- 2)
 - i. **To meet the requirements of the Code of Practice, and the wishes of providers, it is proposed to introduce a system to enable providers to claim funding (and to refund any over-payment) with effect from September 2011.**
 - ii. **Providers will be required to submit details of children not declared in the headcount for the funding period in the following circumstances:**
 - **children who started to access free entitlement with the provider after the headcount date;**
 - **children who ceased to access free entitlement with the provider after the headcount date;**
 - **children who were inadvertently not included on the headcount form;**
 - **children who were included on the headcount form but for whom inquiries were outstanding**

154. **Final DSG Settlement / DSG Update**

Liz Williams updated Schools Forum on the projected level of DSG and the implications for the schools budget in the absence of the final Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlement for 2011/12

The so-far unvalidated January count of pupils, including academies, is expected to be 63,845 or 35 pupils lower than the initial estimate which was based on October pupil data it was explained. Within this, numbers of pupils in schools are 69 higher the initial estimate and the numbers of 3 and 4 year olds in the Early Years Census are 104 lower than estimated. The implications of the expected reduction in pupil numbers will result in a shortfall in DSG, compared with the original estimate of £0.165 million.

The updated calculation for the number of schools which had converted to academies on 1st April 2011 indicates a LACSEG deduction of £0.312 million.

This represents a further shortfall in DSG compared with the original estimate of £0.074 million. However this estimate does not include any funds returning to the budget as income from traded services.

The total shortfall in DSG compared with the agreed schools budget is estimated at £0.239 million.

Members of the Schools Forum were asked to consider whether or not to fund the expected shortfall in the current financial year from the underspend rolled forward from 2010/11.

It was confirmed by officers that the Music Education Grant Allocation 2011/12 will continue to be allocated to primary schools in Wiltshire to support music tuition at Key Stage 2 on the same basis as in previous years.

More information had also been forthcoming on the arrangements for administering the Looked After Children (LAC) pupil premium, and it was confirmed that the funding follows the child not the school and will track in-year changes in the statement status of a child.

Officers were asked to investigate the precise definition of an 'Armed Forces Family' used for the pupil premium for children from military families: in particular whether those eligible must have parents / guardians in the military or whether having other close relatives in the military would constitute eligibility for the measure.

John Hawkins and the rest of the Forum thanked officers for their work in producing these figures.

Resolved:

- a. That the projected shortfall in DSG for 2011/12 should be offset from the 2010/11 DSG underspend.
- b. That if the final DSG settlement is significantly different from this estimate, the Schools Funding Working Group should meet as a matter of urgency in July to consider any further implications on the schools budget.
- c. That Music Education Grant for 2011/12 be allocated to schools on the same allocation basis as the Music Standards Funds grant in 2010/11.
- d. That the payment of the Pupil Premium for Looked After Children be linked to the payments for the Personal Education Plan for each child meeting the criteria of "looked after continuously for at least 6 months".

155. **Schools Funding Consultation Response**

The Schools Forum noted the draft consultation response, in particular the inclusion of the below table which made clear the discrepancy in the Guaranteed Unit of Fund measure (GUF) received by Wiltshire Council, compared to other local authorities.

Pupils per DSG Calculator		63895			
Local Authority	GUF 2011-12	Difference	Total increased GUF if Wiltshire funded at the same level	Potential extra funding that a 200 pupil primary school would receive	Potential extra funding that a 1000 pupil secondary school would receive
Wiltshire	4593	0	£0		
Hampshire	4648	55	£3,514,225	£11,000	£55,000
BANES	4788	195	£12,459,525	£39,000	£195,000
Glos	4661	68	£4,344,860	£13,600	£68,000
Swindon	4696	103	£6,581,185	£20,600	£103,000
Dorset	4683	90	£5,750,550	£18,000	£90,000
North Somerset	4677	84	£5,367,180	£16,800	£84,000
Somerset	4668	75	£4,792,125	£15,000	£75,000

Liz Williams, Head of Finance made the forum aware that the second phase of consultation was due to take place soon – any contributions from Forum members and other interested parties were welcome.

156. **Intended Use of Revenue Balances (IURB) Monitoring 2009/10**

The Schools Forum noted the report, commending the fact that there were no failures to complete the Intended Use of Revenue Balances Monitoring Return or the respond to the request for information.

157. **Report of the School Funding Working Group**

The Forum noted the report of the Schools Funding working group.

158. **Confirmation of dates for future meetings**

The dates and location of future meetings were noted.

159. **Urgent Items**

None

(Duration of meeting: 1.40 - 3.35 pm)

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