



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **SCHOOLS FORUM** will be held at the Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on **WEDNESDAY 19 OCTOBER 2016 AT 9.30 AM**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Couldrick'.

Andy Couldrick
Chief Executive
Published on 11 October 2016

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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our Vision

A great place to live, an even better place to do business

Our Priorities

Improve educational attainment and focus on every child achieving their potential

Invest in regenerating towns and villages, support social and economic prosperity, whilst encouraging business growth

Ensure strong sustainable communities that are vibrant and supported by well designed development

Tackle traffic congestion in specific areas of the Borough

Improve the customer experience when accessing Council services

The Underpinning Principles

Offer excellent value for your Council Tax

Provide affordable homes

Look after the vulnerable

Improve health, wellbeing and quality of life

Maintain and improve the waste collection, recycling and fuel efficiency

Deliver quality in all that we do

MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM

Schools Representatives

Paul Miller	Governor - St Crispins - Chairman
John Bayes	Governor - Foundry College - Vice-Chairman
Ian Head	Governor – Aldryngton Primary
Helen Ball	Primary Head - Polehampton Infant
Ali Brown	Primary Head - Nine Mile Ride Primary
Sally Hunter	Primary Head - Wescott Infant
Brian Prebble	Primary Head - Rivermead Primary
Elaine Stewart	Primary Head - Aldryngton Primary
Mandy Turner	Primary Head - Shinfield Infant
Sylvia Allen	School Business Manager - Hawkedon Primary
Julia Mead	School Business Manager - St Sebastian's CE Primary
Carol Simpson	School Business Manager - Colleton Primary
Ginny Rhodes	Secondary Head - St Crispins
Derren Gray	Academy Headteacher - The Piggott School
Janet Perry	Academy Business Manager - The Holt School
Mary Davies	Academy Head - Maiden Erlegh School
Kerrie Clifford	Maintained Nursery Acting Headteacher
Liz Meek	Special School Head - Addington School
Vacancy	Special School Head

Non School Representatives

Vacancy	Roman Catholic Diocese
Anne Andrews	Oxford Diocese
Richard Dolinski	Wokingham Borough Council Representative
James Taylor	Wokingham and Bracknell College
Mary Parker	Early Years Representative
Gail Prewett	Early Years Representative

Observers

Funding Reform Team	Education Funding Agency, Maintained Schools Division
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ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
6		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.	
7		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the meetings held on 13 July 2016 and 21 September 2016.	5 - 14
8		DECLARATION OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest.	
9		REVENUE MONITORING To receive and consider a report outlining the current financial position.	To Follow

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| 10 | 2017/18 FINANCIAL PRESSURES
To receive and consider a report outlining the 2017/18 financial pressures. | To Follow |
| 11 | FORWARD PROGRAMME
To consider the Forum's work programme for the remainder of the municipal year. | To Follow |

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent

A Supplementary Agenda will be issued by the Chief Executive if there are any other items to consider under this heading.

CONTACT OFFICER

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SCHOOLS FORUM
HELD ON 13 JULY 2016 FROM 9.30 AM TO 10.40 AM**

Schools Representatives

Helen Ball	Primary Head - Polehampton Infant
Ali Brown	Primary Head - Nine Mile Ride Primary
Brian Prebble	Primary Head - Rivermead Primary
Mandy Turner	Primary Head - Shinfield Infant
Julia Mead	School Business Manager - St Sebastian's CE Primary
Carol Simpson	School Business Manager - Colleton Primary
Mary Rome	Pupil Referral Unit - Foundry College Headteacher
Ginny Rhodes	Secondary Head - St Crispins
Janet Perry	Academy Business Manager - The Holt School
Mary Davies	Maiden Erlegh Academy
John Bayes	Governor - Foundry College - Chairman
Paul Miller	Governor - St Crispins - Vice-Chair
Ian Head	Governor - Aldryngton Primary

Non School Representatives

Anne Andrews	Oxford Diocese
James Taylor	Wokingham and Bracknell College
Richard Dolinski	Wokingham Borough Council Representative

Also Present

Luciane Bowker, Democratic Services Officer
Donna Munday, Schools Finance Manager
John Ogden, Head of Finance

Paul Miller, Vice-Chairman informed that he would be chairing the meeting at John Bayes' request. John had undergone a medical procedure and preferred not to chair the meeting on this occasion.

