

SCHOOLS' FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.30 pm on 18 July 2013

Present:

Andrew Downes (Chairman)	Secondary Academy Governor
David Bridger (Vice-Chairman)	Non-School Representative (Church of England)
Geoff Boyd	Primary Maintained Governor
Angela Chapman	Primary Maintained Governor
Keith Seed	Special Head Teacher/Governor

Also Present:

Councillor Stephen Wells	Portfolio Holder for Education
David Bradshaw	Head of Education and Care Services Finance
Amanda Russell	Head of Schools Finance Support
Helen Long	Democratic Services Officer

39 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

This item was deferred to the next meeting in September.

40 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Anna Boshier, Patrick Foley, Aydin Onac, Karen Raven and David Wilcox.

41 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

42 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7TH MARCH 2013

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2013 be confirmed.

43 2014-15 REVENUE FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

Report EDU13073

Further to Minute 37 of the last meeting, consideration was given to a report on additional guidance that had been issued by the DfE to assist local authorities and Schools Forums with planning the local implementation of the reformed funding system for 2014-15. The Head of the Schools Finance Team introduced the report and highlighted the nine main changes, the majority of which did not have a major impact on local arrangements. The DfE had also issued a new Authority Proforma Tool to allow the local authority to model funding for 2014/15 on a

school by school basis and the local authority was then required to submit a provisional 2014/15 school budget proforma by 31st October 2013.

The Forum went on to discuss the two main changes that would have an impact on local schools funding i.e. i) the upper limit for the lump sum which would be reduced to £175,000 in 2014/15; and ii) the change to the attainment measure for secondary schools to target pupils achieving level 3 or below in either English OR Maths as opposed to English AND Maths in 2013/14. Regarding the change to the lump sum in the case of primary schools this would mean a proposed reduction from the £180,000 to the capped amount. It was suggested that as no Secondary School representatives were present there would be discussion with Secondary Heads on this change and full consultation carried out with all secondary schools on proposed models based on a lump sum of either £175,000 in line with primary schools or no lump sum at all.

In respect of the second issue relating to the attainment measure this was more complicated and two papers were circulated at the meeting showing the percentage increases for schools and data comparisons. It was noted that for secondary schools in particular in terms of pupil numbers the new change would more than double the amount of pupils in 2014/15 attracting this funding and have considerable cost implications. It was proposed that more modelling be done to show the full impact and that discussions be held with Head Teachers about the approach to be taken. In order to deal with this within the time available it was proposed that a Working Group be set up to meet during the summer to draw up proposals which could be circulated early in the Autumn term. Arising from queries concerning the attainment measure change and whether it resulted in some pupils being counted twice the Head of Schools Finance advised that she had spoken to the DfE to clarify the matter and confirmed that this assumption was correct. The Chairman requested that the additional papers circulated at the meeting be emailed to all Forum members not present which the Officers undertook to do. It was also agreed that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman would be members of the Working Group.

RESOLVED that a Working Group be established to consider the above implications for schools to meet during the summer and develop proposals to come back to the Forum meeting in September.

44 CONSTITUTION OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM

Report EDU13072

The constitution of the Schools Forum was reviewed annually to reflect any changes that might have occurred in respect of member representation. The Head of Education, Care and Health Finance advised that there had been no further regulations affecting Schools Forums since last September and although there had been some changes to pupil numbers it was not sufficient to warrant amending the Constitution.

It was therefore proposed to retain the current membership within the academies and non schools areas and make no changes to the terms of reference. Members

noted, however, that it was likely there would be more significant changes in 2014.

RESOLVED that no changes be made to the Schools Forum Constitution and terms of reference.

45 SEND REFORMS, EHC PLANS AND THE LOCAL OFFER

A report was circulated at the meeting on the Government's new approach to special educational needs and disability which would require a new single assessment process to be put in place and an 'Education, Health and Care Plan' by 2014 to replace the current statutory SEN assessment and statement. The new Plans would provide for the same statutory protection to parents as a statement of SEN but would extend the age range for eligibility from birth to age 25 years. The intention was to give parents more control over the support for their child and family with the introduction of options for personal budgets.

The Acting Principal Educational Psychologist advised that the local authority and schools would be required to publish a local offer to clarify what support was available and from which source. To help with this officers would produce a template for schools which would be published on the Council's website. The report also highlighted other issues arising from these changes. In advance of the legislation plans would be introduced from 1st September 2013 for all new pupils who reached the threshold of specialist provision. A Local Authority 'Local Offer' would also be put in place to complement the school's 'Local Offer' and provide additional support for pupils below the threshold for an EHC Plan and above the notional £6,000 that was expected to meet needs which formed part of the mainstream schools and Academies delegated budgets.

Particular reference was made to the financial implications for the way that funding was delivered for Statements on SEN. From 1st April 2013 (maintained schools) and from 1st September 2013 (Academies) the first £6,000 funding for support of high incidence low level SEN needs would be delegated into school's budgets. The report detailed the changes and levels of funding that would be available and members were advised that a matrix system would be introduced to implement banded funding above the £6,000 limit. In response to a query on where any additional funding might come from it was explained that this would come out of the DSG and there could be an impact if a majority of pupils were put on the higher level.

It was noted that the local authority would continue to have responsibility for a child's health and social care needs in addition to educational needs. However, a significant change to the Bill had been included which placed a legal duty on Health Commissioners to arrange for health services that a local authority had specified in the EHC Plan.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and copies circulated to Forum members not present at the meeting.

46 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman reported brief details of an email he had received from a parent of a pupil at a Primary School about the DfE current Primary School AWPU level compared to the Secondary level, which was highlighted by DfE during the funding review. He had referred the request to the Head of Schools Finance Team to provide a suitable response as there had already been similar questions from a reporter as well as several Freedom of Information requests. It was suggested that the parent be asked to submit these questions as a formal Freedom of Information request and that it would be dealt with accordingly.

47 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The dates of the next meetings up until March 2014 were noted as follows:

Thursday 26th September 2013
Thursday 21st November 2013
Thursday 23rd January 2014
Thursday 13th February 2014
Thursday 20th March 2014

The Chairman requested that the dates for May and July 2014 also be provisionally agreed and the following were proposed:

Thursday 22nd May 2014
Thursday 10th July 2014

The Meeting ended at 5.30 pm

Chairman