

# **SCHOOLS FORUM**

## **PLEASE NOTE TIME OF MEETING**

Wednesday 28 March 2018  
at 4.00 pm – 6.00 pm

**Regents Park Community College**  
King Edward Avenue, Shirley, Southampton SO16 4GW

This meeting is open to the public

LEAD OFFICER  
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### **Present**

<b>Chair and Vice Chair</b>		
Jonty Archibald	Head Teacher	Regents Park Community School
John Draper	Head Teacher	Swaythling Primary School
Harry Kutty (Vice Chair)	Head Teacher	Cantell School

Primary School Representatives		
Julie Swanston	Head Teacher	Woolston Infant School
Amanda Talbot-Jones	Head Teacher	St Denys Primary School
Mark Sheehan	Head Teacher	Mansbridge Primary School
Peter Howard	Head Teacher	Fairisle Junior School
Primary Governor		
Richard Harris	Governor	Moorlands Primary School
Secondary School Representatives		
Martin Brown	Head Teacher	The Sholing Technology College
David Turner	LA Governor	
Special Schools Representatives		
Andy Evans	Head Teacher	Great Oaks School
Colin Grant	Governor	Cedar School
Academy Representatives		
Sean Preston	Chief Financial Officer	Hamwic Education Trust
Pupil Referral Unit Representative		Apologies received
PVI Early Years Provider		
Anna Wright		Paint Pots Nursery
Non Schools Representative		Not represented
Observers		
Jedd Hayward	NASUWT	
William Rimell	Daily Echo	
SCC Officers		
Julien Kramer	Service Lead for Education	
Paul Atkins	Capital Programme Manager	
Councillor Dr D Paffey	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	
Nick Persson	Finance Business Partner for Education	
Jo Knight	Service Lead, Finance Business Partnering	
Clodagh Freeston	Schools Admissions Manager	
Anne Downie	Early Years	
Christine Rice	Business Manager	
Kaye Cantor	Meeting Support (minutes)	
Stephanie Wickenkamp	Meeting Support (minutes)	

## MINUTES

### 1 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Chair Jonty Archibald welcomed delegates to the meeting. JA explained he is stepping down and leaving Regents Park Community College to take up an appointment in another LA.

### 2 **APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

The following changes to membership were noted:

#### **Apologies:**

Susanne Ottens	Head Teacher	Fairisle Infant & Nursery School Hardmoor Early Years Centre
Alison Parsons	Head Teacher	Compass School
Luisa Whittick	Deputy Head	Compass School
Lyn Bourne	Head Teacher	St. Anne's Catholic School
Susan Brakewell	Governor	Bitterne Manor Primary School
Chris Ode	Observer	NASUWT
Hilary Brooks	Council	Service Director, Children and Families Services

#### **Changes in membership:**

Susan Brakewell has given notice of her resignation as Primary School Governor representative.

**ACTION:** RH offered to raise the Governor vacancy at the next Governors' Forum meeting.

HK nominated Woodlands Community College Head Teacher designate, Jim Henderson as replacement for JA. MB seconded this and the appointment was agreed.

**ACTION:** Meeting Support to add Jim Henderson to Schools Forum distribution list and update membership accordingly.

### **Election of new Schools Forum Chair**

Prior to the meeting, four Chair nominations were received for John Draper, Head Teacher, Swaythling School. JD was unanimously elected by delegates present. Vice Chair HK wished JA well for the future.

In accepting the position, JD thanked JA for his tenure and progress made with the Schools Forum. JD commented he is proud to be working with the city.

### **Recommendations and decision to appoint an Independent Financial Advisor to Schools Forum**

HK raised a suggestion to appoint a suitably qualified colleague who has been working behind the scenes with Head Teachers. The proposed Independent Financial Advisor would offer support, challenge and accountability.

HK commented this person should also be invited to Schools Forum pre-meetings. SP also offered his assistance and will be invited to future pre-meetings.

**ACTIONS:** Meeting Support to invite the Independent Advisor (*Gary Wooldridge*) to future Schools Forum meetings and pre-meets.

Meeting Support to invite SP to future Schools Forum pre-meets.

There was a discussion regarding the Independent Financial Advisor's role and how this would be managed through the Schools Forum. RH commented that the individual cannot be both a Governor representative on the Schools Forum and an independent advisor. JD stated they would not be able to vote.

DT offered to raise at the Governors' Association meeting next term if appropriate.

JD asked delegates to consider the decision to appoint an Independent Financial Advisor, pending LA looking at the constitution, guidelines and seeking legal advice.

A vote was taken.

