

Minutes of the Schools Forum

29 June 2017

-: Present :-

Roger Hughes (Chairman), **Mike Lock** (Vice-Chair) **Adam Morris** (Primary Maintained Head), **Claire Shiers** (replacement for Stewart Biddles, Primary Academy Head), **Lindsey Kings** (Secondary Academy Head), **Daneian Rees** (Secondary Maintained Head), **Tim Stephens** (Early Years), **Dan Hallam** (Post 16), **Jan Chopping** (Secondary Academy Governor) and **Maurice Codd** (Primary Maintained Governor)

Andy Dempsey (Director Of Children's Services), **Rachael Williams** (Head of Education, Learning and Skills), **Rob Parr** (Principal Accountant) and **Michael Freeman** (Clerk)

1. Apologies/Changes to Membership

Apologies were received from Clive Star and Jim Piper. Claire Shiers attended as replacement for Stewart Biddles. The Forum noted that Simon Niles is no longer a Primary Governor, and that this will be the last meeting that Tim Stephens will attend as an Early Years Representative. The Chair would like to thank Simon and Tim for their contributions.

Action – MF to begin sourcing new representatives for Early Years, PRU and Primary Governors.

2. Minutes of the meeting of the School Forum held on 9th March 2017

Minutes of the last meeting held 9th March 2017 were agreed as a true record.

3. Matters arising

The forum notes that agenda item 5 from March Forum, a report from the working party on a response to the National Fair Funding Formula, has now been circulated to schools.

4. Financial Issues

4.1 Report on 16/17 DSG out turn position

The forum was presented with an Outturn Report, written by Rachael Williams, detailing an overspend of the DSG for 2016/17. It was noted that the overspend of £834,597 is significantly more than the figure of £404,000 forecast at the March

Forum, and because of this a need to revisit the original decision in March (to manage overspends by use of the reserve funds) was needed.

Various options were discussed by members, who were in agreement that a Working Party should be set up, in order to manage the overspend, and to review funds in reserve set aside for future projects. This working party will consist of Rachael Williams, Mike Lock, Adam Morris and Rob Parr. Given the urgency of the situation, the forum agreed that the working party should make decisions on savings as necessary, without the need to report back to Forum with recommendations.

Action – Working party to convene shortly to manage overspend. Findings will be presented to Forum at next meeting in October.

4.2 Report on 17/18 DSG and forecast out turn

Predicted Outturn for the 2017/18 DSG was shared with the Forum, with a forecast overspend of £412k. Members recognise that this is due to continued national pressure on the High Needs block, coupled with a higher prevalence of EHCP requests in Torbay. It was recognised that the Local Authority has a duty to cascade this information to schools, and offer advice on what is expected by schools given the forecast. Members also agreed that more detailed forecasts of Early Years numbers should be collated, twice a term, in order to make a more accurate prediction in this area. Any issues found will be reported to members at future Forums.

Action – Rachael Williams to prepare a briefing document informing Head teachers of forecast overspend, and implications this will have on schools, to be sent out in September.

4.3 Statements/EHCP 17/18

Detailed analysis of Statementing/EHCP funding, including monthly in-year adjustments, for the years 2016/17 & 2017/18 was shared with members. The Forum notes that there is an overspend of £163,459 for the year 2016/17, and a predicted overspend of £138,739 for 2017/18.

4.4 Unallocated DSG Reserves

A breakdown of the DSG reserve was shown to members, detailing year by year underspends, the current balance of the reserve and allocated funding on future projects. The Forum notes that figures were taken at the end of the financial year 2016/17, and therefore the current balance may differ slightly. Members agreed that funding still to be allocated against the reserve should be discussed by the newly established working party, with findings brought to future Forums.

5. Update on National Fair Funding

Rachael Williams shared with members details of a speech given by Justine Greening, Education Secretary, on National Fair Funding. The Forum notes key

points from the speech, that Schools will be funded fairly and equally, and that no school will have its budget cut.

6. Update on recruitment of Head of Service for Vulnerable Pupils

Due to the recent findings on the finances of the DSG, it was felt that the Forum needed to revisit the proposed recruitment of a Head of Vulnerable Pupils. Although recognised as a difficult decision, Money for the post is centrally funded and already accounted for. It is anticipated that an appointment will reduce the demand on the system, with the expectation that it will save money in the long term. With this in mind, Members agreed that the Post is still necessary, and recruitment should go ahead as planned.

7. Report on ALFEY spending 14/15, 15/16 & 16/17

A report on ALFEY spending was shared with members, detailing the year on year increase, due to rising demand and the increasing complexity of children's needs. To moderate funding across provisions, it was agreed by members that a Funding Allocation Panel should be set up, to mirror the practices of the SEND panel, and the proposed Post 16 panel. The Forum also agreed with the decision to allocate an additional £100k to ALFEY funding, to mitigate the demand of the 30 hour entitlement that children will receive from September 2017.

An update on ALFEY Funding will presented to members in March 2018.

8. Report from Post 16 working party

Feedback from meetings of the working party was shared by Mike Lock. Discussion centred on the need to collect and analyse provider information, and trials of a data collection form are now being run at Combe Pafford. The Forum also notes that a Post 16 panel has been established. An update on the working party, including feedback from the trials and the work of the Post 16 panel, will be shared with the Forum in the October meeting.

9. Report on checks into the accuracy of 17/18 allocations

After queries from forum members at the March meeting as to the accuracy of figures in the 17/18 School Allocations, Rob Parr confirmed that figures are correct, and have been verified with the EFA.

10. Report on Sexual Identity and Orientation Project (Deferred until October 2017)

It was agreed by members that this item be deferred until the October meeting, pending evaluations from the training that has recently finished.

11. Annual Review of school representation

It is recognised that Forum membership is largely made up of Primary representatives. The Chair feels that recruiting an additional Secondary

representative to the Forum would more accurately reflect the proportion of Primary and Secondary pupils in Torbay. Members requested that this should be a Head teacher, either from an academy or maintained school.

Action - Rachael Williams will contact secondary Heads so that they can elect a new member.

12. Items for next meeting

Standing Orders – Changes to Forum membership

Post 16 working party progress report.

Report on Sexual Identity Project.

Report from the working party on managing the overspend.

13. Future meeting dates

12th October 2017, 09:00, Mezzanine 3 Tor Hill House

30th November 2017, 09:00, Mezzanine 3 Tor Hill House

18th January 2018, 09:00, Mezzanine 3 Tor Hill House

8th March, 09:00, Mezzanine 3 Tor Hill House