

Minutes

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON TUESDAY 21 JANUARY 2020 IN MEZZ 3, NEW COUNTY OFFICES, COMMENCING AT 1.30 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.30 PM

PRESENT

| | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Headteachers | Mr K Patrick (Chairman) | Chiltern Hills - Secondary Academy | |
| | Ms K Tamlyn (Vice-Chairman) | Cheddington Combined School - Primary (Combined) Maintained | |
| | Ms J Cochrane | Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School - Secondary Academy | |
| | Ms P Coppins | Manor Farm Community Infant School - Primary (Infant) Maintained | |
| | Ms J Freeman | King's Wood School - Primary (Combined) Maintained | |
| | Mr D Hood | Cressex Community School - Secondary Maintained | |
| | Mrs J Male | Alfriston School - Special Academy | |
| | Mrs D Rutley | Aspire - PRU | |
| | Mr S Sneesby | Kite Ridge School - Special Maintained | |
| | Ms S Skinner | Bowerdean & Henry Allen Nursery Schools - Nursery Maintained | |
| | Ms E Stewart | Stoke Mandeville Combined School - Primary (Combined) Maintained | |
| | Governors | Mrs G Bull | Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School - Secondary Academy |
| | | Mr R Page | Chalfont Community College - Secondary Academy |
| | | Dr K Simmons | Cressex Community School - Secondary Maintained |
| Representative | Ms C Glasgow | NASUWT - Trade Union | |
| | Ms N Lovegrove | The Village Pre-School (Tylers Green) Early Years | |
| | Ms S Stephens | National Education Union - Trade Union | |
| | Ms F Smalley | The Sandcastle Nursey- Early Years | |

In Attendance

Officers

Ms S Bayliss, Mr J Carter, Mr G Drawmer, Ms H Slinn, Ms J Try,
Ms E Williams, Ms C Beevers and Ms J Cassey

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from:

Ms A Cranmer (Bucks County Council), Mr H Beveridge (Long Crendon School), Ms J Antrobus (Newton School), Ms J Divers (Turnfurlong School), Ms S Fahey (Brindley House School), Mr A Wanford (Green Ridge Academy) and Mr B Taylor (Chiltern wood School). Mr N Strain (Stony Dean School) attended as a representative for Mr B Taylor.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman declared an interest in item 7; the school was in receipt of the Growth Fund.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

RESOLVED: The minutes from the meeting held on 03 December 2019 were **AGREED** as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

RESOLVED: The actions from the meeting held on 03 December 2019 were **AGREED** as completed or on the current agenda.

4 SCHOOLS FORUM FUNDING GROUP UPDATE

Mr K Patrick, Chairman of the Schools Forum, wanted to thank the members of the SFFG for all their efforts at the last meeting with a lot to cover and a limited amount of time.

Mr S Sneesby, Vice- Chairman of the Schools Forum Funding Group SFFG gave an overview of the discussions from the meeting held on 08 January 2020.

The action points from the SFFG held on 08 January 2020 would be appended to the minutes.

ACTION: Ms C Beevers

5 BUDGET MONITORING

Ms J Try, Finance Business Partner (Schools) BCC, gave an overview of the report provided. The following points were raised in discussion:

- The Chairman, shared that there were concerns raised by members of the SFFG around the fact there was not enough money in the pot and that the overspend

was going to be much higher than initially expected. Officers shared that this had been recognised by Ms R Shimmin, Chief Executive, BCC and Mr M Tett, Leader of the Council. These concerns and the budget would be closely monitored and updates made appropriately.

- Ms K Tamlyn, Chairman of the SFFG, raised the fact that some of the overspend was down to clearing the backlog of Education Health Care Plans (EHCP's). There was an expected cost increase to this but would not be an ongoing increase moving forward.
- It was confirmed that at the meeting in March the forum would discuss the £7m additional High Needs Allocation for 2020-2021. The discussion would include; what would happen if the funds were not received again and what the contingency plan would be. It was recognised that the assumptions around the extra monies were difficult as there were no confirmations from the DfE that this would be on-going funding.
- It was confirmed there was currently no backlog of EHCP's in Bucks.
- It was noted at the Chesham liaison group and other liaison group meetings that the Speech and Language therapy (SALT) were keen to get into schools and schools were looking to appoint people to run the intervention. An offline conversation to take place between the Chairman and Ms H Slinn, to follow up on liaison group feedback.

ACTION: Chairman/Ms H Slinn

- A concern was raised that money that maintained schools had agreed to return to the Local Authority for specific purposes through the de-delegation process was being seen as part of the "reserves" pot. It was felt these funds should be ring-fenced and transparently only spent on the purposes for which it was intended. There would be no risk of it being used to bail out any other overspent budget. It was agreed an update would be provided at the March meeting.