**AGREED:** 11 in favour to appoint an Independent Financial Advisor  
0 against  
0 abstentions.

**ACTION:** JK/PA to seek legal clarification, reviewing Schools Forum operational guidance and Terms of Reference, to make sure there is no conflict of interest for the potential appointee.

### **3      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

KC requested outstanding declarations of interest forms are sent to Meeting Support at the Civic Centre.

### **4      MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 17 JANUARY 2018**

JD reviewed the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2018 for accuracy and matters arising. No amendments were noted.

Matters Arising:

*Page 4: Actions from 6 December 2017 meeting AOB (2) - MS query regarding School Improvement money:*

MS asked for information about his previous query. PA responded this would be covered in a later agenda item.

*Page 11: Item 5ix – High Needs Block*

RH asked Cllr Paffey whether a letter was written to the DfE. Cllr Paffey replied that a letter was sent and a reply had been received from Minister, Nick Gibb. The response highlighted the importance of LA stability and mentioned consultations. Cllr Paffey quoted from the letter which gave details of the High Needs Block allocation for Southampton. Cllr Paffey commented that because of the 3% cap, schools received 1.9% of the DSG as opposed to the full 4.9% allocation. Cllr Paffey offered to share the letter with Schools Forum members and will respond to it if members wish to comment.

The minutes were agreed.

***Further discussion on matters arising from the minutes occurred at the end of the meeting:***

*Page 9: 5v) Primary Review Growth Fund: £260,400*

MS asked for an update on his query about whether schools might get extra funding from Capital. PA responded there was no variance in the revenue amount of £30K being transferred to schools and this was an item to be transparently addressed through the Education Services Review. PA continued historically, Capital Funding varied for the Primary sector, due to

an expansion phase. Some schools provided temporary accommodation and other schools were refurbished.

MS was not satisfied with PA's response; his understanding from JK's predecessor was that funding would be identical. MS described circumstances where he felt funding was unfair and requested further clarification.

**ACTION:** JoKn/NP to provide MS with previous figures for Growth Funding for clarification. MS to raise any further queries in a telephone discussion with JoKn.

**ACTION:** Growth Funding figures to be discussed at future Schools Forum.

*Page 4: Minutes of 6 December 2017 (Item 6 AOB (1) query on alleged differentiation of funds received by schools*

MS again raised the query concerning a newsletter he had received, which suggested one school had received additional funds compared to his school. MS commented this query has been long standing over 3 years and should have been resolved.

Cllr Paffey explained he was not in post during the timeframes mentioned but had discussed this matter with his predecessor. Cllr Paffey's understanding is for schools accepting expansion via a bulge year group, agreed sums of funding were allocated to specific schools. Cllr Paffey stated his understanding was that there were differences in how schools tendered for expansion work and subsequent delays and changes were made to the expansion programme. MS was unsatisfied with this explanation. Cllr Paffey further stated the leaflet MS had referred to was untrue in its basic claims.

JoKn acknowledged MS's query is long standing and reassured MS that figures can be provided to him and discussed within Schools Forum. Cllr Paffey offered to meet with MS after the figures are provided and discussed at Schools Forum.

**ACTION:** JoKn to provide historic school funding figures.

**ACTION:** Cllr DP to meet with MS following completion of the above action.

*Page 7: 5ii) Allocation of total amount of DSG*

JoKn confirmed that an error in the DSG allocation was found by NP; the figures were re-checked and an adjustment made. The allocations were re-issued to schools, with the majority benefitting by £9 per pupil. This was

found early enough to amend and there is no need for amounts to be carried forward to the next financial year.

SP queried Academy funding based on increased rates. JoKn clarified that the DfE will not re-run figures and the update will be received in the next financial year.

HK queried the transitional premium factor in relation to Business Rates for all schools; JoKn to discuss with HK separately.

NP stated that issue of the revised budgets meant that schools now have their exact payments. MS commented that percentages rather than the amount received should also be looked at.

Some representatives had queries in relation to their own particular schools and JoKn offered to discuss these on an individual basis with relevant Head Teachers.

**ACTION:** JoKn to meet with Head Teachers to address queries.

## **5 LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATES**

**5i** JD introduced JK to the meeting delegates.

JK thanked JD and stated he is proud to be working for Southampton and delighted to be working with members of Schools Forum. In his first month JK has met with Heads and Governor colleagues. A meeting has been scheduled with the Regional Schools Commissioners.

JK congratulated Schools Forum members on their achievements, commenting there is much exciting work still to be done, despite these not being easy times.

With reference to finance, JK emphasised transparency is required. JK acknowledged that LA finances have not always been clearly understood or shared. Developing a confident relationship is key, as well as the implementation of the proposed sub-group and recommendation of introducing professional advisors to Schools Forum; these will be central in achieving positive outcomes.

