

# Minutes

## SCHOOLS FORUM

**MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON TUESDAY 17 JANUARY 2017, IN KNIGHT HALL, GREEN PARK, ASTON CLINTON, COMMENCING AT 2.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 5.00 PM.**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Pete Rowe (Chairman), Karen Collett, Alan Rosen, Sue Skinner, Kevin Patrick, Owen Lloyd and Kathryn Tamlyn, Lindsey Grexhammer, Michael Moore, Fiona Brooks, Wendy Terry, Claudia Glasgow, Katy Simmons and Peter Ward

### **OTHER ATTENDEES**

Mr Zahir Mohammed

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP**

Apologies were received from :

John Bajina (Parent Governor Representative)

Karen Duckworth (Associate Member)

David Hood (Associate Member)

Simon Kearey (Parent Governor Representative)

Andy Gillespie (Associate Member)

Angela Coneron (Parent Governor Representative) – Chris Stephenson attending in her place.

Janice Freeman – Gareth Drawmer attended as substitute

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

During discussions declarations of interest were made as follows:

Ms W Terry; Buckinghamshire Learning Trust

Members noted there were no primary academy representation on the Forum and this needed to be reviewed.

**ACTION: Mr Huskinson**

### 3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 November were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The following updates were noted:

- Minutes of last meeting (page 4) – date needed to be added
- SEND Governance (Page 7) – Mr N Wilson updated the Forum that a Programme Director and Manager were now in place and finances had been secured
- Growth Fund (Start-up) (Page 9) – It was confirmed that Mr K Patrick, Mr M Moore and Mrs K Tamlyn agreed to represent the Schools Forum. Mr J Carter to arrange meeting dates

**ACTION: Mr Carter**

'Fair Funding' letter (Page 10) – Mr Rowe confirmed a letter had not yet been sent to the Secretary of State as there was an opportunity to feedback as part of the consultation process.

### 4 SCHOOLS FUNDING 2017/18

Mr Huskinson presented the report on DSG 2017/18. The report set out recommendations for the Schools Forum to agree.

The report was discussed section by section with key points being highlighted as follows:

#### **Sections A and B background and purpose for the report**

- DSG Funding was a Cabinet Member decision but had been delegated to officers (Mr D Johnston)

#### **Section C – Overall Settlement**

- Section C outlined the settlement of £412m. High Needs (HNs) funding £1.9m extra funding and had received £5m extra in DSG for growth in pupils
- The £6m gap had been balanced as below:
  - £1.5 HNs funding, £1m HNs saving, £1m DSG headroom, £2m given back from Early Years and £1.5m capping

#### **Section D – Other funding**

- Mr Huskinson outlined other announcements that had been made and additional funding that could be bid for

## Section E – Education Services Grant (ESG)

**Recommendation 1:** *That the School Forum notes the implications of the ESG proposals and agrees the allocation of the £1.178m ESG retained duties funding to the Authority.*

- Mr Huskinson confirmed that the County Council were using council tax funding to relieve some of the pressure

**RESOLVED: All Members (17 present) of the Forum were asked to vote on the recommendation:**

<b>For</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Against</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Abstention</b>	<b>0</b>

## Section F – National Funding Formulae and High Needs Funding

**Recommendation 2 -** *The School Forum considers the consultation and provides a collective response to the F40 group (notwithstanding Schools and stakeholders may wish to provide individual or other collective responses)*

- Forum members discussed and disagreed with the view in the report that the outcome for Buckinghamshire schools was a positive one. It was noted that not all schools would see this as positive and particularly those higher in deprivation would be negatively affected
- Mr Wilson confirmed that compared to other Counties it was seen as good with 85% of schools gaining

**RESOLVED: Since the meeting it had been agreed that a more productive forum debate could be had with some evidence and analysis of the views of the wider schools community, following a consultation exercise led by the officers and promoted at various other stakeholder meetings. The response from Bucks would be agreed at the next Forum on 21 March 2017.**

**ACTION: Mr J Huskinson**

## Section G – School Funding Formulae 2017/18

**Recommendation 3** - *The School Funding Formulae agreed in 2016/17 are unchanged but that capping of gains is set at 0.5% (per scenario 2)*

