



Minutes

Name of meeting	SCHOOLS FORUM
Date and time	9.00AM – THURSDAY 20 July 2017
Venue	COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE, WESTRIDGE, BRADING ROAD, RYDE PO33 1QS
Present	David Thornton – Federation of Carisbrooke and Newport CEPs (Vice-Chair and acting Chair for this meeting) John Bailey – Haylands Primary Fidelma Washington – Isle of Wight College Julie Stewart – Medina House School Amanda Bitchenor – Chatterbox Day Nursery Eric Hemming – St Blasius CE Primary Academy and St Francis Catholic and CE Primary Academy
Observers	Dominic Coughlin – NUT
Officers	Barry Downer - Isle of Wight Council Brendan Hodson – Isle of Wight Council Diane Hiscock - Clerk
Apologies	Jackie Boxx – Island Learning Centre Beverley Gilbert (Chair) – Brading CE Primary Kay Wood – Summerfields Primary Peter Shaw – Island Innovation Federation Robert Dare – Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received

2. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No public questions were received.

3. SCHOOLS MEMBERSHIP AND CONSTITUTION

Forum members welcomed EH as the new Academy Representative.

AB agreed to continue as an early years representative and was duly appointed for a further term of office.

Members were asked to canvas interest in the following vacancies through their respective groups –

1 x Primary Governor

1 x Secondary Governor

1 x Academy Representative

LA Officers were asked if they could also follow up with academies to try and identify another suitable candidate to represent academies.

Forum members had been asked to consider adding a Trade Union representative to membership of the Forum. The regulations require schools members to comprise 2/3 of the total membership and non-schools members can be up to 1/3. Current membership is 11 school members and 5 non-school members. To add an additional non-school member, would require an increase in school members, and there have already been difficulties in filling existing vacancies.

Another option would be to reduce the number of Early Years Representatives to 1 and replace with another non-school member (which could be drawn from Trade Unions or other bodies). Forum members expressed concern that the early years sector would only be represented by a single individual on forum. Members expressed a desire to increase early years engagement with schools forum rather than delete the vacant post.

It was noted that the Primary Headteachers' group had expressed a view that attendance at Schools Forum meetings would not be an effective use of Trade Union Facilities Time.

RESOLVED

i) THAT the Schools Forum Constitution remain unchanged (unanimous)

4. AGREE AGENDA ITEMS

An additional paper had been circulated prior to this meeting, in relation to the DFE announcement made on 17 July on additional funding for schools. Covered in Item 8.

A brief item on induction for Forum members to be included at the end of the meeting.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED :

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [18 May 2017](#) be confirmed

6. ACTION POINTS FROM LAST MEETING

6.1 (Item 3) The Forum had been asked to comment on the consultation in respect of Sandown Bay Academy. A statement had been submitted by the Lead Member for Children's Services, outlining the 3 options available.

1 – AET to continue with their proposal. This is not a likely outcome.

2 – Regional Schools Commissioner to remove AET and replace with another Academy Sponsor. There are 96 other academies awaiting a new sponsor.

3 – The preferred option by IW Council. To increase the age-range of The Bay CE Primary School to 4–16 (or 18) and provide all-through education in Sandown. This requires due diligence on both financial and educational viability and would need to be signed off under Cabinet delegated authority.

The IOW Council consultation ends on 24 July and had received 1486 responses by 10 July. Approximately 98% want a school in Sandown and 85% favour the all-through school option.

The LA is in regular communication with all parties - including AET. The IOW MP, Cllr Bob Seely, is taking this forward at Westminster.

No further comment was made by Forum members.

- 6.2 (Item 6) PS had sent apologies for this meeting.

Action – Clerk to contact PS and request feedback on any response from The Free School re contributing towards Trade Union Facilities Time

- 6.3 Action points on Inclusion, Home Educated Children and Growth Fund are included in Items 9.1 and 10.1.

7. STRATEGY GROUP

A meeting of the strategy group was held on 7 June. Minutes were not taken, but a record of subsequent meetings will be provided. BH gave an overview –

- There was a strong focus on rigour and the detail that Forum members requested to be included in budget reports.
- The group discussed how to reduce the risk of further overspending on SEN and High Needs.
- An explanation of what is covered within budget lines was also requested.

As a result, Appendix B to [Paper C](#) provides summary detail for each budget heading to assist members in understanding how budgets are used. This is a work in progress and feedback to BH would be appreciated.

It was noted that the summary and explanations of terminology will contribute toward the effectiveness of the Schools Forum.

