

# Schools Forum

Wednesday, 6th December, 2017  
at 3.30 pm – 5.30 pm

Cantell School, Violet Road, Southampton, SO16 3GJ

This meeting is open to the public

**LEAD OFFICER**

Hilary Brooks, Service Director,  
Children and Families Services

Tel : 023 8083 2134

Email :

[SchoolsForumAdmin@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:SchoolsForumAdmin@southampton.gov.uk)

**FORUM ADMINISTRATOR**

Meeting Support

Tel: 023 8083 2557

Email:

[SchoolsForumAdmin@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:SchoolsForumAdmin@southampton.gov.uk)

**Present**

<b>Chair and Vice Chair</b>		
Harry Kutty (Vice Chair)	Head Teacher	Cantell School
<b>Primary School Representatives</b>		
Julie Swanston	Head Teacher	Woolston Infant School
Amanda Talbot-Jones	Head Teacher	St Denys Primary School
John Draper	Head Teacher	Swaythling Primary School
Mark Sheehan	Head Teacher	Mansbridge Primary School
Peter Howard	Head Teacher	Fairisle Junior School
Susanne Ottens	Head Teacher	Fairisle Infant & Nursery School Hardmoor Early Years Centre
<b>Primary Governor</b>		
Richard Harris	Governor	Moorlands Primary School
<b>Secondary School Representatives</b>		
Martin Brown	Head Teacher	The Sholing Technology College
David Turner	LA Governor	

<b>Special Schools Representatives</b>		
Andy Evans	Head Teacher	Great Oaks School
Colin Grant	Governor	Cedar School
<b>Academy Representatives</b>		
Sean Preston	Head of Finance	Hamwic Trust
Lyn Bourne	Head Teacher	St Anne's Catholic School
<b>Pupil Referral Unit Representative</b>		
Alison Parsons	Head Teacher	Compass School
<b>PVI Early Years Provider</b>		
Anna Wright		Paint Pots Nursery
<b>Non Schools Representative</b>		
None		
<b>Observers</b>		
Chris Ode	NASUWT	Teacher's Liaison Panel
Yong Mei Li	PHD Researcher	Southampton
<b>SCC Officers</b>		
Hilary Brooks	Service Director	Children and Families Services
Alan Voyzey	Finance Business	Partner for Education
Paul Atkins	Capital Programme Manager	
Kevin Allan	Commercialisation Manager	
Anne Downie	Early Years	
Christine Rice	Business Manager	
Kaye Cantor	Meeting Support (minutes)	
Stephanie Wickenkamp	Meeting Support (minutes)	

## MINUTES

### 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

HK welcomed delegates to Cantell, explaining that he is Chairing the meeting for Jonty Archibald. A positive pre-meeting was held with LA officers; HK noted progress with commitments to work closely with the LA to make more informed decisions. This includes timely issuing of papers and comparison benchmarking.

HB thanked HK and agreed the pre-meeting was fruitful. HB has new involvement with Schools Forum and is open to doing things differently, being keen to answer questions and find solutions together.

RH raised whether the Schools Forum meetings would get full Democratic Services support in the future. HB explained there have been delays in sending paperwork for various reasons, including short staffing. Schools Forum has confirmed administrative support. Work is in progress to make improvements and HB encouraged all to get in touch with her if this is not the case.

**ACTION:** More timely LA papers requested by HK

**ACTION:** Benchmarking opportunities requested from LA by HK

## **2. APOLOGIES AND CHANGES OF MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

Apologies were received from:

- Jonty Archibald
- Jo Cassey
- Susan Brakewell
- David Scott-Batey

There were no changes in membership.

## **3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING - 13 SEPTEMBER 2017 (Pages 1 - 14)**

HK checked with members for any comments. The minutes were agreed subject to the amendment below.

**ACTION:** Meeting support to amend Page 7 – Appendix 1 removing ‘maximum or’ requested by RH.

## **4. REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE, INCLUDING MEMBERSHIP OF THE FORUM**

### **a) Southampton Schools Forum Constitution**

HK stated there had been much discussion around the Southampton Schools Forum Constitution, particularly around areas which were not reflected in other LAs’ constitutions. Jonty Archibald had suggested adopting the Hampshire Schools Forum Constitution, with a view to ‘Southampton-ising’ it.

AE requested clarification around block voting, commenting that members should vote on matters for their particular school block.

