



Minutes

Name of meeting	SCHOOLS FORUM
Date and time	9.15AM – TUESDAY 16 JANUARY 2018
Venue	COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE, WESTRIDGE, BRADING ROAD, RYDE PO33 1QS
Present	Beverley Gilbert (Chair) – Brading CE Primary Caroline Sice – Lanesend Primary Academy Kay Wood – Summerfields Primary Eric Hemming – St Blasius CE Primary Academy and St Francis Catholic and CE Primary Academy Mike Hayward – Island Innovation Federation Matthew Parr-Burman – Island Innovation Federation (<i>Substitute</i>) Paul Buckland– Isle of Wight College (<i>Substitute</i>) Julie Stewart – Medina House School Jackie Boxx – Island Learning Centre
Elected Member	Cllr Paul Brading – Cabinet Member for Children’s Services
Officers	Brian Pope – Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion Brendan Hodson – Senior Accountant Diane Hiscock – Clerk
Observers	Parent Voice Representative
Apologies	Barry Downer - Senior Finance Business Partner David Thornton – Federation of Carisbrooke and Newport CEPs John Bailey – Haylands Primary Fidelma Washington – Isle of Wight College Karen Begley – Island Innovation Federation

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

As BG was expected to arrive late it was agreed that KW would chair the first part of the meeting.

Introductions were made for the benefit of new attendees.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED :

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [21 December 2017](#) be confirmed

4. ACTION POINTS FROM LAST MEETING (See also Item 7)

4.1 (Item 5.1) BG to feedback on letter to Free School.

4.2 (Item 6.1) BP reported that he is awaiting a copy of the letter from Hampshire Schools Forum and will share with BG as soon as possible.

4.3 (Item 9.1) A report on use and impact of the Early Years (EY) Central Services budget was included in Paper C (See Item 8)

4.4 Re Item 9.3 BP noted that very school schools tend to remain viable due to the lump sum in the funding formula and gave examples. Viability concerns are with slightly larger schools where the per-pupil impact of the lump sum is lower, but the school does not benefit from the economies of scale of large schools.

BG joined the meeting at 9.25am and assumed the chair.

5. SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA 2018/19 [Paper B](#)

5.1 BH explained that the appendix to Paper B, showing the funding formula values had been updated. This was due to changes received from DfE on Free School Meals (FSM) data, which led to minor adjustments. The updated paper had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The formula is in line with the agreement made at the [December 2017](#) Schools Forum meeting, that formula factors, excluding the lump sum, would be adjusted in proportion in order to balance the overall funding for schools.

5.2 After the £50,000 allocation for the Growth Fund (agreed at the December 2017 meeting) and the 0.5% transfer to the High Needs block (agreed at the November 2017 meeting), the final total for distribution to schools is £69,069,000.

5.3 SPARSITY FUNDING

Members discussed eligibility criteria for sparsity funding, which is based on the autumn census of pupil population and the distance to the next nearest school from the postcode of the pupil's home address. The funding is for small schools (average year group size of 21.4 for primary) and larger schools cannot qualify. Following the October 2017 census, Godshill Primary School has become eligible for this funding. Two other schools currently eligible are Chillerton & Rookley Primary School and Brighstone CE Primary School. It was confirmed that schools may be eligible in one year, but not the next, so should not rely on this element of funding when planning ahead.

Sparsity funding is included in the National Funding Formula as protection for small, more remote schools. It was included in the Local Funding Formula for 2018/19 following the agreement by the Schools Forum to follow the National Funding Formula as closely as possible. Members felt that details of sparsity funding were not clear in the consultation on the funding formula.

It was agreed to review this area of funding over 2 – 3 years, depending on how the National Funding Formula evolves and what flexibility there is for any Local Funding Formula in future years.

Action – When school budgets are allocated, the local authority (LA) to make it clear to schools that are currently eligible for sparsity funding that they may not continue to be eligible in future years.

To revisit this item in the Autumn term 2018.

