

Minutes

SCHOOLS FORUM

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON TUESDAY 27
SEPTEMBER 2016 IN KNIGHT HALL (MAIN ROOM 2), THE COACH HOUSE, GREEN
PARK, ASTON CLINTON, COMMENCING AT 2.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 3.50 PM**

PRESENT

Headteachers

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Mrs D Rutley | Wycombe Grange PRU |
| Karen Collett | Haddenham St Mary's Church of England School |
| Mr A Rosen | Aylesbury High School |
| Mr S Sneesby | Kite Ridge House PRU |
| Ms S Skinner | Bowerdean School |
| Mr K Patrick | Chiltern Hills Academy |
| Miss K Douglas | Brookmead School |
| Mr O Lloyd | Iver Heath Junior School |
| Ms J Freeman | King's Wood School & Nursery |
| Ms K Tamlyn | Cheddington Combined School |
| Mrs K Duckworth | Padbury CE School |

Governors

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Mr P Rowe (Chairman) | Princes Risborough School |
| Ms A Coneron | The Vale Federation of Special Schools |
| Mrs G Bull | Haddenham St Mary's Church of England School |

Representative

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Mr A Nobbs | Ashmead School |
| Mr D Mortimer | Chiltern Way |
| Fiona Brooks | St Mary's Pre-School |
| Ms C Glasgow | NASUWT |
| Ms W Terry | Manor Farm Pre-School |
| Ms L Grexhammer | Bucks NUT |

In Attendance

Officers

Mr J Huskinson, Ms E Wilding, Ms A Sayani, Ms S Griffin, Ms J Nicholls,
Mr N Wilson and Ms L Nankin

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Mr P Rowe (Headteacher at Princes Risborough School) be elected Chairman of the Schools Forum for the current academic year.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

That Mr A Rosen (Headteacher at Aylesbury High School) be appointed Vice Chairman of Schools Forum for the current academic year

3 ELECTION OF SCHOOLS FORUM FUNDING GROUP MEMBERS

The following membership of the Schools Forum Funding Group was agreed:

Mr P Rowe – Chairman, Schools Forum
Mr A Rosen – Vice Chairman, Schools Forum
Mr S Sneesby – Special School representative
Mrs W Terry - Early Years representative (substitute Mrs F Brooks)
Mrs K Tamlyn – Combined School representative
Mrs A Coneron – Special School representative
Mr K Patrick – Academy Upper representative
Mr M Moore – Catholic Diocese of Northampton

4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies for absence were received from Mr D Hood, Mr A Gillespie, Mr S Kearey, Mrs K Simmons, Mr M Moore, Mr Z Mohammed, Mr J Bajina and Mr P Ward (Mr D Mortimer substituted for Mr Ward).

Changes in Membership

Mrs L Grexhammer, Bucks NUT was welcomed to the meeting.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

6 MINUTES OF THE MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2016 were confirmed as a correct record subsequent to the following minor amendment:

The date of the next meeting was to be amended from 29 December to **29 November 2016.**

7 MATTERS ARISING

None

8 **SCHOOLS FUNDING STRATEGY - FOR INFORMATION**

Mr N Wilson, Service Director, Education, gave the following update:

The 'Education for All' Bill progressed many proposals outlined in the Government's White Paper 'Educational Excellence Everywhere'. The Bill was divided into three main elements:

- A school-led system
- Fair-funding
- Excellence for every pupil

Developments since April 2016 included:

- The withdrawal of the forced academy proposal by Nicky Morgan in the run up to the Queens speech.
- New Education for All Bill 2016
 - The commitment of every school to become an academy
 - Popular schools being allowed to expand
 - The requirement of underperforming schools to convert to academies
 - Good schools taking the lead as part of multi academy trusts

The Schools National Funding Formula included the proposal that authorities passed on their schools block funding to schools. Local authorities, in consultation with their Schools Forum, were currently able to divide their total DSG across the DSG blocks as they saw fit i.e. they could spend schools block funding on high needs, or early years block funding on schools.

A substantial overspend on the High Needs block had been forecast in Buckinghamshire for a number of years which was of concern. The overspend could be bridged with Capital this financial year was not sustainable going forward. Members were also advised the following:

- The remaining monies in the Contingency Fund monies had been allocated. There was no contingency in the DSG.
- A large increase had been seen in the volume of children being assessed and the number of children on an education plan.
- If spend continued against the High Needs Block, the reduction of spend in special schools and mainstream schools might have to be considered.
- The number of requests received from schools over the summer for top-up funding had been overwhelming. Going forward, one option could be to approval partial funding only.
- Other local authorities had the same issue but they appeared to have moved into contingency. Buckinghamshire seemed to have used up its contingency funding earlier than other local authorities.
- There was concern about how to balance the budget for DSG. There would be an

- overspend if the current path continued.
- The delay in the National Funding Formula left the local authority in a position of needing to look at the High Needs Block and schools funding over the next few years. An option could be to consider top-slicing the budget of all schools in the local authority.
 - The Leader of BCC had sent a request for transitional funding to Nick Gibbs MP, Department for Education to try and address the issue of schools going into deficit.

