



Minutes

Name of meeting	SCHOOLS FORUM
Date and time	9.00AM – THURSDAY 21 DECEMBER 2017
Venue	COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE, WESTRIDGE, BRADING ROAD, RYDE PO33 1QS
Present	Beverley Gilbert (Chair) – Brading CE Primary John Bailey – Haylands Primary Caroline Sice – Lanesend Primary Academy Mike Hayward – Island Innovation Federation Fidelma Washington – Isle of Wight College Julie Stewart – Medina House School Jackie Boxx – Island Learning Centre
Observers	Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth Peter Shreeve – ATL Mark Chiverton – UNISON John McGee - NUT
Officers	Barry Downer - Senior Finance Business Partner Brendan Hodson – Senior Accountant Diane Hiscock - Clerk
Apologies	David Thornton – Federation of Carisbrooke and Newport CEPs Kay Wood – Summerfields Primary Karen Begley – Island Innovation Federation Amanda Bitchenor – Chatterbox Day Nursery Eric Hemming – St Blasius CE Primary Academy and St Francis Catholic and CE Primary Academy

1. QUORUM

There was brief discussion on whether the meeting was quorate. A quorum for the Schools Forum is 40% of members in post. There were 7 members present so this meeting was quorate. However, concern was raised at the level of attendance and it was agreed that members should be reminded of the importance of decisions being made the forum and the impact on school budgets.

Action – Members are requested to make every effort to attend meetings. If unable to attend, apologies should be sent to the clerk as soon as possible.

NB – The regulations allow for substitutes to be nominated to attend in place of members if necessary; the clerk to be informed prior to the meeting.

2. WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

BG welcomed Caroline Sice (Academy Rep) and Mike Hayward (Secondary Governor Rep) to the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

BG had received comments and support for all recommendations, from a member who had sent apologies for this meeting. These were conveyed to the forum.

An e-mail had also been received from a number of primary schools in favour of the removal of the Growth Fund (item 9.3)

5. REVIEW OF TRADE UNION FUNDING IN SCHOOLS Paper B

AT presented an annual review of funding for trade union facilities time. Returns have now been received from all unions and an analysis of work carried out was shown in Appendix A.

Appendix E showed a range options for funding trade union facilities time in 2018/19 with a recommendation for Option 1, with funding remaining the same as for 2017/18.

5.1 Following the October meeting of the Schools Forum, AT had discussed with the legal team possible actions in relation to the Free School's decision not to contribute to trade union facilities time. The Free School had been contacted in February 2016 and had initially been under a misapprehension regarding the request to contribute. Following clarification, there was no further response, despite further communication via the Schools Forum.

In October 2017 the Free School had confirmed that they would they would not contribute, as cover is supplied internally for school representatives and meetings to support school staff are arranged outside school hours, so there would be no need to draw down from another school.

Union representatives were asked if they would support members where a school does not contribute. All were in agreement that representatives are duty-bound to support their members. It was also confirmed that there is no cost to members for this support. It would be possible to charge a school for the time, but nationally, there is no knowledge of this having happened previously.

Action – BG to write a letter to the Free School and to inform them of the potential for the unions to charge the school directly for their time.

5.2 Appendix C showed a joint letter receive from NUT, ATL and NASUWT to request an increase in funding to support effective use of trade union facilities time. It was noted that the union support work undertaken by union representatives often impinges on their full-time work. The current budget equates to £3.38 per pupil.

Members discussed the allocation of funding and options to reduce the lump sum paid to unions from £4000 to £2000, allowing a more to be distributed on a pro-rata to membership basis. The lump sum covers expenses such as

accommodation and administration. Union representatives agreed that the current formula is fair and they would not seek to change this.

It was agreed that it would be helpful to refine the information requested and received from unions to gain a better insight.

Action – BG to meet with AT in February 18 to work on a revised returns form, to be implemented for the next financial year. This will be brought to the Schools Forum meeting on 22 March 2018.

RESOLVED :

To continue with the existing arrangements for the distribution of funding between the various unions from the de-delegated budget for 2018/19 in accordance with the details set out in option 1 Appendix E.

6. MINUTES

RESOLVED :

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [30 November 2017](#) be confirmed

6.1 ACTION POINTS FROM LAST MEETING

(Item 2) The Primary Headteacher executive group are to write to government regarding High Needs Funding. A letter on the same subject will be sent from Hampshire and copied to BG, who will compose a letter on behalf of the IOW Schools Forum and bring to the next meeting on 16 January 2018.

7. 2017/18 SCHOOLS BUDGET MONITORING Paper C

The overall budget position shows a forecast overspend of £809,000 – a decrease from £901,000 as reported at the October meeting. This is due to the overspend in the High Needs block being reduced from £991,000 to £904,000.