80 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Charlotte Wilkinson, Kerry Clifford, Liz Meek, Elaine Stewart and Alan Stubbersfield.

81 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 May 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising

Item 75 – Donna Munday, Schools Finance Manager explained that a new traded services brochure would come out in December which would include an option for academies to buy into the scheme for payment for supply of maternity cover.

Item 77 – a report about the Tribunals process was listed further on in the agenda. The Forum had received an update report which had been circulated previously with the minutes.

Item 78 – Donna explained that no change to the scheme for financing schools was necessary. This was because Graham Ebers, WBC Director of Finance and Resources had agreed a mechanism by which schools could obtain loans from WBC, provided they met a certain criteria.

82 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

83 REVENUE MONITORING

Donna Munday, Schools Finance Manager presented the Revenue Monitoring report which was set out on agenda pages 11 -14.

The report provided details of the outturn position on the schools budget funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), including Education Funding Agency (EFA), Pupil Premium Grant and Universal Infant Free School Meal grant as at the end of May 2016.

Donna reminded members that the Forum had requested a revised down end of year position of (£500k) surplus. Donna stated that for the purposes of monitoring and being able to reconcile to the s251 statement, this monitoring report would start from the initial (£838) position.

Donna explained that the pupil growth / infant class sizes deficit of £255 displayed in the report related to the increase in growth fund due to the additional pre-opening costs required by the new secondary school in Arborfield. Donna informed that this was the actual final pre-opening cost and it was not expected to change.

During the discussion of the item the following points were made:

- A question was raised about what benchmarking had taken place against the opening of a new secondary school and the running of a school. Donna explained that this was the first time the Local Authority had to open a new secondary school. In addition, this was an atypical site which already had a gym and a library. Donna stated that benchmarking against the running costs of a secondary school had been done;
- Ginny Rhodes expressed concern over the potential lack of expertise to negotiate the best deals for the school. Ginny also believed that there was unacceptable pressure in other local secondary schools as a result of the new school opening in September;
- Mary Davies stated that in her experience of opening a new school, the Trust would be working together with the Local Authority and providing central resources;
- The Forum was informed that Alan Stubbersfield was the project sponsor for the new school and he would be able to provide more information around the funding for the new school.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Alan Stubbersfield would be asked to give more details around the setting up of the new school in Arborfield;
- 2) The report be noted.

84 FIVE YEAR PLAN UPDATE

Paul Miller stood down as Chairman for this item only and John Bayes took the position of Chairman.

Donna explained that it had been agreed that the Forum would be presented a five year plan every year at its July meeting. The report set out on agenda pages 15-18 had been

revised since July 2015 and was as accurate as possible at this point in time. Donna emphasised that this could change should the new government decide to amend its policies. Donna stated that this plan reflected the impact of schools in the borough converting into academies over the next five years. More schools were expected to convert in the near future and this had an impact on the schools finance.

During the discussion of the item the following points were made:

- Paul Miller expressed great concern over the figures presented in the report and how different these were from the previous report. Paul emphasised that the difference was in the order of millions and he was seeking clarity as to how this numbers had been calculated;
- Donna explained that the schools' funding had reduced and the schools allocation had reduced whilst the costs facing schools had increased, also the academisation of schools had had a huge impact;
- Donna stated that although there was a variation in numbers, a healthy surplus was projected every year, and this was a better position than other local authorities;
- Donna offered to set up a task and finish group to analyse this plan or to have meetings with members to explain the figures. Not all members felt this would be beneficial, but some members agreed to contact Donna;
- Donna stated that the figures had been worked out on the assumption that the pupil funding would remain the same, but this was not certain;
- Donna explained that once all schools converted to academies, this plan would become redundant as the money would go directly to the schools;
- Members felt that there was a need to understand in more detail why there was such a variation from the plan last year and the plan this year;
- In response to a question John Ogden, Head of Finance stated that the finance team would be able investigate the variation internally and provide the assurance that the Forum was seeking;
- Members expected that an explanation around growth fund would be included in the finance team's investigation;
- Donna referred to the upcoming consultation and the expectation that growth fund would become formulaic, in which case actual historical spend would be used to determine funds received by the Local Authority. This could have an adverse impact on any Local Authority that was opening new schools at an increasing rapid rate;
- Donna explained that the timeframe for the new schools' places in Earley, Woodley and Shinfield to open had been brought forward to this September 2016 as per Executive approval earlier in the year. This was in response to the Local Authority's statutory duty to provide school places;
- Members agreed that it would be useful to have a breakdown of all schools opening in the borough;
- Donna stated that once more schools converted to academies, the local authority would not be in a position to support the remaining maintained schools and therefore those schools would be in practical terms forced into academy status.