In response to questions raised Members were advised the following:

- Possible solutions to the High Needs issue could be to take £1.6m from Capital Funding or the short term fix of profiling within the 5 year Capital Plan.
- Applications for top-up funding should be submitted to the SEND team. Recognition was needed that going forward the amount of top-up funding available would be lower in order to remain within budget.

9 SEND REVIEW - FOR INFORMATION

Mr N Wilson, Service Director, Education, gave the following update:

- An in depth review of SEND had taken place over the last 6 months. A consultation document had been drafted which included 8 priorities around SEND provision.
- Political sign-off had been received for the draft document which would be out for consultation for 4-5 weeks.
- The consultation would be launched at the BASH meeting on the 3 October.
- The way in which services were collectively planned for the future generation of children in Buckinghamshire needed to be addressed as the process was currently not as well thought through in other local authorities.
- SEND Reform grant funding had been used for extra resources in the service to try and reduce caseload of members of the team.
- Requests for higher level top up funding allocations, assessments and plans were being seen which had an impact on HNB monies.
- The Capital Profiles had been redrafted which included looking at the needs of primary and secondary schools. The needs of the primary sector remained high. The local authority currently had a shortfall of £53m over the length of the programme to invest in all school places.
- Housing developments were built in blocks of 2000/3000 homes and generated s106 monies. The approach for developer contributions had been strengthened but there would always be a gap in funding.
- There had been 4600 in year admissions in Buckinghamshire in 2015. Work was taking place to look at possible ways of addressing this increase.

10 EARLY YEARS FUNDING CONSULTATION - FOR INFORMATION

Mrs J Nicholls, Commissioner, Early Years and Childcare advised Members of the

following key headlines from the Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) consultation.

The DfE had launched a consultation on how the Early Years Block of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) was allocated across local authorities; the consultation closed on 22nd September 2016.

The proposals included:

- introducing a new early years national funding formula for 3 and 4 year olds;
- changing the way local authorities fund the early years providers in their area; and
- making sure that children with special educational needs or disabilities attract the extra funding they need.

The Government was looking to introduce the new formula from April 2017 for existing provision, with all local authorities being on the formula by 2019/20. Buckinghamshire was currently the 90th highest funded local authority, but would move to the 60th highest funded after the transitional arrangements.

In terms of what this meant for Buckinghamshire:

- Buckinghamshire currently received £4.115. The aim was to review how funding was distributed to achieve a more equitable arrangement.
- Currently local authorities retained between 0-20%, the average is 6%. The figure for Buckinghamshire for 2016/17 was 6.5%
- From 2017/18 local authorities may retain maximum 7%, reducing to 5% from 2018/19.

Within the consultation there was also emphasis around SEND funding and the requirement for local authorities to set up an inclusion fund from Early Years (EY) and/or High Needs Funding blocks. The DfE had not illustrated this as for local authorities to determine how much funding to set aside, which block and criteria for allocation.

£12.5m per year would be ring fenced for Disability Access Funding (DAF) for every child on DLA, to be fully pass-ported to providers to use at their discretion. The expectation was that funding would not cover the full cost of this provision. It was a top up from HNF Block but was funded within the core rate to local authorities so would require new money to move to HNF.

Buckinghamshire currently funded all providers at the same base hourly rate with the exception of its two maintained nursery schools. The consultation included the requirement for all local authorities to reduce factors and supplements and all providers to receive the same base rate regardless of sector with the inclusion of at least 2 years protection for Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS).

The Excel spreadsheet included with the agenda showed the challenges ahead in reaching an affordable rate which incentivises the market place to expand ready for + 15

hours taking into account factors such as the inclusion fund and the reduction of reducing central spend.

The extended free childcare entitlement of 30 hours of free childcare per week was being implemented from September 2017 which was in addition to the existing 15 hours of free early education, which is available to all 3 and 4 year-olds and eligible 2 year-olds.

Consultation had taken place with the Early Years Forum which was attended by the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills. A response to the consultation had been drafted and would be shared with F40 group prior to finalising.

During discussions, Members made the following comments:

- Many schools within the voluntary sector were struggling financially which had resulted in some schools closing in July and not re-opening in September. There was a sufficiency problem in the local authority.
- Some schools did not have the resources to deliver the extra 15 hours of free childcare and were therefore totally dependent on Government funding.