RH stated that voting guidance is available on the DfE website.

HK asked for members' agreement in adopting a Hampshire style Constitution. All members were in agreement.

**ACTION:** Officers to complete first draft of new Schools Forum Constitution by 15 December with reference to the Hampshire Schools Forum Constitution and voting policy guidance from the DfE website.

b) Code of Conduct and Registered Interests

HK encouraged members to complete outstanding Registered Interests forms prior to leaving the meeting.

**ACTION:** Members to complete outstanding interest forms and return to Meeting Support if not filled in at the meeting.

## 5. LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATES

a) Update on the Schools Capital Programme

PA announced that four months ago he had been tasked with addressing the Capital Programme for the city with particular reference to secondary school places. PA stated that a report will be submitted to the Council Capital Board on 19 December setting out the strategy for taking this forward. The report to Capital Programme is in order to address expected demand in the mid-2020s of an additional 1,700 places.

PA stated that a previous strategy addressed expanding numbers of schools in the West/Central area of Southampton or building new secondary school. The previous forecast was taken from school planning, which gave a trajectory for secondary places.

PA confirmed the current free school application process is frozen, which is a challenge. PA assured that suspension of the free school application could only be removed if other alternatives to improve capacity are discovered. However the Council are receiving critical messages that investment must begin now to cover capacity shortfall in the future.

Consultation with interested schools regarding willingness to expand has begun. PA noted that Councillor Paffey will also visit schools in the near future to discuss expansion proposals.

DT requested clarification on whether the Council are able to consider a free school application or whether the submission is indefinite. PA responded that the Council need to consider funding in order to begin the free school application process, this is reflected in the report which will be put forward to the Council Capital Board. DT queried whether a particular site had been chosen for the free school. PA responded that research into feasible sites has begun.

RH noted the difficulty in calculating statistics for the number of children's placements in primary schools. RH queried whether the impact of Brexit would impact on numbers.

PA explained that he had referred to the past six forecasts before calculating additional capacity. Child benefits and birth rates were also considered, alongside Hampshire's demand impacting the city. PA stated that the trajectory will be in the middle between the lowest and highest demand curves; if a decision is made to press for an expansion strategy, the delivery for 200 – 300 additional places falls below the lowest demand curve.

PA commented that he had researched the prediction on impact of population following Brexit and concluded that there would be a decrease in secondary school placements. However, the decrease in secondary school placements can be countered by increased housing development: from 1999 – 2017, 15,000 dwellings were built across the city and the upward pressure in capacity had been absorbed. PA concluded that continued progression within housing development, where 80% are single or two bedroom dwellings, will have an upward pressure of up to 200 places following Brexit.

JD queried whether the sites aligned would marry up with the capacity in demand. PA confirmed this and explained that there are capacity gaps within the West/Central areas, with prioritised focus on the central area.

HK queried whether the LA are authorised to set up a free school. PA confirmed this and discussed the option of inviting schools to bid to run the free school once implemented. PA repeated that the process of the free school can be closed at any time and emphasised the capital requirement to begin the free school process now, in order to prevent failure of reaching demand which will manifest in time.

HK queried who is involved within the local evaluation of the tendering process. PA responded that only the LA are involved alongside those the LA deem appropriate to assist. PA commented this would be at a future stage and emphasised the need to address sites first. HK acknowledged this, mentioning that school colleagues should have the opportunity to input through the evaluation stage. HB agreed to include colleagues in the process. HK welcomed future updates from PA regarding the free school progress.

It was noted that following Capital Board, the report is expected to be taken to full Council on 21 February 2018.

RH noted that any free school application has to have the tacit support of the LA. The LA has to demonstrate that they consulted with other local schools and this is not to their detriment. HK checked with PA that the creation of a free school would not be at the cost of school places at existing schools. PA confirmed this to be the case.

RH requested that PA provide information on Admissions Policies relating to free schools and academy schools.

**ACTION:** PA to keep on the Schools Forum agenda and provide updates when available, allowing Schools Forum members to input on the evaluation.

**ACTION:** PA to provide Admissions Policies update at a future Schools Forum meeting.

b) Update from the High Needs Block Working Group

HB noted the group have met throughout the year and also attended a Hot House day. All are working extremely hard, however, the pressure of £2.9M is forecast to rise to at least £3.5M. HB stated realistically this will not be met by the end of this financial year. HB is meeting with the Head of Finance to work up a plan by the end of March to address the deficit going forward.

