

**SCHOOLS FORUM
3 MARCH 2011
4.31 - 5.26 PM**



Present:

Schools Members

Councillor Mrs Maureen Beadsley, Secondary School Governor
Trisha Donkin, Primary School Representative
Andrew Fletcher, Secondary School Representative
Ed Glasson, Primary School Governor
Gill Harbut, Primary School Representative
John McNab, Secondary School Governor
Kelvin Menon, Primary School Governor
Joanna Quinn, Primary School Representative
Paul Salter, Secondary School Representative
Councillor Mrs Anne Shillcock, Special Education Governor
Kathy Winrow, Secondary School Representative

Non-Schools Members:

Gordon Anderson, Diocese Representative (Vice-Chairman)

Also Present:

Paul Clark, Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Alan Kendall, Executive Member of Education
Emma Silverton, Bracknell Forest Council
Bob Welch, Bracknell Forest Council

Apologies for absence were received from:

George Clement, Union Representative (Chairman)
Brian Francis, Primary School Governor
Brian Fries, Secondary School Governor
Tony Reading, Primary School Governor
Kate Sillett, PVI Provider Representative
John Throssell, Primary School Governor

VICE CHAIRMAN, GORDON ANDERSON, IN THE CHAIR

65. Declarations of Interest

Paul Salter declared a personal interest in respect of Item 5 as the Head Teacher of Brakenhale Secondary School.

Gordon Anderson declared a personal interest in respect of Item 5 as the Chairman of the Governing Body of Jennett's Park School.

66. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

There were no matters arising.

67. **School Planned Maintenance**

The Forum received a report which set out the Local Authorities proposed approach to school planned maintenance from April 2011. The coalition government had reviewed and revised the allocation of capital grant funding available to schools and local authorities for 2011/12.

The overall level of available funding for schools planned maintenance had increased by 124% from 2010/11 to 2011/12 however, as in previous years the funding available for 2011/12 was still insufficient to meet all of the Priority one condition works in schools. Less than half the funding could be met from LA funding, so a joint approach was required between the LA and schools in prioritising and targeting the available resources to maintain assets.

It was proposed that where the Council undertook work in a school the school would be expected to contribute 10% of the cost from its Devolved Capital Funding, up to a maximum ceiling of 75% of their Devolved Formula Capital allocation. The contribution would be subject to abatement where a school had previously agreed with the Council for the allocation of its devolved Formula Capital to an alternative capital project.

The Forum noted that only five schools had responded to the consultation on planned maintenance. Concern was expressed over the short period of consultation with schools and the formality of the survey.

The Forum agreed that the process of consultation should be looked at in detail and that the results including any additional submissions from schools should be summarised and brought to the next meeting of the Forum.

Members of the Forum expressed concern over the Condition of Works Surveys which had been undertaken in 2009 as many schools had undertaken essential works since the time of the survey. It was noted that new surveys were in the process of being updated and would be used to revise the summary of Identified Condition Need in Schools.

The Forum requested that clarity on how the capital allocation would be prioritised and shared across the schools be provided at the next meeting of the Forum.

AGREED that from April 2011, community and voluntary controlled schools should contribute to the costs of planned maintenance as set out in the report.

68. **Local Authority Proposals for the 2010/11 Schools Budget**

The Forum received a presentation from Paul Clark, Group Accountant for Children, Young People and Learning which provided members with an update on the Schools Budget for 2011-12. The presentation included details of changes now expected from those presented to the last meeting of the Forum in respect of the forecast level of income, pressures on budgets delegated to schools and pressures on budgets managed by the Council.

Changes in forecast income included a significant increase in hours participation for three and four years olds and an increase of 1.1 pupils in maintained schools which

had resulted in an overall increase in Dedicated Schools Grant income of £0.914 million.

Annex B of the report detailed changes to budget pressures, with the total net change to the budgets delegated to schools calculated at £0.697 million and the total net change to budgets managed by the Council at £0.180 million. After taking in to account the additional income and revised cost of pressures, there remained balance of budget to allocate of £0.051 million. In accordance with the agreed budget strategy it was proposed to distribute this funding to schools and Early years providers, on the basis of 85% by reference to pupil numbers and 15% as a fixed amount per school.

RECOMMENDED to the Executive Member for Education that the 2011-12 Schools Budget include:

1. funding for the budget proposals as set out in the shaded column of Annex B calculated at £2.084m;
2. allocating the remaining £0.051m uncommitted budget to schools and early years providers in accordance with the agreed budget strategy, as detailed in paragraph 5.31.

AGREED that:

1. the school specific contingency for 2011-12 be set at £0.571m (paragraph 5.33 (1), Table 3);
2. the Minimum Funding Guarantee payment due to Brakenhale Secondary School be fully removed by the end of the 2012-13 financial year with the resultant savings redistributed within the Schools Budget (paragraph 5.33 (2));
3. the combined services budget that supports joint education and children's social care initiatives be set at £0.591m (paragraph 5.33 (3)).

NOTED that:

1. the Central Expenditure Limit had not been exceeded (paragraph 5.34);
2. the resultant budget for each service was set out in Annex D.

69. **Schools Forum: Operation and Good Practice Guidance from the DfE**

The Forum received a report which contained Operational and Good Practice Guidance from the Department of Education. The guidance was designed to provide members of Schools Forums, local authority officers and elected members with advice, guidance and information on good practice in relations to the operation of Schools Forums.

It was reported that in most instances, Bracknell Forest procedures and practices were considered to be in accordance with the good practices identifies by the DfE however, there were a small number of areas for consideration. Firstly providing better communication of the business of the Forum to the wider education community and secondly whether a more formal training programme should be made available to members of the Forum.

The Forum did not feel that at present a formal training programme was necessary. New members of the Forum were able to request training and guidance from officers and it was felt that it was difficult to structure meaningful training events.

The Forum felt that officers were always well prepared for meetings with thorough presentation that clearly outlined the purpose of the Forum's decisions. It was noted that schools were pleased with the services provided by the Council in relation to schools and felt that there was a good relationship between the Council and local schools.

The Forum commended the work of officers and their team particularly on their recent efforts to produce a school the Schools Budget for 2011/12 within the tight timescale required.

It was agreed that a copy of the Forum's Constitution would be circulated to all members of the Forum to allow comparison to the good practice guide.

70. Update to the Scheme for Financing Schools

The Forum received a report which informed members of the need to make changes to the Bracknell Forest Scheme for financing schools which was required following changes issued by the Department of Education to the guidance on local authority schemes which needed to be effective from 1 April 2011. Due to time pressures, the consultation would be issued to the schools and agreed by the Forum by the urgent business procedure.

It was proposed that a short consultation be undertaken with the schools during March, with the results presented to the Forum via email under the urgent business procedures, with a consensus decision formulated in consultation with the chairman of the Forum.

It was noted that a more detailed consultation would be undertaken with schools during the summer term with the outcomes reported back to the Forum to determine if any further changes were required.

In order to meet the required implementation deadline, the following timetable would be adopted:

- Consultation with schools from 28th February to 14th March
- Consultation with the Forum from 3rd March to 14th March
- 14th March to 18th March – Forum members requested to consider final proposals for any changes, reflecting comments from the consultation with schools
- 21st March to 28th March – views from Forum members summarised and presented for agreement to the Chairman of the Forum
- Scheme changes implemented 1st April.

The Forum agreed that the consultation be undertaken following the urgent business procedure.

71. Dates of Future Meetings

The next meeting of the Schools Forum was scheduled for Thursday 28 April at 4.30pm in the Function Room, Easthampstead House.

CHAIRMAN