

**SCHOOLS FORUM
NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 25th JUNE 2014
FAIRISLE JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Present:

Primary School

Peter Howard	-	Headteacher
John Draper	-	Headteacher
Amanda Talbot-Jones	-	Headteacher
Julie Swanston	-	Headteacher

Secondary Schools

Richard Harris	-	Governor
Ruth Evans	-	Headteacher
Ewan Scott	-	Headteacher

Special Schools

Andy Evans	-	Headteacher
------------	---	-------------

Academies

David Turner	-	Townhill Infant School
--------------	---	------------------------

Pupil Referral Unit

Jane Smith	-	Headteacher
------------	---	-------------

Nursery

Karen Waters	-	Headteacher
--------------	---	-------------

Non Schools

Peter Sopowski	-	NUT Secretary
Alice Wrighton	-	Post 16 – Richard Taunton 6 th Form College
Councillor Paffey	-	SCC Councillor

Observers

Sue Thompson	-	Early Years/Sure Start
--------------	---	------------------------

Also in attendance:

Councillor Jeffery	-	Cabinet Member for Education and Change
Graham Talbot	-	SCC - People
Lynn Franklin	-	SCC - Finance
Sue Poynter	-	SCC - Finance
Sharon Pearson	-	SCC - Democratic Services

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

Apologies were received from Anna Wright, Anne Murphy, Liz Mizon and Jeannie Gibbons.

The following were welcomed:

Ewan Scott, who replaced Karen Dagwell as a Secondary Headteacher representative and Councillor Paffey the newly elected Council representative.

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

Ruth Evans, Cantell Maths and Computing College very kindly agreed to host the meeting scheduled for 10th September and Jane Smith, PRU kindly agreed to host the meeting scheduled for 22nd October.

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

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2014 were approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Item 6 - Page 4 - Community Language Trust

The Chair informed the meeting that following the Community Language Trust's request for financial assistance, additional funding had been granted to assist with the Trust's room hire expenses and once the pricing structure for the service had been re-organised, the service should become self-sustaining.

3. **SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING DATES FOR THE 2014/2015 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

The Forum received and noted the schedule of meeting dates for the 2014/2015 Municipal Year.

4. **FAIRER SCHOOLS FUNDING 2015/2016**

The Forum received and noted a briefing paper of the Principal Accountant, Education, providing details of the interim Fairer Schools Funding proposals for 2015/2016.

The following was noted:-

- the DfE (Department for Education) had advised that the introduction of a national funding formula would not be implemented in 2015/2016 and that it would potentially be a phased process commencing during 2017/2018 at the earliest;
- Southampton City Council had formally responded to the consultation on interim proposals regarding the setting of minimum funding levels in March 2014 and had indicated that the DfE's current proposal to utilise the average of all local authorities for each of the characteristics suggested, would not reflect how local authorities chose to weight rates applicable to local priorities;
- that the Government had made the following commitments:-
 - all local authorities would be funded at the same cash level per pupil in 2015/16 as provided in 2014/15;
 - a further £350m would be allocated to fund schools in the least fairly funded authorities; and
 - that no local authority or school would receive less funding as a result

of the proposals;

- a full review of the feedback received would be considered by the DfE over the summer and further guidance would be issued which would include the final minimum funding levels that would be applied for 2015/2016.

A discussion ensued and it was noted that officers would have a better indication of what “headroom” funding was available when the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding figures were received (which would be late December 2014), after which further consultation would need to be taken with the Schools Forum to explore targeting the headroom at factors where Southampton is below the national average.

It was AGREED that a further paper would be submitted in January 2015, recommending proposals for aligning the current Southampton City Council funding levels more closely to those minimum funding levels proposed by the DfE for 2015/2016.

5. **SCHOOL BALANCES**

The Forum received and noted a briefing paper of the Principal Accountant, Education, detailing the revenue and capital balances held by schools at the end of 2013/2014.

The following was noted:-

- 2013/2014 school balances had increased by £1.732m compared to 2012/2013 and the total value of the excess increased from £3.5m to £5m in 2013/2014;
- letters were in the process of being mailed to all schools, requesting confirmation of their commitments and future projects/works in terms of their balances and it was essential that any requested spend was in line with the individual school’s development plan; and
- a further paper providing details of spending plans would be submitted to the October meeting.

6. **DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT SAVINGS PROPOSALS 2015-2016**

The Forum received and noted a briefing paper of the Financial Accountant, providing details of proposed savings targets over the next two years and requesting Schools Forum members’ views on which savings should be supported.

The following comments and issues were noted:-

- that the People Directorate had been asked to make significant savings and in particular had a target to save £1m from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funded services in 2015/16; a paper detailing these savings would be submitted to Council in November 2014;
- the DSG funded three areas which were the Schools Block, Early Years Block and High Needs Block and any central services that were retained by the local authority in the Schools Block and Early Years Block had to be approved by the Schools Forum. However, the local authority had the power to move funds between the Blocks after consultation with the Schools

- Forum;
- regulations defining eligible expenditure from the High Needs and Early Years Blocks were very loose and therefore if a saving could be identified from an area currently funded by the DSG, this could be replaced by expenditure relating to the MASH (Multi-Agency Support Hub) and the Early Help Service; and
 - updated DSG figures had been issued by the Education Funding Agency which showed an increase in Southampton's DSG allocation and although this additional funding had been prioritised for the expansion of Early Years places, Great Oaks and Springwell Special Schools and top-up funding for Special Schools, it did give some flexibility to make savings in 2015/2016.

It was AGREED that:-

- officers would provide the Forum with a breakdown of the "Pupils with Statements" budget; and
- a more detailed paper would be submitted to the September meeting for a decision on where savings could be made.

7. **USE OF THE INTERVENTION FUND 2013/2014**

The Forum received a briefing paper of the Principal Accountant, Education, providing details on how the 2013/2014 Intervention Fund had been allocated.

It was noted that £370,000 had been held back from the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) in 2013/2014 as an Intervention Fund contingency and had been used to fund additional allocations to schools that faced extra costs as a result of significant mid-year increases in pupil numbers, those affected by the Primary Review or in financial difficulty.

The Forum expressed concerns that schools applying for assistance from the Intervention Fund should have their overall financial position assessed prior to an allocation being made. A discussion ensued and officers confirmed that there were checks in the process to ensure that schools who applied for assistance from the Intervention Fund had their financial position scrutinised prior to receiving assistance.