RESOLVED That the analysis of the variation between the 2015 and 2016 Five Year Plan would be presented to the Forum via email.

85 FUTURE OF FORMULA FUNDING NATIONAL/ LOCAL AND DSG

Donna Munday stated that the Consultation had not yet taken place; it was anticipated that this would happen in the summer. Donna expected that the consultation would involve schools block, high needs block and early years.

Donna urged the Forum members to respond to the Consultation and to express their opinions. Donna reassured the Forum that briefing sessions would be organised and a paper would be presented to Forum before the final submission of the Consultation.

RESOLVED That the verbal update be noted.

86 MECHANISM FOR WORKING WITH TRIBUNALS

The Chairman, Paul Miller stated that the report contained in the agenda provided an overview of the process for working with Tribunals. Although this was useful information, there were no suggestions in the report of changes to improve the system as requested by the Forum at its last meeting.

John Bayes suggested that as this issue only affected a small number of schools, it might be more productive if only the schools concerned met with the finance team to discuss the possibilities around this issue. The results could then be fed back to Schools Forum for information. Members were in agreement with this suggestion.

RESOLVED That: The schools affected by financial losses as a result of SEN Tribunal processes would meet with Wokingham Borough Council's finance team to discuss a possible solution to alleviate the financial burden.

87 FORWARD PROGRAMME

The Forum considered and noted the Forward Programme of work and dates of future meetings as set out on Agenda page 33.

Members noted with concern that certain items agreed at its last meeting were not included in the forward programme. After discussion it was agreed that the following items be included in the forward programme, as well as the items already listed in the report:

19 October

- Foundry College
- Education out of schools / fees for independent special schools
- Impact of pupil movement in schools (based on the September headteachers' count)

14 December

- Impact of pupil movement in schools (based on the October census)

Members requested that in the future a note be included with the agenda highlighting items that were likely to need a vote at the meeting.

Janet Perry raised concern over the lagged double funding of pupils as a result of pupils taking up places at new schools, but still being included in other schools' lists. The Forum asked to Donna to investigate and report back at the next meeting.

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SCHOOLS FORUM
HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2016 FROM 9.35 AM TO 11.00 AM**

Schools Representatives

Ali Brown	Primary Head - Nine Mile Ride Primary
Brian Prebble	Primary Head - Rivermead Primary
Elaine Stewart	Primary Head - Aldryngton Primary
Sylvia Allen	School Business Manager - Hawkedon Primary
Julia Mead	School Business Manager - St Sebastian's CE Primary
Carol Simpson	School Business Manager - Colleton Primary
Liz Meek	Special School Head - Addington School
Derren Gray	Academy Headteacher - The Piggott School
Kerrie Clifford	Maintained Nursery Acting Headteacher
John Bayes	Governor - Foundry College - Chairman

Non School Representatives

Anne Andrews	Oxford Diocese
Richard Dolinski	Wokingham Borough Council Representative
Gail Prewett	Poperinghe Pre-School
Mary Parker	St Pauls Playgroup

Also Present

Yoke O'Brien, Schools Finance Manager
Luciane Bowker, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Alan Stubbersfield, Interim Head of Learning and Achievement
Alison Pugh, Early Years Team Manager
Stuart Milne, Early Years Funding Adviser

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Paul Miller was appointed Chairman of the Schools Forum for the 2016/2017 academic year in his absence.

2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

John Bayes was appointed Vice-Chairman for the 2016/2017 academic year.

In the absence of the Chairman the Vice-Chairman took the chair.