- Mrs Huskinson highlighted the need to find £0.5m and suggested that if scenario 2 was chosen, to use the current funding but reduce capping to 0.5%

**RESOLVED: All Members (17 present) of the Forum were asked to vote on the recommendation:**

<b>For</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Against</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Abstention</b>	<b>0</b>

## Section H – Historic Commitments (Wendy Terry declared an interest when discussing BLT)

**Recommendation 4** - *The Schools Forum agrees the full use of the historical commitments proposed.*

- The Forum agreed to maintain funding wherever possible

**RESOLVED: All Members (17 present) of the Forum were asked to vote on the recommendation:**

<b>For</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Against</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Abstention</b>	<b>0</b>

## Section I – Central Ongoing Commitments

**Recommendation 5** - *The Schools Forum agrees the ongoing commitments recommended in the report.*

- Mr Huskinson confirmed that following on from discussions at the last Forum, £115k had been left in for BASL however potential areas of savings were to be looked at  
**ACTION: Mrs A Sayani**
- It was questioned why we are paying to independent schools without Special Education Needs. Mrs Huskinson agreed to find out and feed back to the members  
**ACTION: Mr Huskinson**
- Mr Huskinson confirmed that the list of Central Ongoing Commitments would be reviewed each year

**RESOLVED: All Members (16 present, one member left the meeting) of the Forum were asked to vote on the recommendation:**

<b>For</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Against</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Abstention</b>	<b>0</b>

## Section J – High Needs

### **Recommendation 6**

#### ***The Schools Forum support the High Needs budget proposals.***

- The High Needs Block was £76.44m including a £602k sum that would be clawed back. This was £1.490m higher than the base line funding and would go some way to offsetting pressures in high needs caused by growth
- Mr Huskinson confirmed that he was working to worst case scenario and that we will get no more than what is predicted for 18/19
- Impact Assessment to be circulated to members of the Forum

**ACTION: Ms R Bennett**

- Mr Huskinson confirmed that the breakdown of the funding had also been reviewed at the Special Heads meeting
- Members for the forum discussed the impact in the reduction for Education Psychology and the strain it would put on the quality of the service provided. Mr Huskinson confirmed that they were trading in some areas that could offset some of the reduction but then this would have an impact on what schools could afford to pay for. Mr Wilson confirmed that he would look into the trading and the impact on schools and update Forum members

**ACTION: Mr Wilson**

- It was noted that some lines in the table provided currently did not have any reductions against them. Mr Huskinson confirmed that there would need to be a further review of the funding next year and that these would be potential areas for reductions

**RESOLVED: Forum Member asked that their comments be taken into consideration. All Members (16 present) of the Forum were asked to vote on the recommendation:**

<b>For</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Against</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Abstention</b>	<b>1</b>

## Section K – Early Years

**Recommendation 7** - *The Schools Forum supports the Early Years budget proposals*

A separate item (refer to item 6) covered discussions regarding the Early Years funding.

**RESOLVED: All Members (16 present) of the Forum were asked to vote on the recommendation:**

<b>For</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Against</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Abstention</b>	<b>0</b>

## Section L – Existing De-delegations – Member of the Forum left the meeting

**Recommendation 8-** *The Schools Forum (maintained schools) considers and votes on the proposed existing de-delegations.*

Only maintained schools would vote on these items. 5 maintain primary and 1 maintained secondary school representation was present at the Forum.

Mr Huskinson presented the table that set out all the existing de-delegations and the following comments were discussed:

- Discussions took place around the contingency per pupil cost being the same for primary as well as secondary and this would mean that primary schools would be subsidising for secondary schools. They also discussed options of rising the per pupil costs for secondary's or splitting the pot, however this was agreed in the end to not be the best solution. A member of the Forum asked to see the breakdown of previous years of who had drawn down from contingency

**ACTION: Mr Huskinson**

- It was suggested by a member of the Forum that the contingency fund should be needs driven and be as flexible as possible, whilst ensuring that each application meets a strict criteria
- £440k was agreed as the appropriate figure for the contingency pot split £381k/£59k primary/secondary

Members of the Forum (maintain schools) wanted it noted that while they disagreed with how the equal split per pupil, they were mindful that a decision needed to be taken.