JK highlighted consistent, high quality standards are required to educate the children of Southampton and encouraged the continuance of positive Ofsted results being received.

JK stated ESG is diminishing and will disappear in future years; conversations within Schools Forum and the sub-group will help inform services in the future. JK highlighted it is up to Schools Forum to

underwrite the future for Head Teachers, so that trust enables clear decisions going forward.

JK concluded a well-run Schools Forum is important and a powerful force in change and educating children. JK looks forward to working with Schools Forum members and JD in the future.

## **5ii Education Services Review**

PA gave a presentation to accompany the paper circulated prior to the meeting. The presentation will be made available with the minutes.

PA described the scope of the review, stating the proposal is to look at Education Services, wholly engaging schools in the process.

A governance sub-group will be appointed, adhering to a Terms of Reference. A representative is sought from each phase and PA requested nominations. PA aims to involve the Independent Financial Advisor and a Governor representative. The review will address challenges in process around the following:

### **Schools in Difficulty Fund**

A sub-group and any other interested individuals to look into this.

### **Budget surpluses**

To look at LA processes, formulating clear terms, rules and percentages.

In answer to a question from MS about lack of previous progress, PA confirmed the LA's commitment to review openly with schools and Schools Forum.

PA confirmed for JD that some discussions have already started.

HK asked whether there had been any claw-backs this financial year. PA/JK confirmed there was no plan to claw-back funds this year.

PA confirmed for AE that the full list of the services in scope is shown in his paper.

### **Deficit Budgets**

PA confirmed for JD this is part of the review.



### Conversion to Academy Process

Proposals to recover costs were previously brought to Schools Forum but not adopted. A sub-group will review the process, roles and responsibilities, making sure this is transparent and equitable. New proposals will be brought forward to Schools Forum for review and agreement.

### Dedicated Schools Grant, (DSG) Process

PA stated much work will be done to ensure this process is more proactive. Information is to be made available earlier for Schools Forum members to take decisions on the statutory vote in new year 2019.

JD asked about quantifying school DSG charges. PA is looking to see how other LAs manage their budget setting. The LA is keen to make this process more open and transparent, moving away from a reactive, crisis approach. One suggestion is for a Finance standing item at all Schools Forum meetings. PA confirmed this process is wholly within the review.

### Growth Funding

Historic management will be looked into and a set of recommendations brought forward to Schools Forum.

### Service Delivery Process

The review will go from April 2018 to September 2018. PA explained in this time frame it is not feasible to take all service delivery elements and transform them. The aim is to take key processes, determined by a sub-group. Then, to go through some structured approaches, giving people capacity and the ability to continuously improve services going forward. Knowledge and skills are to be embedded, enabling changes to how services are delivered.

PA outlined the services where processes will be identified.

MS asked if the sub-group will be open to all schools and PA confirmed this.

### Methodologies

PA stated the sub-group will nominate the methodology process to be used. This offers a structured approach, using established methods and tools, starting by looking together at whole systems of work. This to include information flows, policies and practices. Recommendations on improvements will be brought back to Schools Forum.

The aim is that members of the sub-group will be involved in the delivery of the service eg. for Admissions, the service lead, Chair of Appeals, legal representative, school representative etc. A question based approach 'The three voices' will be used, so delegates gather profound knowledge. Identified stepped change can then lead to a significant continuous improvement drive for the whole system. PA noted savings can also be identified through this process.

### Recommendations

PA sought the following from Schools Forum:

- Schools Forum to Endorse Approach
- Appoint nominees to sub group
- Recommendation to support scope (Finance Processes) and selection of candidate processes

The proposals were discussed. HK welcomed the review. AE queried whether one sub-group would look at all topics. PA stated there would be different sub-groups and people involved in the process. External perspectives would also be useful and PA is open to Schools Forum direction on this.

PA stated it is key for delegates to engage in discussions and the sub-groups will present their findings to the September Schools Forum.

Cllr Paffey clarified that some potential recommendations coming out of the review may advise services are re-shaped. Findings of this nature would require agreement by the Cabinet, who reserve the right to this decision. Any recommendations for outsourcing would not be favourable.

Cllr Paffey emphasised the collaborative approach of the review. MS highlighted confidentiality and felt this needs to be considered. PA extended an invitation to Cllr Paffey for his involvement on the sub-group.

RH stated there may be a slight delay in forming the sub-group, as there needs to be discussion amongst colleagues to ensure the right people are appointed. MS highlighted the time commitment needed.

