

SCHOOLS FORUM

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2011 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, BROWFORT, DEVIZES.

Present:

Mr N Baker, Mrs Julia Bird, Mrs A Ferries, Mrs J Finney, Mr J Foster, Mrs Jane Franchi, Mrs C Grant, Mr Tim Gilson, Mr J Hawkins, Mr M Keeling, Rev. A Kemp, Dr Tina Pagett, Mr M Watson and Mrs C Williamson

Also Present:

Cllr Alan Macrae

160. **Election of Chairman**

Resolved:

To elect Mr N Baker Chairman for the ensuing year.

Mr N Baker in the Chair

161. **Election of Vice-Chairman**

Resolved:

To elect Mr M Watson Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

162. **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Lionel Grundy and Mrs Carolyn Godfrey.

163. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Resolved:

To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2011, subject to the removal of Mrs A Ferries from the list of attendees.

164. **Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

165. **Chairman's Announcements**

- (a) **13-19 Commissioning Strategy** The Service Director, Commissioning & Performance reported that Cabinet had agreed the strategic direction and priorities as outlined in the 11 to 19 Commissioning Strategy, which therefore would now be extended to include young adults from the age of 11 to 19.
- (b) **Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Commissioning Strategy**
It was reported that the Council was currently updating this Strategy.
- (c) **SEN and Disability Green Paper Pathfinder** It was noted that Wiltshire had been selected along with 19 other local authorities to participate in an 18 month pathfinder programme.

166. **Schools Forum Constitution, Memberships and Arrangements**

Consideration was given to a report by the Corporate Director, Department for Children & Education which sought to:-

- (1) Clarify the current constitution of the Forum, its membership and the composition of its sub-groups.
- (2) Bring the Schools Forum in line with best practice arrangements as per DfE guidance.
- (3) Review the operation and make-up of the Forum in light of the development of Wiltshire governor groups and changes to Academy status by a proportion of Wiltshire schools.

After a full discussion

Resolved:

- 1. **To note the logistical arrangements for the Schools Forum outlined in the report.**
- 2. **To note the membership and method of nomination for each Schools Forum sub-group.**
- 3. **To adjust the terms of reference and constitution of the Schools Forum to show the Wiltshire Governors' Association as the nominating group for any future vacancies for Primary and Secondary School governors on the forum. These are currently 3 voting positions of this type.**

4. To confirm that the SEN working group should continue, and therefore request that WASSH should nominate a representative.
5. To invite WASSH and PHF to review the balance of representatives between academies and maintained schools, especially if the funding mechanisms are not clearly linked and that the Chairman & Vice-Chairman of the Forum be authorised to consider and agree any nominations received.
6. To authorise the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to confirm who the Academy representative should be following consultation with head teachers from Primary, Secondary and Special academies.
7. To include the School Services Board as a sub-group.

167. **Reports from Working Groups**

The Forum noted the report of the following Working Groups:-

- Schools Funding Working Group
- Early Years Reference Group
- Schools Services Group

168. **DSG Update paper**

The Forum received a report by the Corporate Director, Department for Children & Education which:-

- Informed the Forum of the final Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlement for 2011/12.
- Presented budget monitoring information against the DSG for the financial year 2011/12 as at 31 August 2011.
- Updated the Forum on the final allocation of Pupil Premium Grant for 2011/12.
- Requested that initial consideration be given to proposals for achieving the required savings against DSG in 2012/13.

An additional paper was received which notified the Forum of the DfE's proposal to include Schools Specific Contingencies in the LACSEG adjustment for academies.

Consideration was given to the initial proposals for DSG savings and it was suggested that if a negative inflation rate were to be applied, then it should be applied across all budgets and not just the delegated budget.

After a full discussion,

Resolved:

- (a) To reaffirm that the shortfall of £0.140 million arising from the final DSG settlement should be funded from the DSG underspend rolled forward from 2010/11, as agreed at the June meeting.
- (b) To note that the budget monitoring position at the end of August 2011.
- (c) To adjust the individual schools allocations for the Pupil Premium in line with the final allocation as notified by the DfE and to request that schools be informed accordingly.
- (d) To defer consideration of the initial savings proposals for DSG in 2012/13 until the next meeting of the Forum.
- (e) To request that details of Health contributions towards Independent Special School placements be brought to the next meeting.
- (f) To apply to the Secretary of State for dispensation to exclude the element of the Schools Contingency related to in year changes in pupil numbers from the LACSEG adjustment.

