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## SCHOOLS FORUM

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 September 2023

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<b><u>In attendance</u></b>	
<b><u>Chair and Vice Chair</u></b>	
John Draper	Headteacher – Swaythling Primary
Harry Kutty	Headteacher – Cantell
<b><u>Primary Schools</u></b>	
Amanda Talbot-Jones	Headteacher – St Denys Primary
Mike Adams	Headteacher – Bitterne Manor Primary School
Peter Howard	Headteacher – Fairisle Junior
PK Macbride	Primary Governor – Bannister
<b><u>Secondary Schools</u></b>	
Jim Henderson	Headteacher Woodlands Community College
<b><u>Academy</u></b>	
Sean Preston	Hamwic Trust
Julian Waterfield	St Anne’s Catholic School
<b><u>Special Schools</u></b>	
Debbie McKenzie	Headteacher – Compass School
<b><u>Nursery</u></b>	
Anna Wright	PVI for Early Years
<b><u>Non-Schools</u></b>	
Rob Sanders	Diocese of Winchester
<b><u>Observers</u></b>	
Matthew	
<b><u>SCC officers</u></b>	
Derek Wiles	Head of Education and Learning– Education
Steve Wade	Finance Business Partner

#### Apologies

Councillor Winning	Cabinet member
Lisa Needham	Springwell School
James Rouse	St Anne’s Catholic School
Tammy Marks	Service Manager - Special Educational Needs and Disability
Clodagh Freeston	Service Manager - Education Strategy, Planning and Improvement
Joanna Lawton	Regional Director Oasis Southampton
Roger Peplow	Governor St Georges
Darrin Hunter	Early Years Manager

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

Apologies were noted.

The Forum noted that a review of membership and the constitution was now due and had been commenced.

2. **ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

Mr John Draper was elected as Chair from September 2023 to September 2025.

Mr Harry Kutty was elected as Vice Chair from September 2023 to September 2025.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members of the Forum were reminded to complete the declarations of interest form that was attached to the papers for the meeting.

4. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

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

The Forum considered the briefing paper giving an update on DFE/ESFA funding announcements.

The Forum was concerned that the rate of increase of funding for the High Needs Block had reduced whilst pressure on that service remained high and noted that further modelling would be undertaken.

6. **PFI**

The Forum considered a briefing paper which had been requested at the previous meeting in relation to the PFI affordability gap.

The Forum noted that additional funding was available for 2024/25 and the sinking fund could be increased by a PFI factor of either:

- RPIX then maintain that rate for the duration of the contract
- RPIX each year for the duration of the contract
- 4%.

Much would depend on whether rates of inflation increased and whether additional funding was available in subsequent years.

This matter would be reviewed annually by the Forum. If there were to be a risk that protecting PFI funding would have a negative impact upon funding for other schools then advanced notification would be expected to facilitate meaningful consideration by the Forum in a timely manner.

The Forum noted that a forecast budget gap of £2.9m was the worst case scenario for the period ending 2032 and that the figures in the first column of paragraph 4 of the briefing paper would cover the lower budget gap forecast of £1.2m. The sinking fund would be unlikely to run out of reserves for approximately seven years in any event.

The Forum noted the financial pressures that the Council is under and the importance of maintaining these contracts. The Forum indicated that it would strongly support efforts to re-negotiate contracts when possible and for the local authority to ensure that all obligations of providers under PFI contracts were being performed in order to obtain best value for money, whilst working collaboratively with the schools concerned which were seeking legal advice, before any increase was sought.

The Forum requested an update be provided to the next meeting by Council Officers and the three schools involved.

**RESOLVED:** in principle, as agreed in previous years, to agree to make a technical adjustment to the minimum funding guarantee formula for the three schools covered by the PFI contracts, subject to every other school receiving full national funding formula.

7. **GROWTH FUNDING**

The Forum noted that further modelling is being undertaken and that the impact of a new University Technical College (UTC) could not yet be calculated as the funding budget for that provision had not yet been set.

Schools Forum had previously agreed a growth fund formula and endorsed continuation of that approach.

The Forum noted that the Department for Education was monitoring falling rolls within medium super output areas. Local authorities can operate a falling rolls fund if they can demonstrate they are likely to need those school places in the subsequent five years. It was agreed that Southampton City Council would review data for five years and report to the next meeting about whether it would be likely to operate a falling rolls fund.

8. **HIGH NEEDS BLOCK**

The Forum noted that a review of the High Needs Block was in hand and that a report would be provided to the next meeting.

9. **POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL BUDGET CONSTRAINTS ON SCHOOLS FUNDING**

The Forum expressed concern that Southampton City Council's budget was under pressure and sought reassurance that schools would not be adversely impacted.

The Forum noted that schools provide statutory services. Many other services provided to schools are income generating or covered by the top slice. It was concerned that maintenance works in some schools are being delayed. The Forum wished to invite appropriate decision makers to the next meeting to be better informed about likely actions and enable open discussions.

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

The next meeting will take place on 22 November 2023.