

Minutes

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON TUESDAY 21 JUNE 2016 IN KNIGHT HALL (MAIN ROOM 2), THE COACH HOUSE, GREEN PARK, ASTON CLINTON, COMMENCING AT 2.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.20 PM

PRESENT

Headteachers	Mr P Rowe (Vice-Chairman) Mr D Hood Ms O Davison-Oakley Mr A Rosen Mr S Sneesby Ms S Skinner Mr K Patrick Mr A Gillespie Miss K Douglas Mr O Lloyd Ms J Freeman Ms K Tamlyn Mr R Burman Ms S Stamp Mr M Keen	Princes Risborough School Cressex Community School Seer Green Church of England School Aylesbury High School Kite Ridge House PRU Bowerdean School Chiltern Hills Academy Burnham Grammar School Brookmead School Iver Heath Junior School King's Wood School & Nursery Cheddington Combined School The Aylesbury Vale Academy Bernwood Liaison Group Aspire
Governors	Mr S Kearey Ms A Coneron Dr K Simmons Mr J Bajina Mr P Ward	Great Kingshill Church of England School The Vale Federation of Special Schools Cressex Community School Parent Governor, Secondary Sector Chilternway Academy
Representative	Fiona Brooks Ms W Terry	St Mary's Pre-School Manor Farm Pre-School
In Attendance	Mr Z Mohammed	
Officers	Mr J Huskinson, Ms E Wilding, Ms A Sayani, Ms S Griffin, Ms J Nicholls, Mr N Wilson, Ms P Richardson, Ms G Shurrock and Ms K Byrne	

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs D Rutley, Mrs K Collett, Mrs G Bull, Mr A Nobbs, Mr M Moore and Mrs K Duckworth.

Mrs S Stamp substituted for Mrs K Duckworth, Mr M Keen substituted for Mrs D Rutley.

Changes in Membership

Subsequent to the recent elections the following had been duly elected as Members of Schools Forum for a period of three years:

Mr D Hood, Headteacher, Cressex Community School
Mrs J Freeman, Headteacher, King's Wood School
Mrs K Tamlyn, Headteacher Cheddington School
Mr R Burman, Executive Principle, Aylesbury Vale Academy
Mrs K Duckworth, Headteacher, Padbury CofE School
Mr S Kearey, Governor – Great Kingshill CofE School
Mr J Bajina, Governor, Sir William Ramsay School
Mr P Ward, Governor, Chiltern Way

The Chairman thanked Mrs S Hartley, Mrs S Stamp, Mrs T Haddon, Mr D Letheren and Mr A Ogden for the work they had undertaken on behalf of Schools Forum.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mrs K Simmons and Mr D Hood declared an interest in Item 9, the Contingency Panel update, due to their involvement in the Cressex contingency bid being considered by the Panel.

Mr S Kearey declared an interest as he was a member of the Chiltern Clinical Commissioning Group.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 May 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

4 MATTERS ARISING

The matters arising from the last meeting would be addressed under the relevant agenda items for the meeting.

5 BUSINESS CASE FOR CHILDREN'S THERAPIES RECOMMISSIONING

Kerri Byrne, Children and Young People's Commissioner was welcomed to the meeting.

Ms Byrne highlighted the following key points from the report:

- Children and Young People's therapy services (speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy) were jointly commissioned by the local authority and Aylesbury Vale and Chiltern Clinical Commissioning Groups
- Occupational therapy and physiotherapy were provided by Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust and speech and language therapy is provided by Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust.
- The three services are currently run separately in terms of teams, contracts and financially. The best model would be a single, integrated service for those accessing two or more parts of the service in order for the best experience and pathway of care. This was particularly important for those children accessing all three therapy services.
- Parents said separate services resulted in a duplication of work and confusion about the care pathway.
- Therapy services were provided for children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- One of the key points of the service was to work with the child in school to keep them in mainstream schools and increasing inclusivity, capacity and confidence of the schools and so reduce the pressure on high needs block funding.
- A significant amount of money had been saved over the course of the current contracts.
- Combining these services would result in greater resilience and the ability to mitigate against the increasing demand to some extent.

