



Minutes

Name of meeting	SCHOOLS FORUM
Date and time	8.30AM – Thursday 20th December 2018
Venue	Community Learning Centre, Westridge, Ryde PO33 1QS
Present	Beverley Gilbert (Chair) – Brading CE Primary David Thornton – Federation of Carisbrooke and Newport CEPs Mike Hayward – Island Innovation Federation Gordon Kendall – Bembridge CE Primary Julie Stewart – Medina House School Caroline Sice – Lanesend Primary Academy Fidelma Washington – Isle of Wight College Sue Bowen – Church of England Diocese
Elected Member	Cllr Paul Brading – Cabinet Member for Children’s Services
Officers	Brian Pope – Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion Barry Downer - Senior Finance Business Partner Chris Jones – SEN Service Manager Troy Hobbs – Education Officer – SEND Judy Mason – HR manager and Principal Lawyer Theresa Wall – Early Years Advisory Teacher Diane Hiscock – Clerk
Apologies	Matthew Parr-Burman – Island Innovation Federation Kay Wood – Summerfields Primary Amanda Bitchenor – Chatterbox Day Nursery Brendan Hodson – Finance Business Partner

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Members and officers were welcomed to the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No public questions had been received.

4. TRADE UNION FACILITIES TIME [Paper B](#)

- 4.1 JM gave a brief overview of the options for consideration in relation to trade union facilities time in schools. The LA takes a neutral stance and schools forum members were asked to decide on –

- Whether to continue with the existing arrangements for distribution of funding between unions
 - Whether or not to allocate funding to the Association of School and College Leaders – who do not currently appear to have a representative
 - Any action to be taken in relation to the Island Free School, who have access to, but have chosen not to contribute to trade union facilities time
 - Whether to put in place any sanction for unions who do not provide the required information on use of facilities time
- 4.2 Members were also asked to agree an increase of 20p to £3.83 per pupil for non-teaching union facilities time. This is a notional charge which would be finalised once the pupil census numbers are known. The final budget increase proposed is from £55,000 to £58,000.
- With schools facing ongoing financial difficulties and the need for reorganisation and restructuring, non-teaching union representatives are required to support members throughout, whereas cases for teaching staff are often referred to regional officers.
- 4.3 Members discussed the position regarding the Free School's decision not to contribute to trade union facilities time. It was noted that the school's requirement of this provision differs from one union to another and is dependent on individual cases, but still adds to the workload.
- 4.4 Forum members were agreed that the Free School should not continue to be subsidised by the contributions made from other schools. However, trade unions are obliged to provide a service to their members.
- 4.5 It was felt that it would be useful to have a breakdown of use of facilities time across schools on the Isle of Wight. LA officers are working to review information that is requested from unions, to achieve a level of consistency and provide some clarity.

Actions

- 1) JM to bring revised pro-forma questionnaire for Trade Unions to the next meeting on 17 January 2019**
- 2) Forum members asked that union representatives escalate the issue regarding support for the Free School within their respective organisation**
- 3) BP to discuss non-payment of Trade Union Facilities Time with Regional Schools Commissioner**
- 4) Further letters to Free School to be sent by JM and by BG on behalf of Schools Forum**

RESOLVED :

- 1) THAT the redistribution of the ASCL funding using the agreed formula for distribution be agreed.
- 2) THAT the increase of 20p to £3.83 per pupil for non-teaching union facilities time be agreed.
- 3) THAT the lump sum is set at £2,000 and remainder of funding be distributed to unions – not including ASCL (Appendix 3 – Option 2).
- 4) THAT union representatives make separate arrangements for supporting members at the Island Free School

- 5) THAT Non-payment of budget to unions which fail to provide the requested activities information be agreed.

DT arrived at 9.00am

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED :

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [21 November 2018](#) be confirmed.

6. MATTERS ARISING

- 6.1 Item 5.1 - DT reported that he is liaising with Jade Kennet – SDO Programme Manager and Vince Ward from Futures IOW on a pilot audit and looking at possibilities for renewable energy in schools. Initial visits have included Brading CE Primary, Bembridge CE Primary, Summerfields Primary and St Helens Primary.

PB also reported on a recent meeting of the Carbon Trust regarding a proposed 'Business Energy Industry Strategy' where school energy usage was discussed.

Action – DT to give further updates at future meetings

- 6.2 Item 6.9 – BG and CS reported on feedback from headteachers regarding the impact on schools of changes to high needs funding. A brief questionnaire was sent out and 25 schools and the IW College responded.

Comments included an increase in behavioural issues and fixed-term exclusions, low staff morale, increased pressure on staff, increased need for support from the Island Learning Centre and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHs).

Members discussed how this information may feed into a 5-year plan for SEN provision.

- 6.3 Item 9.2 (17 October 2018 meeting) – A letter has been sent to Early Years (EY) providers offering support for completion of the annual EY Census Return.