**RESOLVED: All Maintained schools (6 in total present) asked to vote on the recommendation:**

<b>For</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Against</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Abstention</b>	<b>0</b>

**New De-delegations - Member of the Forum left the meeting**

**Recommendation 9** - *The Schools Forum (maintained schools) considers and votes on the proposed new de-delegations.*

Only maintained schools would vote on these items. 5 maintain primary and 1 maintained secondary school representation was present at the Forum. In addition 1 Special school representation would vote.

Mr Huskinson presented the table including suggested new de-delegations – those areas at risk due to ESG funding and whether they would have to be stopped or charged for. The Forum made the following comments:

- A member of the primary representation stated that given the cuts to budgets there was huge unrest within the liaison group about the £18 per pupil if all new de delegations were approved. Mr Huskinson confirmed that they had a couple of months to work through the detail once the figure had been put forward
- Members of the Forum discussed the additional School Improvement and how this interfaced with what was already provided by the BLT and who would be providing the additional school improvement. Mr Wilson confirmed that BLT budgets from the central budget would remain in, but colleagues were still working through what this would look like. He also confirmed that discussions still needed to be had with the BLT

**RESOLVED: All Maintained schools (7 in total present including 1 special school) asked to vote on the recommendation.**

Those voting agreed to the recommendation in principle but asked that a working group be arranged with maintained school representation and each line of the new delegations be worked through. Mrs Tamlyn volunteered for primary school and it was confirmed after the meeting that Mr D Hood would represent secondary on the working group. An update to come to the March Schools Forum

**ACTION: Mr Huskinson**

<b>For</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Against</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Abstention</b>	<b>0</b>

## Section N – Growth Fund

**Recommendation 10** - *The Schools Forum supports the recommended £1.9m growth fund budget to be top-sliced from DSG and agree the final criteria for use of the growth fund before year end.*

**RESOLVED:** All Members (14 present) of the Forum were asked to vote on the recommendation:

<b>For</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Against</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Abstention</b>	<b>0</b>

## Section O – Licenses

### **Recommendation 11**

**The Schools Forum notes the license proposals and the top-slice of DSG as a result.**

- Mr Huskinson confirmed that top slicing the DSG for licences would benefit all schools and academies
- The Forum noted that 2% increase was significantly higher and another hit to the budgets

**RESOLVED:** All Members (14 present) of the Forum were asked to vote on the recommendation:

<b>For</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Against</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Abstention</b>	<b>0</b>

## 5 SCHOOL FUNDING CABINET MEMBER DECISION

A copy of the Cabinet Member decision report was attached for information only.

## 6 EARLY YEARS FUNDING

Mrs J Nicholls presented a report to the group which outlined the government's allocations for Early Years funding.

The report outlined the feedback from the consultation carried out with the sector in December 2016 which included a series of meetings in the summer term and an online survey.

The final allocation had not changed with the exception of the additional allocation for maintained nursery schools (MNS) which had decreased by £40,125k (18.8%).



The report set out a number of recommendations for Schools Forum members to consider and vote on.

### **Deprivation Supplement – Mandatory and optional supplements**

- A high number of providers (78%) agreed that £623k allocated to deprivation was about right
- 72% of providers agreed to Model 2 for deprivation which reduced the overall budget, but all providers would receive some allocation
- It was confirmed that an Impact Assessment had been completed and it showed that if model 2 was adopted some providers would be worse off next year. Mr Wilson confirmed that there would be work to mitigate against the impact of reductions. Schools Forum requested to see the Impact Assessment previously referred to

**ACTION: Mrs Nicholls**

- The Forum commented some of the schools affected the most were those that attract some of our most vulnerable children. The Forum did discuss the option of looking at other models, but noted that this would only then have a negative impact on other areas of the sector
- Mr Huskinson confirmed that although budgets need to be set for March, a decision on this would be required now in order for discussions to start with providers. He confirmed that further modelling will be taken to the Early Years Forum on 30 January 2017 and the final decision on the model by taken by Mr Z Mohammed. An update will come back to Schools Forum in March.

