

Minutes of the Schools Forum

9 March 2017

-: Present :-

Roger Hughes (Chairman), **Mike Lock** (Vice Chair), **Dan Hallam** (Post 16), **Adam Morris** (Primary Maintained Head), **Lindsey Kings** (Secondary Academy Head), **Daneian Rees** (Secondary Maintained Head), **Clive Star** (Secondary Academy Governor), **Jan Chopping** (Secondary Academy Governor), **Julie Shears** (PRU) and **Claire Shiers** (replacement for Stewart Biddles, Primary Academy Head)

Andy Dempsey (Director of Children's Services), **Martin Phillips** (Head of Finance) and **Michael Freeman** (Clerk)

1. Apologies/Changes to Membership

Apologies received from Jim Piper, Maurice Codd, Simon Niles, Tim Stephens, Rob Parr, Rachael Williams and Stewart Biddles. The Forum welcomed Claire Shiers as replacement for Stewart.

The Forum noted that this was the last meeting for Julie Shears and Debbie Main and the Chair thanked them for their contributions. Julie will ask Torbay School to nominate a new rep for the Assessment Unit.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the last meeting held on 19th January 2017 were agreed as a true record.

3. Matters arising

None from last meeting.

Andy Dempsey shared with the Forum news of Devon Studio Schools proposed merger with South Devon College. Whilst there was discussion around the future of the building, it was stressed that present focus is on the pupils moving, and the managing of this process.

4. Financial Issues

4.1 Report on DSG 16/17 and forecast out turn

Martin Phillips, Head of Finance, shared a paper written by Rachael Williams, detailing under/overspends in the 2016/17 Dedicated Schools Grant. Main areas of overspend remain statementing/EHCP, Special Schools contingency and Early

Years SEN inclusion. Conversations with other Local Authorities indicate that this is a similar problem nationwide, and whilst a long term solution is sought it is agreed by the forum to continue to manage the overspend using the DSG reserve.

4.2 Statements/EHCP 16/17

A breakdown of funding for statementing/EHCPs for years 2015/16 & 2016/17 was shared with the Forum, detailing in-year adjustments month by month. An anticipated overspend of £143,000 is predicted for the year 2016/17.

4.3 17/18 School Allocations

Allocations for each school was presented in a spreadsheet, showing the percentage increase or decrease in funding for next year. It was recognised that overall funding from government was in line with the percentage increase of additional pupils. However, some concern was raised by some schools as to the accuracy of the figures.

Action – Finance colleagues to validate accuracy of spreadsheet, and report findings at next Forum meeting.

4.4 Report on unallocated reserves

A summary of DSG underspends for the last 10 years was shared, alongside detailed analysis of expenditure and funding for future projects from the DSG. There is currently an unallocated balance of £173,000 in the DSG reserve. Whilst this reserve may appear on the low side (due partially to an increase in numbers at special schools), it is recognised that some local authorities are struggling to balance their DSG. A precautionary approach to managing the reserve was agreed, and funding still to be allocated will be reviewed and presented in an updated spreadsheet at each future meeting of the Forum.

5. Report from the working party on a response to the National Fair Funding Formula Consultation

A response to the National Fair Funding Consultation, written by Rachael Williams, Head of Education, Learning and Skills, was shared with the Forum. Although concerns about the fairness of the proposed formula was discussed, the importance of the Local Authority being seen to respond was agreed by members.

Action – Andy Dempsey, (Director of Childrens Services), and Roger Hughes, (Chair), to make amendments to report, before circulating to schools and inviting them to formulate their own responses.

6. Post 16 Working Party report

Details of the first two meetings of the Post 16 working party were shared with the Forum. A vision statement, outlining the aims of the party has been written and is currently out to consultation. How best to incorporate these aims into a commissioning framework is currently under discussion. The working party has now

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committed to meeting every three weeks, with the focus of the next meeting on creating consistency in data collection and procedure used by members.

7. Standing Items

7.1 TESS

A progress report from Sarah James, Education Senior Practitioner, on TESS was shared amongst members. After initial difficulties in recruiting, two new Community Care Workers have now been employed, and will be in post from the Summer term. TESS has now made contact with every school in the Local Authority, and it is recognised how appreciative schools are of the work being done.

Action – Andy Dempsey and Rachael Williams to continue to monitor effectiveness of TESS, and to discuss findings of report ready for next Schools Forum.

7.2 CAMHS

An updated report on the CAMHS service was discussed by the group. Schools Forum funding for CAMHS is due to cease in Aug 2017, and at present the Forum will not be planning to invest after this date.

7.3 Autism

A report from Dorothy Hadleigh, Head of SEND, on the impact of the Autism project was presented to the Forum. A progress report from the Autism-friendly schools co-ordinator, Mary Bruton, along with some case studies from schools involved was also shared. The first cohort of Autism Champions are now in their second year of training, and are liaising with schools that do not have champions. The second cohort of champions have also just started their training. The forum recognises the success of this project, and hopes to use the model for future projects. It was requested that future reports should focus on the sustainability of the project, with champions funding scheduled to end in Dec 2017.

7.4 Challenging Behaviour Project

Adam Morris (Chair of Challenging Behaviour Implementation Group) shared an update on the project. An action plan had now been agreed, and the group will be meeting shortly to discuss this.

7.5 Chestnut - Intensive Outreach Support Service (IOSS)

Progress of the IOSS was presented to the Forum, along with an impact report on the effectiveness of the project in each school. Feedback from both schools and families involved has been overwhelmingly positive, with a significant reduction on behaviour threshold reported.

8. Items for next meeting

Financial Issues

- I. Report on 16/17 out turn
- II. Report on 17/18 DSG and forecast out turn
- III. Statements/EHCP 17/18
- IV. Report on unallocated reserves
- V. Analysis report on TESS

Report on Sexual Identity and Orientation Project

Report on ALFEY spending 14/15, 15/16, 16/17 and projections for 17/18

Update on the DfE Fair Funding consultation (if available)

9. Future meeting dates

29th June 2017, 09:00, Mezzanine 3, Tor Hill House
12th October 2017, 09:00, Mezzanine 3, Tor Hill House
30th November 2017, Mezzanine 3, Tor Hill House
18th January 2018, Venue TBA
8th March 2018, Venue TBA