11 CHANGES IN THE NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIPS SCHEME AND THE IMPACT ON SCHOOLS - FOR INFORMATION

Mrs E Wilding, Senior Accountant gave the following update:

- In summary an Apprenticeship Levy was being introduced from April 2017 as part of the wide-ranging reforms of Apprenticeship training in England.
- The Levy would be charged at 0.5% of the total pay bill and would be collected through PAYE. For example under the levy a small primary school with a pay bill of £200,000 would have to pay £1000, a large primary school with a pay bill of £1.5m would have to pay £7,000 and a large secondary school with a pay bill of £3m would have to pay £15,000.
- The levy was applicable to all employers with a pay bill in excess of £3m.
- Employers could draw down levy funds towards the cost of training apprentices.
- Apprentice targets would apply to all public sector bodies with more than 250 employees.
- There were currently approximately 25 apprentices in Bucks schools. The current consultation proposed a target set at 2.3% of the headcount. Based on the estimated figures of all maintained schools, this could be in the region of 230 apprentices.
- Best practice around the use of apprentices in schools needed to be looked into.
- The Government had advised that further details about the scheme would be available in October.

During discussions the following comments were made:

- An apprentice needed to have a single employer and have work for 52 weeks per

year.

- The opportunities for apprentices in small rural schools would be very limited.
- Aspire had a team of Apprentices i.e. sports coaches, administration support, kitchen staff who also worked collectively in other schools to reduce the cost of the scheme.

ACTIONS:

- **Details of the National Apprenticeship Scheme would be presented at Head Teacher and HUB meetings – Caroline High.**
- **Further details about the scheme would be presented to Schools Forum when available – Caroline High.**

12 CHARGES FOR PERMANENTLY EXCLUDED PUPILS - FOR DECISION

Mrs L Nankin, Head of Fair Access and Youth Provision highlighted the following key points from the report:

The current method used in Buckinghamshire was to only charge AWPU from the excluding schools from the point of exclusion to the end of the current financial year that ends 31st March and only give the AWPU to the admitting schools from the date of admission to the 31st March. This method currently applied to all schools including academies.

The proposal was being recommended for the following reasons:

- The new charging mechanism would be fairer
- The financial incentive to Permanently Exclude would be removed and create an incentive to reintegrate
- Funding pressure

The additional paper circulated during the meeting clarified the 'Funding Period', cross border arrangements for exclusions with other local authorities and explained how treating Academies and Maintained Schools differently could be managed financially.

During discussions the following comments was made:

- If a member of staff had been specifically contracted to support a child who was then subsequently excluded, there could be a financial cost to the school.
- High Needs block and other extra funding allocated would follow the child if they moved school.
- The reintegration grant followed managed moves and was funded from a different budget.

RESOLVED

Members of the Schools Forum AGREED the following recommendations:

- **Change to charging the excluding schools (allocating to the admitting school)**

for the school's relevant financial year i.e. to 31st March for maintained schools and 31st August for academies.

- Charge the excluding school (allocate to the admitting school) for the remained of the current financial year and additionally the following year if the exclusion was after the October census and the pupil was not in year 11 and include all the relevant factors in the formula outlined in Appendix 1.

13 SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS - FOR DECISION

Mrs E Wilding, Senior Accountant gave the following update:

The paper detailed changes to the Scheme for Financing Schools to bring it in line with the latest guidance from the Department of Education.

Three responses had been received from schools about the register of business interests; the submission of budget plans and the balances of closing and replacement schools.

Members of Schools Forum (only those from the Maintained Sector) were advised that a decision would be required on the following three areas:

1. Submission of Budget Plans

In Buckinghamshire the current scheme allowed a sub group to approve the budget plan. The DfE scheme gave local authorities the flexibility to decide whether to allow a committee of the Governing Body to approve the budget plan or insist that the Full Governing Body approves the budget plan.

The local authority was proposing to change the scheme to insist that the Full Governing Body approved the budget plan in order to provide more accountability and control. The onus would be on the school to have this system in place.

The scheme being proposed by the local authority would include the proviso in the Constitution that the agreement about the budget plan could be made electronically.

RESOLVED

Members voted as follows:

In favour – 8

Abstained – 0

Against – 1

2. Section 6

The ability for the local authority to charge the budget share of a school for costs in administering admissions appeals, where the admissions authority and the funding for admissions appeals had been delegated to all schools as part of their formula allocation. Adding this section would give the local authority the ability to change the funding arrangements for admissions appeals in the future.

RESOLVED

Members voted as follows:

In favour – 9

Abstained – 0

Against – 0

3. Controls on surplus balances

The inclusion of the definition agreed by Schools Forum last year of excessive surpluses as follows:

15% or more (on all school's income) for the last 5 years and at least £10,000 each year, and Schools Forum reserved the right to clawback excess balances.

RESOLVED

Members voted as follows:

In favour – 8

Abstained – 1

Against - 0

14 CONTINGENCY GROUP UPDATE

Mrs K Douglas advised that all outstanding issues had been resolved at the last meeting of the Contingency Group.

The date of the next meeting was 21 November 2016.

15 F40 UPDATE

Members of Schools Forum were advised that there had not been a meeting of the f40 since the last Schools Forum. The next f40 meeting was planned for November/December.

ACTION: Concern about the f40 group's response to the delay in the Fairer Funding consultation would be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills – Member Services Officer

16 DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 18 October 2016, 2pm, The Knight Room, The Coach House, Green Park, Aston Clinton.

Future meeting dates: 29 November

CHAIRMAN