JD asked about the frequency of meetings and PA replied monthly meetings would be held for updates. On behalf of delegates, JD asked for more time to enable sub-group nominees to be identified.

**ACTION:** Each Phase to meet outside of Schools Forum and confirm their delegates for the governance sub-group to PA in the first week after the Easter holidays: Secondary, Primary, Special, Academy and Governor.

JD asked for a vote to support the scope of the Education Services Review and the recommendations within PA's presentation.

**AGREED:** 11 votes in favour  
0 votes against  
0 abstentions.

JK is also seeking an internal review in the LA Education Department. With the support of colleagues, JK will set up a small sub-group and welcomes a Schools Forum ambassador as part of this. JK asked for nominations in support of this group. HK felt this would be hugely valuable. SP is willing to give support as an independent Academy representative.

**ACTION:** Delegates to consider nomination of Schools Forum member for the LA Education Department review.

**ACTION:** Meeting Support to circulate PA's presentation with the minutes.

**ACTION:** PA and sub-groups to report back on progress at the September Schools Forum meeting.

### **5iii Schools Capital Programme and Secondary Schools Expansion**

PA gave an update on the Schools Capital Programme. The intention is to take a report to Cabinet and then full Council after local elections, in May. The SEND review will help to inform the report. Cllr Paffey is in discussions with individual schools and informal consultation is nearly complete. PA is working on resources and subject to full Council, statutory consultation will then commence.

JD asked about the SEND review. PA stated the in-depth review was led by Portsmouth City Council and gives a number of recommendations. The final report has not yet been formally released but will feed into the Capital Strategy.

HK queried about confirmation of key stakeholders in any secondary school expansion. PA will provide feedback to schools when possible.

HK asked about a potential Academy sponsor. PA replied at this point in time proposals are that funding is put forward by the LA. PA stated that the intention was that this would be an LA funded school, through the presumed route.

There was a discussion about recommendations on preferred sponsorship and HK asked if PA could confirm this. However, PA stated there is no recommendation on a preferred sponsor within the report.

PA stated that the free school process is frozen, presenting challenges for the LA. The initial intention in the report is for sponsorship by the LA, who would fund the school.

There was a discussion as SP thought that new schools had to be free schools. RH stated there are a variety of ways open to meet LA needs.

JA highlighted a specific Academy provider, querying whether a discussion was needed with the Schools Commissioner. There was further discussion about sponsorship. JA asked if any opportunities would go out to tender in an open and transparent way. PA reiterated for absolute clarification that the LA are not in discussions with an Academy sponsor around any proposal for a new free school. JA stated there is a letter on a schools website which mentioned a specific provider. PA stated certainly not around this.

MS raised his concerns regarding financial auditing processes of a maintained school by a provider. HK asked for this to be clearly noted in the minutes.

JK summarised what the LA see as a statutory duty to plan good quality, permanent accommodation. JK noted previous experience working with academy groups and liaison with Dominic Herrington, Regional Schools Commissioner for South-East England and South London. JK is keen to work with all schools, no matter what their name, to secure outcomes for children. If it is felt there is a dependency on one provider, JK will investigate and report back on his findings. JD felt a clear statement was required about remaining in control of this commissioning.

Cllr Paffey wanted to clearly emphasise that the LA has a role, which is continuing to change. There is a phase within the plans of the report to consult and possibly seek other sponsors; at this stage there is no preferred sponsor. Cllr Paffey is in informal discussions with schools and the new school could be an LA school if no-one else wants to run it. Cllr Paffey outlined several options, including a co-operative or a school sponsored by one of several academy chains. Cllr Paffey stressed this process is not at any stage where a decision has been taken. In encouraging schools to share their ideas for a new school, Cllr Paffey stated these would be considered, along with other received suggestions.

#### **5iv High Needs Block Working Group**

PA gave an update on the review being carried out by the High Needs Block Working Group. Options will be considered within the Capital Programme.

Top-up funding is being reviewed across special schools, in line with the overall service review.

An Autism Resource Base (ARB) is proposed at Bitterne Park. Approval is being sought through Cabinet and Council. The ARB will help keep children within the mainstream school setting, assisting with pressures on outside city placements. PA confirmed for SP that funding for the ARB is from the DfE Capital funding allocation and not the High Needs Block.

**ACTION:** Meeting Support to circulate PA's slide with the minutes

## **5v Schools Admissions Policies**

CF explained she had become Admissions Manager in January 2018 and confirmed the Secondary School offers have been completed for this year and are as follows:

Number of applications processed	2387*	
Number and %age getting first preference school	2107	88.3%
Number and %age getting 2 <sup>nd</sup> preference school	156	6.5%
Number and %age getting 3 <sup>rd</sup> preference school	43	1.8%
Number and %age who were not offered any preferred school	81	3.4%
Number and percentage of pupils allocated schools in other Local Authorities These pupils are already accounted for in the preference statistics.	283	11.5%

\*4 have withdrawn their applications and are not counted in these figures

CF explained since National Offer day, more schools have become oversubscribed.

