

Minutes

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON TUESDAY 18 OCTOBER 2016 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 2.10 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 3.30 PM

PRESENT

Headteachers

Mr A Rosen	Aylesbury High School
Mr S Sneesby	Kite Ridge House PRU
Ms S Skinner	Bowerdean School
Mr K Patrick	Chiltern Hills Academy
Mr O Lloyd	Iver Heath Junior School

Governors

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

Representative

Ms W Terry	Manor Farm Pre-School
Ms L Grexhammer	Bucks NUT

In Attendance

Ms J Nicholls, Mr Z Mohammed, Porter and Ms K Rumboll

Officers

Mr J Huskinson, Ms E Wilding, Ms A Sayani, Ms J Nicholls, Mr N Wilson, Ms N Beagle and Ms K Rumboll

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Debra Rutley, Karen Collett, Mr A Gillespie, Mr S Kearey, Andrew Nobbs, Fiona Brooks, Claudia Glasgow, Michael Moore, Janice Freeman, Kathryn Tamlyn, John Banjina, Karen Duckworth, Amanda Picillo.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Wendy Terry declared an interest for the BLT item, as she is a BLT Trustee.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 Sept we agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

Action from the last meeting - Councillor Zahir Mohammed agreed to circulate a response that was sent to the Secretary of State on the National Funding Formula along with the reply after today's meeting.

ACTION: Councillor Mohammed

4 MATTERS ARISING

None.

5 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND THE WORK OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LEARNING TRUST (ALLOW 45 MINS)

Mrs Kate Rumboll, Director of Education Standards BLT and Mr Steve Porter, Director of Finance and Corporate Governance BLT attending the meeting to provide an update. During discussion key points were raised as follows:

Headline information from last year

- Continued/sustained improvements in all areas.
- Reports were provided to BCC on a termly basis, including KPI's.
- Percentage of pupils attending schools rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted was increasing, summer 2014 =79%, summer 2015 = 82%, summer 2016 = 86%.
- Percentage of good or outstanding ratings by Ofsted for Primary schools, Aug 2016 = 93% which was the top of the South East.
- BCC had commissioned BLT for a 5 year period, due to come to an end 2018.
- Last year BCC had commissioned an upper school project, how best to build a sustaining network. To support this BLT had put forward £100k for the network of schools working closely with BLT
- Reputation of BLT was strong, particularly outside of Buckinghamshire. Strong leaders working in partnership, increasing number of schools being judged good or better.
- Most areas nationally did not have a school improvement service they can call upon similar to BLT.
- Decreasing number of schools being judged as inadequate.
- Sample comments by external Ofsted validators were available in the report.

Headline for early years

- Rapid improvement reflected.
- Currently 0 inadequate.
- 5 require improvement.
- Good or o/standing had increased from 86.5% to 97.5%.

SEN and inclusion

- KPI's were well met.
- The challenge remained high.
- Last year's grant was adjusted, service was running but exceeded the original commission set out initially.

Finances

- BLT had been running for the last 3 years.

- Year 1: made a substantial profit
- Year 2: 14- June 15: made a substantial loss c.£1.5m. Principle reason, series of actions were taken to take costs out of the organisation as were not sustainable.
- Year 3: 15- June 16: clean audit, result was break-even.
- Validation that actions in 14/15 to adjust cost base, for that year costs were on even keel.
- Current year predicting break-even also.
- Balance sheet - net assets of £800k - substantially un-distributable amount, offset by a small deficit of BLT's useable reserves. This was not a strong position but had improved slightly.
- Years beyond the current year BLT were trying to understand what the landscape would look like.
- BLT would continue to address significant financial challenges going forward.

Proposal - for BLT to bring to a future meeting

- BLT Blueprint for future landscape
- Implications of funding changes.
- Disadvantaged pupils.
- Update on other BLT services (e.g. CPD/training, Governors, Music)

During discussion Schools Forum members raised the following:

- Great to see progress being made however with a third of children still attending schools which require improvement, what was the focused approach planned to tackle this issue.
- Mrs K Rumboll advised BLT accept that there had been progress but that there was still more to be done. BLT were investing their surplus of £100k into the upper school project. A working party was looking at how best to use resources and how the community could be helped.
- Members of the working group advised they were grateful to BLT for the £100k investment however there were limitations with a self-referring group, e.g. contextual factors that were beyond the working groups control, i.e. social care. Therefore BCC challenge would also help.
- Mr Z Mohammed commented that although there was quite a lot of work being done by BLT, there was always more that could be done. Understanding of what the working group would be looking would be required before BCC could explore providing input. There was concern around the number of non-selective schools rated as not good or inadequate by Ofsted, which was high on BCC's focus. Some reports had been disappointing, as they were not due to the school failing but rather some of the processes had not been right. Mr Z Mohammed advised he was in contact with some of these schools and was confident that their position would change. He advised it was a collective effort by all stakeholders to improve the situation.
- Mr Z Mohammed agreed that the £100k investment from BLT would not go very far and that he continued to lobby Government for funding. He had highlighted the disparity of funding for London, e.g. Bucks £4k and London tower hamlets £7k per child. He also continued to raise the profile of Bucks, within both the local and national press and amongst local MPs.