In response to questions raised, the following was noted:

The integration of the speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and physiotherapy services would result in better communication and working together. The speciality of the service would not be lost; there would continue to be specialists in each therapy area but there could also be some cross-therapy roles which would increase capacity.

The number of EHCP statutory assessments has increased by 43% in Bucks against an increase of more than regionally or nationally. This was putting additional pressure on the current services.

The factors considered as part of the commercial strategic options appraisal (4.1 of the report) were not in any particular order/priority.

A long contract term (5 years plus option to extend) was recommended to allow time for the service to settle and start delivering outcomes before the next re-tendering process, and incentivise providers to put effort and investment into the service. Learning from other areas suggested it took a minimum of 18 months to achieve complete service transformation of this scale. This also follows the precedent of other recently recommissioned large scale services.

Consultation was taking place with Members of Schools Forum to advise them of the direction of travel of the service as the majority of the contribution from Buckinghamshire County Council comes from the high needs block.

One of the most important factors was to provide the core services. The specification for the service could include the ability for schools to purchase additional provision from the new service in order to support a whole-school approach to creating communication-friendly environments and looking at the needs of the whole school population.

Members of Schools Forum were in AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE to the integration of services and the recommendations set out in the business case.

Concern was noted about the financial commitment of 5 years and the management of a reducing high needs block budget.

6 SEND REVIEW UPDATE

Gill Shurrock, Head of SEND and Penny Richardson, SEN consultant were welcomed to the meeting.

Members of Schools Forum were taken through a presentation (attached) giving details of the interim feedback of the SEND review, during which the following key points were highlighted:

- One of the main reasons for the SEND review was that the current SEND strategy ended in July 2016 and that an updated Strategy that reflected current challenges and priorities was needed to steer SEND development over the next 3-5 years. Another key driver was the trend in spend against the high needs block that was a pressure well known to the Schools Forum.
- The review had involved extensive dialogue with stakeholders, including parents, children and young people, school leaders and support services staff over the spring and first part of the summer term.
- Today's presentation of Interim Findings explained the challenges of Threshold Management and Resource Pressures, both key areas of focus of the review. The review has dealt with the interface of the statutory SEND process and its relationship with and impact on SEND funding.
- The datasets considered by the review have not included qualitative data, such as the quality of education received by children with SEND. This goes beyond the scope of this particular review.

The presentation made to the Schools Forum is attached to these minutes.

The Director of Education reinforced the point that the local authority had statutory duties and informed members of both a projected overspend of £2-3m and increasing cost base to assist specific children.

Members were advised by the Director that the first stage of the SEND review had looked at data and research and that the next stage would be to determine the direction of travel following the Review. In terms of a redesign of services, a whole system approach of the assessment and planning process would be taken and consistency applied across all phases in order to address the current fragmentation of services.

During discussions, members of the Schools Forum commented on:

- Low levels of confidence in pre-school settings about provision for children with SEN on transfer to school, and that this was a key reason for requesting extra help through an EHC Plan
- Bucks was poorly funded in comparison with its statistical neighbours making it difficult to employ staff in SEN support roles and to carry out work schools would like to undertake.
- It would be helpful to see a comparison of the number of students excluded in schools in different areas of Bucks i.e. Wycombe and Aylesbury Vale.
- The requests for top up funding had increased as current funding did not cover the cost of the necessary staffing and schools did not have access to services they used to.
- Inclusive schools had to be able to provide for the needs of their pupils which was not always possible within the current funding envelope.

7 CHANGES TO THE SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS

Members were referred to the report which gave details of the changes to the Scheme for Financing Schools to bring it in line with the latest guidance from the Department of Education and which set out the financial relationship between the authority and maintained schools and contained requirements to financial management and associated issues.

