



Minutes

Name of meeting	SCHOOLS FORUM
Date and time	8.30AM – THURSDAY 19 July 2018
Venue	COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE, WESTRIDGE, BRADING ROAD, RYDE PO33 1QS
Present	Beverley Gilbert (Chair) – Brading CE Primary David Thornton – Federation of Carisbrooke and Newport CEPs Eric Hemming – St Blasius CE Primary Academy and St Francis Catholic and CE Primary Academy Mike Hayward – Island Innovation Federation Kay Wood – Summerfields Primary Duncan Mills – Cornerstone Federation Fidelma Washington – Isle of Wight College Julie Stewart – Medina House School Jackie Boxx – Island Learning Centre Amanda Bitchenor – Chatterbox Day Nursery
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 Brendan Hodson – Finance Business Partner Chris Jones – SEN Service Manager Janet Hoff – Hampshire Commissioning Team Andrew Briggs – Post 16 Commissioning and Funding Manager Diane Hiscock – Clerk
Apologies	Caroline Sice – Lanesend Primary Academy Robert Dare – Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth Matthew Parr-Burman – Island Innovation Federation (<i>Substitute</i>)

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

BG welcomed members, officers and observers to the meeting.

- 1.1 Membership Update – A nomination has been received for Jayne Hill from Niton Pre-School and Brighstone Pre-School to fill the vacancy for an early years (EY) representative. All EY providers have been notified for comment so that the appointment may be confirmed for the next meeting in October.

There is one other vacancy for a primary governor representative, which will be followed up in September.

It was noted at the last meeting that Duncan Mills had been elected to represent primary headteachers and would be attending this meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Questions had been received in relation to high needs provision requiring a specific response, but were deemed outside the remit and terms of reference of the Schools Forum. These have been passed to the appropriate officers for a full response to be given.

It was agreed that forum members should revisit the terms of reference for clarity.

Action – Review of Terms of Reference to be brought to the meeting on 18 October 2018

4. ANNUAL WORKPLAN

The workplan had been updated and was circulated for consideration. Members agreed to add the following items as the meeting progressed –

- 18 October 2018 – Review terms of reference
 - Revisit 3-year plan for schools budget
- 20 December 2018 – Further update on school placements

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED :

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [10 May 2018](#) be confirmed.

6. ACTION POINTS FROM LAST MEETING

6.1 (Item 4.1) BG had sent a letter to Trade Union representatives on behalf of the Schools Forum, informing them of the decision made by the Island Free School, not to contribute towards Trade Union Facilities Time.

6.2 (Item 4.2) BG and CS had sent a reply to the Secretary of State, reiterating concerns regarding high needs funding for the IOW, including the impact on school budgets of rising costs and elective home education.

Action – Copy to be sent to Bob Seeley, MP for the IOW and to PB and BP

It was noted that the overspend of the high needs budget on the Island is low in comparison to some other local authorities (LAs). The Minister for Schools has acknowledged that high needs funding is a matter of national concern. A view was given that the DfE is seeking evidence to support a request for additional funding as part of the government's spending review. If and when the funding crisis is resolved, deficits will have to be recovered.

Members discussed the impact of having to make difficult decisions and reductions in services. It was noted that schools are absorbing the pressure. The Schools Forum is a partnership board, working collectively with the LA to manage the schools budget, whilst providing necessary challenge and review on behalf of their representative groups.

Action – Add review of 3-Year Budget Plan to agenda for next meeting

6.3 (Item 5.4) It was proposed to send a letter to EY providers regarding census forms and include an offer of support sessions and advice, to help providers with completion of the forms. Providers who submitted forms with incorrect/unclear information will be advised and encouraged to attend.

Action – BH to compose letter for BG to sign on behalf of Schools Forum

6.4 (Items 4.2 and 6.6) covered in Item 8 – SEN Reports.

7. 2017/18 SCHOOL BALANCES AND SCHOOL BUDGETS

7.1 SCHOOL BALANCES

BH reported that there had been no change to the outturn position since last reported in May 2018. The final adjustment in the 2017/18 EY block was £18,000 lower than the estimated adjustment, which will contribute an underspend of £18,000 in the EY Block in the 2018/19 budget.

7.2 Appendix A showed a list of maintained school balances. Academies do not have to publish balances and are not comparable, as they account for their finances on a different basis to maintained schools, particularly capital.