8. SCHOOLS FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT [PAPER D](#)

An additional report was circulated prior to this meeting, in relation to the ministerial announcement made on 17 July re additional £1.3 billion funding for schools and Local Authorities (LAs). More details are expected in the Operational Guidance that is due to be published soon. A response to the consultation on the National Funding Formula and High Needs Funding Formula is expected in September 2017.

The National Funding Formula (NFF) will be introduced on a soft basis from 2018/19 through 2019/20. The national formula allocations for all mainstream schools will be allocated to LAs for re-distribution under a local formula. The hard NFF is expected to be introduced from 2020/21, dependent on the National situation at that time.

- 8.1 The formula for a notional allocation to LAs will be announced in September 2017, with the amount that any school can gain, capped at 3% per pupil. There is also a floor increase of 0.5%, so that all schools will receive some increase in comparison to 2017/18. Local consultation with schools and the Schools Forum will take place in the Autumn.

Members were informed that this is a notional allocation and protection is on a per-pupil basis, so schools with falling pupil numbers are likely to still see an overall reduction in funding.

A minimum funding level for secondary schools will be £4,800 per pupil. Two secondary schools on the Island are currently below this level, but are expected to be above by 2019/20.

The majority of the schools block will be ring-fenced, with some flexibility allowed through agreement with Schools Forum.

For LA Funding and High Needs, LAs will receive a minimum of 0.5% more than in 2017/18 and 1% more in 2019/20 if they are under the baseline. This would bring an additional £74,000 and £149,000 in the respective years, dependant on final confirmation of the formula and if the IOW remains below the funding floor.

- 8.2 Pupil Premium will continue unchanged and Sports Premium will be doubled. These increases will be funded through savings made by DFE, from Healthy Pupils capital funding, the Free School programme and DFE central support.

Members asked how technical adjustments may affect the final allocation for LA funding and high needs. BH explained that 2017/18 budgets will be used to identify the baseline, but the DfE will make some adjustments to these for any changes in funding methodology. In the consultation it was proposed that funding would be reduced for LAs who 'export' more pupils to other LAs for educational provision. The IOW falls into this category.

It was confirmed that it is the role of the Schools Forum to agree, monitor and challenge central funding on the IOW.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Schools Forum note the update on schools funding

9. SCHOOLS BUDGET OUTTURN [PAPER B](#)

There was no change from the draft report presented in May 2017, showing an overall deficit of £336,000 to be carried forward.

- 9.1 Forum had requested more information on support for Inclusion and Elective Home Education (EHE). For Inclusion, the budget covers 1 x LA Inclusion Manager to provide support in schools for those pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion. There is also a top-up budget of £18,000 for additional provision in schools where needed, through agreement with the Officer.

Members asked about the impact of the work of the Inclusion Officer. The role is to support schools, liaise with parents and put strategies in place to encourage pupil engagement.

It was confirmed that, where a pupil has an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP), funding for additional support will come from the SEN budgets.

For EHE, the budget covers 1 x Home Education Officer and respective administration. This includes an initial visit, discussion on educational plans, annual reviews on the suitability of the education for each child and safeguarding. The IOW Council [Home Education Policy](#) provides further information.

Parents do not have to engage and the role of the Home Education Officer is to maintain a relationship with them. It was noted that the Officer also sits on SEN panels and is pro-active on behalf of parents.

If parents do not register their child for EHE, the IW Council will not know about them.

Action – An update on EHE engagement levels and number of known EHE pupils to be brought to the next meeting

- 9.2 A number of schools are shown to be in deficit and members asked how the LA supports and manages this. There are meetings with Headteachers and School Business Managers (SBMs) and a recovery plan must be agreed before a school is permitted to set a deficit budget. Where required, support has been

provided by school improvement and local authority finance officers to identify savings that can be made to enable a deficit to be recovered. Where there are further issues or a school does not meet the requirements in the scheme, a Notice of Concern can be issued. There is a clear expectation that deficit will be addressed.

The IOW Council [Scheme for Financing Schools](#) provided further information on a Notice of Concern and when responsibility for a school's delegated budget may be removed from the governing body. Where there are wider issues with the governance and management of a school, the governing board (GB) could be replaced by an Interim Executive Board (IEB). It was agreed that it is a slow process and members were concerned about the situation at Christ the King, showing a £2.5m deficit at March 2017. Members were assured that other schools are not subsidising a large deficit. It was confirmed that the deficit cannot be written off and the schools' budget would not be top-sliced to support this deficit. Schools are funded transparently through a local funding formula which schools and schools forum are consulted on. The only DSG funding which can be used to support schools in financial difficulty with additional funding is the de-delegated contingency, which is not sufficient funding to have a material impact on the deficit.