ACTION: Ms J Try

- It was noted that induction for forum members to be reviewed to ensure adequate training and understanding was gained. Officers advised that induction/training took place at the October meeting.

RESOLVED: The Schools Forum resolved to:

- 1.1- NOTE the forecast outturn (year-end) position of £3.43m, as set out in the report**
- 1.2- AGREE the use of funds as set out in 6.2 above as part of the 2020-21 DSG reserve recovery plan.**
- 1.3- AGREE that budget proposals for 2020-21 must include provision to address the projected deficit in the DSG reserve.**
- 1.4- AGREE that a longer term recovery plan for the DSG reserve (including levels for ear-marked reserves) is brought back to the March Schools Forum meeting.**

6 SCHOOLS BUDGET PROPOSALS 2020-21

Ms E Williams, Head of Finance, Children's Services, gave an overview of the report provided. The following points were raised in discussion:

- It was asked if there was a mainstream post 16 solution to placements in colleges – and whether this could be looked at.
- It was stated that if a 20% reduction was needed in the future for central school services block for reduction in Historic commitments and that it could be funded from one of the 4 blocks. JT advised that the DfE will allow transfers between blocks but, because of the pressures on the High Needs Block, this was not a solution that was available for BCC.
- On the presentation summary section D, the 2 year old rate should state £5.50.
- It was asked if the timings of the Early Year Forum meetings could be adjusted to fit in with Schools Forum.

ACTION: Early Years Forum Reps

RESOLVED: The Schools Forum resolved to:

NOTE the information on each of the DSG funding blocks and to take the information in to account when considering the Schools Budget Proposals Decision Paper.

7 SCHOOLS BUDGET PROPOSALS 2020-21- DECISION PAPER

Ms E Williams, Head of Finance, Children's Services, gave an overview of the decisions paper. There were no further points raised in discussion.

RESOLVED: The Schools Forum resolved to:

AGREE the proposals summarised in the attached table.

8 APPEALS FUNDING

Ms J Try, Finance Business Partner (Schools) BCC, gave an overview of the report provided. The following points were raised in discussion:

- Observation made in SFFG meeting- some schools had been paying for different levels of appeal. It was advised in theory the process of these should be the same, but in practice they were not due to complexity. It was asked if the detail could be fed back to the forum.

ACTION: Ms J Try

- It was noted that whatever was decided that it could cause anxiety to the schools that it would affect.
- It was asked if the legislation allowed schools to charge parents. It was advised

the legislation did not allow for that.

- It was asked what would happen if a decision was not made at the meeting. It was advised that currently Buckinghamshire County Council were not compliant Schools were aware they had to pay for appeals; the issue was more around the additional cost part way through the financial year.

RESOLVED: The Schools Forum resolved to:

NOTE the information in the report and in the appendices, and to AGREE that a paper needed to go out to all schools to make them aware of the charges. BASH and PEB needed to be involved and feedback from them.

It was proposed that the following were needed:

- Breakdown of costs, average times for each.
- Were there average costs that could be applied.
- To be able to differentiate between Primary. Secondary infant class sizes
- A single level of charging for grammar.
- The Contingency Group could consider meeting costs for maintained schools in deficit if this was a significant unforeseen costs.

9 GROWTH FUND

Ms J Try, Finance Business Partner (Schools) BCC, gave an overview of the report provided. The following points were raised in discussion:

- It was stated that of the start-up fund, the majority of the amount given was for Headteachers salaries (approx. 2 terms)
- It was advised the Growth Fund needed to support the growth as what was seen as a need. Members of the forum requested an up to date understanding of where that need was for Bucks.

RESOLVED: The Schools Forum resolved, subject to DfE approval of the proposed criteria, to:

- 1.1- NOTE the information set out in the paper and in the appendix.**
- 1.2- AGREE from April 2020, where it has been agreed with a school to increase a school's PAN on a permanent basis, this should be reflected in an adjustment to the pupil numbers via the APT, with funding through all of the per pupil formula factors, as in 3.3. above.**
- 1.3- AGREE from April 2020, where it is a temporary increase in pupil numbers or it is unclear as to exactly where growth is needed, this is dealt with outside of the schools funding formula as a growth fund project. Funding will reflect all funding factors in line with permanent expansions, as in 3.4 above.**

