

Minutes

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON TUESDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2016 IN KNIGHT HALL (MAIN ROOM 2), THE COACH HOUSE, GREEN PARK, ASTON CLINTON, COMMENCING AT 2.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.30 PM

PRESENT

Headteachers

Mrs D Rutley
Karen Collett

Wycombe Grange PRU
Haddenham St Mary's Church of England
School

Mr D Hood
Mr A Rosen
Mr S Sneesby
Mr K Patrick
Mr A Gillespie
Mr O Lloyd
Ms J Freeman

Cressex Community School
Aylesbury High School
Kite Ridge House PRU
Chiltern Hills Academy
Burnham Grammar School
Iver Heath Junior School
King's Wood School & Nursery
Cheddington Combined School
Padbury CE School

Governors

Mr P Rowe (Chairman)
Mr S Kearey
Mr A Nobbs
Mr J Bajina
Mr P Ward

Princes Risborough School
Great Kingshill Church of England School
Ashmead School
Parent Governor, Secondary Sector
Chilternway Academy

Representative

Fiona Brooks
Ms C Glasgow
Mr M Moore
Ms W Terry

St Mary's Pre-School
NASUWT
Catholic Diocese of Northampton
Manor Farm Pre-School

In Attendance

Officers

Mr J Huskinson, Ms A Sayani, Carter, Mr N Wilson, Try, Ms R Bennett
and Ms S Kershaw

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Mrs K Simmons, Mrs G Bull, Councillor Zahir Mohammed, Mrs S Skinner and Mrs K Douglas

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

During discussions declarations of interest were made as follows:

Ms W Terry; Buckinghamshire Learning Trust

Mr P Rowe; Alternative Resource Provision

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on --- date were agreed as a correct record & signed by the Chairman.

The follow updates were noted:

- David Hood was in attendance at the meeting
- Item 5 (page 8): It was suggested BLT be invited to a future meeting to discuss potential projects being explored to provide an income stream.
ACTION: Mr J Huskinson/ Ms R Bennett

4 MATTERS ARISING

None.

5 SCHOOLS FORUM PAY REVIEW CONSULTATION

Mrs S Kershaw, Senior OD officer at the County Council attended the meeting to set out the options identified when considering what pay award to apply to Bucks Pay Schools.

Following the decision made last year to maintain Range 1A and increase in line with National Living Wage (NLW), the Senior Appointments and Bucks Pay Award Committee SABPAC were required to make a decision this year whether to apply a percentage (or other) pay award to all Bucks Pay Schools, as well establish the amount.

The report from Mrs Kershaw set out the following options identified and asked for the view of the School Forum.

- 1) No increase to any range except to meet NLW requirements
- 2) A percentage increase for all ranges, with an additional increase for R1A to meet NLW.
- 3) A percentage increase for all ranges, with an additional increase to meet and

slightly exceed NLW requirements (e.g. if standard increase was agreed at 1%, an increase of 2.7% could be applied to Range 1A to bring the value up to £7.60 per hour.

Mrs Kershaw highlighted the following points:

- SABPAC had discussed Pay for School support staff at a recent committee meeting and supported Option 2
- SABPAC would make the final decision however any awards agreed would be paid from the school's budget
- Due to the Government cap of an average 1% on public sector increases, a 1% increase had been applied to Teachers pay scales in September 2016

RESOLVED

Schools Forum agreed to support Option 2 and suggested that the increase applied should be consistent with the 1% applied to teachers pay scales.

Mrs Kershaw advised the Forum that there would be a further opportunity to provide input during December and January, as a consultation with school employees would be published via Schools Bulletin.

The Forum thanked Mrs S Kershaw for the update.

6 NATIONAL FUNDING PROPOSALS AND F40

Mr P Rowe advised the Forum that Councillor Zahir Mohammed was unable to attend the meeting as he was attending a meeting with Justine Greening, Secretary of State for Education as a Member of the F40 group.

Mr J Huskinson advised that Finance meetings had now been pushed back to January 2017 as the Government settlement details would not be provided until 14-20 December 2016.

