

SCHOOLS FORUM

PLEASE NOTE TIME OF MEETING

Wednesday 27 June 2018
at 4.00 pm – 6.00 pm

Mansbridge Primary School
Octavia Road, Swaythling, Southampton, SO18 2LX

This meeting is open to the public

LEAD OFFICER
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Present

Chair and Vice Chair		
John Draper	Head Teacher	Swaythling Primary 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		
Jim Henderson	Head Teacher	Woodlands Community College
Special Schools Representatives		
Andy Evans	Head Teacher	Great Oaks School
Colin Grant	Governor	Cedar School
Academy Representatives		
Lyn Bourne	Head Teacher	St Anne's Catholic School
David Turner	Governor	
Pupil Referral Unit Representative		
Alison Parsons	Head Teacher	Compass School
PVI Early Years Provider		
<i>Not represented</i>		
Non Schools Representative		
<i>Not represented</i>		
Observers		
Jedd Hayward	NASUWT / Teacher's Liaison Panel	
Andy Peterson	Head Teacher	Bitterne C E Primary School
Kathryn Bevan-Mackie	Head Teacher	St Monica Primary School
SCC Officers		
Councillor Sarah Taggart	Millbrook Ward	
Hilary Brooks	Service Director, Children and Families Service	
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	
Tammy Marks	<i>(Item 6v)</i>	Service Manager, Special Educational Needs and Disability
Pippa Cook	<i>(Item 6v)</i>	SEND Strategic Manager, Portsmouth
Anne Downie	Team Manager, Early Years	
Christine Rice	Education Support Manager	

Stephanie Wickenkamp

Meeting Support (minutes)

MINUTES

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair John Draper welcomed delegates to the meeting and thanked MS for kindly hosting the meeting.

JD welcomed Jim Henderson, Head Teacher at Woodlands Community College, to Schools Forum.

2 APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)

Apologies:

Harry Kutty (Vice Chair)	Head Teacher	Cantell School
Gary Wooldridge	-	Schools Forum Advisor
Martin Brown	Head Teacher	The Sholing Technology College
Anna Wright	-	Paint Pots Nursery
Susanne Ottens	Exec. Head Teacher	Fairisle Infant and Nursery School
Sean Preston	Chief Financial Officer	Hamwic Education Trust
Kaye Cantor	Meeting Support (minutes)	

Changes in membership:

The follow changes in membership were noted:

DT announced his retirement from Schools Forum after 20 years' service. DT was appointed Chair of the Hampshire Education Committee 30 years ago. During this time, the DfE stipulated a Schools Forum's membership must compile 50% Head Teachers and 50% Governors. DT appreciated Southampton Schools Forum have maintained a good relationship with the LA and was hopeful this would continue.

JD thanked DT for his substantial and important contributions to Schools Forum and emphasised his role was celebrated by members. Members wished DT a long and happy retirement.

RH explained he has been liaising with Kaye Cantor regarding the Primary School Governor vacancy. If more than one Primary School Governor is interested in the position, RH stated he would be happy to address. RH and DT reiterated the importance of School Governor representatives and attendance to Schools Forum.

PA announced DW has been appointed Service Lead for Education. JD welcomed DW to Schools Forum and looks forward to working together.

ACTION: Meeting Support to amend membership, following David Turner's retirement (Academy Governor vacancy).

***Post-meeting note:** Chris Ode will be retiring at the end of the academic year. Jedd Hayward confirmed he will be attending Schools Forums in his place.*

ACTION: Meeting Support to amend membership, following Chris Ode's retirement.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

JD noted there was only one declaration of interest outstanding for this academic year and asked this is completed at earliest convenience.

4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 28 MARCH 2018

JD reviewed the minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2018 for accuracy and matters arising.

Matters Arising:

Page 5: Item 2 Apologies and Changes in Membership (if any) – Recommendations and decision to appoint an Independent Financial Advisor to Schools Forum

PA confirmed Gary Wooldridge has been appointed as an observer and does not have any voting rights. His membership does not pose any conflicts of interest.

Page 6: Minutes of 17 January 2018 (Item 5ii Allocation of total amount of DSG)

JK confirmed she had met with multiple Head Teachers to address finance queries.

Page 10: Item 5ii Education Services Review – Methodologies

PA stated no formal group has yet been established and requested this action be carried forward.

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.

The minutes of the meeting were agreed.

JD explained to members a more transparent Programme of Work had been agreed with LA officers, which will enable earlier identification of items to be raised and discussed throughout the year. A new standing item for every Schools Forum meeting is a DfE funding update to allow better understanding of the political landscape around schools' funding.

