

# Minutes

## SCHOOLS FORUM

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON TUESDAY 18 JUNE 2019 IN KNIGHTS HALL, GREEN PARK, COMMENCING AT 13.35 AND CONCLUDING AT 15.30**

### PRESENT

#### Headteachers

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Mr A Rosen     | Aylesbury High School   |
| Ms K Tamlyn    | Cheddington Combined School   |
| Ms S Cromie    | Wycombe High School   |
| Mr A Gillespie | Burnham Grammar School  |
| Mr D Hood      | Cressex Community School  |
| Mr O Lloyd     | Iver Heath Junior School  |
| Mr K Patrick   | Chiltern Hills Academy  |
| Ms S Skinner   | Growing Together Federation (Bowerdean & Henry Allen Nursery Schools) |
| Mr S Sneesby   | Kite Ridge School   |
| Ms E Stewart   | Stoke Mandeville Combined School                                      |
| Ms J Divers    | Turnfurlong Junior School   |
| Mrs A Cranmer  | Cabinet Members of Education and Skills                               |
| Ms J Watson    | Lent Rise School  |
| Mrs G Bull     | Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School  |
| Mr S Kearey    | Great Kingshill Church of England School                              |
| Mr R Page      | Chalfont Community College  |
| Dr K Simmons   | Cressex Community School  |
| Ms S Fahey     | Brindley House School   |
| Ms C Glasgow   | NASUWT  |
| Ms W Terry     | Manor Farm Pre-School   |

#### Governors

#### Representative

#### In Attendance

Mrs A Cranmer, Cabinet Members of Education and Skills  
Mr Keen, Apire, Ms Sandcastle Nursery, The Village Pre-School

#### Officers

Ms S Callaghan, Ms A Kenward, Ms J Try, Ms E Williams and  
Ms H Slinn

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Ms J Antrobus, Ms P Coppins, Ms J Freeman, Ms S Stephens, Ms D Rutley, Ms J Nichols, Mr J Carter.

## **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

## **3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 MARCH 2019**

The following actions were reviewed from the previous meeting:

- Item 4 KPIs and financial reporting
  - Following feedback officers had displayed financial figures differently in the reports circulated with the agenda.
- Item 5 banding system
  - Ms E Williams, Head of Finance, Childrens Services, confirmed the task and finish group had now formed and held its first meeting in May to start initial work on banding. The second meeting was scheduled for week beginning 24 June.
- Item 6 - Changes to the Scheme for Financing Schools
  - The revised scheme was circulated for consultation. There had been no feedback so changes had been adopted as per the report. This would be confirmed in the Schools Bulletin.

**RESOLVED: Members of the forum AGREED the minutes for 25 March 2019 meeting and were signed by the Chairman.**

## **4 SCHOOLS FORUM ELECTIONS UPDATE**

Ms A Kenward, Committee Assistant, confirmed that the nominations were open for the following spaces due to members having reached the end of their three year term or changing roles:

- Maintained Primary (Combined) x 3
- Academy Secondary x1
- Maintained Secondary x1
- Maintained Primary (junior) x1

There were also spaces not filled at the time of the previous election which were being promoted again:

- PRU (either maintained or academy)
- Maintained Special
- Academy Special

The nomination period would run from 10 June to 25 June. The election had been promoted in Schools Bulletin and Governor Times and by a direct email to relevant head teachers. Ms Kenward encouraged members of the forum to promote roles to fellow

head teachers and governors.

There was discussion again on how best to ensure equal representation of selective and non-selective schools. It was agreed this was not a problem within the current membership. As the constitution was on the forward plan for the October meeting it was agreed the review would consider how this could be included, with proposals to be taken to the next meeting of the Schools Forum Funding Group.

**ACTIONS: Ms Williams/Ms Kenward**

## **5 SCHOOLS FORUM FUNDING GROUP UPDATE**

Mr K Patrick, Chairman of the Schools Forum Funding Group (SFFG) confirmed the following was discussed at the 22 May meeting:

- The Outturn and DSG Balance and SEN update reports were reviewed and SFFG members had asked for additional information to be included for the School Forum meeting.
- There was discussion around how schools with surplus and deficit budgets were being supported by the County Council.