7.3 School balances decreased by £378,000 between March 2017 and March 2018. This is the result of an overall decrease in balances in the primary sector and a modest increase in the other sectors. There is a general theme that schools are being pessimistic when setting budgets and actual balances are regularly higher than those projected in May budget plans.

7.4 The number of schools in deficit at March 2018 is 12, in comparison to 11 at March 2017. This is the result of 1 school moving from a deficit to a surplus budget and 2 schools moving from surplus to deficit. Where school 3-year forecasts show a move towards a deficit budget, the LA will write to the chair of governors and headteacher to request further detail on how this will be managed.

7.5 Members asked about schools that show a significant variance in balance. This will depend on the individual circumstances of each school and may include staffing issues or use of balances to maintain the same provision. It was felt that schools could benefit from collaborative work, where schools in surplus may be able to provide advisory support to schools in deficit. BP outlined ways in which schools are currently working together, such as the introduction of an 'Affordable Curriculum' which is not too broad, but is Progress 8 compliant. Work is also underway on reviewing management structures in secondary schools and headteacher/management/ pastoral roles in primary schools.

JB entered the meeting at 9.10am

7.6 Members sought clarification on the position regarding Sandown Bay Academy. It was confirmed that The Bay CE School will be an all-through school and the LA will not inherit any deficit from Academies Enterprise Trust (AET). AET will also fund alteration work that is required for September.

7.7 At June 2018, planned balances for March 2019 show an expectation for 33 schools to have a surplus budget and 9 schools to be in deficit, with an overall deficit budget of £449,000. 3-year plans that have been submitted anticipate 22 schools to be in deficit by March 2021 and these will be followed up by the LA. However, the year-end balance at March 2018 was £1.6m higher than planned - an indication that schools are being cautious when setting budgets.

DM entered the meeting at 9.20am

7.8 Members discussed how schools can be proactive in working towards a sustainable educational provision across the Island. Governing boards (GBs) have the responsibility to manage their individual school budgets and schools have autonomy to make decisions on federation or academy status. The LA would intervene in cases of concern and The Education and Skills Funding Authority (ESFA) oversees academies.

7.9 SCHOOL FUNDING

BH informed the forum that the school funding operational guidance for 2019/20 is expected to be published in July, which should allow earlier consultation with schools on the local funding formula (LFF). BH gave an overview of the minor changes anticipated for LA allocations as noted in [Paper C](#).

7.10 The LFF will remain mostly the same. There is an allowance to use optional factors that could protect schools' funding against a reduction in comparison to 2017/18, but schools will already receive protection in relation to 2018/19 funding through the minimum funding guarantee. So, it was not thought necessary to provide additional protection at the expense of gaining schools.

7.11 Members were asked to endorse the proposals to consult with schools on the basis that the local formula would –

- Retain the lump sum at the same level as 2018/19
- Allocate the premises factors and rates based on actual costs, including any adjustments to 2018/19 allocations
- Allocate the remaining funding in the same proportions as the NFF individual formula values, increasing or decreasing the values in proportion to balance to the overall budget available

7.12 Members asked for clarification on any other options that may be available. It was felt that the above options will provide some stability for schools, at a time when government plans for the NFF for 2020/21 and beyond are unknown. An overall approach to funding for 2019/20 will be discussed further at the Schools Forum meetings on 18 October and 20 December 2018.

RESOLVED :

THAT the school balances as at 31 March 2018 and planned balances for March 2019 to March 2021 be noted.

THAT the approach to determine the 2019/20 funding formula, for consultation with schools, be on the same basis as 2018/19.

It was also agreed that schools should be made aware of any alternative options, following publication of the operational guidance in July.

CJ, JH and AB entered the meeting at 9.40am

8. SEN REPORTS [Paper B](#)

8.1 At the last forum meeting AB gave a presentation on provision for high needs post-16 students. Members had asked for further information on achievement and progression. Due to the small numbers of students in this category an original report produced, showing number of EHCP students by provider, may have enabled individual students to be identified. Therefore, an abbreviated overview report was submitted.

8.2 AB had sent a request to all post-16 providers, requesting data on progression of students with SEND. It was disappointing to note that none of the secondary schools had replied.

8.3 The report, based on replies received, showed that the majority of students either progress on to other educational establishments or work related learning. Most providers receive students up to the age of 18, after which they tend to go on to the IW College. The IOW figures for this cohort show 3.9% Not in

Education, Employment or Training (NEET) against a national average of 6.0%. The participation rate is 99.1% against a national average of 94.5%. Over a 3-year period the trend of students moving on to traineeships, supported internships or apprenticeships has increased from 3% to 13%.

