

## SCHOOLS FORUM

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### **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING HELD ON 4 MARCH 2010 AT COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE.**

#### **Present:**

Mr N Baker (Chairman), Mr C Dark, Mrs J Finney, Mr J Hawkins, Mr J Kimberley (Reserve), Mr J Proctor, Mr C Smith, Mr J Smith, Mr M Watson (Vice-Chair), Mrs C Williamson and Mr C Zimmerman

#### **Also Present:**

Simon Burke, Phil Cooch, Julia Cramp, Carolyn Godfrey - Director of Children and Education, Cllr Lionel Grundy OBE, Cllr Alan Macrae and Elizabeth Williams

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#### **39. Apologies and Substitutions**

Apologies were received from Ms Isabel Lancaster-Gaye, Mr John Foster, Mrs Alice Kemp, Mr Ted Hatala, Mr Neil Owen and Ms Julia Bird substituted by Mr John Kimberly.

#### **40. Matters Arising**

There were none.

#### **41. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

##### **Resolved:**

**To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2010 as a correct record.**

#### **42. Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman explained that a few changes to the agenda would be made as follows:

- Item 6: due to DCSF recent publication on regulations, specifically about dual registration, a report would be tabled

- Item 8(3) would be the first sub-item to be considered under item 8
- An update on schools representation on Trust Board would be presented as an urgent item

43. **Budget Monitoring**

Mrs E Williams introduced the report and in doing so highlighted a typo in paragraph 2 which should read "The overall position as at the end of January 2010" not "November 2009".

She also informed the forum that she was working with the Chief Finance Officer on additional cost of premature retirement / redundancy costs for support staff being met from central reserves.

No decision with regards to the end date of the current severance policy arrangement had been taken; but was being considered by the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and expected to last beyond April 2010.

The Forum requested for clarification to be sought as there was no provision for that cost in the DSG budget.

**Resolved:**

**To note the report**

44. **Budget 2010/11**

Mr P Cooch tabled a report as announced by the Chairman.

He gave the forum some background, explaining that this was part of a DCSF consultation on Schools Finance, that a paper had been published in September 2009 with regards to dual registration but that it was focussing on 14/16 year olds level and accessing diplomas. Following consultation the DCSF published a paper on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2010 focussing on dual registration and giving local authorities the option to apply a lower weighting to dual registered pupils and included not funding the subsidiary registration(s) at all. A previous regulation had stated that Local Authorities would have to fund dual registration. Mr Cooch pointed out that it was common practice for schools in Wiltshire to make their own financial arrangements where a pupil attends more than one school.

The Forum asked officers to consider producing reports on the budget which could be used by different task groups and the Schools Forum itself (e.g. including the amount spent on deprived areas, vulnerable families, etc)

**Resolved:**

**Not to fund pupils who are registered at a subsidiary school through the funding formula**

45. **Audit Commission Valuable Lessons Report**

Mr S Burke introduced the report following the “Valuable Lessons” report published by the Audit Commission in July 2009.

He explained that one of the aims was to promote better procurement processes and to work in collaboration to maintain Value For Money.

Members of the Schools Forum asked officers to seek further information on the following:

- extending the ‘Schoolquote’ service for early years settings
- the commissioning activities listed on the Procurement Plan
- the possibility to have some case studies of good practice (e.g. shared language teacher for Key Stage 2) to demonstrate feasibility

**Resolved:**

**To endorse the plan of support to be provided by the Local Authority as detailed in the appendix.**

46. **Reports from Working Groups**

Following earlier discussions in the meeting the Chairman announced that the reports from the Working Groups would be dealt with in the following order:

- School Funding Working Group (8.1 on the agenda refers)
- School Services group (8.3 on the agenda refers)
- SEN / Social Deprivation Working Group (8.2 on the agenda refers)

**46.1 School Funding Working Group**

The Forum considered the report from the School Funding Working Group on the crossover between old and new Controls on Surplus balance. The Forum also noted the minutes of the Working Group’s meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2010.

**Resolved:**

**1. To agree the following for Controls on Surplus Balances Scheme:**

- a) That assignments of excess surplus balances that have been agreed under the old scheme and which also had been assigned beyond the commencement of the new scheme, but would not be eligible under the new criteria, are to be considered by Officers and recommended for appeal if there is any concern that they should not be rolled forward from 2009/10;

**b) That unspent Standards Funds which have been paid late in the financial year be dealt with within the criteria of the scheme.**

**2. To agree the following for Economy and Efficiency in Schools:**

**That case studies be developed for both primary and secondary schools to develop models for greater collaboration in procurement and joint employment of staff. Input would be required from HR, Finance, etc to develop appropriate protocols.**

#### **46.2 School Services group**

Mr S Burke tabled the report as previously announced by the Chairman and introduced Mr S Rodrigues, HR officer, who had been involved with the Schools Recruitment Services (SRS) for Wiltshire Council.