7. HIGH NEEDS STRATEGY [Paper C](#) + [Appendix A](#)

- 7.1 BP informed members that significant work has been undertaken and is ongoing on the proposal to move Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to a banded system for the IOW. This would bring the Island in line with other Local Authorities (LAs) and would be the recommended direction, regardless of pressure on the High Needs Budget.

SEN children need appropriate support to develop the necessary skills to allow them to become independent adults.

- 7.2 TH gave a presentation on banding models for mainstream schools. Under the current funding system schools meet the first £6,000 of support for SEN children. Top-up funding is held by LAs for support when an EHCP is in place and is allocated at a rate of £7.45 per hour x 52 weeks. The current system does not allow for whole school/classroom provision to provide the most appropriate support for each child. 1-1 support often segregates the child from the class rather than enabling them to develop within their environment.

- 7.3 Banding is not a new mechanism, but is focused to bring about better outcomes for children and young people by allowing more flexible use of resources. It also reduces the risk of pressure on the high needs block.

- 7.4 There has been a significant rise in EHCPs in recent years, along with the extension to young people up to 25 years old. The allocation of 'hours' of assistance on an EHCP tends to be misconstrued as a requirement for 1-1 support and can be a barrier to providing the most appropriate support for a child.
- 7.5 Moving to a banding model allows greater flexibility to provide better outcomes for children and young people. The descriptors provide greater consistency of delivery, offering a level of resource that is matched to the needs. It also aligns the IOW service with other LAs. It should reduce the adversary nature of allocated hours.
- 7.6 Three Options are currently under consideration
- OPTION 1 – The 'universal offer' (first £6,000 of support from school budget), followed by a targeted offer through an EHCP. The Plan will be set within one of 4 bands based on a 'best fit' model. The bands would be straight forward and easy to understand.
- OPTION 2 - Some LAs have more bands to allow greater financial control. Children are more likely to move between bands over time. This may bring increased challenge and require more administration.
- OPTION 3 – Differentiated bands matched to specific types of SEND and weighted accordingly. Cash values to each band, according to need. This option may more closely match need but could result in an increased level of diagnoses. It will also require more administration.
- 7.7 A whole system approach is needed, with a clear universal offer. Schools will be encouraged to develop a provision map showing additional strategies, provision and intervention that are in place at the setting. If EHC assessment is required, there should be clarity on refined areas of need that will lead to identification of the appropriate banding. This will enable the provision of a robust cycle of policy setting, provision, reporting and review.
- 7.8 Every child will have an individual assessment and banding determined through a 'best-fit' approach. Banding will be fixed to the next review (or possibly when the child moves to the next Key Stage).
- 7.9 Next steps – a working party (to include parents) will develop band descriptors and funding allocations for each option. A detailed plan will be devised, building on the work and evidence from other LAs. Public consultation will take place before July 2019 with implementation proposed for September 2019.
- 7.10 A phased transfer is planned for current EHCPs as reviews take place in Yr 2, Yr 6, and Yr 11. It is expected that transfers will be managed over a 3-year period. Members agreed that a swift transfer period would be preferable. It was noted that the timescale would be reliant on staff/officer resources.
- 7.11 Challenge is anticipated and it is important to be clear on what is being done and why. It would be helpful to have evidence on other LA systems and how they are working. It was felt that the proposals rely on idealistic skills of teachers and SENCOs. Training will be needed to support adapting the curriculum and classroom management at a time when schools are trying to reduce the teacher workload.
- 7.12 Members were advised that the system should promote better and more efficient use of Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). Further information and evidence can be found on the [Whole School SEND Consortium](#) website.

- 7.13 It was agreed that banding is the way forward and it is essential to engage with parents. SENCOs will require training and development. LA officers are working on
- the expectations for SENCOs
 - how banded EHCPs will be made
 - the development of an EHC Hub for the IOW
 - where to provide learning and development within the plan

The aim will be for a consistent approach across IOW schools and to get it right.

- 7.14 Support for early intervention, emotional wellbeing and children's mental health will be fundamental to the plan. Officers recognise the gap in Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) provision and further work is planned.

- 7.15 Ongoing information will be available within the [Local Offer](#)

- 7.16 A question was raised about the post-16 strategy. BP gave an example of how block funding and use of an external consultant could assist a review. Annual reviews of EHCPs at age 12/13 should put in place support to enable students to progress and take their place in society. It is anticipated that the whole plan will take more than 5 years to be fully embedded.

It was noted that other LAs value the banding descriptors for provision for post-16 students.

- 7.17 Special schools are already working on a banded system, but it is hoped to bring these in line with Hampshire. There is currently an issue over inequity of costings between mainstream, special schools, 6th form and college provision for EHCPs, which will also need to be addressed.

