

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
SCHOOLS FORUM  
HELD ON 20 MAY 2015 FROM 1.00 PM TO 3.50 PM**  
Revised following the meeting on 15 July 2015

**Schools Representatives**

Phil Armstrong	Maintained Nursery Headteacher
Brian Prebble	Primary Head - Rivermead Primary
Elaine Stewart	Primary Head - Aldryngton Primary
Helen Ball	Primary Head – Polehampton Infant
Ginny Rhodes	Secondary Head - St Crispins
Ann Keane-Mayer	Secondary Head - Waingels College
Liz Meek	Special School Head - Addington School
Mary Rome	Pupil Referral Unit - Foundry College Headteacher
Derren Grey	Academy Headteacher - The Piggott School
Janet Perry	Academy Business Manager - The Holt School
John Bayes	Governor, Chairman
Nick Dyer	Governor Vice Chairman
Mike Hutchinson	Governor
Paul Miller	Governor

**Non School Representatives**

	Children's Services
Ian Pittock	Wokingham Borough Council
Clare Sheppard	Early Years Forum

**Also Present**

Tricia Harcourt, Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Donna Munday, Schools Finance Manager  
Alan Stubbersfield, Interim Head of Learning and Achievement  
Nicky Barlow, School HR Business Partner

**41 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted from Sally Hunter, Charlotte Wilkinson.

It was noted that Wazir Khan had resigned from the Forum as his term of office as a governor had come to an end.

The Chairman welcomed Helen Ball, Headteacher of Polehampton Infant School, who had been appointed to replace Christine Hyatt as the North Cluster representative.

**42 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 March 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the correction in Minute 34 on Agenda page 8, that the training could be provided through the National Association of School **Business** Managers.

**DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **44 CONTINUOUS SERVICE - REQUEST TO EXTEND PROVISIONS FOR TEACHERS**

The Forum received and considered a report set out on Agenda pages 13 and 14, detailing a request to allow the recognition of service accrued by teachers in academy/free schools continuous service provisions for teachers moving from academy schools to be extended for the calculation of sickness and maternity entitlements on their return to employment in a Local Authority School

Nicky Barlow presented the report and explained that currently under the provisions of the Burgundy Book, which sets out the Terms and Conditions of Service for Teachers, if a teacher moves from a local authority maintained school to work in an academy/free school, that service cannot be counted for the purpose of the calculation of aggregated or continuous service in relation to occupational maternity pay and sick pay. However support staff, whose terms and conditions of service are in the Green Book, already have this provision written in.

The request would bring teachers into line with support staff and would facilitate the movement of teachers between local authority and academy/free schools. The only impact on the central Schools Budget would be to refund schools for any additional maternity pay. Individual schools cover the cost of sick pay and normally have insurance cover.

Forum agreed that it was appropriate to bring teachers in line with the support staff and that any perceived barrier to recruitment should be removed.

**RESOLVED:** That the provisions of the Burgundy Book Terms and Conditions for Teachers be extended to include the recognition of service accrued by teachers in academy/free schools for the purposes of calculating sickness and maternity entitlements when they move from an academy/free school voluntarily to a Wokingham Borough maintained school.

#### **45 SCHOOLS BUDGET 2014/15 - FINANCIAL MONITORING - FINAL OUTTURN**

The Forum received and considered a report set out on Agenda pages 15 to 20, and with the table circulated separately, detailing the projected final outturn position for the 2014/15 Schools Budget as funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) , including Education Funding Agency funding and the Pupil Premium Grant.

Donna Munday presented the report which listed the main material movements from the approved budget set in July 2014 and from that forecast in March 2015. This shows a decrease in the projected outturn surplus from £1,466,000 in March to £982,000. The table circulated separately showing the S251 budget lines, included a commentary on the material movements; the main ones since the last report were:

- Line 1.3.1 - Pupil Referral Units -£127,000 surplus which is Foundry College's year end carry forward;
- Line 1.0.1 High Needs Block allocations – £865,000 of additional distribution and year end accruals;
- Additional grant notifications of £216,000

Donna clarified some of the comments.

Agenda pages 16 and 17 of the report set out the context in which the 2014/15 budget was set and an explanation of the material movements that had occurred throughout the year.

Officers indicated that a paper will be brought about the impact of the new schools for future years and the complexities of growth in pupil numbers. Also information looking at the last 5 years of spending will be prepared.

**RESOLVED:** that the final outturn Monitoring Report for the 2014/15 Schools Budget be noted.

Comments were made in relation to the 2015/16 budget which had been agreed at the March meeting, as follows:

- There were overspends on several lines in 2014/15, but the same amounts have been put in for 2015/16. Some lines had underspends, but the same amounts were put in for 2015/16;
- The 2015/16 budget was set on the information available at that time; we are still expecting another indicative allocation in July;
- How confident are you about the High Needs Block figures for 2015/16;
- Officers across Berkshire are moderating the different charges for courses;
- The lag in the post 16 funding was acknowledged;
- It is hoped that the Working Group will be able to look at the predictions in the 5 Year Plan

#### **46 SCHOOLS FORUM WORKING GROUP - DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Forum received and considered a report set out on Agenda pages 21 to 23, setting out suggested Terms of Reference for the proposed Schools Forum Working Group.