5 STANDING ITEM: LA UPDATE ON DfE/EFA FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENTS

NP explained he had attended a DfE information session on 22 June in relation to proposals for the NFF. The 2019/2020 NFF will be broadly the same as the 2018/2019 NFF with the following key differences;

- The funding floor will increase to 1% against 2017/18.
- The gains cap will increase to 6.09% against 2017/18.
- The minimum per pupil funding levels will increase to £3,500 and £4,800 for Primary and secondary schools respectively.
- The most substantial change in 2019/2020 will be the formulaic approach to the growth factor.

NFF Next Steps: 2019/2020 Allocations

- DfE will be publishing Primary and secondary units of funding and illustrative LA and school level allocations in July 2018. This will include the methodology for calculating growth funding including a worked example.
- Final allocations for 2019/20 will be calculated following the October 2018 census and will be confirmed in December 2018. This will include LA allocations through the new growth factor.

School Resources Management Self-Assessment Tool

This tool will replace the current SFVS return and will be in place for April 2019. Academies will be provided with a voluntary version which will be made available to them from September 2018. The following was highlighted regarding the new tool:

- A checklist which will be a development of the exiting SFVS
- A dashboard which will look at how a schools data compares to thresholds, which are set using the data for all schools and will provide information on any deviations in performance against a national perspective.

Local formula arrangements – mirroring the NFF

NP stated a new optional factor will be added to the 2019/20 APT which will operate in a similar way to the MFG but will use the updated 2018/19 NFF baselines.

NP stated in addition to the above, the DFE confirmed that for 2019/20, disapplication's allowing 0.5% movement between blocks which would allow funding to be transferred to High Needs from the schools block will be available subject to schools forum approval.

JD appreciated the new information and queried how this will effect Southampton schools. NP responded figures will be received in July for processing and can then be shared with Schools Forum members. JK added Gary Wooldridge and Sean Preston's experience in finance will be valuable in understanding the figures.

AE requested this update be sent electronically to Schools Forum members.

ACTION: NP to provide Schools Forum members with July finance figures via Schools Forum Admin inbox.

ACTION: JK/NP to liaise with Gary Wooldridge and Sean Preston upon release of July finance figures.

ACTION: Meeting Support to circulate NP's paper for this item with the minutes.

6 LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATES

JD stated the following issues need to be understood and noted lessons must be learnt going forward. JD hopes to ensure future decisions for schools funding are equitable and transparent.

6 (a) Primary Schools bulge and Expansion

PA explained in March 2013, Primary schools were contacted to consider bulge classes due to an anticipated shortfall in the projected places for 2015/16. This was a transient demand and all Head Teachers were emailed to consider accommodating bulge classes. It was noted the LA holds all school capacity information in relation to this request. PA stated a smaller number of schools should have been targeted with this request, where the demand was highest.

PA continued a cluster of schools were approached to take on 2 bulge classes and were notified of the Capital funding limit of £30K. However, this funding limit had been set prior to the LA assessing individual schools requirements. Each school's situation was vastly different, with some schools requiring minor refurbishment and others requiring a new module build to facilitate the bulge classes.

PA emphasised no judgement should have been made at the level of capital investment, prior to completing assessments on the cluster of schools. PA noted the difference between equal and equitable and understood the schools' expectation was that they would be treated the same. PA relayed his acute awareness of another school receiving a vast amount of funding in comparison to another. The cluster of schools involved should have received a structured presentation to explain the need and demand for when and where it was needed. PA emphasised this must be a lesson to be learnt for the future, as this request could occur again.

MS highlighted the disadvantage of a particular school and emphasised all schools had understood they would be treated fairly. RH stated this issue should have been raised through and potentially put forward for decision by Schools Forum. RH strongly insisted this must not happen again in the future. PA agreed proposals should have been brought to Schools Forum first.

PA stated the LA lacked clarity through its use of language and actions in catering for transient demand and permanent capacity; future proposals to work with schools will be very clear along with expectations.

Decision making criteria was not consistent through this process and were based on low and high cost solutions. PA explained high cost solutions were decided on the basis that 1 school was closer to the city, however in reality the distance was marginal. A consistent methodology, approach and constant communication are required and were noted as lessons learnt.

MS was unsatisfied with the response provided and commented a school had received a sizeable amount of funding in comparison to the Capital funding limit. PA responded he fully acknowledged this and stated expectations were distorted.