Mr S Porter provided more detailed information on the BLT finances:

Total income £13m - budget for this coming year

- £7m of the £13m was the main grant

- £2m school improvement (which may not be received going forward- Government decision.)
- £2m special teaching/SEN
- £1.6m early years- school improvement and SEN (others work force development, school finance, governor services)
- Other grants of £1.2m, of which £800k was arts council (excluding music business)
- Bulk of remainder was special projects and bits of work £400k

Traded income £5m

- £1.5m music service
- £1.2 Governor service
- Other substantial amount was school improvement aspirational budget £0.9m (schools predominantly across bucks)

Local Authority (LA) Funding £6.8m

- Mr N Wilson advised this previously has been funding between 3 pots, Higher Needs Block, Education Services Grant and Central DSG block. Future provision is uncertain. As of 31 August 2017 Education Services Grant was to disappear from Local Government. This would coincide with the changing of statutory duties of LA's. It was likely £3.9m would be used to fund commission and BLT and statutory duties. Residual duties would then translate to the Central DSG block and decisions would be made at Schools Forum around the allocation of money and BLT. It was not the Higher Needs Block was currently forecasting a £3m overspend.
- The period in which grant would finish was 01 Sept 18. Options were being explored for future provision. Mr S Porter advised the initial term had been for 5 years with the possibility of a 2 year extension.
- Decision making within Schools Forum would remain the same until the new funding formula was implemented. Schools Forum would then run parallel to the process. Schools Forum would still have a role for debating and providing recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education.
- It was queried whether BLT would in future be producing an income flow by providing services outside of Buckinghamshire. Mr S Porter advised BLT would be able to share plans at a future meetings. There were a series of projects being explored which BLT were not in a position to discuss presently but would be able to at a later date.

It was agreed that the BLT would be invited to a future meeting to provide further details.

ACTION: Mr J Huskinson

BLT attendees were thanked for their attendance and promptly left the meeting.

6 PROVISIONAL 2017-18 BUDGET REQUIREMENT

Mr J Huskinson presented the report, PowerPoint slides attached. During discussion key points were raised as follows:

- As previously reported to Schools Forum in September 2016, by the Director of Education, the high needs block budgets within DSG were under considerable pressure.
- The latest forecast showed a pressure above budget of c £1.9m predominantly on the budget for Independent Schools, despite having increased budgets in 2016/17 to cope with demand.
- Overall the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget was projected to be c £3m over budget.
- The budget for high needs was at present indicating £1.9m overspend, despite

increases in budgets in 2016/17. This had not factored in potential additional growth in post 16 since the start of year.

- Pressures on the DSG would be carried forward; however where there was a DSG reserve this would be used first.
- High needs pressure in 2015/16 had used the remaining DSG reserve.
- The deficit contingency in 2016/17 was £900k over the budget available, with no reserves available to cover this cost. A £0.3m timing issue regarding school rates also appeared as a pressure.
- Trend data suggest c. 100 additional pupils would need support in 2017/18 (dependant on scenarios). Most of these would be in relatively costly provisions.
- The additional budget impact (over the 2016/17 pressure) was c. £2.4m. The recurrent pressure from 2016/17 was currently forecast at £1.9m, therefore the estimated recurrent pressure for high needs in 2017/18 would be increased to c £4.3m (dependant on scenarios).
- The financial benefit of any SEND reform project was unlikely to be realised in 2017/18, so any additional pressure would need to be offset by savings in DSG budgets in 2017/18.
- DSG budgets for 2017/18 will be discussed in more detail in November.
- Positive: the de-delegation issue was a nonrecurring issue.
- Negative: High Needs pressure was a recurrent pressure.

Recommendations

Option 1: The Schools Forum could agree to carry forward the £3.0m 2016/17 budget pressure to 2017/18 and deal with on top of any additional pressures in 2017/18, estimated at £4.3m.

Option 2: Alternatively, the Schools Forum could agree to redirect £3.3m of capital contribution from DSG revenue budgets (£1.65m in 2016/17 and £1.65m in 2017/18) to offset the 2016/17 pressure. This would create an impact on the £300m capital programme over the next 5 years. It would not solve the recurrent c £4.3m 2017/18 pressures.