Members were advised that there had been one update to the admission appeals since the paper had been circulated which had been updated on the Schools Bulletin version of the document.

Mrs E Wilding explained that at this stage the paper was for information only as the details of the new scheme and changes had been sent to all schools and governors via Schools Bulletin for consultation. Members were advised that the closing date of the consultation was the 21 July 2016;- the comments received would be summarised and presented at the next Schools Forum meeting for agreement following which the new document would be published on the BCC website.

ACTION

The statutory and optional requirements from the DfE would be clarified in the report – Mrs E Wilding

8 SURPLUSES AND DEFICITS AT 31ST MARCH 2016

Members were referred to the Surpluses and Deficits report which showed the state of the schools maintained by the local authority in terms of their balances as at 31 March 2016 and which were reported annually to Schools Forum.

Members were advised of the following:

- There were more schools in surplus this financial year (174 compared to 166 in 2014-15) and the total amount of surplus was £16,303,827 compared to £13,290,825 in 2014-15.
- 62 primary schools, 2 secondary schools, 3 special schools and no PRUs increased their surplus by 30% or more from 2014-15 to 2015-16.
- 15 primary schools, 1 secondary school, no special schools and 1 PRU reduced their surpluses by 30% or more from 2014-15 to 2015-16.
- 9 schools had a budget surplus in excess of 15% for 5 years or more. These schools would be asked to provide an explanation for the surplus.
- Deficits would also be looked at in conjunction with Bucks Learning Trust colleagues.

ACTION

A letter would be sent to the Regional Commissioner expressing concern about the anomaly in legislation which did not give enough contingency for current risk - Chairman.

Members of Schools Forum NOTED the state of the maintained school balances and AGREED that further analysis would be brought to Schools Forum Funding Group.

9 CONTINGENCY GROUP UPDATE

Members of Schools Forum received the following update.

- The Contingency Group should have met on a termly basis but unfortunately had not met this term due to the Chairman being unable to attend the meeting.
- The appeal process used by other authorities had been looked into. The findings were that various models were used; some authorities did not have a contingency fund; in some local authorities officers dealt with this process.
- The appeal panel concept existed in some local authorities.
- There was no appeal structure currently in place in Bucks which resulted in a complex process when legal issues arose.
- Legal clarification of the Contingency Panel and Appeal structure for Bucks was still awaited.
- Due to the expiration of the term of membership of some Members of Schools Forum and subsequent elections, new representatives were needed on the Contingency

Group.

- A virtual meeting would be arranged if it was not possible to arrange a physical meeting before the end of term.
- The current appeal process around the Cressex contingency bid would be considered by the newly convened panel.

The membership of the Contingency Group was confirmed as follows:

- Mr M Moore
- Mrs K Douglas
- Mr D Hood
- Mr J Bajina
- Mr S Sneesby
- Mrs J Freeman

10 F40 UPDATE

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills gave the following update.

- The f40 group had not met since May 2016 and the meeting scheduled for Saturday 25 June had been cancelled.
- The f40 group had been lobbying the DfE about the second stage of the Schools National Funding Formula consultation.

11 NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY DISCUSSION

This item was deferred as publication of the second part of Schools National Funding Formula was awaited.

12 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairman advised that Mrs Davison-Oakley would be retiring at the end of the summer term and that an election would take place for an Academy Primary representative. Thanks were given to Mrs Davison-Oakley for the work she had undertaken on behalf of Schools Forum.

The Chairman explained that due to changes in membership there was a vacancy on the Schools Forum Funding Group. Mrs K Tamlyn was subsequently confirmed as a member of the Schools Forum Funding Group.

13 DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 27 September 2016, 2pm, The Knight Room, The Coach House, Green Park, Aston Clinton.

Future meeting dates for 2016:
29 December

CHAIRMAN