In relation to Secondary school capacity, JD stated PA is committed to ensure decisions are brought to Schools Forum for approval, not necessarily for decision. PA explained due to the scale of investments, reports will be taken initially to Capital Programme, prior to discussion at Schools Forum, with the intention of being put forward to Cabinet and Council.

In response to LB's query on timescales, PA responded reports going ahead in July to Cabinet and published papers will be next week. PA confirmed he will be liaising with individual schools over the next few days to ensure schools are made aware of future plans.

JD thanked PA.

ACTION: PA to provide Secondary School Placement capacity update at next meeting, following Cabinet and Council in July.

6 (b) Funding of previous amalgamation – Junior/Infant School

PA had investigated schools who were initially Junior or Infant and had received a lump sum of funding, before transitioning to a Primary school, and incidentally acquiring merged funding. PA shared his frustration that the LA could have approached the DfE for support which would have benefitted schools, however this was not actioned. In response to JS query, PA stated it would be unlikely to receive DfE support at this point.

PA highlighted the importance in ensuring understanding of the Capital Programme; its priorities are learning and education. Buildings are a vital part to deliver the best educational outcomes to all the children in the city, however decisions should not be based on buildings and instead should be schools should be encouraged to operate effectively.

MS highlighted the lack of documentation and stated Schools Forum had not been consulted in relation to this issue.

JD acknowledged the ongoing impact and requested an update be brought to the next Schools Forum.

ACTION: PA to provide further details on 'Funding of previous amalgamation – Junior/Infant School' at next meeting.

6 (c) Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)

PA stated schools have collectively approached the LA with a number of concerns around MFG funding. PA continued LA decisions may or may not have influenced school finances and unpicking this process is taking longer to enable shared learning. PA assured members the LA is meeting with the schools concerned and will continue to maintain a dialogue. PA stated these issues are very complex.

One potential issue to address is in relation to the original cohorts of the 4 schools and 2 new schools, and their MFG's. PA explained these schools' MFG's have been locked in based on their original cohorts. A commitment has been made to look into the details of these schools and to ensure all schools have a transparent understanding of MFG going forward.

MS was unsatisfied with this explanation and stated the LA had approached the EFA. AT-J stated some schools have not been able to find written documentation that explains this. JS requested this information be received to Schools Forum members for distillation to other school colleagues. PA agreed.

JD thanked PA for the technical understanding and agreed the need to move forward and be wiser.

ACTION: PA to circulate MFG PowerPoint to Schools Forum members, to enable feedback to other school colleagues.

ACTION: PA to circulate "Analysis around Primary Schools Bulge" email to Schools Forum members.

6 (d) Consortium of Local Education Authorities for the Provision of Science Services (CLEAPSS) funding

JD's recollection was that CLEAPSS (an online safety resource) was initially paid by the LA. LA Funding was then ceased and payment was taken through schools' budget without seeking any decision from Schools Forum. PA stated the LA had previously charged a relatively small subscription to schools through per pupil funding (11p per pupil). However, PA clarified the LA is now paying for this service.

6 (e) Changes to Finance Systems

NP announced the Agresso system will be undergoing a major upgrade in 2019 to a system known as Milestone 7. The following areas were highlighted:

1. Approval limits – How much a member of staff can approve

Approval limits are being approved and a new banding schedule is to be agreed.

2. Automated Approvals for requisitions

A previous exercise with schools to identify an auto-approval limit resulted in a mix of results and a new proposal is to be put forward to schools to determine if and how much the schools auto-approval limit should be.

3. Sub Cost Centres

The Milestone 7 upgrade will no longer possess sub cost centres. Alternatives are being addressed to record school expenditure, such as school trips.

4. Cost Centre Hierarchy

The Milestone 7 upgrade will provide a more flexible cost centre hierarchy which some schools may want to make use of. The new upgrade will provide a facility for schools to allocate their budgets at a lower level which for example might be for upper / lower school or for a primary school, infants / juniors. NP stated schools will need to decide whether this will be appropriate.

JK invited schools to trial a tangible update once available and emphasised the importance of receiving ongoing feedback. JD thanked JK and NP and highlighted school business managers will need to have understanding on how this will effect operations going forward.

ACTION: JK to invite Schools Forum members to trial Milestone 7 update once available.

ACTION: Meeting Support to circulate NP's paper for this item with the minutes.

6i **Education Services Review sub-group**

PA is keen to progress and emphasised the need for positive engagement. Utilising schools' perspective will hopefully identify value and realisation of how the service should operate. PA confirmed the sub-group will look at proposals around the final year of DSG before transitioning to the NFF in 2019/2020. PA has received nominations for the sub-group and asked JD whether he would be happy to schedule a meeting to progress. JD responded favourably and requested an update at the next Schools Forum.