The officer recommendation would be to support Option 2, as the ability to manage pressures would be relatively easier from capital over a longer term, than from 2017/18 central and schools budgets and the combined effect of 2016/17 and 2017/18 pressures may be too great to be managed just from 2017/18 revenue budgets.

During discussions further points were clarified as follows:

- Mr J Huskinson advised BCC's CEO, Rachael Shimmin, was in support of option 2, as the Capital programme would receive government funding. Last year the Government provided £9m funding on Capital, therefore the £3.3m pressure could potentially be offset with the government funds provided around the growth agenda.
- Mr N Wilson advised the pressure was due to growth in the population, with money being a symptom of growth. Housing was beginning to materialise at a swifter rate therefore the Government would have to fund us for the growth of the area.
- It was queried how confident officer were around the figures for next years funding. Mrs E Wilding advised that although 17/18 forecast details were not in the projections currently, the delay in the funding formula from the government had helped in favour of the Higher Needs pressures. Were the Government to provide £1m next year, this would go towards the £4.3m.
- Mr N Wilson confirmed there was no funding available in the DSG reserve, there

had been rapid deployment of £10m over previous 3 years. Many Local Authorities were using their reserves rapidly, was not just a BCC issue. Higher Needs was the single area that had not been recognised in funding terms which had caused significant pressures nationally.

- A member stated that 3-4 years ago Schools Forum allocated a significant amount of funding to Special Schools to build capacity, so that out of county provision was not going to be as much of an issue. Was this useful and had the money been well spent at this time?
- Mr N Wilson advised the investment in Special Schools was correct. This had held Independent schools where they were, however needed to revisit if further Capital was required and more provision in the County. To be reviewed, this would include provision within the county. It was agreed that at a later date the details of previous initiatives would be explored.

ACTION: Mr N Wilson

- Mrs E Wilding advised that the data was very sensitive therefore any slight change makes a big difference. Also the current details did not include the Higher Needs Block Funding for those children that did not have a statement, this data was currently a working process and would be provided in due course.

ACTION: Mrs E Wilding

DECISION

Option 2 of the recommendation was agreed unanimously by voting members (12) of Schools Forum.

7 IDACI IMPACT ON 2017-18

Mr J Huskinson provided an update. During discussions key points were raised as follows:

- The Government had announced the IDACI data would be reviewed again this year, following issues that were created during last year's review.
- Good news as would be looking at re-banding, which would result in small changes only.
- Subject to real data being available in mid December 2016, unless a school radically changed the nature of its cohorts, there should be no school significantly affected by the change.
- Following discussions at the last Schools Forum Funding Group, it had been suggested that the bands return to roughly a similar size, in terms of pupil proportion for each band.
- The revised bands were shown on the accompanying table, renamed "A" to "G", with the more deprived neighbourhoods being captured by band "A", relating to roughly 6 children in the total

Recommendation

That the Schools Forum agree with the banding values proposed in the table above, for the purposes of modelling the 2017/18 schools formula, notwithstanding that any announcements regarding national fairer funding may result in a further review of these bands.

DECISION

The forum voted unanimously (12) and AGREED to the above recommendation.

Member Comment

- It was suggested that the IDACI formula also be used for the early years formula for deprivation for consistency. Mr J Huskinson confirmed this would be investigated.

ACTION: Mr J Huskinson

8 SEND REVIEW - FOR INFORMATION

Mr N Wilson provided an update on the SEND review. Points were raised as follows:

- Details were available on website for consultation.
- Over 50 responses received so far.
- Consultation due to close 24 October 2016.
- Encouraged Members of Schools Forum to comment.
- Strategy will then be redrafted based on the comments received during the consultation.

9 SCHOOLS FORUM FUNDING GROUP UPDATE

Covered in earlier discussions.

10 CONTINGENCY GROUP UPDATE

None.

11 DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

SFFG Meeting	SFFG venue	Forum Meeting	Forum venue
11 November	Aylesbury High School	29 November	Green Park, Aston Clinton
6 January 2017	Green Park, Aston Clinton	17 January 2017	Green Park, Aston Clinton
20 January	Green Park, Aston Clinton	31 January	Green Park, Aston Clinton
10 March	Green Park, Aston Clinton	21 March	Green Park, Aston Clinton
5 May	Green Park, Aston Clinton	16 May	Green Park, Aston Clinton
30 June	Green Park, Aston Clinton	11 July	Green Park, Aston Clinton
15 September	Green Park, Aston Clinton	26 September	Green Park, Aston Clinton
13 October	Green Park, Aston Clinton	24 October	Green Park, Aston Clinton
17 November	Green Park, Aston Clinton	28 November	Green Park, Aston Clinton

CHAIRMAN