8.4 The IW college had submitted achievement data showing good outcomes and included a range of positive comments from Ofsted. AB noted that all students have to achieve a qualification in English and Maths.

8.5 27 High Needs students were not included in the report, due to there being no response from secondary schools.

Action – AB to write to secondary schools to express disappointment on behalf of the Schools Forum and Cllr Brading. Members to convey this message to secondary colleagues

8.6 The projection of 19 – 25 year olds with SEND will impact on the high needs budget and numbers are increasing as EHCPs are introduced for post-16 students. It was noted that the SEND reforms in 2014 had not expected the level of support required for all SEN students to continue until they reach the age of 25. Officers need to engage with annual reviews at age 13 – 14 in order to assist with setting expectations for the future and prepare students for life.

8.7 UPDATE ON FINANCIAL SAVINGS ON PROCUREMENT OF OFF-ISLAND PLACEMENTS

JH was appointed to the commissioning team which was established in April 2018 in Hampshire and will be working in partnership with the IOW. An update was given on work being undertaken.

8.8 A review of out-of-county placements –

- Attendance at reviews of high cost placements, looking at alternative options
- Establishment of a consistent decision-making process on spending
- Analysis of needs of pupils and EHCPs – developing provision to suit these
- Ensure delivery of education placement in the most effective way

More recently, the County Placement Group have considered cost-effective ways of meeting the needs in relation to IOW pupil places. JH has attended reviews held on the mainland for pupils under 16 and has worked with AB on establishing a consistent approach for post-16 students.

Placements of pupils from Hampshire on the IOW are also being reviewed.

8.9 Post 16 students are being supported towards readiness for work. Liaison with Adult Services is ongoing to prepare students in the 19 – 25 age range for work and to bring them back into the local community.

8.10 A joint plan is being developed for Social, Emotional and Mental Health provision and support for Behavioural Needs. A joint strategy will help to commission places in different ways, providing better value for money. In the longer term, work will be developed with other LAs to identify further opportunities and create better buying power.

8.11 Members asked for details of actual costs and when proposed savings are likely to be seen. Joint commissioning work is in the early stages and reviews of provision are underway. Work is progressing quickly and in the right direction, but consultation on change is necessary. There will be capital implications, but the long term strategy is expected to achieve savings.

8.12 It was noted that other LAs are considering alternative ways of funding post-16 provision, to enable more certainty for colleges and other providers. It was

agreed that EHCPs should be outcome-focussed, rather than linked to specified hours of support. Special schools already work on this basis.

Action – Report on high needs provision and procurement to be included in the budget report for the meeting on 20 December 2018

9. 2018/19 BUDGET MONITORING Paper D and Appendix C

9.1 BH reported a forecast overspend of £155,000 as at 30 June 2018. This is due to pressure on the High Needs Block. Appendix A shows a breakdown of the budget position. The projected deficit, taking account of the £704,000 deficit brought forward from last year, is £859,000.

9.2 Appendix C showed an overview of proposed savings in the High Needs Block. This has been rag-rated to indicate the risks of delivery of individual savings.

BH noted that there is a forecast underspend of £30,000 in the Central School Services Block as there were currently no non-SEN independent school placements, which had not been included in the report narrative.

9.3 SCHOOLS BLOCK

An underspend of £50,000 is expected due to no schools being eligible to receive growth funding and none are anticipated for the forthcoming year.

9.4 EARLY YEARS BLOCK

There were no specific variances in the Early Years Block.

9.5 HIGH NEEDS BLOCK

BH gave a brief explanation of the following –

- £33,000 underspend in resourced provision place funding due to more places being funded at the £6,000 rate
- £44,000 overspend in top-up funding for resourced provisions due to more pupils than budgeted being placed in the provision at Carisbrooke College
- £19,000 overspend in special school top-up funding due to an increase in pupils funded at high bands. A further overspend would occur if special school placements increased beyond current occupancy, and JS confirmed that Medina House expects to over occupy from September.
- £27,000 overspend in top-up funding for pupils attending the Island Learning Centre (ILC) based on actual occupancy in 2017/18, which is on an upward trend. The proposed SEMH provision at Hunnyhill may help to relieve this.
- £25,000 overspend in EY top-up funding, due to a sharp increase in demand, higher than in previous years and rising.

