

# **SCHOOLS FORUM**

## **PLEASE NOTE TIME OF MEETING**

Wednesday 19 December 2018  
at 4.15 pm – 6.15 pm

# **The Cedar School**

Redbridge Lane, Nursling, Southampton, SO16 0XN

This meeting is open to the public

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### **Present**

<b>Chair and Vice Chair</b>		
John Draper	Head Teacher	Swaythling Primary School
Harry Kutty	Head Teacher	Cantell School
<b>Primary School Representatives</b>		
Amanda Talbot-Jones	Head Teacher	St Denys Primary School
Mark Sheehan	Head Teacher	Mansbridge Primary School
Peter Howard	Head Teacher	Fairisle Junior School

<b>Primary Governor</b>		
Richard Harris	Governor	Moorlands Primary School
Ross Williams	Governor	Mason Moor Primary School
<b>Secondary School Representatives</b>		
Jim Henderson	Head Teacher	Woodlands Community College
Nick Giles	Head Teacher	Chamberlayne College for the Arts
<b>Special Schools Representatives</b>		
Maria Smyth	Head Teacher	Vermont School
Colin Grant	Governor	Cedar School
<b>Academy Representatives</b>		
Sean Preston	Chief Financial Officer	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>		
<i>Not represented</i>		
<b>Observers</b>		
Gary Wooldridge	Schools Forum Advisor	
Mark Critcher	Finance Analyst, SCC	
<b>SCC Officers</b>		
Councillor Darren Paffey	Cabinet Member, Aspiration, Schools and Lifelong Learning	
Derek Wiles	Service Lead, Education	
Paul Atkins	Schools Capital Programme Manager	
Nick Persson	Finance Business Partner for Education	
Jo Knight	Service Lead, Finance Business Partnering	
Andy Hart	Lead Officer of Early Years Funding Team	
Sophie Squibb	Meeting Support (minutes)	
Stephanie Wickenkamp	Meeting Support (minutes)	

## **MINUTES**

### **1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Chair, John Draper, welcomed delegates and thanked the Cedar School for hosting this month's meeting. JD welcomed RW as a newly elected Primary School Governor representative and also MaSm as a Special School representative.

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

#### **Apologies:**

<b>Councillor Sarah Taggart</b>	Millbrook Ward
<b>Hilary Brooks</b>	Service Director, Children and Families
<b>Susanne Ottens</b>	Head Teacher Fairisle Infant and Nursery School
<b>Anne Downie</b>	Team Manager, Early Years

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

JD highlighted there are still vacancies for a Secondary Governor and an Academy Governor.

A query had arisen regarding Andy Evans' membership at the previous meeting; he identified as an Academy Special School and therefore could not continue in his post as a Special School representative. MaSm had been nominated as his replacement.

### **3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 16 OCTOBER 2018**

JD reviewed the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October for accuracy and matters arising. MaSh requested the following amendment:

*Page 9: Item 7 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Modelling Options (Transfer to High Needs and Consultation Discussions)*

*“MS queried the progress of work within the High Needs Block with regards to the funding mechanisms, bandings and also noted a discussion around inconsistent rates and special schools.”*

**ACTION:** Meeting Support to amend the October minutes accordingly.

**Matters Arising:**

**Page 3: Item 3 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 19 September 2018**  
**(Item 8c Agresso Update)**

NP confirmed Jo Chapman (Procurement Management Officer) and Deborah Smart (Service Lead, Digital and Strategic IT) are leading on the IT Policy. The LA are looking to make a future offer to schools regarding the purchase of IT equipment.

NP relayed schools with purchase cards should not be using these to purchase IT equipment; the card is to be used in incidental purchases only. PH queried the specifics over purchasing IT, i.e. hardware. NP responded, hardware such as laptops should not be bought using a purchase card.

The minutes of the meeting were agreed.

**(Item 8) Payroll Proceedings for Schools**

JD clarified he had been in touch with Katie Cope regarding this item, however it was confirmed that there would not be an alternative solution offer from 1 April 2019. AT-J and JD had written a joint letter to the LA, capturing the perspective of schools on this issue. PA explained the LA had a meeting with the Regional Service Director of its Professional Services Partner. It had been explained that the LA's Partner would not provide an interim solution as they were intending to move to another system and would not consider maintaining the old system.