5.4 MINIMUM FUNDING GUARANTEE (MFG)

Schools were able to comment on the level of MFG (between -1.5% and 0.5%) applied to the 2018/19 budget, in the consultation that was carried out in November 2017. Schools Forum members discussed and commented at the meetings held on [30 November 2017](#) and [21 December 2017](#) and agreed the MFG would be -1.5% for 2018/19. Comments were received about the high levels of MFG some schools have received recently and in the 2018/19 allocations, and on how long this funding will continue to be deducted from other schools.

[Paper B](#) outlined some special circumstances in which the DfE may agree to dis-apply the MFG, but these are very limited. A change to the funding formula would not be considered a reason for dis-application of the MFG.

It was confirmed that the MFG exists for a reason – to protect small schools and avoid a ‘cliff-edge’ scenario. It protects schools against a difference between funding from one year to the next, to provide some stability. Members considered whether schools who had been in receipt of MFG protection for some years should continue to do so and whether this is in keeping with ‘fair funding’.

In reality, there is little flexibility for the LA and the decision to continue cannot be changed for the 2018/19 budget.

It was felt that Headteachers and School Business Managers need to understand the purpose of and allocation criteria for the MFG. The Schools Forum should monitor and quality-assure the overall impact on school budgets.

It was noted that the National Funding Formula is no longer referred to as the National Fair Funding Formula. LAs need to continue to lobby for fair distribution of funding between LAs.

Three Island schools are currently receiving high levels of MFG protection, these are St Francis Primary Academy, Lanesend Primary Academy and Oakfield CE Primary School.

Action – BH to bring a report on MFG to the Schools Forum Meeting on 10 May 2018 for consideration

RESOLVED :

THAT the final proposed funding formula in appendix A of Paper B be noted (school and academy members).

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

6.1 The following questions had been raised prior to the meeting, following submission of 200 comments on high needs funding via the IOW Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Facebook page.

In relation to the Secondary ASD units and the ASD Outreach Service –

1. What data has the committee used to make its judgement that secondary ASD units do not have enough demand to justify continuing to offer 24 places?
2. Has the committee commissioned any studies to determine the likely impact of withdrawing the ASD Outreach Service at the same time as reducing the number of secondary ASK unit spaces available?

In relation to reducing and withdrawing services –

1. Has an impact analysis been completed to highlight the risks of reducing/withdrawing services? If so, where can these be found?
2. Given the expectation of co-production at strategic level, how has the IOW Council involved service users, as part of this decision making? Has the local area parent carer forum been involved?
3. Why was there not a formal consultation?

6.2 Response – At the [November 2017](#) meeting, Schools Forum agreed the transfer of funding to reduce the total high needs savings required and, following discussions in a working group of headteachers and officers, endorsed the list of savings in that paper. However, Schools Forum is a consultative body for high needs and the final decision for how the high needs budget is spent is the responsibility of the LA. The above questions have been forwarded to the LA SEN team for a more details response.

A further explanation was given in relation to the reduction of ASD resourced provision places – places are commissioned and paid for in advance, but in recent years not all have been filled, so vacant places are being funded. If the requirement is for more than the number of commissioned places in any year, the LA would provide funding for these.

In addition, pupil numbers have been increased at Medina House and St George's special schools, to help cope with demand.

The issue is that the High Needs Block is not sufficient to meet the ongoing demand for provision. Headteachers and the LA are committed to working together to retain quality.

Action – Full response from the LA SEN team to be sent to the parent representative in attendance at this meeting and reported to the next Schools Forum meeting on 22 March 2018.

7. ACTION POINTS FROM LAST MEETING (continued from item 4)

7.1 BG had composed and read out a letter to the Free School to request contribution to Trade Union Facilities time. The Free School would be expected to pay a contribution around £1,937, which would cover 10 days supply and comprehensive support for union members. A refusal to contribute could result in the school being charged for individual support and could amount to a greater overall cost.

7.2 The chair of the Primary Headteachers Forum is to write a letter to the government regarding high needs funding and will copy to BG. All Headteachers are encouraged to send written representations. BP will also forward a copy of the letter from Hampshire Schools Forum.

Action - BG will then write on behalf of the IOW Schools Forum

8. SCHOOLS BUDGET 2018/19 [Paper C](#)

8.1 This paper was presented as a follow-up to the meeting held in December 2017, requiring agreement with regards to the EY Central Team and a decision on De-delegation from secondary school representatives.