PA explained the need to look at the pressure radically. He is working with schools to accurately forecast Special places, which is very complex and cannot be done in isolation.

There are a very small number of pupils who are generating a significant pressure because there is no capacity in the city to meet their needs. PA is working to explore how needs demand can be met through the existing provision. PA noted a significant demand from secondary girls with emotional and developmental requirements. Any accommodation needs to be suitable for the cohort. Early work has started to look at potential options. PA believes there are opportunities within existing resources, however any proposals will need Political backing.

AE agreed more information is needed for 60 children accounting for over £5M of expenditure. HB explained external high cost placements in the city are being reviewed and when data is available, analysis can begin on trends and need. A case will be developed for a spend to save strategy by the end of the financial year.

SP asked if consideration had been given to 0.5% pupil transfer from the Schools Block to HNB for this Forum or a higher amount to be provided by the Secretary of State. AV responded there is opportunity to move 0.5% between blocks but it is not yet clear if this will be affordable for 2017/18. SP highlighted the very short timescale for consulting with schools about this. HB highlighted concerns and would not want to see schools going into deficit in one area to help another block. SP agreed; another LA had transferred 3% which caused difficulties. HK asked HB to confirm the LA has no intention to do this.

HB replied the LA is working on deficits from all angles with no substantial increase in funds. A wide range of opportunities are being looked at. HB accepted the short time frame with LA responses required by 19 January 2018.

AE noted it was agreed at HNB Working Group that all blocks are agreed at the same time.

In relation to the £5M for special placements, RH asked if there were any figures available on tribunals. HB confirmed there are more tribunals and this is being reviewed to see if they can be reduced. More clarity is needed at the start of the process in order to address. HB commented there are opportunities to save money by reviewing processes and getting the provision right. This will be part of the strategy to move forward and noted the wider remit of city partner agencies.

Delegates discussed tribunals and MS was keen that genuine requests for tribunals are taken forward. HB agreed but commented parties should try and resolve before it gets to tribunal stage.

**ACTION:** As noted by AE HNB Working Group – to agree all blocks at the same time.

**ACTION:** SCC Officers to evaluate tribunals and incorporate into overall strategy.

c) Updates on Proposed Timetable for Budget 2018/19 Schools National Funding Formula (NFF)

AV noted that 2018/19 is significant as the NFF appears for the first time. The Secretary of State announced additional funds of £1.3B in July. However, this provides a relatively small injection into schools funding.

The NFF is being introduced in a phased way with a soft formula for the next couple of years. A notional sum is identified based on the NFF formula, then aggregated and distributed to schools through the local Southampton formula. Thereafter the NFF moves to a hard formula with individual school allocations based on the national formula. AV stated it is not yet clear what will happen after this time.

Based on current data the position in Southampton is that the additional funding provided an increase for all schools of at least 0.5% in the current year as a minimum. Analysis suggests one third of schools would benefit by 0.5% a third by 3% and the other third between 0.5% and 2.8%.

In September the funding agency published indicative allocations based on current pupil numbers and factors. These will change in December when the final funding allocations are announced. Allocations will be based on updated census and deprivation data from the DfE. Indications can be provided but AV stated they may not be reflected in the announcement.

**NFF - headlines**

AV reported there are currently three Funding blocks: Schools, HNB and Early Years. Last year saw the introduction of a NFF for Early Years which limited discretion to move money between blocks.

From 2018/19 a fourth block covering Central Schools Funding was then identified. This comprises funding for historic commitments and ongoing responsibilities to meet statutory requirements. The allocation for Southampton is around £2M with 90% allocated through a per pupil factor and 10% through deprivation factor.

Funding through the pupil led factors in the NFF will be 90.7% which is marginally higher than the national total of 89.6% for 2017/18.

The Schools block will provide for a minimum 0.5% per pupil increase in 2018/19 and 1.0% in 2019/20. The proposal again is to limit gains to 3% and there will be a Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG). Previously this was -1.5%; AV stated this can be set within the range of +0.5% to -1.5% providing flexibility in the MFG calculations. Updated operational guidance is expected.

For movement between blocks, the Schools block will be ring fenced but up to 0.5% can be transferred subject to Schools Forum approval. However, if this was agreed this would not in itself resolve the funding issue within the HNB. (0.5% equates to approximately £700K).