PA highlighted the LA's commitment to develop an interface into Business World and stated he would send a letter to school colleagues. Responses would need to be gauged ahead of 1 April 2019 so that work could progress to transfer the data from the existing system into Business World. PA reiterated the LA cannot provide an alternative service from the 1 April, however would be happy to assist schools where possible in facilitating a solution.

MaSh was disappointed with this response and highlighted a total of 13 schools would need to seek different providers. PA advised MaSh and any other members with queries to contact him so that a fuller, more detailed response can be made. NP underlined the LA's aspiration to implement a new system offer to schools by 2020.

PA undertook to reply formally to the letter received from AT-J and JD.

#### **4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

JD requested members complete any remaining documents and return to Meeting Support.

#### **5 STANDING ITEM: LA UPDATE ON DFE/EFA FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENTS**

NP stated the Teaching Pay Award, which is funded by the Schools Budget and is a prescriptive model, amounted to £449K. NP raised an additional High Needs funding announcement was made; Government is providing £250M in 2018/19 and 2019/20 to help alleviate pressures, with Southampton receiving an additional £140K for capital spend in 2019/20.

PA explained as opposed to an application process, the LA instead need to explain how the money would be spent. In addition, an Expression of Interest has been put forward for the Free School, however the criteria around the rest of the funding is not yet clear. SP queried whether this was part of a supporting bid discussed in October, as he felt that if a bid was not placed, Southampton would not receive any funding. PA responded, the announcement clearly stated £500K Revenue would be received to the LA each year. SP suggested looking into other bids, to which PA agreed and took an action to clarify the bidding processes around the Capital Funding.

NP confirmed for JD that the current High Needs pressure is £1.5M and would reduce to £1M in 2019/20 with the aforementioned alleviation fund. NP relayed the final DSG allocations were received; the Schools Block will receive a total of £142M, which is an increase of £3.3M from the previously predicted figures presented at October's meeting. NP commented this was due to the increase in pupil numbers. PA confirmed the final allocation for the High Needs Block was £25M.

SP cautioned despite additional funds being received in 2019/20 for the High Needs Block, the underlying High Needs pressure in 2019/20 is £1.0M. If a transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block of 0.5% is agreed (equating to circa £700k) this will reduce the 19/20 High Needs pressure to £300K. Councillor Paffey reiterated although the additional funding is welcomed, it minimally reduces the overall High Needs pressure.

**ACTION:** PA to clarify the Capital Bidding remit by January's meeting.

## **6 LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATES**

### a) Scheme for Financing Schools

PA apologised for the delay in circulating a meeting invitation to the nominated sub-group members. PA stated there should be opportunity to meet early in the New Year to ensure the Scheme for Financing Schools review is still achievable within the given timeframe.

### b) Schools Service Level Agreements

PA stated the SLAs are ready for distribution over the New Year. It was noted that the LA are identifying improvements and work across some of its services. JD queried whether PA could disclose any significant changes as of yet. PA responded at this stage nothing significant is set to change other than the payroll providers and added the LA are keen to move forward to address the structure of School SLAs.

### c) Pupil Growth

PA stated figures have stabilised over the past few years, however difficulties were noted in predictions. With new housing developments and pressure demands increasing around the city, there is likely to be an increase in pupil growth numbers within the mid 2020's. This has also been flagged as a long term Capital Strategy. PA commented there is no indication for the impact of Brexit and no definitive statistics have been published. Secondary place planning work has been completed, however pressure is anticipated due to inward planning which will be significantly higher due to Brexit. SP raised a concern around Government funded Growth Funding: during a period of growth within the Secondary Phase, growth funding will be received on a lagged basis so there will be no funding available for the first year of any growth.

PA stated this will be monitored continually, adding that the LA do not take full account of Housing Development within forecasting. This is due to a significant portion of the Southampton families' population moving around. PA highlighted this is a piece of work which needs addressing; some Housing Development needs building into forecasts with particular emphasis around Primary Schools. PA also emphasised the anticipated Hampshire Schools Push Back; by mid-2020 Hampshire services are expecting increased pressure due to demands.