3 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Linda Orr, Mary Davies, Helen Ball, Paul Miller, James Taylor, Janet Perry, Ginny Rhodes, Ian Head, Maggie Seagrove and John Ogden.

4 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

5 WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL'S PROPOSED RESPONSE TO THE EARLY YEARS FUNDING CONSULTATION

Alan Stubbersfield, Interim Head of Learning and Achievement presented the report which contained Wokingham Borough Council's proposed response to the Early Years

Government consultation on funding. Alan went through the report highlighting the following points:

- Most questions in the consultation required 'yes' or 'no' answers, however Alan felt that some issues were too complex for a simple 'yes' or 'no' answer;
- The way that Early Years was funded was changing and the Government was seeking responses to the consultation by 22 September 2016;
- More clarity was needed as to how the future free entitlement to 30 hours for working families was going to be administered. The provision for Early Years would have to expand to meet demand. There would be changes to the local funding formulae; each local authority would have to distribute the funding to their providers. Alan predicted financial pressures in the system as a whole;
- Alan stated that it was not yet known how the new Early Years funding would impact Wokingham, therefore he advised caution;
- Alan pointed out that the Government consultation proposed to limit the size of supplements to 10% as well as limiting the type of supplement that could be used. The current supplements made up 18% of the total amount providers received so this was a significant reduction;
- Alan stated that it was important to incentivise providers to expand to meet the predicted demand of free 30 hours for working families. However, Wokingham was a high cost area and there may be a cost issue for providers considering increasing places;
- Alan reminded Members that Wokingham was historically low funded and urged caution with regards to expectations of increased funding. It was difficult to know what every Early Years providers would actually receive;
- Alison Pugh, Early Years Team Manager explained that a briefing with providers regarding this consultation and its proposals had already taken place.

Alan went through Appendix 1 which was a summary of the Early Years consultations and the challenges faced by Wokingham. The main points of discussion are listed below:

- Alan stated that in the past, when a universal base rate was first introduced, it had initially been thought to be advantageous for Wokingham; however this had proved not to be the case in practice;
- Wokingham had only one maintained nursery school;
- The numbers of new eligible families in September 2017 were not yet known;
- The Disability Living Allowance (DLA) did not equal Special Educational Needs (SEN); a child could have a low cost high incidence special educational need which required support but did not attract DLA;
- WBC did not currently passport monies from its High Needs Block (HNB) to 3 and 4 year olds unless the setting requested the money via the moderation panel.

Alan suggested the Forum analysed appendix 2 in detail, this contained the draft response to the consultation. The Forum went through each question, with some question being discussed in more details as listed below:

Question 9 – Should there be an early years national funding formula (to distribute money from Government to each local authority)?

- It was proposed to say 'yes' as it was understood that there would be a national formula in any case scenario.

Question 10 – Should a universal base rate be included in the early years national funding formula?

- Officers explained that this was a question of balance, a base rate would give predictability and supplements would give some flexibility;
- Alison was of the opinion that Wokingham would benefit from a high base rate due to the fact that deprivation in the Borough was very low;
- The figures in Wokingham were based on KS1 and KS2 eligibility to free school meals; however at this point the figures were illustrative;
- There would be less flexibility with the proposal to reduce supplements from 18% to 10%;
- Yoke O'Brien, Schools Finance Manager was of the opinion that an early years national funding formula was not necessarily going to benefit Wokingham. There was no indication that Wokingham would receive more money with an early years national funding formula as the proposed national deprivation rate was 8% whilst Wokingham only attracted 5.4% for deprivation also, it was not known how many three and four year olds would be entitled to the 1.5% EAL or qualify for the 1%DLA;
- John Bayes pointed out that the deprivation fund worked against Wokingham because Wokingham had the lowest take up of free school meals in the country;
- Councillor Dolinski asked that a robust explanation be included with this answer if possible;
- There was uncertainty around this question, but it was agreed to keep to the proposed answer of 'yes'.

Question 11 – Should an additional needs factor be included in the early years national funding formula?

- The proposed answer was 'yes' due to costs to support children with additional needs being higher per funded hour than for children without additional needs.

Question 18 – Do you think that 95% is the correct minimum proportion of the money that should be passed from local authorities to providers?