He explained that the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) had invested in the development of the SRS and was the system's sponsor. It was hoped that as SRS was a national service, sponsored by the DCSF, it would eventually become the reference for jobseekers.

DCSF had commissioned the project and schools could either join individually or through their Local Authority. Wiltshire Council had purchased a subscription to the SRS to provide access for all schools in the county and the report summarised the benefits and the proposed arrangements to enable schools to participate.

Members of the Schools Forum could not help expressing some doubts and concerns as other systems had been rolled out in previous years as the "one system to replace all old advertising systems", yet failed to achieve that goal. They were offered reassurance that as the SRS was heavily supported by DCSF and the Government it had all chances to succeed in becoming the one central system, it would also be advertised through the Government's Job Centres as well as its' website. However it was acknowledged that in the first instance key posts may have to be advertised both through SRS and previously used systems.

#### **Resolved:**

**To offer access to the Schools Recruitment Services to Wiltshire schools on the following terms:**

**1. That schools are invited to join the SRS by payment of a subscription to Wiltshire Council**

**2. That the subscription level be:**

|                                 |                                   |                |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Annual Subscription fees</b> | <b>Band 1 (1-50 employees)</b>    | <b>£110.00</b> |
|                                 | <b>Band 2 (51-150 employees)</b>  | <b>£230.00</b> |
|                                 | <b>Band 3 (151-250 employees)</b> | <b>£314.00</b> |

3. That whilst the costs quoted are for a year it is recommended that schools sign up for a longer period of time to ensure the full benefits of the service (3 years). Once the school has joined, one super user per school will be trained on the system by Wiltshire Council officers at Trowbridge. An account will be set up for the super user when trained, this will enable them to put job vacancies on the system and maintain applicant workflow. A school super user can add two additional users to the system, but they have limited access.

#### **46.3 SEN / Social Deprivation Working Group**

Mrs E Williams introduced the report and the notes from the SEN / Social Deprivation Working Group meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2010.

She informed the Forum that Wiltshire Council had been working with a number of pilot schools on the Special School Funding and were hoping to roll out the SEN/AEN (Additional Educational Needs) tool to five pilot schools.

One of the main problems felt was that schools needed to identify clearly the money received and identifying the AEN could be difficult as no clear definition had been given by DCSF.

#### **Resolved:**

**1. To agree the following for the Audit Commission SEN (Special Educational Needs) / AEN (Additional Educational Needs) Tool:**

**(a) That the national funding level for AEN be identified on the funding certificate from 2010/11;**

**(b) That the following items be classified as AEN (with a, b and c being given out through the formula):**

- a. Personalised Learning funding;**
- b. Free School Meals funding;**
- c. Social Deprivation funding;**
- d. specific standards funds, to be considered on a case by case basis, for example 1:1 Tuition funding;**
- e. any funding allocated to schools for Looked After Children;**
- f. turbulence;**
- g. talented and gifted.**

**(c) That (a) and (b) above be reviewed for 2011/12.**

**2. To agree the following for the Social deprivation Formula:**

(a) To look at formula factors and methodologies from other local authorities – particularly Wiltshire’s statistical neighbours where the attainment gap is narrower;

(b) To focus the review on the two targeted elements of social deprivation allocation and analyse the impact of moving to a post code basis for distribution;

(c) To link the review of the formula with the wider piece of work on Narrowing the Gap being led by Stephanie Denovan;

(d) To ask the SEN / Schools Finance Working group to bring an initial proposal to the June meeting of the Schools Forum.

47. **Confirmation of Dates for Future Meetings**

To confirm the dates of the future meetings as follows:

24 June 2010  
7 October 2010  
2 December 2010  
20 January 2011  
3 March 2011

48. **Urgent Business**

**Schools representation on Trust Board**

Mr J Smith addressed the Forum and explained that schools would become statutory partners of the Trust Board.

He asked the School Forum to consider whether they would like to appoint a formal representative on the Trust Board.

He also reminded members of the Forum that from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 it would be a statutory responsibility of the Schools Forum to be aware of what was happening on the Trust Board.

**Resolved:**

1. To ask WASSH and PHF to consider how they would want to be represented on the Trust Board

2. In the interim to ask existing Board Members to remain in their post; namely Mr N Baker and Mr J Smith.

**CRB checks / IAS**

Members of the Forum asked officers to provide some clarification over the use of CRB checks until June 2010, then IAS from October, and Risk Assessments over the interim period.

**Resolved:**

**To receive details of the process at the next meetings of WASSH and PHF.**

(Duration of meeting: 1.30 - 3.10 pm)

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