Mr Rowe advised that the Schools Forum Funding Group were working to four key principles:

1. There was an unavoidable necessity to significantly reduce expenditure. The specific amount expenditure would need to be reduced by was dependent on details to be supplied by the Government, due mid December
2. The SEND Review had an explicit aim to reduce expenditure however had not yet focussed down on how much of a reduction or by when
3. The 'worst case' scenario was being budgeted for, were the outcome to be more positive once Government data had been received some of these proposed reductions could be mitigated
4. 'Equal pain' across all sectors with no areas immune to cuts

7 SEND UPDATE

Mr N Wilson attended the meeting to provide an update on the SEND Review and its findings.

An overview of the key findings were highlighted as follows:

- The SEND Review had now concluded and the first draft of strategy and priority plan had been developed
- Buckinghamshire had more children statemented within its schools compared to other areas (3.8%), which sat above national benchmarks
- Through the consultation exercise it was clear that there was not much descent in the findings
- There was a strong involvement from parents and carers
- It was recognised that there was the need for investment in the improvement and planning process
- 20-30 groups have been involved in the strategies development
- The strategy was due to be presented to One Council Board on 30 November 2016 and would need to go through the appropriate Member Decision Process following OCB approval

Mr Wilson informed the Forum that the analysis of the review had highlighted 7 key priorities:

Children, young people and families	
Priority 1	Enhance the experiences of families, children and young people of the statutory SEND processes.
Developing provision and supporting Schools and Settings	
Priority 2	Develop greater confidence, competence and skills in mainstream settings, schools and academies, providing stronger leadership and support for SENCOs and others, across schools and settings.
Priority 3	Refocus specialist SEND provision, such as special schools and Resourced Provisions, on those children with the most significant and complex SEND.
Priority 4	Improve the leadership, co-ordination, deployment and collaborative working of specialist SEND specialist teaching, advisory and educational psychology services.
Planning ahead	
Priority 5	Develop and implement improved approaches to planning and securing specialist educational places for those children with the most significant and complex needs.
Strategic Leadership and Management	
Priority 6	Strengthen the management of the statutory SEND processes
Priority 7	Develop improved approaches to monitoring and accountability, especially in relation to the use and impact of High Needs funding in schools and other educational settings.

Members of the Forum made the following points:

- It was queried whether there was a funding difference between SEND children in mainstream and special schools. Mr N Wilson advised that specialist schools were funded £10k per child, with top up being available through existing mainstream budgets.
- It was suggested that there be open communications with all the stakeholders, to ensure all have a better understanding of the position going forward
- The need for a more robust process when applying for Higher Needs Funding was highlighted. It was advised that once the funding was granted, funding was

not monitored to determine how it had been spent.

- It was queried who would be delivering the Strategy and Priority Plan once it had been approved. Mr Wilson confirmed that it would require a drive from schools and members of the Forum and Strategic Leadership from the County Council. The resource for this was yet to be allocated, however the need for funding change management capacity had been requested with specific sector knowledge

It was queried where the governance for the project would sit, Mr Wilson confirmed there was a proposal for a governance structure, where a strategic group come together to support and advocate the project.

8 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT

Growth Fund and Growing Schools

Mr J Huskinson presented the report which set out the additional funding available for new schools, growing schools, those being reorganised or those with falling numbers, and highlighted the potential of those that may be financially disadvantaged for a time due to the way that the formula allocated funding.

With the information provided in the report, Mr Huskinson asked the Forum to consider the following options identified:

Option 1 to not allow a disapplication request and leave the school(s) affected to manage this.

Option 2 to support the disapplication request being made to the EFA in all applicable cases, either on a Growth Fund basis or a variation in pupil numbers basis

Option 3 for the Forum or a delegated group of the Forum to review each case on its own merits and where agreed, support the disapplication to the EFA, either on a Growth Fund basis or a variation in pupil numbers basis

Recommendation

The Schools Forum Funding Group recommended that Schools Forum agree with Option 2, with advice on whether the Growth Fund or pupil adjustment was the most appropriate being left to the Local Authority (LA), in liaison with Schools Forum and Education Funding Agency (EFA) to agree.

Members of the Forum made the following comments:

- Consideration needed to be given to free schools; in theory their budget would include diseconomies when they submitted their initial plans in so contingency would be available for maintained schools. Free schools should have a budget plan and rely on the Forum to take on the risks when issues occur. This message was to be fed back to the EFA.
- Were Option 1 selected, would this stop a school applying to contingency fund if

they had made the wrong calculations? Mr Huskinson confirmed that it would not, however if Option 3 was chosen this would mean they would be unable to apply for contingency funding as this would be available to maintained schools only.

