

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SCHOOLS FORUM
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14 JANUARY 2015 FROM 9.15AM TO 12.40PM
This meeting was adjourned to be reconvened at
12.00noon on Thursday 22 January 2015**

Present:- .

WBC Member: *Ian Pittock*

Schools Members:

Primary Headteachers: *Brian Prebble, Ali Brown, Louisa Gurney, Sally Hunter, Christine Hyatt, and Elaine Stewart*
(only four votes allowed)

Secondary Headteachers: *Ann Keane-Mayer, Ginny Rhodes,*

Special Schools: – *Liz Meek, Dominic Geraghty (only one vote allowed)*

Pupil Referral Unit:– *Mary Rome*

Maintained Nursery Headteacher: *Phil Armstrong*

Governors: *John Bayes (Chairman), Nick Dyer (Vice Chairman), Wazir Khan, Paul Miller, Mike Hutchinson*

Academies Members: *Derren Grey, Janet Perry*

WBC Children's Services: *Matt Marsden*

Oxford Diocese:

Roman Catholic Diocese:

Early Years Forum: *Charlotte Wilkinson,*
(only one vote allowed)

Observers:

Also present:-

Donna Munday, Schools Finance Manager

Tricia Harcourt, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Alan Stubbersfield, Interim Head of Learning and Achievement, Children's Services

Alison Pugh, Early Years Team Manager (for Item 24)

PART I

23. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 17 December 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

24. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Clare Sheppard

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In relation to Item 24, Early years Funding – Free Entitlement, it was noted that Charlotte Wilkinson was the owner of an early years provider.

26. EARLY YEARS FUNDING – FREE ENTITLEMENT REVIEW

The Forum received and considered a report, set out on Agenda pages 5 and 6, detailing proposals to allocate funding adjustments and unallocated resources for Early Years.

Alison Pugh presented the report and highlighted that there has been no increase in the Early Years funding base rate for 3 years and the only way that providers can increase their funding is through the formula. Many PVI providers are concerned about how they are going to meet running costs, in light of increases in rent and particularly minimum wage issues, so a review of funding was requested. It was noted that an in year adjustment amount of £97,000 had been received and they are requesting that it be ring fenced for Early Years and distributed amongst all providers as a one off payment.

Donna Munday clarified, that there would be no more capital and trajectory funding; and that historically Early Years (EY) funding was based on the places provided, but now this has changed to participation funding.

Early Years representatives pointed out that:

- In the national context, settings are seriously considering not taking funded 2 year olds, because it is too expensive, and there is a limited desire to expand places;
- It is estimated that nationally there is an underfunding of £800 per child for EY education;
- It is critical that this funding goes to the EY providers, as the PVI settings don't get the extra funding that maintained nurseries get;
- Maintained nurseries have more statutory requirements;
- Some PVI settings are withdrawing or closing, and some are only taking funded placements;
- Settings are losing staff to neighbouring areas as they pay more because their base level funding is higher - eg it is £5/per hour/per child in Reading and only £3.11 in Wokingham;
- the quality of provision is reducing
- it is acknowledged that Early Years education is important because of the impact it has on later years
- the money was for EY provision and should not be held back. It is known that the £97k has been received and there would be settings would be outrage if it was not distributed;

During the discussion the following points were made:

- There could be a clawback of funding if participation does not match the estimate;
- Pupil Premium is being introduced for 3 year olds and is likely to be extended to 2 year olds;
- There is a level of unpredictability in EY funding, so the money should be for EY;
- Trajectory and capital funding that was given in 13/14 which covered places;
- Is it better to keep some of the adjustment amount to use in future to smooth out any funding changes, particularly because of the uncertainty about the number of 2year olds;
- Morally it should be spent on those children in the EY settings now; not held back;
- Officers are aware that our neighbouring authorities are considering reducing their base rate;
- In the new model of funding for participation, settings will get money for the number of children they have;

- Settings have to claim each term and are paid on the 11th week each term for 80% of the estimated numbers with 20%;
- If the £97k was distributed to all the EY providers, settings would get £1000 and child minders £250;
- The current underspend indicated in the budget includes the £97k, and there is still one term's pay out;
- Suggest give half now and review in March;
- Suggest it could be ring fenced and kept as a 'sustainability pot, to give additional funds to those settings that are struggling;
- If the whole amount was distributed, it would have to be made clear that it was a one off payment and could not be relied upon to fund ongoing running costs;
- Suggest the whole amount is distributed now to all providers, to be used to support the quality of provision, such as funding training or additional equipment. Providers should feedback on how the additional funds were used.

RESOLVED: That the in-year adjustment to the Early Years budget of £97,000 from 2013/14 be ring fenced and distributed to Early Years providers, to be used to e make a positive impact on the quality of provision for the children in settings, such as funding training or quality of provision, such as funding training or additional equipment. Providers

27. SCHOOLS BUDGET 2014/15 – FINANCIAL MONITORING

There had been no material movements from the last monitoring report made at the December meeting.

No papers had been circulated for the following Items

27. DRAFT 2015/16 SCHOOLS BUDGET

The Forum received a copy of a summary sheet circulated at the meeting. A detailed breakdown of the proposed second draft of the budget had not been circulated because the DfE had continued to make changes to the allocations up until the day before the meeting.

Alan Stubbersfield pointed out that the indications are that the budget for 2015/16 which maintained current levels of spending would lead to an end of year situation where there was only a very small surplus to be carried forward to help support the 2016/17 budget. The predicted carry forward of £1.3m from 2014/15 was necessary to allow the 2015/16 budget to stay in surplus. There would be further pressures on the 2015/16 budget, which have not yet been included in the draft, because of the requirement to fund the immediate needs for setting up the new schools in the Borough which are planned to open in September 2016 - two primary schools and one secondary.

The Forum was asked to suggest what they felt would be the best way to reduce the level of spending in 2015/16. Donna presented an electronic version of the second draft of the 2015/16 budget, with an alternative which included suggested savings. However because Forum members had not had to opportunity to study the suggestions and consult with their groups it was agreed that the meeting should be adjourned and to allow for copies of the suggested budgets, with different models showing the impact of suggested reductions be circulated by email several days before the meeting.

RESOLVED: that the meeting should be adjourned and reconvened to allow for suggested budget information for 2015/16 to be circulated. The reconvened meeting will be on Thursday 22 January 2015 at 12.00, at the Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham.

28. APPROVAL OF CARRY FORWARDS

This Item to be considered at the reconvened meeting.

29. FINAL PROFORMA SUBMISSION

This Item to be considered at the reconvened meeting.

30 . DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND FORWARD PROGRAMME.

This Item to be considered at the reconvened meeting.

These are the Minutes of a meeting of the Schools Forum

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