- 7.1 In the Schools Block, the Growth Fund is forecast to be underspent by £46,000 and there is not expected to be any further draw on this funding for 2017/18.
- 7.2 The Early Years Block is forecast to be underspent by £44,000 due to the increase to 30 hours entitlement. This is subject to an update which will be given at the next meeting on 16 January 2018.
- 7.3 A one-off contribution of £288,000 following the audit of the 2016/17 accounts has been set against the overall deficit.
- 7.4 The anticipated overspend in Post-16 top-up funding is reduced from £54,000 to £37,000 as funding for the IW College has been agreed.
- 7.5 The forecast overspend on Pre-16 Individual Placements is reduced from £315,000 to £255,000. Members asked if it was possible to identify a trend in this area. The funding covers a small number of high cost places and it would be difficult to analyse.
- 7.6 Other minor differences include an underspend in Early Years Central Services. Members discussed Early Years funding and were informed that £17,000 is included for project payments.

The overall budget forecast, including the deficit brought forward and one off contribution from reserves shows a forecast deficit of £857,000.

The £2000 variance in de-delegated services meant that schools had overpaid, but it is difficult to plan exact funding due to timing (when companies request payment) and until costs are confirmed by DfE. It was agreed that this is a

minor variance but more questions would be raised if the difference was significant.

A 3-year budget forecast, shown in Appendix B was produced on the same basis as the budget monitoring report.

RESOLVED :

THAT the November position on the 2017/18 schools budget be noted.

8. SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA 2018/19 Paper D

- 8.1 BH presented a draft local funding formula for 2018/19. Members asked if the ratio on which primary/secondary schools were funded could be changed. The ratio is calculated from the formula factors, which follow the National Funding Formula where possible. The ratio has been revised from 1:1.29 to 1:1.28 as a result of increasing the lump sum. The national average is 1:1.29.

It was noted that the IOW previously used a ratio of 1:1.23 but to retain this would not be in line with the agreement to move towards the National Funding Formula. Secondary schools are in the greatest deficit and a ratio of 1:1.23 would further increase this.

It was agreed that the ratio has to be fair.

- 8.2 Members asked if the Lump Sum of £115,000 has to be the same for primary and secondary schools. This is also in line with the National Funding Formula with no clear rationale or justification for different amounts being paid to different sectors.

Concern was raised that primary schools are losing where secondary schools are gaining. It was agreed that a £40,000 loss would not impact on a secondary school as much as it would on a primary school and could be the cost of a teacher in a primary school or the Island Learning Centre.

There is one overall budget to be distributed between schools. An increase in the Lump Sum would result in a reduction in other funding factors. It was agreed that although the impact for primary schools is huge, it is fair to follow the National Funding Formula.

- 8.3 A consultation on the Funding Formula was sent out to schools. Only 25 responses were received, comprising responses from 23 primary schools and 2 secondary schools. Appendix B (please see document attached to email) showed the responses and was circulated with papers for this meeting.

Overall, 76% supported the proposal to follow the National Funding Formula. Therefore, no changes are proposed in the factors used, or the proportion of funding for all factors except the lump sum.

There was a fairly positive response that the Lump Sum is about right, as this provides some stability for schools. However, a number of responses supported an increase. It was suggested that the Lump Sum be reviewed annually. The DfE will set the Lump Sum in the National Funding Formula is fully implemented.

52% felt that the IDACI funding was right and there was a fairly even split between responses that it was too high or too low. Therefore proportions will be kept the same.

RESOLVED :

THAT the draft funding formula be approved (school and academy members – 1 abstained)

8.4 FUNDING FORMULA VALUES

School and academy members were also asked to agree the principle that the formula values be adjusted in proportion to balance the overall funding available for distribution. The Funding Tool should be received this week and will show the differences between the 2017/18 funding formula and the draft for 2018/19.

The Age-Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) is reduced by £191 per pupil, which follows the NFF shift towards funding for Special Needs.

Members asked if it would be possible to benchmark distribution of funding against other Local Authorities (LAs). Details of other formulae will be published later in the year, but this is monitored through a regional officers group and the general trend is that other LAs are adopting or moving towards the NFF.

RESOLVED :

THAT the principle that formula values (excluding the lump sum) be increased or decreased in equal proportion to balance the overall funding available for distribution be agreed (school and academy members – 1 abstained)

8.5 MINIMUM FUNDING GUARANTEE

In previous years the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) has been set at -1.5% for all LAs. From 2018/19 LAs may set a different MFG between -1.5% and 0.5% (DfE proposal increased from 0%). This will protect the minimum gain for funding per pupil. The consultation responses showed 64% in favour of the MFG remaining at -1.5%. Two responses favoured middle ground and the remainder opted for a 0% MFG (now 0.5%).