There was a brief discussion on the closed nature of the SFFG. It was confirmed that the meeting was closed/confidential by default but that the information taken to the meeting may not always be confidential.

**RESOLVED: Members of the forum NOTED the update.**

## **6 OUTTURN 2018-19 AND DSG BALANCE**

Ms J Try, Senior Accountant, BCC, asked the forum to agree the proposal set out in table 4.1 of the report circulated with the agenda.

The following points were discussed as a result of questions from members of the forum

- Mr D Hood, Chair of the Contingency Subgroup, proposed the £300,000 of de-delegation funding to be returned was money that had previously been paid in by schools. The monies would be returned on a per pupil basis.
- The DSG reserves were now significantly reduced. There was a concern among members of the forum that by continuing to allocate so much to high needs there would be no safety net for unseen circumstances. Ms Try confirmed the figures in the report covered the total amount available in reserve.
- Ms Try confirmed that in the event of a High Needs budget underspends the monies allocated from this reserve would be returned to the same.
- Ms Williams explained that initial High Needs spending estimate for 2020-21 were being based on 2019-20 figures. This assumed that numbers of young people with additional needs would continue to grow but that cost savings from new strategies would start to take effect.
- Members of the forum continued to be concerned about High Needs spending. A revised update on spending would be presented at the October forum meeting.

| Proposed Use of Reserves   |  |  |  |                  |
|--|--|--|--|------------------|
| Mandeville school - deficit write off                            |  |  |  | 500,000          |
| Early Years - changes in grant funding                           |  |  |  | 700,000          |
| Dedelegation including £300k refund to schools (see table below) |  |  |  | 717,511          |
| High Needs funding for 2019-20                                   |  |  |  | 1,021,694        |
| <b>Total Reserves</b>  |  |  |  | <b>2,939,205</b> |

**RESOLVED: Members of the forum voted unanimously to AGREE the use of reserved outlined in table 4.1 of the report (shown above).**

## **7 SEN QUARTERLY UPDATE**

Ms S Callaghan, Service Director for Education, BCC, gave a review of the report circulated with the agenda.

Ms Callaghan highlighted the following:

- The percentage of out of county placements had remained at 17% despite significant increases in demand for autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), +93%, and special emotional mental health (SEMH), +40%. This reflected the work done to support students within mainstream schools and to reduce out of county placements.
- External independent placements made up 7% of all placements but 21% of total costs.
- There would always be occasions where more expensive, independent placements were necessary to best meet the child's needs. However early intervention could help reduce the level of intervention later.

Ms H Slinn, Head of Integrated SEND, introduced herself to the forum for the first time. Ms Slinn highlighted the following:

- The current cost of high cost placements by need could be found on page 59 of the agenda pack. As need was increasing Ms Callaghan felt these figures would be the best way to judge the impact of cost savings on a by placement basis.
- BCC needed to ensure they made the best use of the 12 special schools they had within the county as well as supporting their mainstream schools to take SEN pupils where appropriate. Ms Slinn mentioned a new ASD toolkit, a dedicated clinical officer and the recent ASD conference as ways to take forward.
- Any changes must place the needs of young people first. It was hoped that by developing a standardised cost for placements, through the banding system now being developed, BCC would be in the best position to understand and challenge provider costs.
- Ms Callaghan added it was not possible to take pupils out of existing placements without proper consultation and discussion particularly with parents and could impact on initial cost savings. Part of bringing in new placements would be working with parents at an early stage.