MaSh queried the allocation of the £2M received to the Central Schools Block by the LA. PA responded this is being addressed as part of this year's budget allocation; once the final figures are known, this will be factored in accordingly.

d) Update on Secondary School Expansion

PA stated this is currently out to consultation (until 18 January 2019) with positive educational perspectives being received. However, due to City-wide demand, schools within the Central region of the city will need to be expanded; liaison with all Central Secondary schools have now occurred. Subject to the outcome of the public consultation, a statutory consultation will commence from 21 January to 18 February 2019 with a formal decision made by Cabinet in March 2019.

RH queried the working processes around consideration towards the All Through School's accessibility. PA confirmed engagement has been had with a Traffic and Transport consultant and it was noted that public transport routes were good within the area.

SP queried the potential risks around the All Through School's contribution towards capacity demand within the city. PA responded, based on the best demographic information the LA have, there is a high degree of certainty that most children will come from the central areas of the city. PA assured the east and the west of the city are reasonably balanced, despite additional housing developments being progressed in the west. However, a factor to address will be parental demand. SP stated overcapacity is a serious risk, to which PA agreed, explaining the precautions being undertaken to avert this and concluding that the LA has a statutory requirement to provide sufficient school places.

**7     PROPOSED OPTIONS FOR 2019/20 SCC SCHOOLS FUNDING**  
**FORMULA AND CONSULTATION UPDATE**

Nursery Education Funding

AH clarified the nursery funding agreement from 2007 for 3 and 4 years old has stayed the same. Three proposals are currently out to consultation as some agencies are looking to address changes. AH informed 95% of the money the LA receives is given back to the providers, with the remaining 5% retained for administration. The current funding formula base rate remains the same at £4.37. AH explained 10% of the funding is given as a supplement, as it is a requirement to have a deprivation supplement. There is flexibility with regards to qualifications and English as an additional language (EAL), however there are many settings that will not qualify. The consultation deadline is today, with results expected early next year. AH commented lots of questions have been asked, however was uncertain of the amount of responses.

SP asked whether there was a favourable proposal from the LA, or whether a majority would be taken instead. AH responded the LA will take the majority. AT-J queried whether there is a percentage threshold to reach and added how a consultation response would be communicated. AH responded, the LA's Communications Team will set up a web link.

AW stated although the base rate has remained the same, costs are increasing and have continued to do so for the past couple of years. AW commented a vast majority of her Nursery settings provide EAL however, to be eligible for funding you must have over 50% of children with EAL within each setting. AW responded favourably to the reference of "free" places being replaced with "funded". Recruitment pressures were also highlighted due to lack of funding.

JD queried the main impact for child minders. AH responded, incentive drivers for child minders require increasing and reflected on a previous funding deduction if no level 3 qualifications were obtained. AT-J queried the impact on 2 year old funding. AH clarified this will remain the same for the foreseeable future as there is sufficient capacity across every children's centre currently.

#### Proposed Options for 2019/20 SCC Schools Funding Formula

NP presented the proposed option to members: it was decided only one option would be provided further to a prior meeting with SP, GW and LA officers. The projected model displayed base figures and factors used within the current year and is also laid out within the 2019/20 consultation document. To model the 2019/20 option, each NFF factor has been incorporated fully. NP confirmed all figures included within the consultation document are working on the full NFF; the consultation document is driven by these key factors.

#### **Proposed Model – Full NFF:**

- This does not include a 0.5% transfer (£700K) to the High Needs Block (HNB).
- Capping has been removed completely (as opposed to 2018/19 cap of 2.19%). NP clarified this still retains affordability of the model.
- Pupil led funding is £2M higher and remains school led.

SP queried whether the funding floor of a 1% increase compared to the 2017/18 baseline is included within the proposed formula.



**ACTION:** NP/PA to clarify whether the Capping and Scaling Factor is compliant with the full National Funding Formula and whether it has been incorporated within the data projected at this meeting.

#### Discussion on Transfer to High Needs Block (HNB)

JD opened up the discussion on the 0.5% transfer to the HNB.

SP stated the £700K would not cover the current deficit. However, consideration is needed regarding the option for the Schools Block to transfer funds to the HNB in future years, as it is likely that a larger percentage will be required as early as 2020. Transparency will be key in discussing this. PA responded, creating suitable accommodation will be sufficient enough to save a significant amount of money. It is a focus of the LA's to identify small actions which can have large outcomes, with particular reference to increasing capacity in the system to alleviate pressures. PA is confident more work can be done with Mainstream Schools, which will take minimal effort and will deliver systemic changes.