EARLY YEARS

8.2 Members had requested further information on staffing and administration of the EY Central team, meetings, projects and the impact of the service. A breakdown of the proposed increase in budget for 2018/19 was shown in paragraph 6 of the report. This included

- pay inflation and salary increments
- increase in working time of the advisory teacher and administrative support
- cost of wider support provided by the Hampshire CC Area Manager and ongoing performance management
- a reduction in the budget for provider costs due to historic underspends on projects
- minor reductions in the budgets for sundry costs

The team is managed on the Island by Sarah Teague, Service Manager for Learning & Development, but as the Island is in partnership with Hampshire, it is necessary for Hampshire to maintain oversight and responsibility for performance of the team.

8.3 An overview of the team and key roles carried out were covered in paragraphs 10 and 11 of the report. Paragraph 12 showed consistently positive Ofsted outcomes through 2015 – 2017. The ‘Changing Destinies’ project helped to reduce the Free School Meals (FSM) attainment gap from 18% to 14%. It was also noted that the Social Mobility Commission has recently rated the Isle of Wight as the top performing LA area for Early Years.

8.4 As discussed at the Schools Forum Meeting held in December 2017, the DfE EY benchmarking tool shows the proposed central early years budget to be less than national average, regional and statistical neighbours – so the budget is far from excessive.

A consultation with providers is ongoing regarding the proposal to maintain the current hourly per pupil rate for the SEN inclusion fund. Proposed hourly rates were shown with minimal change in paragraph 19 and compared with 2017/18. BH has attended an EY briefing and a Childminders briefing to give information and the closing date is the end of January 2018. So far, there has been a low response. Previously, providers had been in favour of continuing with the existing funding formula.

It was confirmed that high needs funding would cover children with Education Health & Care (EHC) plans. Top-up funding (additional support for children with a significant delay in their development) are split between high needs funding for children with EHCPs and EY SEN funding for children without EHCPs. Access to this will continue to be subject to assessment by an EY SEN professional.

It was confirmed that funding for the Central EY Service is deducted before money goes out to providers. Members were asked to bear in mind that small providers, such as childminders will not have a budget for Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The LA has a statutory duty to provide a service for EY providers.

Members agreed the need to invest in this sector and noted that EY outcomes are a point of celebration.

RESOLVED :

THAT the proposed Central EY budget of £227,000 be approved.

THAT the consultation with providers on the EY Funding Formula and the SEN Inclusion fund be noted and the approach to minimise any changes to the formula for 2018/19 be endorsed.

8.5 SECONDARY DE-DELEGATION OF SERVICES

Secondary school representatives were asked to agree on whether to continue to de-delegate funding for selected services in 2018/19 as outlined in paragraph 21 of [paper C](#).

- The contingency fund at £5 per pupil has not been used in recent years and it was proposed that this be discontinued.
- Licenses and subscriptions cover financial systems such as HCSS, SIMS and the Financial Reporting Suite. The LA is able to negotiate a better rate on behalf of schools if funding is de-delegated.
- Trade Union Facilities Time is charged at £3.38 per pupil and covers representation for union members for all schools as required.
- Checking eligibility for FSM is a service that saves considerable time for schools

Primary schools have agreed to de-delegate funding for all services, except the contingency fund. If the age-range at The Bay Primary School is extended to include secondary provision, an automatic adjustment will be made to their contribution for de-delegation.

RESOLVED :

THAT secondary schools continue to de-delegate funding for services as detailed in paragraph 23 of the report, excluding the contingency fund. (secondary representatives)

8.6 OVERALL SCHOOLS BUDGET

Appendix B of the report showed a breakdown of the proposed school budget allocations for 2018/19. Members were asked to agree these.

RESOLVED :

THAT the proposed budget allocations for 2018/19 set out in Appendix B be agreed.

9. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Schools Forum has been arranged to take place **Thursday 22 March 2018 – 8.30am** at Westridge CLC (*Note earlier start time*).

10. DATES OF FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Thursday 10 May 2018

Thursday 19 July 2018

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

CHAIR