The following was discussed as a result of questions from members of the forum:

- Ms Williams, Head of Finance, Childrens, BCC, confirmed it was possible to display details of numbers of placement by year groups. Members of the forum felt this would allow them to see upcoming trends and could show the impact of early intervention if pupils did not move into long term high cost placements.
- Ms Callaghan stated that the KPI's in the report were focused on finance to reflect the forums interest in how the additional funds they allocated were spent. Ms Callaghan explained her officers had access to a full data dashboard for reporting. When looking at outcomes indicators such as independent living, employability and the voice of the child were considered with oversight in these areas being taken to relevant groups rather than to the Schools Forum.
- Ms Slinn explained that the new Area Team Managers would use an annual review process to look at outcomes for children. Ms Slinn felt this would be an improvement to how reviews had previously been managed.
- Ms Williams and Ms Try would review the KPIs report to the forum and would take further details to Mr K Patrick, Chairman of the Schools Forum Funding Group.

**ACTION: Ms Williams/Ms Try**

- Ms Williams stated that the Government had called for evidence on High Needs spend. This was an [open consultation](#) and schools were encouraged to respond. BCC is also a member of the F40 group which is lobbying to secure additional funding. Ms Williams explained there £1.3m had been made available for 19/20 but it was not yet clear if this would be included in the baseline for future years.
- Ms Callaghan confirmed that in June 2019 several new members of staff with experience of a range of approaches from working different authorities had been appointed. It was hoped their experience would help Buckinghamshire with a fresh approach to high needs.

**RESOLVED: Members of the forum NOTED the update.**

## **8 MAINTAINED SCHOOLS REVENUE BALANCES 2018-19**

Ms J Try, Senior Accountant, BCC, gave an overview of the report circulated with the agenda.

Ms Try highlighted the following:

- Appendix 1 showed schools with a surplus balance with the report giving narrative for each school. In September 2018 the forum had voted not to institute a claw back mechanism. However if there was reason to believe a large surplus was being maintained without a specific goal in mind officers would challenge this.
- Appendix 2 showed schools with a deficit balance and the report outlined the support given which varied due to factors such as amount of debt and the level of expertise within the school.
- There was now a larger team at BCC who could offer support to schools with both surplus and deficit budgets.

As a result of questions from members of the forum the following points were discussed:

- Lists were of maintained schools only. Academies were required to publish their own figures but there was not a way of collating the information in one place.
- Officers were waiting on all schools to complete their three year budget forecast and hoped to bring a projected High Needs spending budget based on this to the October 2019. Ms Try explained that that schools showing an in year deficit at that stage would be challenged. Further details would be brought to a future meeting.

**ACTION: Ms Williams**

- Ms Williams confirmed her team worked with the schools commissioning team to look ahead at the changing population. While high needs and Ofsted presented challenges she felt that unexpectedly high or low cohorts seemed to be the biggest areas causing budget monitoring concerns.

**RESOLVED: Members of the forum NOTED the update.**

## **9 UPDATE FROM CONTINGENCY GROUP**

Mr D Hood, Chairman of the Contingency Sub Group referred to the report circulated to the report

Members of the forum voted on the recommendations

**“ that £300,000 of the reserve is refunded back to schools on a per pupil basis”**

**RESOLVED : Members of the forum voted unanimously in support of the recommendation.**

## **10 MATTERS ARISING**

### **Healthy pupil funding**

Ms E Williams, Head of Finance, Children’s Services, BCC, gave an update on the Health Pupil funding:

- The funding had been available to academies but via SIF. The healthy pupil funding Ms Williams was updating the forum on, related to maintained schools only.
- There were still some monies to be allocated with several possible projects identified. There were no controls in place that said monies must be spent by the end of 2019.
- An annual report would be submitted to the Department for Education in the autumn as part of the reporting on maintenance spend.
- There were concerns among forum members about the allocation of funds and how they were prioritised. Ms Williams would share the list of schools via Schools Bulletin.

**ACTION: Ms Williams**

**RESOLVED: members of the forum NOTED the update.**

## **Changes to mileage rates**

**RESOLVED: members of the forum NOTED the update.**

### **The Chairman**

The meeting was the last of the current Chairman Mr A Rosen. Members of the forum thanked the Mr Rosen for his work as chairman and as a member of the forum and wished him well for his retirement.

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

15 October 2019, 1.30pm  
Green Park, Aston Clinton

**CHAIRMAN**