

Minutes of the Schools Forum

12 October 2017

-: Present :-

Roger Hughes (Chairman), **Mike Lock** (Vice Chair) **Adam Morris** (Primary Maintained Head), **Stewart Biddles** (Primary Academy Head), **Jim Piper** (Primary Academy Rep), **Maurice Codd** (Primary Maintained Gov), **Daneian Rees** (Secondary Maintained Rep), **Lindsey Kings** (Secondary Academy Deputy Head), **Lisa Finn** (Secondary Academy Rep) **Clive Star** (Secondary Academy Gov) **Jan Chopping** (Secondary Academy Gov), **Dan Hallam** (Post 16), **Steven Hulme** (PRU Head)

Andy Dempsey (Director of Children's Services), **Rachael Williams** (Head of Education, Learning & Skills), **Martin Phillips** (Head of Finance), **Dorothy Hadleigh** (Head of SEN), **Rob Parr** (Principal Accountant) & **Michael Freeman** (Clerk)

1. Apologies/Changes to Membership

The Forum welcomed Steven Hulme, Head of Burton Academy, as the new PRU rep. Lisa Finn also joined the Forum as a representative for a Secondary Academy Head. Stewart Biddles, Head of Oldway Primary School, also attended his first meeting.

Representatives are still being sought for the Early Years sector, and an additional Primary Governor.

Action – MF to contact Jean Willder to source representation.

2. Election of Chair

Members voted for Roger Hughes to remain in position as Chair of the Forum.

3. Election of Vice Chair

Members re-elected Mike Lock to position of Vice-Chair.

4. Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the last meeting held 29th June 2017 were agreed as a true record.

5. Matters arising

A revision of the Forum's Standing Orders was shared with members, to reflect changes to membership agreed at the last meeting. This was to increase the membership of the Forum by recruiting an additional Secondary Headteacher, to reflect better the proportion of schools in Torbay.

6. Annual Report on High Cost Placements

Dorothy Hadleigh Head of SEN, shared with the Forum updated Analysis of High Cost Placements in Torbay. Whilst every Local Authority is under significant pressure, Torbay has twice the national average children on statements/EHCPs (Education Health & Care Plans). The number of Requests for Statutory Assessments has also increased significantly in recent years, and because of this alternative providers are having to be used to meet these children's needs.

Members recognise that the current situation is unsustainable, and highlighted the importance of the new role of Head of Vulnerable Pupils in tackling this.

Action – Rachael Williams to provide feedback on individual child placements at November Schools Forum.

- **Head of Vulnerable Pupils to analyse permanent exclusions in mainstream schools, and present findings at future forums.**

7. Update on National Fair Funding

Rob Parr, Principal Accountant, shared with the Forum details of changes made to the National Fair Funding Formula. Proposals from the DfE give Local Authorities the option to implement a soft formula based on local data for the years 18/19 and 19/20, before moving to a hard formula, based on National Fair Funding unit values, from 20/21.

Members agreed that a Funding & Resources working party should meet to discuss the proposals in more depth, and look at projected outcomes modelled by the Finance Team. This will be made up of Roger Hughes, Rachael Williams, Rob Parr, Lisa Finn, Mike Lock, Stewart Biddles and Jan Chopping.

Action – Working party to meet to discuss formula, and to set out the distribution of funding in 18/19 and 19/20, under the soft formula arrangement. Working Party to report back to Schools Forum on 30th November.

- **Finance team to model available options to present to 1st working party.**

8. Financial Report

At request of Schools Forum, a detailed breakdown of the Local Authority's financial position was shared with members.

There is currently a forecast overspend on DSG funded activities of £1.1m, with budget pressures largely coming from the Early Years and Higher Needs Blocks.

Changes made recently to the National Fair Funding Formula has capped the virement of funds across blocks at 0.5%. Members discussed the use of money from the 18/19 Schools Block, (which at 0.5% equates to roughly £364k) to manage these pressures, whilst recognising that the current approach is unsustainable. This was then put to vote between school members:

Recommendation 1, to approve the recommendation to vire 0.5% of the 18/19 DSG to the High Needs Block:

9 in agreement, 2 not in agreement, and 1 abstaining.

By disapplying from the National Funding Formula, further virement of funds could be used to cover the overspend, this option (recommendation 2) was then discussed and put to vote between school members:

Recommendation 2, to agree to the application to disapply the 0.5% cap on virements between blocks:

0 in favour, 11 against, with 1 abstaining.

The local authority wishes to show its gratitude to the Forum regarding recommendation 1, and recognises the position of schools on the decision of disapplication (recommendation 2). It is recognised that current pressures are not a reflection on Torbay schools, the Forum feels that the funding model itself is flawed. Members agree that a need to act collectively, and to work out a long term plan, is required, and a one off working party will meet shortly to produce guidance for schools. This will consist of Andy Dempsey, Roger Hughes, and Maurice Codd.

Action – One off working party will meet to decide on appropriate guidance to send out to schools next week. The consultation document will go to schools by the 30th October.

9. Verbal update on recruitment of Head of Service for Vulnerable Pupils

The application period for the position has now closed, there are 6 candidates going forward to interview on the 1st November. Rachael Williams and Adam Morris will sit on the interview panel.

10. Report from Post 16 Working Party

Rachael Williams - responses are now in from all Post 16 providers, and are currently under review. Once review has been completed, and Value for Money analysis has been done, a full report will be presented at a future Schools Forum.

11. Report on Sexual Identity and Orientation Project

15 Primary and 6 Secondary Schools have attended two training sessions, run by Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH). Feedback was shared with the Forum, and members were pleased to see the positive impact the sessions had. The Local Authority is keen for the training to be implemented, and follow up sessions will take place at future PHSE network meetings.

12. Items for next meeting

- Updated Financial Report
- Analysis of Permanently excluded pupils (Vulnerable Pupils Project)
- Update from Funding and Resources Meeting.
- Written Report on TESS
- Written Report on IOSS
- Written Report on Autism Project
- Report on Audit of Schools Forum

13. Future meeting dates

- Thursday 30th November, 09:00 Mezz 3 Tor Hill House
- Thursday 18th January, 09:00 Mezz 3 Tor Hill House
- Thursday 8th March, 09:00 Mezz 3 Tor Hill House