

Minutes of the Schools Forum

1st December 2016

-: Present :-

Roger Hughes (Chairman, Primary Maintained Head), Mike Lock (Vice Chair, Special Academy Head), Maurice Codd (Primary Maintained Gov), Dan Hallam (Post 16), Adam Morris (Primary Maintained Head), Debbie Main (Primary Academy Head), Daneian Rees (Secondary Maintained Head), Jan Chopping (Secondary Academy Gov) and Tim Stephens (Early Years & 14-19 partnership)

(Rachael Williams (Head of Education, Learning & Skills), Martin Phillips (Head of finance) Dorothy Hadleigh (Head of SEN) Lisa Finn (Finance manager), Rob Parr (Principal Accountant) & Michael Freeman (Clerk))

1. Apologies/Changes to Membership

Apologies were received from Andy Dempsey, James Piper and Clive Star. The forum welcomed Martin Phillips, Head of Finance for Torbay Council, to the meeting.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting 13th October were amended to show Tim Stephens as absent with apologies. Other than this, minutes were agreed to be a true record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising

The Challenging Homophobia Senior Leadership Training, originally to be held on 7th December, has been rescheduled.

Further analysis of spending on Vulnerable Pupils is ongoing, Roger Hughes and Rachael Williams will report on this at the next meeting in January.

4. Analysis of high cost Post 16 placements

Dorothy Hadleigh presented analysis of costings at both local provisions and alternative providers. Concerns were raised around the budgetary impact of SEN funding now continuing up until the age of 25, and the fact that there is not currently any one in post to monitor this. A working party was set up involving Rachael Williams, Dorothy Hadleigh, Mike Lock, Rob Parr, Debbie Main and John Deringer (South Devon College) to explore the value for money of providers, the outcomes of students placed in provisions, and how to build capacity moving forwards.

Actions: Working party to convene in mid January in order to report to the March Schools Forum to discuss findings.

5. Standing Items

5.1 Verbal Update on TESS

Roger Hughes shared feedback from Vashti Wickers (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub), who reports that MASH is now reaching statutory timescales. TESS is currently well within budget, although this is partly due to staffing shortages. The idea of recruiting admin staff to help social workers was discussed as a possibility because of this. Feedback from Schools on TESS has been very positive.

5.2 Verbal Update on CAMHS

Concerns around the current service were raised, particularly around staffing and then inability to recruit. There is however, a new CAMHS Commissioner, Louise Arrow, now in place. Louise will be meeting with SACSAG in January to discuss ongoing concerns, and to look at alternative funding models used by other local authorities. The current contract expires in August 2017, the decision whether or not to renew this will be held at a later date.

5.3 Verbal report on Autism

Roger Hughes shared a verbal update on the Autism Project. It was noted that the level of consistency between schools with autism champions was particularly pleasing.

5.4 Verbal update on Challenging Behaviour project

Adam Morris shared an update. 2 new outreach workers are now in post at Chestnut. ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) are planned, and Family Support Workers will need to access Signs of Safety training.

It was proposed that the Schools Forum could have funds available for a full time vulnerable pupils Head of Service, who could be employed on a temporary basis. Andy Dempsey and Rachael Williams will meet to discuss the viability of this before next meeting.

Actions: Proposal will be brought to January Schools Forum for discussion.

6. An outcome analysis report on the impact of work of Autsim project

Dorothy Hadleigh shared a report on the work of the Autism Implementation project. The second group of Autism Champion are due to start training in January 2017. Further analysis of the impact of the project by Mary Bruton (Autism friendly Schools Co-Ordinator) will be taking place in the spring term.

7. Impact report on Early Years future funding model

A report was shared with the Forum detailing changes to Early Years Funding from April 2017, and the Local Authority's response to these, outlining concerns that the LA is already using the DSG to 'top up' current rates. Significant cuts to funding in

Torbay are anticipated, and the Forum will have to budget for the expected reduction in the universal base rate.

Action: to be discussed at January Schools Forum once final paper has been published

8. 2016/17 DSG outturn. Statements and projected under/overspend

Rob Parr, Principal Accountant, highlighted that there is a forecast overspend of £280k in the DSG, the first time since its inception that this will be the case. It is anticipated that any losses for the year will be funded from the following years DSG.

Actions: Rob Parr and Rachael Williams to investigate possible saving measures, with the aim of at least breaking even. To be presented in Januarys Schools Forum.

9. Delegation of services

A vote was taken on the delegation of centrally retained services, it was agreed unanimously to keep this the same as last year, with £28k being retained to service the Schools Forum.

10. DfE fair funding - verbal update

It is anticipated that the 2nd phase of consultation will begin later this year. It is agreed that the Local Authority will write a response to the DfE, to be circulated to schools beforehand.

Actions: Rachael Williams will circulate response to schools before the end of the 2nd phase of consultation.

11. DfE excellence everywhere

Rachael Williams shared with the forum a response to March's government White Paper, Education Excellence Everywhere. Proposals in the paper include the statutory nature of a Schools Forum being removed, however in this occurrence it is proposed by the group that Torbay keeps a Schools Forum in place.

12. Items for next meeting

Verbal Update on TESS and CAMHS.
Analysis of Vulnerable Pupils unallocated funds (Roger Hughes & Rachael Williams).
17/18 DSG.
Fair Funding Consultation.
Education Support Grant.
Early years National Funding Formula.

13. Future meeting dates

Thursday 19th January 2017, Tor Hill House, Mezzanine, Room 3

Thursday 9th March 2017, Tor Hill House, Mezzanine, Room 3
Thursday 29th June 2017, Tor Hill House, Mezzanine, Room 3
Thursday 12th October 2017, Tor Hill House, Mezzanine, Room 3
Thursday 30th November 2017, Tor Hill House, Mezzanine, Room 3
Thursday 18th January 2018, Venue TBA
Thursday 8th March 2018, Venue TBA