169. **Schools Funding Consultations**

On considering a report by the Corporate Director, Department for Children & Education,

Resolved:

To note the response submitted to the DfE document “A consultation on school funding reform: Proposals for a fairer system.”

170. **Schools Revenue Balances 2010/11**

The Forum received a report by the Corporate Director, Department for Children & Education which set out the position of balances of Wiltshire schools as at 31 March 2011 and which identified those which were in deficit. It was pointed out that only three schools were in deficit and letters had been sent to them about the situation.

Resolved:

To note the contents of the report and that a further report would be presented to the next meeting of the Forum.

171. **Schools Financial Value Statement**

The Forum considered a report by the Corporate Director, Department for Children & Education which set out details about the new Schools Financial

Value Statement (SFVS), the DfE's replacement for the Financial Standard in Schools (FMSiS).

After discussion,

Resolved:

- (a) To include the submission of SFVS returns in the financial returns compliance statement required from all schools.
- (b) To put into place a system of "scoring" the returns on an objective basis to inform the LA's programme of financial assessment and audit.
- (c) To publish a list of schools who do not complete the SFVS on time in an annual report to the Forum.

172. **Schools PFI Affordability Gap**

The Forum received a report by the Corporate Director, Department for Children & Education which updated members on the current position regarding the Schools PFI Sinking Fund and the affordability gap relating to the Fund.

After discussion,

Resolved:

To increase the contribution from DSG to the affordability gap relating to the PFI Sinking Fund by £100,000 to £700,000 in total for the three PFI schools, noting that it would depend on the agreed funding mechanism for Academies as to whether the full amount was a call on Wiltshire's DSG settlement or whether part of the contribution would come direct from the DfE.

173. **SEN Services - Activity Analysis**

The Forum received a presentation from the Manager for Inclusion which included a breakdown of activities undertaken by the Inclusion Service across core, statutory and discretionary services.

It was noted that traditionally, a full range of support services had been provided by the LA to all schools free of charge at delivery point. With an increasing number of schools converting to academy status it was crucial to consider how services in Wiltshire should be delivered and funded in the future.

After further discussion,

It was,

Resolved:

To request that responses received to the consultation issued to schools be considered in cluster groups and analysed in time for the next meeting of the Forum.

174. **Carbon Reduction Commitment - Impact on Schools**

On considering a joint report by the Service Director, Schools & Learning and the Service Director, Economy & Enterprise,

Resolved:

- (1) To agree that a survey benchmarking Wiltshire schools' CRC emissions performance be compiled by the Council and shared with Wiltshire Schools after each annual submission.**
- (2) To monitor compliance with the data reporting requirements for schools through the routine financial compliance statements already provided to head teachers and governing bodies of maintained schools and to consult on the process of passing on the cost to a school that fails to comply with all schools through the Schools Forum.**
- (3) To agree Option 2 (Charging Individual Schools) as set out in the report as the preferred way forward for passing CRC costs on to schools and that schools be consulted on the change to the funding scheme.**

175. **Young People's Support Service**

The Forum received a report by the Corporate Director, Department for Children & Education which outlined the current position of the Young People's Support Service (YPSS) and Wiltshire's involvement in a pathfinder pilot Trial of Alternative Provision being run by the DfE.

During the discussion, concern was expressed on the issue of admissions and also the risk of schools not signing up to the new ways of working. It was suggested that if a school did not "sign up" then they would not be able to access the funding.

The cost of redundancies from YPSS was also discussed and estimates from HR were awaited after which funding options could be looked at.

Resolved:

- (1) To support the delegation of the responsibility of permanently excluded young people to secondary schools.**

- (2) To agree in principle to devolve funds to individual secondary schools to enable them to fulfil this responsibility.
- (3) To request the officers to develop an activity led model to identify the cost of the Pupil Referral Unit so that this could be compared with the available budget for distribution.
- (4) To agree that the Forum would set the quantum to be devolved in the light of the budget settlement for 2012-2013 and further work to be done to establish the real costs of provision but to accept in principle that at least for 2012-2013 the quantum should not be less than the current historical budget for YPSS.
- (5) To support the general direction of development for alternative provision, Wiltshire's participation in the DfE trail and the proposed closure of YPSS.

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

Resolved:

To hold meetings of the Forum on the following dates:-

Thursday 1 December 2011 – location to be confirmed

Thursday 19 January 2012 – location to be confirmed

177. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 1.30 - 4.55 am)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Roger Bishton, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 7183763035, e-mail roger.bishton@wiltshire.gov.uk

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