- 7.18 Members asked how information will be disseminated to providers and the local community. Information will be available on the [Local Offer](#) and in an SEN Newsletter. A representative of Parent Voice (who was present as an observer) will feedback information from this meeting.

Action – CJ to discuss with colleagues and will feedback to the Headteacher forums in January 2019.

RESOLVED :

THAT the approach and options outlined in this paper be agreed and any other options identified through consultation be considered.

8. SCHOOLS BUDGET 2019/20 [Paper D](#)

BD gave a brief overview of the proposed budget for 2019/20.

8.1 EARLY YEARS

There is no change from 2018/19 DfE funding rates for Early Years (EY), which means that the hourly rate for providers will remain much the same as last year.

- 8.2 The cost for EY Central Services has incurred a slight increase from £227,000 to £232,000 due to inflation and staffing costs. Members gave a view on the low rate for providers, but it was confirmed that this is a national issue with minimal flexibility due to ring-fenced funding.

RESOLVED :

- 1) THAT the proposed central early years budget of £232,000 be agreed

2) THAT the proposal to maintain the 2018/19 early years funding rates for two year-old and three/four year-old entitlements, ahead of consultation with providers be endorsed.

8.3 CENTRAL SERVICES

The central services block covers statutory duties carried out by the LA for schools. The allocation for 2019/20 is £613,000 and the breakdown remains similar to last year. There is a slight reduction in independent places for non-SEN pupils (based on known placements).

RESOLVED :

THAT the proposed central school services block budgets for 2019/20 be approved.

8.4 GROWTH FUND/FALLING ROLLS

The growth fund was previously reduced to £50,000 and there is no currently known budget commitment for 2019/20. It is prudent to retain a fund for any school that may become eligible from September 2019, if required by the LA to run an additional class or employ an additional LSA due to pupil numbers.

The proposal is to reduce the growth fund to £33,000. It was noted that Headteachers have agreed the reduction through their forums.

RESOLVED :

THAT the growth fund budget of £33,000 for 2019/20 be agreed.

8.5 DE-DELEGATION OF SERVICES

Maintained mainstream schools are able to de-delegate funding for selected services and special schools and academies are able to buy in to these services. The services are

- Licences and Subscriptions
- Staff Costs (Trade Union Facilities Time) – See item 4
- Free School Meals Eligibility (FSM)

Agreement to de-delegate funding for these services must be agreed annually by maintained school members of the schools forum.

Members questioned the differences in costings between primary and secondary provision, particularly for FSM. These are based on a formula using pupil numbers.

It was noted that de-delegation was agreed at headteacher forums.

8.6 It was noted that Behaviour Services could be added to the services that schools wish to be de-delegated. This would require some consideration and planning.

RESOLVED :

- 1) THAT the primary school de-delegation funding be agreed – maintained schools (3) – all in favour.
- 2) THAT agreement by secondary representatives (2) be agreed by e-mail, following this meeting.

8.7 EDUCATION FUNCTIONS FOR MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

It is proposed to increase the funding retained for LA statutory duties in relation to maintained schools from £55 to £57 per pupil for 2019/20 to meet costs.

RESOLVED :

THAT a contribution from maintained schools of £57 per pupil, to meet the cost of statutory services provided by the LA for maintained schools be agreed - maintained school representatives (4)

9. SCHOOLS BUDGET 2018/19 [Paper E](#) and [Appendix C](#)
- 9.1 BD informed members that an overspend of £454,000 is forecast, which is £33,000 more than previously reported. With the deficit carried forward in 2018 this will be close to the 1% threshold that would incur DSG intervention.
- 9.2 BP reported on the announcement of additional DfE funding for High Needs to be distributed nationally with an estimated £263,000 for the Isle of Wight. Closure of the Studio School may also bring a recoupment adjustment in the region of £200,000 to be confirmed in January 2019. Both may help to reduce the in-year balance.
- 9.3 The joint bid by Hampshire and the IOW for a new SEMH special school in Hampshire is currently under consideration by DfE. This would lead to reduced costs for current off-Island placements.
- 9.4 The Local Government Association (LGA) has strongly lobbied the DfE for more funding for SEN.

RESOLVED :

THAT the October position on the 2018/19 schools budget be noted.

10. VIRTUAL SCHOOL REPORT

This report was deferred to the next meeting when an officer will attend to give an overview.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Schools Forum has been arranged to take place **Thursday 17 January 2019 – 8.30am at Westridge Community Learning Centre, Brading Road, Ryde PO33 1QS**

DATES OF FORTHCOMING MEETINGS – All at Westridge Community Learning Centre

Thursday 21 March 2019

Thursday 20 June 2019

Thursday 21 November 2019

Thursday 16 January 2020

Thursday 19 March 2020

8.30am start, all at

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

The meeting closed at 10.25am

CHAIR