SP agreed that these are important and valid actions however, stated this would not be ideal for schools to be asked to make a transfer to the High Needs Block in the future. PA agreed and stated to the Chair that the High Needs Block Working Group needs to be re-referenced. A more targeted Terms of Reference is required to ensure the group is reconstituted with clear, achievable targets set. JD responded favourably and requested PA return with a clearer remit in January's meeting.

MaSh queried whether the consultation document was weighted towards schools non-associated with MFG. PA responded, if there is room to make clarifications on the consultation document this will be done, without specifying which schools are required to pay. SP stated this would not be necessary as there is the option to reduce the MFG.

MaSh reflected on the 0.5% transfer within the current year, adding his understanding that £3M was also transferred to the HNB in 2016/17: Schools Forum assumed this would be a 1 year adjustment, however the DfE considered this figure as a baseline. SP assured this was not permanently taken from the Schools Block and that the £3M was a decision for 2016/17 only. GW pointed out that in 2017/18 the amount of funding within the Schools Block funding Per Pupil did decrease over time in line with the £3M MaSh referred to. PA clarified the consultation document links to documentation by the DfE around how the NFF for High Needs is calculated, and assured formatting will be as advised by the DfE.

MaSh commented over the past 2 years, growth in SEND has increased significantly within Post 16 provision, which the School Budget is unaccustomed to. PA stated schools are being consulted and are encouraged to feed this information back. MaSh continued the costs of an EHCP is roughly £6K, however with consideration of Pension and National Insurance contributions, this totals around £8K. PA requested MaSh submit his queries via email to ensure a detailed response is ascribed to each.

MaSm stated the number of children with increased complex needs has increased significantly, along with associated costs. All Special Schools have received an influx in numbers and are supporting more children with significant Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. MaSm relayed that an additional 300 additional spaces will be required before 2022 and highlighted extreme difficulties in supporting children without the 0.5% transfer. MaSh appreciated this stating he does not wish for competition between Mainstream and Special schools to occur. However, MaSh concluded this 0.5% transfer, if agreed, would be taken from Mainstream Schools who are expected to take on board more children with special needs, which will require additional support.

JD summarised transparent processes are welcomed to ensure Schools Forum members and School colleagues understand where funds come from and also understand the pressures from both Special and Mainstream School settings. JD concluded the discussion and stated these are important, national issues with impacts which need to be understood on both sides.

**ACTION:** PA to return to Schools Forum in January with proposed objectives / Terms of Reference for the High Needs Block Working Group.

**ACTION:** MaSh to email PA with further consultation paper queries.

#### Consultation Paper - update

PA stated in line with the LA's commitment with regards to transparency, numbers have been published. Admittedly, the consultation process began later than preferred, however there have been suggestions to extend the consultation deadline which the LA is happy to accommodate. PA recommended schools should return with consultation paper amendments or feedback by the end of the first week back of term.

The consultation paper was projected for members to see and PA explained there were 6 main questions for response. The first question sought a response from school colleagues on whether they supported the move

towards the full NFF. PA commented the LA are mandated to move towards the NFF, transitional or full. The second question related to the transfer of 0.5% (or more due to settlement figures being higher) to the High Needs Block. An explanation of Pressure Mitigation Actions from the LA is included within the consultation paper, as requested by Schools Forum. PA stated the main pressure driver results from numbers within the system; short term fixes are being addressed prior to seeking a long term capital investment.

Reference was made within the consultation paper to the Portsmouth SEND Strategic Review, regarding Mainstream and Special Schools support for pupils with SEND. PA added the Bitterne Autism Resource Base (ARB) is now running, with accommodation and modular classrooms being implemented. This has so far prevented 8 children from being placed outside of the city, retaining savings equating to £80K per child. Work is also being undertaken by Tammy Marks (Service Manager, SEND) to address banding and mechanisms of funding. The consultation process noted to address future needs around SEND and children with complex needs.

MaSh highlighted there were a total of 13 quotes included within the consultation from parents and pupils. 11 of the quotes reflect positively for Special Schools; MaSh felt there was an absence in quotes from any supportive Mainstream Schools, resulting in an assumption that Mainstream settings are not providing support. MaSm responded, Special Schools did express there are Mainstream Schools providing positive support. Councillor Paffey reiterated inclusion is a large issue from the LA's perspective and that it is important for the LA's Strategic Direction to be clear. Councillor Paffey continued if this was not communicated as intended, it would be amended accordingly.