9.6 Forum members discussed the rising number of EHCPs, and the backlog in ASD diagnosis coming through from NHS. Parents are becoming frustrated when they are unable to access Occupational Therapy and other NHS services. The LA must ensure that educational needs are met, regardless of whether a diagnosis has been made.

9.7 The number of placements in independent and non-maintained special schools is increasing pre-16. Although placements have decreased slightly in the post-16 sector, the overall cost has increased. It was felt that early provision for high needs SEN would help to save money in the long term. As schools have to cut down, issues increase more quickly.

- 9.8 It is hoped to achieve planned savings of £350,000 through reductions in central SEN services and joint working with Hampshire, but this will not be achieved in the current year. A series of SEN inspections are taking place and efficiency of the service is being scrutinized.
- 9.9 Members felt that keeping specialist teachers and support workers would justify the overspends. It was confirmed that the purpose of making savings is to achieve better value for money. Consultation would have to take place on proposals for changes in service delivery.
- 9.10 Members queried the level of EHCPs on the island - the IOW has 3.5% EHCPs in comparison to a national figure of 2.9%.

RESOLVED :

THAT the 2018/19 schools budget position be noted.

10. **SUGGESTIONS FOR SAVINGS ON UTILITY COSTS**

DT suggested setting up a focus group to explore ideas around saving opportunities in relation to utility costs in schools. It was agreed that this would be best addressed through the Headteacher Forums and School Business Manager group.

Action – DT to make contact with relevant groups for further discussion

MG entered the meeting at 10.30am

11. **IOW SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS** [Paper E](#) and [Appendix A](#)

A draft of the revised IOW Scheme for Financing Schools, which applies to maintained schools, was sent to schools for consultation. The scheme was last updated in 2015. No comments had been received from schools.

- 11.1 At the Schools Forum meeting held on 18 May 2017, members had asked for the responsibility for redundancy and premature retirement payments to be reviewed, as part of the review of the scheme. BH informed members that legislation has not changed and that the legal responsibilities remain the same as in the previous scheme.
- 11.2 Members asked why the definitions between capital and revenue funding in relation to buildings had been removed. An overall definition is provided on Page 35 of the scheme and a further breakdown is not required.

RESOLVED :

THAT the revised scheme for financing schools be approved by maintained school representatives, to take effect from September 2018.

12. **INFORMATION ON SCHOOL PLACES**

MG gave a presentation on school places and noted that conversations with DfE are taking place to address surplus spaces. Data from the NHS shows that there is expected to be a significant dip in Yr R pupils in the year 2020/21. The following figures were reported –

	2019/20	2020/21
4 yr old population	1368	1160
Yr 4	1300	1109

- 12.1 This is an accurate snapshot, but data is checked regularly for consistency. The expected drop will incur issues regarding school places and will require

consideration of reductions in pupil admission numbers in some schools (PANs).

- 12.2 Areas have been rag rated and show the greatest concern to be in the west wight, south wight and an area within the east wight. Members asked if new housing projects have taken into account. This would only be the case if more than 584 houses were built per year and development tends to progress slower than is planned.
- 12.3 A reduction in school buildings is not a consideration at this time, but will be looked at in terms of alternative use. This would enable a reversion for education provision should the pupil population increase over time.
- 12.4 The situation requires good tracking and ongoing conversations with schools over sustainability, recruitment and the future. It is likely that applications made by parents, for children to change schools in-year will be refused, although these can go to appeal. Members discussed the implications of the pressure of reducing numbers and agreed that key discussions need to take place as soon as possible.

Action – MG and BP to take this information to the Primary Headteacher Forum

A further update on school places to be brought to the meeting on 20 December 2018

13. REPORTING TO SCHOOLS FORUM

For future meetings, any officer or other person who is to present or report to the schools forum will be required to submit a paper for consideration at the agenda planning meeting, which will be held no later than 8 days prior to the schools forum meeting.

14. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Schools Forum has been arranged to take place **Wednesday 17 October 2018 – 8.30am** at The Wight Innovation Centre, St Cross Business Park, Newport PO30 5WB

DATES OF FORTHCOMING MEETINGS – All at Westridge Community Learning Centre

Thursday 20 December 2018

Thursday 17 January 2019

Thursday 21 March 2019

8.30am start, all at

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

The meeting closed at 11.45am

CHAIR