Matt Marsden introduced the report, which set out proposals for the setting up and activities for a small Working Group of Schools Forum Members, as suggested at the last meeting. The idea was for the Group to gain a better understanding of the budget setting process and be able to challenge assumptions. It would not make decisions, only feed back to the main Forum, possibly with recommendations.

One of the issues to be discussed was whether the current method of presenting the budget information needed changing.

During the discussion the following points were made:

- We could end up with a small group of people who understand more than others – a two tier system;
- the more detailed/different information should be provided for all Forum members;
- It would be helpful to have it documented to show how the budget decisions are made;
- The information provided in advance of meetings should be in a form that all can understand with more detailed commentary;
- Any group should be time limited;
- Some other local authorities prepare a booklet giving details of each budget line and the decisions made, which could be kept by Forum Members to refer to at all meetings. This would help Members to understand /remember what decisions have been made, which would stop a lot of questions about the activity on individual budget lines.
- It would be helpful to have information by the end of June, in good time for the 15 July meeting;
- Doubtful of the benefit of spending time preparing a 5 Year Plan;
- A training session for all would be useful.

Officers agreed that they would review the information provided on the 2015/16 and 2016/17 budgets; get that information out as early as possible and would prepare a draft of a 5 year Plan. They also indicated that they were proposing that additional meetings of Forum be programmed in November 2015 and February 2016 to allow more time for budget discussions.

**RESLOVED:** That:

- 1) a Working Group would not be formed;
- 2) detailed information on the 2015/16 and 2016/17 Schools Budgets would be provided for all Forum Members in good time for discussion at the next meeting on 15 July;
- 3) a first draft of a 5 Year Plan would be considered at the next meeting.

#### **47 EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS MODERATION PANEL - REVIEW**

The Forum received and considered a report set out on Agenda pages 25 to 29, giving details of the review of the operation of the Exception Needs Moderation Panel arrangements, after one year of operation

Kathy Roberts presented the report and explained that the review had looked at the current arrangements where the Panel meets once a term to consider requests from schools for financial support to address particular exceptional circumstances that cannot be funded from their special needs allocation. Currently requests and supporting information are considered at cluster meetings, then presented to the Panel by the cluster representative.

The review identified that this process extends the time taken before a decision is made and that there is duplication of effort from those involved, so changes to the process have been suggested.

The details of the changes were set out in the report, but the main suggestions were;

- Panel membership changed;
- The Panel to meet every half term;
- Requests to be submitted directly to the SEN Officer 2 weeks before the scheduled meeting, with papers circulated in advance;
- Cluster meetings will continue to review requests and consider single pupil focus requests for up to £2,000.

New criteria for exceptional requests were set out in the report.

The cluster would evaluate the impact of the allocations on a termly basis, as these allocations are meant to be for short term solutions. There should be an SEN Officer and a Finance Officer present at the cluster meetings.

Forum members who had raised the issue and asked for a review, indicated that they were happy with the new proposals.

**RESOLVED:** That the proposed model of operation for the Exceptional Needs Moderation Panel, as set out in the report be adopted.

#### **48 SPECIAL NEEDS ALERT**

Linda Orr gave a verbal update on the situation regarding the funding required for pupils with Special Education Needs, who have out of Borough placements. She indicated that in September 2015, the number of pupils would reduce because the number of leavers will

be eleven and there are six anticipated new placements. However the needs of pupils and costs are increasing, with the average cost of one of the pupils leaving being £450,000 and the estimated costs for one of the new pupils being £560,000.

There are three families with social care needs, with a child who may need placements. Currently there are four outstanding cases going to Tribunal, and those decisions have the potential for the child to be placed in maintained provision. In cases where children's needs are complex, there should be some contribution from Social Care; an equitable split must be ensured.

It was noted that in budget line 1.2.4 a surplus of £489,000 had been achieved from a budget of £6,144,000 in 2014/15. However the allocation made for this line in the 2015/16 budget £5,794,000, although now predictions are that placement costs may rise.

Comment was made that more use should be made of the resources within the Borough.

**RESOLVED:** That the SEN Alert report be noted.

#### **49 FORWARD PROGRAMME**

The Forum considered and noted the Forward programme of work set out on Agenda page 31 and agreed to the following changes:

- Additional meetings of Forum be arranged for 18 November 2015 and .. 24 February 2016;
- The Growth Fund Allocations report and impact of new Schools reports will be moved to the July meeting;
- A report on the Primary Strategy will be added to the October meeting.

The next meeting will be held on 15 July at Waingels College.

The dates of future meetings were noted:

23 September, 21 October, 18 November and 16 December 2015

20 January, 24 February, 16 March and 18 May 2016.

The October meeting will be held at Charvil Piggott School.

#### **50 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) as appropriate.

#### **51 CLUSTER FAMILY SUPPORT WORKERS**

The Forum received and considered a confidential report set out on Agenda pages 33 to 55 on the work of the Family Support Workers in the context of fixed term funding, including a copy of the Parenting Team Report.

It was acknowledged that the work provided by the Family Support Workers was valuable and any reduction would have an impact on schools. However it was

**RESOLVED:** That at this time, there is no commitment to allocate further funding.

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