ACTION: PA to provide an update at next Schools Forum, following meeting with the sub-group.

6ii **Private Funding Initiative (PFI)**

Research had been undertaken to clarify whether PFI was included in the MFG and this was confirmed. NP stated work is progressing to see how the MFG incorporated PFI and identify how it effects the schools and their MFG.

ACTION: NP to provide an update on 'Private Funding Initiative (PFI)' at next Schools Forum.

6iii Local Authority Budget Pressures and DSG monitoring

Schools Forum members' general response to an LA Financial Update was in relation to savings targets and pressures.

Revenue Budget

Expenditure of £539M (2018/19) offset by Service and Specific Grant Income £358M. £181M to be funded from Central Government Grants, Council Tax & Business Rates.

Capital Programme (2017/2018 – 2021/2022)

Total Capital funding equates to £410.2M. The general fund is £193.3M, of which £98.7M is Schools capital. Housing and Revenue Account holds £216.9M. JK highlighted the significance of Southampton's Schools Capital Programme; outcome-based planning formulates the budgets alongside the 5 key objectives aligned with the LA.

Medium Financial Term Strategy (MTFS)

A recent Peer Group Review has recommended a different MTFS approach across 2 years, as opposed to 4 - 5 years. JK stated financial announcements are still pending, however the MTFS had been based on reliable financial data.

Revenue Budget & Resources

Expenditure is funded through Council Tax, Business Rates and Reduced Central Government Grants. JK highlighted the Council provide sellable services to people.

JK highlighted a £6.95M budget gap for 2019/2020 and an anticipated £14.10M budget gap for 2020/2021. A £6M budget gap within Childrens' Social Care was highlighted; HB and PA are trying to reduce expenditure within HNB in response. HB commented in the past couple of years, the Council have been able to transfer money to reduce the pressure, however this cannot be repeated this year.

JK explained 41.1% of the Council's budget goes toward Children's Safeguarding and 53.1% goes towards Housing Revenue.

Dedicated Services Grant (DSG)

£128.1M will be the available DSG funding. In 2017/2018 the LA overspent by £1.54M, however underspend in other areas of schools financing were able to reduce this overspend.

The forecast for 2018/2019 has increased by £1M due to activity levels being locked in from 2017/2018. JK stated some of this resulted from the High Needs Block, in which the Government have acknowledged under funding for this area. JK stressed in 3 years savings must be realised in areas such as Home to School Transport.

Capital Budgets & Resources

Capital spending by councils is mainly for buying, constructing or improving assets such as:

- Buildings (Schools and Houses)
- Land (for development, roads and playing fields)
- Vehicles, Plants and Machinery (such as refuse collection vehicles)
- IT Hardware and Software

JK stated although £98.7M (a quarter of the Capital Budget) goes towards Education & Children's Social Care, Schools received most of the budget.

MS queries how loss of funds are recuperated. JK reassured MS that the funds will not be taken out of the DSG and explained Council funding is utilised from other areas where possible. However, this cannot occur this year due to previous savings.

JK highlighted Southampton were the only LA to publish their accounts (Internal Budgets and DSG) and remain within budget. Despite the pressures felt within Children's Social Care, work is progressing and remaining in budget is a huge achievement. JK has liaised with a contact at the LGA who stated all LA's are experiencing similar pressures, especially in relation to High Needs Block.

DT queried the progress on work to reduce Out of City Placements. HB highlighted a large scale piece of work regarding Children's Residential Placements; a paper is set to go to Cabinet in September. HB emphasised the need to reduce Out of City placements in order to manage further funding cuts. DT reflected on his attendance to an Infant School in which a child was struggling within these mainstream settings and required constant support.

DT acknowledged the strain this causes on the LA's budget and RH discussed a Radio broadcast in relation to this issue. HB responded she attends a DCS London meeting every 8 weeks with Councillor Jordan and Councillor Paffey, to address Schools Funding pressures; preventative services are being cut and the impact is having a critical effect. In the previous meeting, HB explained the Government are addressing funding and noted a piece of work is set for completion by Autumn 2018. HB highlighted all areas are effected and only a small majority of LA's have achieved their budget within Children's Services.

AP raised concerns of the language being utilised in relation to Out of City placements; the focus is not to bring children back in, but to prevent them from going out. HB agreed work is being progressed to prevent children from going out of city, however reiterated provisions should be made available within the city, to ensure children who have been placed outside due to lack of provisions, can return and have their needs met. AP highlighted the need

to address each case individually due to traumatic experiences and HB agreed placements must be suitable. A paper in relation will be put forward for Cabinet.