Members had discussed at the previous meeting and noted that some schools have continued to receive protection for a number of years. BH explained how the MFG could be funded through scaling the increases received from all gaining schools and/or capping gains above a maximum percentage.

RESOLVED :

THAT the MFG be set at -1.5% in 2018/19, to be funded by scaling gains of schools receiving a per-pupil increase (school and academy members - 2 abstained)

9. SCHOOLS BUDGET 2018/19 Paper E + Appendix B

BH presented updated information on the schools budget for 2018/19.

9.1 EARLY YEARS

Confirmation had been received that the hourly rate allocated to the Isle of Wight will be the same as for 2017/18. This means that funding for providers will be as for last year, subject to changes to the Central Early Years (EY) service and SEN Inclusion costs. Members queried and discussed the increase in staffing costs within the central EY team, which includes the need for additional administration support due to the extended entitlement to EY provision.

The central service also provides for a range of projects that are available to EY providers and participation is good.

The proposed central spend for 2018/19 is £227,000 - lower than other similar LAs, which also raised some concern.

Consultation with providers on SEN Inclusion funding will be carried out early in 2018.

Members requested further information on the staffing/administration /attendance at meetings, projects and how/which EY settings benefit.

Action – Theresa Wall, Early Years Advisory Teacher, to be asked to provide a report to the next Schools Forum meeting on 16 January 2018.

RESOLVED :

THAT approval of the proposed central EY budget be moved to the next meeting.

9.2 CENTRAL SCHOOL SERVICES

The Central School Services block will be a separate allocation from 2018/19, in order to separate the costs of LA statutory duties from the main schools block. The allocation for the Isle of Wight is £630,000 (a reduction of £2,000 following the October census).

- DfE Copyright is a mandatory national charge.
- Independent school places for non-SEN pupils is estimated to remain the same, but is difficult to judge.
- Servicing of Schools Forum includes a reduction for external advice from £4000 to £1000.
- Admissions service remains the same.
- LA statutory functions was formerly ESG retained funding. Schools Forum agreed to passport this back to the LA – includes saving of £2,000.

Members asked if it is possible to identify a trend re independent school placements for non-SEN children. This budget had to be increased from £70,000 to £120,000 following an overspend in 2016/17 and an increase in Looked After Children in 2017/18. The budget relates to a small number of pupils in high cost placements and it would be difficult to identify a trend.

RESOLVED :

THAT the proposed central school services block budget for 2018/19 be approved.

9.3 GROWTH FUND

The growth fund is expected to underspend by £46,000. The DfE allocation of £100,000 for 2018/19 is not ring-fenced and there are currently no expected needs to draw on this funding, although it is possible that schools may become eligible due to class size or pressure in specific areas. Any excess in funding can be pasported to schools via the local funding formula.

The Growth Fund Policy was agreed by Schools Forum and a reduction to £50,000 was proposed. This has been discussed with primary headteachers, who questioned whether there is a need for a growth fund. It is necessary to hold a fund as the policy allows schools to access funding if they are eligible.

Members briefly discussed the viability of small schools. It was agreed to request an admissions expert to attend a meeting of the Schools Forum to give more information.

Action – Martin Goff, Head of Service – Information, Transport and Admissions to be asked to attend the Schools Forum Meeting on 22 March 2018.

RESOLVED :

THAT the growth fund budget of £50,000 for 2018/19 be agreed.

9.4 DE-DELEGATED SERVICES

Appendix B to Paper E showed the updated proposed rates to fund de-delegated services. Primary and secondary representatives were asked to vote separately on whether to continue to de-delegate funding.

RESOLVED :

THAT funding be de-delegated for services outlined in paragraph 27 of Paper E in respect of primary schools.

THAT a decision in respect of secondary schools be moved to the next meeting on 16 January 2018.

9.5 EDUCATION FUNCTIONS – MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

Members were asked to consider the retention of funding from maintained schools for LA statutory duties. A proposal was made to increase the contribution from £32 per pupil to £58 per pupil (final pupil numbers shown in Appendix B). Most of this funding is paid out for premature retirement and redundancies.

Members discussed the increase and a recommendation was made for the contribution to be £55 per pupil, which is the full year equivalent of the £32 agreed for 2017/18.

RESOLVED :

THAT the contribution from maintained schools to meet the costs of statutory services be set at £55 per pupil for 2018/19.

10. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Schools Forum has been arranged to take place **Tuesday 16 January – 9.15am** at Westridge CLC.

11. DATES OF FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Thursday 22 March 2018

Thursday 10 May 2018

Thursday 19 July 2018

All at 9.00am (unless otherwise stated)

Westridge Community Learning Centre, Brading Road, Ryde PO33 1QS

CHAIR