The offer data is still being validated and as yet needs to be exchanged with Hampshire and other authorities. CF stated the final figures will be presented on 16<sup>th</sup> April; this includes National Primary and Junior figures. CF has presented data during a Primary Head Teachers Conference. CF expressed her willingness to feedback the finalised figures at a future Schools Forum meeting if members would find this beneficial.

RH asked whether CF could disclose how many out of city secondary places were selected. CF responded 283 offers were made outside of Southampton; 279 were to Hampshire schools and the remaining 4 were to other LAs. CF commented some places were taken up by independent schools. CF is working to develop the relationship with Hampshire.

JD queried whether any patterns had emerged from the Secondary School applications. CF replied there are still vacancies in the East side of

Southampton; late applicants and non-applicants will be processed, however CF cannot predict where they will go.

HK thanked CF for her time and engagement during the busy period. PH thanked CF for producing the data on time and sending through the preferred communication method over half term.

**5vi      Schools in Financial Difficulties Fund**

PA explained that the Schools in Financial Difficulties Fund will be addressed as part of the Education Services Review as at (5ii) above.

**5vii     Finance update**

JoKn, Service Lead - Finance Business Partnering, asked delegates what they would like to know regarding School finance. Core information will be shared at the next Schools Forum, to tie in with pressures and budgets for next year.

The Finance Team has moved to a business partner model. JoKn introduced NP as the new Finance Business Partner for Education. JoKn is working to recruit the right staff into her team.

JoKn has already met with some Heads and is keen to visit schools and talk to delegates. JoKn is really impressed with schools and the engagement of children with teaching staff.

RH commented he is encouraged by JoKn's update and stated that continuity is required. JoKn is reassured by support given by NP and will support Schools Forum where she can in the future.

JD welcomed JoKn's approach and enthusiasm to work together.

JoKn received an invitation from PH to meet at Fairisle Junior School.

MS asked for schools going into deficit budgets, whether this is dealt with as a loan to the school and who pays for this.

**ACTION:** JoKn to clarify arrangements for schools' surpluses and deficits.  
(To be picked up through the Education Services Review).

**ACTION:** JoKn to give a financial presentation at June Schools Forum

**5viii    Private Finance Initiatives (PFI) update**

PA presented this item, giving a statement of intent that PFI is an area which needs to be looked at. This area is complex and schools are

managing on a day to day basis. PA commented there are a host of opportunities to improve contract management.

HK fielded a question from a former Headteacher at a Southampton school about PFI and its effect on the MFG. HK's understanding is that any school that is not full, should receive the MFG. The MFG is determined by the income a school receives. If the school is not full, it does not gain full funding and therefore the MFG should compensate. PFI schools in Southampton appear to have been receiving additional income through the PFI factor. This is to cover the increased costs, which almost doubled between 2016-17. However, the PFI funding, like rates, is cost neutral. What comes in, goes out again. It is not therefore a true indicator of income, however, in Southampton, the decision was made to have the PFI factor in the income stream rather than sitting by itself, as rates does. The impact of this has been that PFI schools which are not full, have not received their full entitlement of MFG. This requires further investigation, further information and a decision to be made by schools forum of whether this is equitable.

**ACTION:**     **SCC Finance will provide Schools Forum with sample MFG calculations for clarification.**

SP did not think that PFI was included in MFG. HK confirmed it was included in the income, making it look like there is more money and the school was being penalised for this.

RH stated when PFI started, the LA was going to pick up the increased charges. However over time the LA could not afford this funding. Other schools were not willing to take this on. Cllr Paffey asked for this to be investigated.

SP asked how many years there were left on the contract. PA believes 16 years but will come back on the details.

JoKn to give clarification on the MFG and commented that the process is very complex.

**ACTION:**     JoKn and PA to provide clarity on the PFI factor in relation to MFG and bring back to the next Schools Forum as an agenda item.

**6      CLOSING REMARKS AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

In closing the meeting, JD welcomed the approach of transparency, commenting that schools finance is esoteric. JD also highlighted the LA's invitation to work pro-actively on the Education Services Review. JD once again welcomed JK and asked for a school to host the next meeting. MS kindly agreed to host in June.

Wednesday 27 June 2018  
4:00pm – 6:00pm  
Venue: Mansbridge Primary School