SP highlighted the ability to adjust the minimum Per Pupil Level is not included within the consultation paper options. This should be incorporated as a potential level to ensure any school within the minimum per pupil funding level, would receive assurance that they will not receive a change in their funding. PA provided clarity around the disapplication process for PFI has been received from the DfE: there is a mechanism to detach. HK responded favourably, thanking officers for their work on the historic issue.

PA requested members consult with all school colleagues (including Special Schools) to ensure all feedback has been received ahead of the budgetary Schools Forum meeting. SP requested all relevant paperwork should be received at the earliest opportunity to allow members time to digest the information, prior to making informed decisions at the January meeting. PA agreed and assured a summary of the consultation will be provided, along with clarity on where Schools Forum powers are and where voting is required. AT-J requested a consultation reminder prompt upon the first day

of the Spring Term. PA agreed and added if there were any further queries to get in touch.

**ACTION:** Tammy Marks to return to a future Schools Forum meeting to provide a progress update around SEND Strategic Review.

**ACTION:** PA to feedback MaSh's comments on Mainstream School quotes to Tammy Marks for a response.

**ACTION:** LA officers to provide members with all of the relevant paperwork ahead of the January meeting.

**ACTION:** PA to send a consultation reminder prompt to all School colleagues on the first day of Spring Term.

## **8 CONTINGENCIES**

PA explained the proposal around a Contingency fund for unforeseen circumstances, which would be applicable to Maintained Schools only. PA underlined this would not be a Schools in Difficulties fund; a small portion would be retained from the DSG allocation where Schools Forum would agree its utilisation. PA reiterated the Contingency fund would not be controlled by the LA, however highlighted it would have a cap of £450K. PA clarified this would not be de-delegated.

MaSh queried how funding would be balanced between Academies and Maintained Schools. PA responded, Academies would receive their full settlement first with the Contingency fund being taken out of the remaining Mainstream settlement.

GW noted the estimated clawback of £4.90 per pupil spend for the £450K. PA noted the figure of £154K was utilised as a demonstration and was the remaining figure from the referenced model. Final figures would be confirmed once a decision had been made in January.

PH referred back to the Schools in Financial Difficulties fund and requested clarity on what the £20K funding assisted with, i.e. how much did it help schools that received it? PH added schools purchase insurance if a Head Teacher goes off sick to cover costs. PA repeated this was not a Schools in Financial Difficulties fund however understood the reasons why schools were sceptical around the LA's previous decisions around this fund. The Contingencies fund would not be a prescriptive fund and would be purely for unforeseeable circumstances. PH noted if this fund was agreed, schools

would no longer purchase insurance. PA reiterated it would be a Schools Forum decision as to how the money is spent.

SP commented he did not see the viability in the small, capped fund (£450K) which could instead benefit schools from the initial point of budgetary allocation. RH stated his assumption that if the funding was not utilised, it would be returned to schools. PH queried whether the Schools in Financial Difficulties fund was returned last year, if there was any money remaining. RH commented this should have been returned or carried forward into the next budget. MaSh stated the Schools in Financial Difficulties fund does still exist, however, schools were advised to discontinue contributions and wait for clarification on how the fund was spent. JK stated she would provide an update at the next meeting.

**ACTION:** JK/NP to provide an update on Schools in Financial Difficulties at a future meeting.

## **9 CLOSING REMARKS AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

JD thanked members for their attendance to today's meeting and felt the discussions had were extremely valuable. JD thanked officers for their efforts in providing timely data and felt confident that colleagues will be better informed when the times comes to make final budgetary decisions in January 2019. HK echoed the thanks to officers and reminded members to liaise with respective colleagues where necessary.

NP highlighted an ESFA Offer is available; Schools Research Advisors will be available for 5 days to provide support and will offer their advice on how to address processes and improvements. NP stated any schools which have requested a review will be sent an invitation to attend a meeting. NP also noted schools should have received invitations to trial the new Business World system and to get in touch if interested.

**Wednesday 16 January 2018**

Time: 4:00pm start

Venue: Mansbridge Primary School