Grants outside of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), Pupil Premium and Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) are not affected by the changes. However, there is a new Pupil Premium Plus Grant from Looked After Children (LAC) factors of £2,300. AV suggested Schools Forum may wish to consider removing this from the local formula and the cost is £130K mainly allocated to the primary sector.

AV compared the NFF to the Southampton formula, stating overall there was a close correlation between the two bases for distributing funding to schools.

Total pupil funding nationally is 90.7%; for Southampton this is 92.1%. Additional Needs both are at 17.8%.

Overall per pupil funding in Southampton is 1.4% higher than the NFF but this is offset by lower lump sum allocations in Schools led funding.

JD asked AV about the differential between the per pupil ratio for primary and secondary. JD stated it was an LA and Schools Forum decision that secondaries receive more than primary. AV replied this figure was not available at the moment.

SP commented the Pupil Premium plus was not new and just a top up. AV explained this was a different title with an enhanced rate of grant payable for Looked after Children (LAC).

JS asked about top slicing for grants, stating current rate of £1,900 is top sliced by the LA at a rate of £1K. JS asked if the £2,300 would come direct to schools or be top sliced. AV replied, it will still be top sliced but this needs to be decided with Forum.



SP stated this is the biggest change in funding in a decade. Reiterated the need for information before Christmas. HK explained it was agreed at the pre-meeting to set out decisions in a timely manner and accepts this needs to happen.

RH highlighted the difficulties for the LA with the figures coming out from the DfE close to Christmas. He asked if the Academy movement have a stronger ear at DfE. Whilst agreeing with RH, HK stated it was clear that other authorities were able to provide much more detailed information for forum members to make an informed decision, albeit based on indicative figures. PA confirmed this will be the aim going forward. SP stated other Authorities are looking at funding already.

**ACTION:** Request by SP for time to review options before Christmas, ahead of the next Schools Forum meeting.

d) Schools Forum - Future Budget Decisions

HK asked what information School Forum members want to see presented to inform their decision making.

Following discussion and AV's comments, the decisions below were agreed to be addressed at the January meeting:

**1) Should the LAC element be removed from the LA local formula?**

AV commented that he would prefer to see final figures, however in the current year the LAC element in the local formula is 0.09% which distributes £130K to schools.

**2) Schools Forum to consider whether they want to move money between blocks. Should Schools Forum transfer funds to High Needs Block?**

AV suggested that members consider transferring money between blocks, however acknowledged that facts and figures will need to be received first.

**3) How do members respond to the ending of Education Support Grant (ESG) and how do we address the consequence of LA maintained schools meeting that short fall? (Latter part of action relevant to maintained Schools only)**

AV stated that this will increase to around £80 per pupil.

AV noted that ESG funding was withdrawn by DfE from September 2017 with a net loss of £1.08M to the authority. In 2018/19 the full year effect of the loss of grant would be around £1.8M.

HK stated that members require further information around this and that data from statistical neighbours should be included. HK noted that there must be

time allowed for members to take back the information to other primary, secondary and special colleagues.

SP noted that the vast majority of Schools Forums address indicative numbers earlier to allow time to feedback to colleagues. SP requested that within AV's list of decisions, that multiple options accompany each decision.

HK agreed and requested that detail of Schools Forum spend in 2017/18 and following years to come.

MS commented he thought on the Schools Forum decision last year, the deprived schools lost money, whereas the least deprived gained. The per-pupil allocation was discussed in relation to deprivation factors. JD felt there was not enough time for consultation on radical change. HB agreed that deprivation factors need to be considered. However, the whole process could not be changed for this year and for next year earlier pro-active action to address.

#### **4) Should Schools Forum consider applications for further second round allocations from the Schools in Financial Difficulties Fund?**

**ACTION:** AV: Timescales to be drawn up as to when Schools Forum members receive paperwork to enable informed decision making.

**ACTION:** AV to create step-by-step decision list for Schools Forum members with range of options as above.

**ACTION:** AV: to look at the consequences of the loss of ESG for a full year and draw comparison. Schools requested to see the steps in calculations to share with their colleagues.