The [Schools Causing Concern](#) guidance gives more detail on the implementation of an IEB.

- 9.3 From March 2016 to March 2017 school balances decreased by £902,000 from £1.6m to £738,000. The planned balance for March 2017 was a deficit of £387,000 which tends to show a degree of pessimism over school budgets.

In March 2016, there were 5 schools in deficit, which has increased to 11 schools in March 2017. These schools must engage with the LA, as noted in para 9.2.

Planned balances for March 2018 have been received from all schools. 9 schools are showing a planned deficit, totalling £1.4m, although work is ongoing with these schools. 3-year plans, projecting to 2019/20 show a worsening situation, but the LA is working with schools to ensure issues are addressed.

BH noted that the report refers to maintained schools only.

Forum members expressed concern that ongoing deficits would lead to some schools becoming unsustainable in the long term. The LA is supporting schools to address overall issues around income and expenditure.

It is difficult to compare variances in school budgets to LA central budgets, as they show a different cumulative position and differ proportionally.

It was agreed that it is important to manage the situation, particularly where a school has a large, increasing deficit. The LA provides an additional level of scrutiny and challenge, and is increasing proactive support.

GBs need to have a clear understanding of finance and financial issues and compliance, in schools. Governors should be involved in completion of the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) and show competence in managing the budget. Some have picked this up, but more support is required.

RESOLVED

- i) THAT the final outturn position for the 2016/17 schools budget be noted
- ii) THAT the school balances at 31 March 2017 be noted
- iii) THAT the planned balances for March 2018 to March 2020 be noted

10. SCHOOLS BUDGET MONITORING PAPER C

The budget position for 2017/18 at 30 June 2017 shows a forecast overspend of £118,000. As requested by Forum members, Appendix A shows a breakdown of the budget and Appendix B is a summary explanation of the budget headings.

The High Needs Block is showing an overspend of £168,000 which is partially offset by an underspend of £49,000 in the Schools Block. With the deficit brought forward from 2016/17 and overall deficit of £454,000 is forecast. It was confirmed that the High Needs deficit is likely to increase.

From September 2017, the LA will be in a better position to forecast the variance and this will inform the budget setting process, to include any deficit brought forward. Further information on this and the 2018/19 budget will be available for the next meeting, in October.

- 10.1 Para 6 of the report gives information on the 2017/18 allocation of growth fund to Greenmount Primary School, which members requested at the last meeting, held in May. This is for the final year (Year 6 pupils), as Greenmount increased their PAN from 2011, which coincides with their move to a new site.

In future, Greenmount will receive full funding based on all year groups, as shown in their census.

10.2 HIGH NEEDS

An overspend of £58,000 on top-up funding for special schools is based on actual numbers in the summer term and expected intake in September, including pupils allocated through the SEN panel. It was noted that Medina House is over occupied, with pupils waiting for places, in mainstream schools. St Georges is a larger school and more pupils are allocated places through the SEN panel when they reach secondary age.

There is an estimated overspend of £117,000 in top up funding for pupils in mainstream schools with EHCPs (based on LSA support in summer 2016, compared with that in summer 2017). It was also noted that SEN provision often costs schools far more than the notional £6,000 allowed, and has a greater impact on school budgets. Some schools have a disproportionate amount of pupils with EHCPs, and can receive additional SEN cap funding. Members felt that the government do not recognise the level of need and financial support required for SEN.

Staff vacancies and employment on lower pay-scale points has led to an expected underspend of £25,000 in central SEN teams.

Early Years SEN shows an expected overspend of £22,000 which may increase, depending on the uptake (by SEN children) of the 30 hours free entitlement. Additional funding from the early years block may be needed in 2018/19 to uplift the budget to meet any additional demand.

Overspending is of considerable concern in this area and difficult decisions are likely to be necessary.

RESOLVED

THAT the June position of the 2017/18 schools budget be noted.

11. Induction for New Schools Forum Members

It was agreed to compile an Induction Pack for New Forum Members.

Action – Clerk to research other LAs and put new pack together

12. DATES OF FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Thursday 19 October 2017

Thursday 21 December 2017

Tuesday 16 January 2018

Thursday 22 March 2018

Thursday 10 May 2018

Thursday 19 July 2018

All at 9.00am

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

CHAIR