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SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 July 2023

<u>In attendance</u>	
<u>Chair and Vice Chair</u>	
John Draper	Headteacher – Swaythling Primary
Harry Kutty	Headteacher – Cantell
<u>Primary Schools</u>	
Amanda Talbot-Jones	Headteacher – St Denys Primary
Mike Adams	Headteacher – Bitterne Manor Primary School
Peter Howard	Headteacher – Fairisle Junior
PK Macbride	Primary Governor – Bannister
<u>Secondary Schools</u>	
Jim Henderson	Headteacher Woodlands Community College
Roger Peplow	Governor St Georges
Martin Brown	Principal Oasis Sholing Academy
<u>Academy</u>	
James Rouse	St Anne’s Catholic School
Sean Preston	Hamwic Trust
<u>Special Schools</u>	
Neil Revell	Headteacher – Cedar School
Debbie McKenzie	Headteacher – Compass School
<u>Nursery</u>	
Anna Wright	PVI for Early Years
<u>Non-Schools</u>	
Rob Sanders	Diocese of Winchester
<u>Observers</u>	
<u>SCC officers</u>	
Derek Wiles	Head of Education and Learning– Education
Steve Wade	Finance Business Partner
Clodagh Freeston	Service Manager - Education Strategy, Planning and Improvement
Tammy Marks	Service Manager - Special Educational Needs and Disability
Virginia Newsom	Finance Analyst
<u>Apologies</u>	

1. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved: that the minutes of the Forum meeting on 18 January 2023 be approved as a correct record.

2. **STANDING ITEM: LA UPDATE ON DFE/ESFA FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Forum received and noted a verbal briefing regarding the recent publication of the Early Years Supplementary Grant applicable from September 2023 to March 2024 which indicated that there would be an increase in the amount of funding available. Consideration was being given regarding how the funding would be passed to early years settings.

3. **DSG AND SCHOOLS OUTTURN 2022-2023**

The Forum considered a briefing paper detailing the DSG and Schools Outturn 2022-23.

It was noted from the outturn statement that seven schools had increased deficit whereas three schools had reduced deficit and work was being undertaken with all the schools which were carrying forward a deficit to formulate deficit recovery plans. Plans were still awaited from five schools.

It was noted the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) had a reduced deficit of just under £1 million. The largest underspend had been on High Needs out of city placements.

In answer to a question it was noted that the budget for out of city placements had been based on past experience and this item of expenditure had not increased in line with forecasts and children were now being placed in local schools. Future trends in Early Years SEN settings should be monitored.

In answer to a question it was noted that trends in the outturn were different for primary and secondary schools which was not unique to Southampton. The bulge in pupil numbers was working its way through the education system. The Forum would need to consider this again at the next meeting.

In answer to a question it was noted that common themes giving rise to deficits or surpluses would help to inform other schools.

In answer to a question it was noted that Southampton City Council had a policy that generally schools should not exceed 10% budget surplus and would be asked to demonstrate how any excess surplus would be spent. Sometimes such surpluses were set aside for planned capital works and KPI's set by the Department for Education provided guidance on the percentage of budgets to be allocated to staff costs. Mutual support was being provided to schools.

4. **SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS**

The Forum were advised that the Southampton City Council Scheme for Financing Schools contained several minor amendments. It had been circulated to schools in February 2023 and no changes had been requested.

Upon being put to a vote by Forum representatives of maintained schools the Forum approved the Scheme.

5. **PFI UPDATE**

The Forum received a verbal briefing that future consideration would need to be given to the PFI affordability gap. It noted that three PFI contracts were due to terminate in 2032 with current costs of £738,000 annually from the schools block. There was a sinking fund to cover the costs but, as interest rates were historically low and the RPI was now much higher, the affordability gap had widened and modelling was being undertaken to inform the options that would be presented to the Forum at a later date. Funds were top sliced from the schools block annually and in answer to questions it was acknowledged that future decisions would be constrained by the national funding formula and the needs of children across Southampton.

6. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS AND CLOSING REMARKS AND DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that this was the last meeting of the current academic year and the Chair thanked members of the Forum for their hard work.

The next Forum meeting will be held on Wednesday 20 September 2023.

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