**ACTION:** AV: to work up models and options based on indicative provisional numbers, particularly around deprivation.

#### e) Update on Schools in Financial Difficulty Fund

AV explained that Jo Cassey had set a timescale relating to the Schools in Financial Difficulty Fund allocations. Jo had discussed these allocations with the Chairs of Conference and ultimately 11 allocations of £20K were made. AV stated that the current balance in the fund was just over £130K.

AV announced that it was intended to have a second stage for Financial Difficulty Fund allocations which has not taken place.

MS queried whether the 11 schools that received the allocation of funds were in deficit. AV responded that he would review the allocation and report back to the next School Forum meeting.

MS commented that the Financial Difficulties Fund was a loan that was required to be paid back to the LA. AV stated that this no longer applies. SP queried whether schools in deficit were obligated to apply for this loan. Various members confirmed this. HB confirmed that the loan being referred to, was accompanied by an Action Plan which would be discussed with individual schools as to how to repay the loan to the LA.

RH commented that the funds were a combination of a grant to help with the serious deficit situation, which was topped up with a loan to the LA. RH noted that situations such as these can only be exited with the support of a loan.

**ACTION:** AV stated Schools Forum may wish to consider the continuation of delegation for 2018/19.

**ACTION:** HB to investigate the Financial Difficulties fund and ascertain the remit of funds, feeding back to Schools Forum members via email / or at next Schools Forum meeting.

f) Trading with Schools

To receive a verbal update from Kevin Allan, Commercialisation Manager.

KA explained arising from the last phase of service realignment, a new role for commercialisation and trading services management was developed. This is about the Council engaging with schools in terms of the services sold, as well as those they are obliged to provide. This includes, Educational Psychology, data, Music Services and others.

KA will work to make it clearer how services are presented, accessed and paid for. The aim is to streamline processes and make this a more positive experience. KA wants to develop services and foster an 'invest in Southampton' message, keeping money in the city. It is about being an honest broker and encouraging buying to serve the children in the city.

Part of KA's remit is to investigate extending the boundaries of the offer, going outside of the city to generate resources. This needs to be done intelligently, looking at where there are opportunities to extend reach.

KA mentioned the Academisation dimension. He is also looking at what else can be done, giving an example of Music Services and Arts Council Grant funding. The immediate task is to work on a new round of SLAs for the next financial year; the intention is to circulate with revised pricing. KA is also looking at Imnet and will share details in the future.

KA recognises the difficult decisions facing Schools and is keen to meet with Head Teachers.

**ACTION:** Kevin Allan to meet with interested Head Teachers.

## **6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- (1) MS commented that he had received a newsletter which suggested that one other school had received additional funds compared to his school and nine others. MS requested confirmation that this matter is being addressed and stated that he had contacted two Councillors for further information and notified Councillor Paffey.

PA responded that Councillor Paffey had passed this information onto him and assured MS that this is being investigated. PA stated he would provide an update to members of the Schools Forum once investigation has concluded.

**ACTION:** PA to investigate alleged differentiation of funds received by schools following MS query and feedback to Schools Forum.

- (2) MS queried whether the School Improvement money had been returned to the Schools budget. AV responded that the £101K received for Schools Improvement was not spent.

AV summarised that the Government had announced new funding bids for £140M for Strategic School Improvement in November 2016. Southampton made a bid in the first round but were unsuccessful. AV continued that a new fund of £50M for School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering was available for bid application, spread over a two year period. Southampton applied in September 2017 and received £101K which had recently been paid to the LA.

HB commented that this money may return to the Schools budget once the context around the funding allocation was understood. JS asked if the money would be allocated to Teaching Schools. JS noted that the funding according to Schools Improvement guidelines should be returned to the Schools budget, following the top-slicing of ESG from the Council. HB acknowledged and stated this would be investigated further.

**ACTION:** HB to investigate whether the School Improvement funding of £101K is to be returned to Schools pot as 'repayment' for ESG top-slicing by Local Authority. Also, to clarify where the funding goes with regard to Teaching Schools.

- 3) JD stated that he and PH were approached by another school regarding a Section 251 return discrepancy. JD requested to meet with AV and PH to discuss further. AV responded this could be arranged before Christmas.

**ACTION:** AV, JD and PH to arrange meeting before Christmas to discuss Sec. 251 return discrepancy.

## **7. CLOSING REMARKS AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

HK confirmed with delegates that there were no further matters for discussion and the meeting was closed.

Wednesday 10 January 2018

4:00pm – 6:00pm

Venue: Regents Park Community College