Mr Huskinson advised the Forum to consider the information set out in the **Growth Fund – Start Up Grant** report before making a decision.

Following discussions on the **Growth Fund – Start Up Grant** the Forum took a vote on the 3 options set out and the result was recorded as follows:

Option 1 – 14

Option 2 – 2

Abstaining - 1

Majority vote for Option 1 was recorded.

RESOLVED

The Forum AGREED with Option 1.

Growth Fund – Start Up Grant

Mr Huskinson presented the report outlining the Start Up Grant available to all new schools. As highlighted in the report, due to Green Ridgeway Academy opening in September 2017 a decision was required on what funding was available between now and then. The County Council were seeking to formalise the arrangements for future provisions.

The options were highlighted as follows:

Option A

To agree a set rate for all new schools of £200,000 for primary mainstream schools, historically this has been around the level of funding given to the last two new schools. To date we have not had a new secondary maintained school, from evidence provided by the DFE they have provided £300,000 of start-up funding.

Option B

For the forum to agree on a case by case basis as it has in the past.

Recommendation

The Schools Forum Funding Group (SFFG) has considered this matter in detail and recommended Option B to the Forum and asked that they also nominate a representative to review the cases as they arise, assuming Option B is agreed.

The SFFG further recommends that to support new schools in their planning assumptions, that there should be a minimum allocation of £150K for new primary

schools and £250K for new secondary schools.

RESOLVED

Schools Forum AGREED with Option B and that representation discharged to be agreed by the Schools Forum Funding Group.

ACTION: Schools Forum Funding Group & Mr K Patrick

Dedicated Schools Grant 2017-18

During discussions declarations of interest were made as follows:

Ms W Terry; Buckinghamshire Learning Trust

Mr P Rowe; Alternative Resource Provision

Mr Huskinson presented the update report to Forum outlining the suggested funding proposals in principle, to help to inform budget proposals. These were to be confirmed prior to the Schools Forum meeting in January 2017.

During discussions key points were highlighted as follows:

- High Need Block activity continued to create pressure
- The estimated growth in High Needs activity had led to an assumed gap of £6m
- The Education Services Grant (ESG) had not been considered when modelling the savings as there was still uncertainty about the responsibility and funding
- A summary of budgets was provided with a full breakdown in Appendix 1 in order to mitigate the £6m

Mr Huskinson explained each area to be considered to offset the pressure.

Members of the Forum made the following comments:

- Current calculations were on current pupils numbers or the assumption of an increase, it was asked that modelling also be carried out on a reduction in pupils entering the school

ACTION: Mr J Huskinson

- Concerns were raised that while it was the correct step to retain children in mainstream schools where possible if we reducing funding for children across the board this could then draw people away from special schools
- It was also suggested that the viability of ARPs should not be reduced
- The need for co-ordination between this piece of work and the 7 Priorities set out in the SEND review
- Support would be needed if the 'equal pain' process was applied
- It was confirmed that Bucks Academy of School Leaders (BASL) were already working on the assumptions that there would be cuts made
- It was suggested that the funding for the BLT should be reviewed. Mr Rowe confirmed that this was already being assessed

Mr Rowe confirmed that the Forums responsibility was to set the budget and agree the

funding formula, however once the settlement was announced by Government on 20 December, some of the planning assumptions may be subject to change.

It was that BASH had already written to the Secretary of State to highlight 'Fairer Funding' issues within Bucks and Mr Rowe confirmed that he would also write to the Secretary of State for Education setting out the funding issues that were being faced, specifically in SEND; a copy of this letter would be circulated. The Primary Executive Board also agreed to send a letter in support.

9 CONTINGENCY GROUP UPDATE

Mr M Moore provided a verbal update following the last Contingency Group.

It was confirmed there was an approximate £150k left in the pot with still two meetings to take place before year end, therefore it was doubtful all requests would be met.

Mr Moore also suggested that due to additional pressures predicted in 2017/18, more requests to the contingency group are likely. The money therefore to be allocated to the group for next year should be higher than in previous years.

It was confirmed that Mr D Hood would be taking over as Chairman following the next Contingency Meeting.

10 SCHOOLS FORUM FUNDING GROUP UPDATE

All items were discussed in previous items.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business to discuss.

Meeting closed 16.35.

12 DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

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