**ACTION: Mrs Nicholls/Mr Huskinson**

**Recommendation: Adopt model 2 and agree no optional supplements.**

**RESOLVED: All Members of the Forum agreed the recommendation with the comments above taken into consideration.**

### **Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS)**

- All providers would be on the same base hourly rate no later than 2019/20 which was in line with the rest of the sector
- It was noted that there was currently lots of investment needed in this area and the cuts would present a real challenge

**Recommendation:** MNSs receive a lump sum of £55k per school per year and £30k for Mapledean annexe. MNS 3 & 4 year olds are funded at the base hourly rate of £4.55.

**RESOLVED: All Members of the Forum agreed the recommendation.**

### **High Needs (HN) Funding – Inclusion Fund**

- Mrs Nicholls confirmed that there was a requirement to set up an inclusion fund from the Early Years block or HN block
- The recommendation set out to fund from early years block in same budget envelop with a slight increase to allow for children to attend for longer –there will be a slight LAG on the pressure on the funding stream

**Recommendation:** Local authorities (LAs) are required to introduce an Inclusion Fund. In Buckinghamshire this would replace the current HNF allocations for children with emerging SEN. More complex and EHCPs would continue to be funded from the HNF Block. An Inclusion Fund would be established from the EY Block. The current spend of £428k should be increased to £475k to support those children who will be eligible for 30 hours from September 2017. Any underspend would be carried forward and ring fenced to EY Block.

**RESOLVED: All Members of the Forum agreed the recommendation.**

#### **Central Spend - High Pass- Through Funding**

- The greatest number of providers supported 5% central spend which would allow BCC to keep central spend in line with current expenditure whilst also meeting government monitoring policy for compliance of High Pass Through

**Recommendation:** a budget allocation of 5% for central spend is agreed. Individual budget lines will be approved by School Forum.

**RESOLVED: All Members of the Forum agreed the recommendation.**

#### **Charging for Services**

- When asking the sector about charging for services the general consensus was they would not have the budget to cover this
- Duplication between BCC services and those provided by BLT were discussed

**Recommendation:** BCC will continue to provide or commission support services to providers. BCC will undertake a further review of EY central support and report back to EY and School Forum on future options.

**RESOLVED: All Members of the Forum agreed the recommendation.**

#### **Contingency Fund**

- Mrs Nicholls confirmed that there was not a contingency fund set aside for Early Years from Local Government and there was strong support from the sector to set one up
- The fund would be ring-fenced for Early Years only and anything not spent would go back into the early years pot
- The Forum discussed the amount suggested of £150-£300k and what comparison in percentage terms this was against other contingency funds agreed by the Schools Forum. Mr Huskinson stated that like the other contingency funds it would be monitored on a yearly basis
- The Forum also had discussions regarding who would manage the contingency fund and agree the criteria for allocation. It was agreed that it be discussed at the next Contingency Group and an Early Years representative be invited.

**ACTION: Mr Huskinson**

**Recommendation:** A contingency fund of £200k will be established and ring fenced to EY providers. Any underspend will be carried forward and ring fenced to EY Block.

**RESOLVED: All Members of the Forum agreed the recommendation in principle as long as the actions above were implemented.**

#### **Payment Timetable**

- It was suggested that payment terms for childminders move to a monthly payment timetable as recommended by Government, however 65% of providers fed back that they want to remain half termly in advance

**Recommendation:** Early Years providers on non-domestic premises will continue to be funded half-termly in advance.

**RESOLVED: All Members of the Forum agreed the recommendation.**

#### **Two Year Old Central Spend**

- Mrs Nicholls confirmed that the Government had given an uplift in funding
- The greatest number of providers supported 5% central spend which would allow BCC to keep central spend in line with current expenditure

**Recommendation:** a budget allocation of 5% for central spend is agreed. Individual budget lines will be approved by School Forum.

**RESOLVED: All Members of the Forum agreed the recommendation.**

**It was confirmed that although Schools Forum did not have the right to vote on the decisions taken regarding Early Years funding, they wanted their comments and concerns taken into consideration in inform decisions taken by the Early Years Forum**

#### **8 AOB**

Dis-applications – Approved in principle but needs the Forum to agree each year.

**RESOLVED: All Members of the Forum agreed the recommendation.**

#### **7 DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS**

Since the meeting in January it has been agreed that the date of the next meeting is 21 March 2017 and a new start time of 1.30pm was agreed.

**ACTION: Ms Bennett**

**CHAIRMAN**