

**SOUTHAMPTON SCHOOLS' FORUM
NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 20 JUNE 2012
AT CEDAR SCHOOL**

Present:

Primary School

David Turner	-	Governor
Colin Warburg	-	Governor
Liz Filer	-	Headteacher
Julie Swanston	-	Headteacher
Chris Bulmer	-	Headteacher

Secondary Schools

Ruth Evans	-	Headteacher
Karen Dagwell	-	Headteacher
Richard Harris	-	Governor (Chair)

Special Schools

Jonathan Howells	-	Headteacher
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Non Schools

Peter Sopowski	-	NUT Secretary
Beverley Murtagh	-	14-19 Partnership
Anna Wright	-	PVI for Early Years
Councillor Keogh	-	Council representative

Observers

Councillor Bogle	Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Councillor Turner	Swaythling Ward Councillor

Also in attendance:

Clive Webster	- Children's Services and Learning
Lynn Franklin	- Children's Services and Learning
Chris Tombs	- Children's Services and Learning
Karen Wardle	- Democratic Services

1. **APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

Apologies were received from Suzy Foster, Susan Trigger, Ian Golding, Mark Sheehan, Sue Thompson and Karen Stacey.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Keogh as the new Council representative and Councillor Bogle, the new Cabinet Member for Children's Services to the meeting.

Members passed a vote of thanks to Jonathan Howells who had very kindly provided the venue and refreshments for the meeting.

The next meeting was scheduled for 18 July and Ruth Evans, Cantell Maths and Computing College very kindly agreed to host the meeting.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Peter Sopowski reported he had an interest in the new school funding formula (item no 5) regarding the costs for trade union supply. It was agreed that the decision on this would be deferred to the next meeting.

3. **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2012 were approved as a correct record.

Matters arising

Richard Harris reported that he had emailed the DfE on behalf of the Schools Forum regarding concerns over the pupil count changing to October from January and the early cut off of funding for EAL.

4. **ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL BALANCES FOR 2011-12**

The Forum received a briefing paper from the Principal Accountant for Schools detailing the revenue and capital balances held by schools at the end of 2011/12 for comment.

The following issues and concerns were noted:

- there were no planned deficits for 2012/13;
- concern was expressed amongst some members regarding those schools with excess balances;
- it was suggested that those schools with excess balances be asked what they were planning to spend the money on;
- some schools had good reasons for excess balances and that the opportunity to share those reasons was welcomed;
- schools with excess balances did not have to provide any information as to why they this money to the local authority;
- it was acknowledged that often school budgets change and in some cases additional money had gone to the school from the authority late in the financial year which had not been budgeted for; and
- that it was positive news that overall there were no schools with a budget deficit.

RESOLVED that School Finance would prepare a brief summary questionnaire to attach to the committed school balance letters due to be sent out to schools asking for details of how they plan to spend their balances.

5. **MODELLING OF NEW SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA 2013-14**

The Forum considered a decision paper from the Education and Economic Development Finance Manager detailing the progress made on the development of the new School Funding Formula.

An additional briefing paper was tabled at the meeting regarding the school funding options that had been modelled options to date in order to determine how funding would be allocated from 2013-14.

The following issues and concerns were noted:

- That the Dedicated Schools Grant will consist of three blocks. The Schools Block would be allocated to schools. Schools could then decide whether to give back all or some of the money to be managed centrally;
- Money could be moved between the three blocks but would need permission from the Forum;
- The MFG would ensure that no school would not lose more than 1.5% per pupil;
- Initial modelling allocated less funding to schools in deprived areas;
- Further work was required on the notional SEN budget to ensure that funding would be targeted at schools with the highest levels of SEN;
- There was a discussion on the merits of allowing a transition time or whether the change should be implemented more quickly;
- Benchmarking will be carried out with authorities with similar levels of deprivation as Southampton such as Ealing;
- There would be a report to the Schools Forum in July for decision regarding the new formula. Consultation will be carried out with all schools in September and the outcome reported back to the Forum and the DfE in October;
- It was felt that the work was moving forward with the High Needs Block formula. The Special schools had agreed to keep the three place types (core, enhanced, exceptional). The top up funding would be based on pupil numbers and not the number of places. Work was also being carried out with other local authorities;
- The Forum was asked to contribute towards the funding gap for the PFI schools (up to £46 per pupil per year, worst case scenario) for the duration of the PFI contract (20 years). Negotiations were taking place to reduce the affordability gap with Interserve. Concern was expressed regarding schools being asked to commit to paying for this for such a long period of time. It was agreed this issue should be discussed with other Headteachers before a decision was taken; and
- The contributions from the schools block to school focused services delivered by the Council was discussed. There was a feeling expressed that the money should go back to the local authority, however it was felt this should be discussed with other Headteachers before a decision was taken.

RESOLVED that the Forum:

- (i) Note progress made to date on modelling of Southampton's new School Funding Formula and that a further paper would be brought to the Forum in July for a decision on which option to take to schools for consultation;
- (ii) Discuss further the authority's proposal to fund the PFI affordability gap from the Schools Budget with their representative groups / conferences; with a final decision to be taken at the July forum.
- (iii) Discuss the proposals for any contingency budgets to be managed by the local authority on their behalf with their representative groups / conferences, with a final decision to be taken at the July forum

Lynn Franklin offered to attend the meetings / Heads conferences to present and discuss the proposals presented to the Forum.

6. **USE OF ISB CONTINGENCY 2011-12**

The Forum received and noted the briefing paper of the Principal Accountant for Schools providing details on how the 2011/12 ISB contingency has been used.

There was a request that where possible schools should be advised sooner of any return of unallocated contingency.

7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

A training session was offered to bring members up to speed on all aspects of school funding reform. This was to take place on 3 July 2012 from 2.00pm to 3.30pm, location: Room 2, 2nd Floor, Southbrook Rise.