RH highlighted tribunal costs, which TM assured a significant improvement had been identified. TM emphasised the need to look at and evidence suitable offers, as opposed to parental preference. TM highlighted no tribunals this year have been put forward for hearing and those that had, have been negated.

JD thanked JK for her presentation and requested this be circulated.

ACTION: Meeting Support to circulate JK's PowerPoint for this item with the minutes.

ACTION: JK welcomed Financial Topic requests from Schools Forum members.

6iv Capital Programme update

PA reiterated the Secondary School Capacity Capital Programme will go to Cabinet in July.

6v SEND Strategic Review

TM stated the SEND Strategic Review was a joint project with Portsmouth which has now been finalised and includes 52 recommendations. The review was timed to coincide with the end of the first 3 years of the SEND Reforms and the increasing pressures around High Needs across the UK.

PC explained the review contains a vast amount of information on the provision to children with SEND within the city and also provides recommendations to meet the needs of children in the future.

PC highlighted the following priority areas to address in Southampton:

Reviewing the use of high cost out of city placements

PC reiterated the considerable cost of out of city placements and noted the difficulty in bringing children and young people back into Southampton once exited. PC emphasised the importance of managing children's needs within the city wherever possible, with children only placed in out of city schools where no other options are available or can be delivered, ensuring transition expectations are in place for children to return.

Meeting the needs of the growing number of children with severe learning difficulties and complex needs

PC highlighted the national issue of the increasing number of children with complex needs; these children are surviving premature or traumatic births or living longer due to support through advanced medical equipment.

Reviewing the availability of Post 16 provision

Numbers of young people in Post 16 education are increasing as predicted, however there is now pressure for statutory protection up to the age of 25. PC highlighted EHCP applications are increasing beyond Post 16 and Post 19.

Meeting the needs of the growing number of children and young people with autism / social communication needs

PC emphasised needs must be met instead of demand; some children are failing to meet Special School criteria, however parents are demanding special school placements at the advice of health practitioners without evidence to support this. Concerns were also raised for mainstream schools who feel they are unable to support children with complex needs. PC stated demand is increasing and requires better management to meet the needs of children. Some mainstream schools are supporting children with complex needs and PC emphasised Southampton's Special Schools are excellent.

Inclusion and inclusivity within mainstream school settings

Mainstream schools require support to become more inclusive; TM has begun work to address this, however this work must be maintained. A robust, flexible, outreach offer should support this, which should include therapeutic offers in schools for children with sensory needs. Some of the children in out of city placements currently require support for SEMH needs. PC stated these needs could be supported within Southampton and through Residential placements. A Task and Finish Group has been created to address Residential placements.

Next steps

PC stated working groups are being identified to take recommendations from the review forward and implement. Joint work with Portsmouth is being considered as joint learning and support would be beneficial.

In response to RH' academy query, TM stated detailed figures showed positive, inclusivity engagement with some academy chains. PC commented it is critical for Head Teachers and Membership Teams to engage and embrace inclusivity within their school. DW stated he had met with the Director of the Academies Trust and agreed to regularly meet with Head Teachers to address any concerns around children with SEND. TM highlighted a new education code of practice which now applies to all schools.

MS commented some schools catchment area results in 95% filled capacity which makes inclusivity challenging. JD responded pupils at his school are based 3 – 4 miles away, due to the surrounding catchment area consisting of

University Accommodation. TM emphasised the need for equal provisions for children and for children with EHCPs.

JD thanked PC and TM for this important, complex piece of work.

ACTION: Meeting Support to circulate PC's SEND Strategic Review to Schools Forum members with the minutes.

7 CLOSING REMARKS AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

JD thanked LA officers for their work and stated Schools finances are a complex area. JD continued the presentations were informative and very helpful in finding out more context behind national and local variances.

JD asked for suggestions on hosting the next meeting. PH kindly offered Fairisle Junior School for the venue. JD thanked PH and added the 17 October 2018 meeting will be reinstated and will be purely DSG focussed.

Wednesday 19 September 2018

4:00pm – 6:00pm

Fairisle Junior School

Proposed forward dates and requests for venues:

- Wednesday 17 October 2018 TBC (DSG dedicated meeting)
- Wednesday 21 November 2018 TBC
- Wednesday 16 January 2019 TBC
- Wednesday 23 January 2019 TBC (Budget contingency)
- Wednesday 27 March 2019 TBC
- Wednesday 26 June 2019 TBC