- It was agreed to keep to the proposed answer 'yes';
- In response to a question Stuart Milne, Early Years Funding Adviser stated that if the full amount was paid, as a rough calculation this equated to £450K maximum. The £450K stated was based on an illustrative figure provided by the Government and referred to the top slice of 5%;
- Alan pointed out that there would be funding top slicing next year and decisions would have to be made in relation to funding.

Question 20 – Should local authorities be required to give the same universal hourly base rate to all childcare providers in their area?

- Carol Simpson pointed out that some settings employed a qualified teacher which incurred in a significantly higher cost;
- Stuart asked Members to bear in mind the potential reduced flexibility with supplements;
- Stuart stated that the Government's cost review indicated there were no significant differences in costs between schools and nurseries, however costs related to schools and nurseries were different, for example teacher costs were high but rent/ premises costs were far lower;
- Officers reminded Members that there was a requirement to offer 30 hours of childcare for working parents so providers had to be encouraged to expand;

- Kerry Clifford stated that it would be unjust to pay the same amount to all providers due to the fact that some settings employed a teacher and others did not;
- Yoke stated that at the moment there were six different supplements, but going forward there would be only one compulsory supplement of deprivation;
- After much discussion it was agreed to change the proposed answer to 'no' with a strong explanatory comment.

Question 25 – if you agree that efficiency (efficient business practices that provide excellent value for money) should be included in the set of supplements, do you have a suggestion of how should be designed.

- There was no overall consensus as to whether this should be 'yes' or 'no'
- John Bayes suggested that inefficient providers perhaps should be given more funding in order to help them to improve;
- It was agreed to keep to the proposed answer of 'do not agree' with a comment attached to it.

Question 26 – if you agree the delivery of the additional 15 hours of free childcare should be included in the set of supplements, do you have a suggestion of how should it be designed.

- Members were informed that providers often sold more than 15 hours a week at a higher rate, it was necessary to find a way to compensate them in some way;
- Stuart stated that the market rate for wrap around care cost more than what was currently paid for 15 hours;
- Stuart suggested that if providers were able to offer 30 hours a week they should be paid more per hour as a way of compensation;
- Yoke stated that financial advice had always been not to stretch the offer as it led to confusion and loss of funding as data collection was not robust and reliable when the termly census was collected for stretch offers, which in turn affected the funding for three and four year olds;
- Kerry questioned the sufficiency of places and stated that providers would have to be encouraged to provide the 30 hours the Government had asked for;
- Stuart stated that it was not yet known how the 30 hours would be delivered, these could for example extend to all year care;
- Alan stated that further discussions on this issue would be necessary to decide the best way forward.

Question 29 – Should there be a Disability Access Fund to support disabled children to access their free entitlement?

- The proposed answer of 'yes' was agreed as this would possibly take the pressure off of the inclusion fund.

Question 33 – What extent do you agree that a lack of clarity on how parents / childcare providers can access financial support results in children with special educational needs not receiving appropriate support?

- All Members representing the Early Years Forum were in agreement that this was not an issue in Wokingham at the moment.

Question 39 – To what extent do you agree with the transition approach proposed for the Early Years National Funding Formula (money distributed from Government to local authorities)?

- Members agreed with the proposed answer, with a view to receive any potential increased funding as soon as possible.

Question 41 – To what extent do you agree that our proposals on the high pass-through of funding from local authorities to childcare providers makes the existing Minimum Funding Guarantee for the early years unnecessary?

- Alan pointed out that Wokingham only had one maintained nursery and this protection only affected maintained nurseries;
- The proposed answer to ‘agree’ was accepted by the Forum.

Question 42 – To what extent do you agree with the transition approach proposed for introducing the universal base rate for all providers in a local authority area?

- Forum decided to change the proposed answer to ‘no’ as it wished to protect nursery schools.

The Forum asked that Officers include explanations and comments to all answers as much as possible. Alison and Stuart would meet and go through the changes resulting from this meeting and the response would be submitted on 22 September 2016.

John Bayes reminded Members that they could also submit responses individually.

John Bayes wished to thank Donna Munday for her contribution to Schools Forum over the years. Donna had now moved into a new role and Yoke O’Brien was the new Schools Finance Manager.

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