- 1.4- **AGREE to maintain the current practice with regard to supporting additional classes needed to meet the infant class size as in 4.1 above.**
- 1.5- **AGREE from April 2020, Start-up funding for new schools will be at DFE's Growth Factor Lump Sum rate for Primary schools and twice the DFE's Growth Factor Lump Sum rate for Secondary schools, as in 5.3 above.**
- 1.6- **AGREE to maintain the current practice for variations to pupils for new schools, with pupil numbers included in the APT at 30 pupils per class for each 'new' year group, as in 5.4 above.**
- 1.7- **AGREE from April 2020, Diseconomies Funding for new schools will be based on a per pupil arrangement, with guaranteed funding of all open year groups at 27 pupils per class, as in 5.5 above.**
- 1.8- **AGREE that the growth fund methodology be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the budget setting process.**

10 UNITARY UPDATE

Mr G Drawmer, Head of Achievement and Learning, BCC, gave a verbal update on unitary. The following points were raised in discussion:

- The majority of senior appointments within the new Buckinghamshire Council had been made.
- A member of staff that would TUPE over would be automatically enrolled onto the pension scheme. If staff wished to opt-out they would need to do this once enrolled.
- Mr Drawmer advised he would ensure any updates regarding branding was shared with schools.

RESOLVED: The forum NOTED the update.

11 FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED: The forum NOTED the forward plan.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of AOB

13 DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

24 March 2020, 1.30pm-16.00pm.
Knight Hall, Green Park.

CHAIRMAN

Schools Forum Funding Group

Action Notes for meeting held on 08 January 2020

| Agenda item number | Action | To be completed by | Completion date |
|--------------------|--|--------------------|-----------------|
| 4 | Budget Monitoring | | |
| 4 | To rearrange layout of report to explain reason for overspend at the forefront of the report. | Ms J Try | SF Meeting |
| 4 | To analyse the data further to establish where the bulk of the cost was by school year for the ECHP catch up. | Ms J Try | SF Meeting |
| 4 | To add some pupil place numbers for special schools- P9. | Ms J Try | SF Meeting |
| 4 | To add capacity into item 4. | Ms H Slinn | SF Meeting |
| 4 | To add when the Impower project will be completed and the outcomes and savings expected. | Ms E Williams | SF Meeting |
| 4 | To add a statement/highlight from the table that the £2.9 million overspend was also transferred over. | Ms J Try | SF Meeting |
| 4 | To add an acknowledgement in place to strengthen the point 5.4 around Bucks not wanting to run in a surplus and how this is going to be done | Ms J Try | SF Meeting |
| 4 | To reiterate in point 5.2, the date it took place. | Ms J Try | SF Meeting |
| 4 | To strengthen and add structure to the wording of the recommendation. | Ms J Try | SF Meeting |

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| 5 | Schools Budget Proposals 2020-21 | | |
| 5 | To correct the monetary amount in point 2.1 | Ms J Try | SF Meeting |
| 5 | To remove table showing last year's figures. | Ms J Try | SF Meeting |
| 5 | To note for the School's Forum for the 5 schools being protected include the number of pupils and for the LA to discuss this with individual schools. | Ms J Try | SF Meeting |
| 5 | To reword the text around the number of EHCP's | Ms E Williams | SF Meeting |
| 5 | To add further detail in around tribunals in table 5 Risks, and wording e.g. reduce rate of EHCP, and add the word 'college' to 'reduce rate in post 16 placements' | Ms E Williams | SF Meeting |
| 5 | To add a cumulative row to table 4, section C. and renumber tables add to 5.3 | Ms J Try | SF Meeting |

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| | 'where the LA is the admissions authority'. Strengthen the recommendations | | |
| 5 | On appendix 6, change wording to state CERA is being used to pay off deficit. | Ms J Try | SF Meeting |
| 5 | To add to the recommendation, to be added from point 6.9. | Ms J Try | SF Meeting |

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| 6 | Schools Budget Proposals 2020-21- Decision Paper | | |
| 6 | To add the page number in the proposal block so members can link back to the paper. | Ms E Williams | SF Meeting |

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| 7 | Admission Appeals | | |
| 7 | To change the wording around maintained schools and foundation schools. | Ms J Try | SF Meeting |
| 7 | To work on an external piece of work as to where foundation schools fit around the maintained schools and where this fits around charging. | Ms J Try | Offline with Mr D Hood |
| 7 | To remove benchmarking table in appendix 1 | Ms J Try | SF Meeting |
| 7 | To differentiate the difference between primary and secondary appeals costs | Ms J Try | ASAP |
| 7 | To add in the detail from the legislation on admission appeals. | Ms J Try | SF Meeting |

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| 8 | Growth Fund | | |
| 8 | To add number of years to secondary diseconomies funding | Ms J Try | SF Meeting |
| 8 | To add to recommendations to review and reflect. | Ms J Try | SF Meeting |