

**SCHOOLS FORUM
15 SEPTEMBER 2011
4.30 - 5.34 PM**



Present:

Schools Members

Trisha Donkin, Primary School Representative
Ed Glasson, Primary School Governor
Gill Harbut, Primary School Representative
Louise Lovegrove, Primary School Representative
John McNab, Secondary School Governor
Joanna Quinn, Primary School Representative
Tony Reading, Primary School Governor
Paul Salter, Secondary School Representative
Trudi Sammons, Primary School Representative
John Throssell, Primary School Governor (Vice-Chairman)
Kathy Winrow, Secondary School Representative
Anne Shillcock, Special Education Representative

Non-Schools Members:

George Clement, Union Representative (Chairman)
Kate Sillett, PVI Provider Representative

Also Present:

Paul Clark, Bracknell Forest Council
Emma Silverton, Bracknell Forest Council
David Watkins, Bracknell Forest Council
Bob Welch, Bracknell Forest Council

Apologies for absence were received from:

Maureen Beadsley, Secondary School Governor
Andrew Fletcher, Secondary School Representative
Brian Fries, Secondary School Governor

1. Election of Chairman

On the proposition of Ed Glasson, seconded by John Throssell it was **RESOLVED** that George Clement be elected as Chairman of the Schools Forum.

GEORGE CLEMENT, IN THE CHAIR

The Forum noted that Gordon Anderson who had previously been Vice Chairman of the Forum had stepped down from his role as Diocese Representative. A letter of thanks had been sent to Mr Anderson on behalf of the Forum.

2. Election of Vice Chairman

On the proposition of Ed Glasson seconded by Paul Salter it was **RESOLVED** that John Throssell be appointed as the Vice-Chairman of the Schools Forum.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

Louise Lovegrove declared a personal interest in respect of Item 9 as Governor of Cranbourne Primary School.

Anne Shillcock declared a personal interest in respect of Item 9 as Governor of Easthampstead Park Secondary School.

4. **Minutes and Matters Arising**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. **Schools Forum Membership Review**

Emma Silverton, Democratic Services Officer, presented a report on the review of provision for secondary school representatives on the Schools Forum which had been undertaken after agreement of the Forum at its meeting on 14 July when the membership was amended to include an academy representative.

There were currently 17 school representatives on the Forum, 59% of which were from primary schools, 35% were from secondary schools and 6% were from academies. The representatives were broadly proportionate to the schools population which meant that there was now a vacancy for a third secondary schools staff representative on the Forum to replace Mrs Winrow who had been confirmed as the Academy Representative by the Governing Body of the Ranelagh Academy.

It was noted that the Secondary Heads Group had been contacted regarding a replacement representative and would confirm who this would be after their meeting at the end of September.

It was noted that the Primary Heads Group would be contacted to ask if they would nominate a representative to fill the Primary Representative vacancy.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the composition of the Bracknell Forest Schools Forum as set out in Appendix A be approved.
- b) the Secondary Heads Group be asked to nominate a third representative to the Forum.

6. **Schools Planned Works Programme**

Chris Taylor, Head of Property and Admissions, presented the report on the Schools Planned Works Programme which set out the Council's proposed approach to the prioritisation of funding for the Schools Planned Works Programme which was a LA capital investment in maintained schools.

The Forum had received a report suggesting a proposed approach to prioritisation following consultation with schools in spring 2011. The Forum had expressed concern in relation to the length of time allowed for the consultation so a further 12 week written consultation was undertaken between May and July 2011.

The response rate was disappointing. Only five schools responded to the consultation however, 80% of respondents did agree with the proposals.

It was noted that there was a minor typographical error in respect of the numbering only in the table of school responses to the consultation. It was agreed that this would be amended and circulated to members of the Forum.

It was reported that School Fire Risk Assessments had originally been carried out by external consultants however, the Council's Health and Safety Officers had now been trained and would be able to offer advice relating to updating Fire Risk Assessments in the future which would be on a more cost effective basis.

RESOLVED that the proposed approach to the prioritisation of LA funding for the Maintained Schools Planned Works Programme as set out in the body of the report be agreed.

7. **New Statutory Requirements Related to Alternative Educational Provision**

Bob Welch, Chief Advisor: Learning and Achievement, presented the report which gave details of the revised statutory requirements and cost implications for the education of children and young people out of school although not excluded but known to Bracknell Forest Council.

The requirements extended the current arrangements in which only pupils who were excluded from school were guaranteed full-time provision. From 1 September 2011 the LA must ensure all children out of school received suitable full-time education unless reasons relating to their medical condition meant this would not be in their best interests.

Given the small number of pupils and the variability of their needs it was difficult to predict the amount of additional resource needed to meet the new requirement. On the basis of 2010/11 numbers the estimated additional budget requirement for the remainder of the 2011/12 financial year was £34,200 comprised of £22,200 for provision for pupils with medical needs and £12,000 for additional teaching for the Cottage group at College Hall. It was estimated that the full year budget pressure in 2012/13 would be £59,000.

In response to a question on the effectiveness of online learning, it was confirmed that this provision worked well alongside face to face learning for pupils however, it was unlikely that online learning would be the sole provision made available to a pupil.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the change to the statutory requirements related to the education of children out of school (paragraph 5.2) be noted,
- b) the forecast overspend in the current year of £0.034m and the potential full year budget pressure of £0.059m (paragraph 5.27) be noted.

8. **Support to schools in financial difficulties**

Paul Clark, Group Accountant for Children, Young People and Learning presented the report on Support to Schools in Financial Difficulties which was received annually by the Schools Forum. The report gave an update on proposals for licensed deficit arrangements for schools, support to schools in financial difficulty, amendments to how the LA funded school improvement budget may be used to support schools at

risk of entering an Ofsted category of concern and confirmed the amount of Dedicated Schools Grant for 2011-12.

It was reported that Cranbourne Primary School, Fox Hill Primary and College Town Junior School were under licensed deficit arrangements with the LA and that all three schools were on target to meet the terms of their agreements. It was noted that should any changes be proposed to the arrangement during the year, they would be presented to the Forum for comment prior to the decision by the Executive Member for Education.

One school was considered in need of additional financial support. Whilst the medium term budget for Easthampstead Park Secondary School indicated sufficient funds were expected to cover anticipated costs, during June 2011, the school was inspected by Ofsted and issued with a Notice to Improve. Discussions between the LA and the School identified that the most effective means of supporting the school would be to fund a replacement assistant head teacher, at a cost of £0.090m, which would ensure that there were sufficient resources and expertise to address the concerns raised by Ofsted and maintain the progress of the School.

It was noted that a Management Intervention Board would be set up to monitor the progress of the school during the period of the Notice to Improve and that this would be responsible for authorising additional expenditure against a further £0.060m funding allocation.

It was reported that the use of the Schools Improvement Budget had be amended to widen the scope of the budget and to allow funding to be used to support schools deemed to be at risk of entering an Ofsted Category as well as those in Ofsted categories.

It was confirmed that the amount of 2011/12 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) was £75 million which was £0.476m more than anticipated. The difference was accounted for by a funding adjustment for low take up of entitlement to early years education.

Members of the Forum were invited to send suggestions for the use of the additional funding to Paul Clark for consideration. It was noted that an update on budget monitoring would be brought to the Forum meeting in October.

RESOLVED that:

- a) Cranbourne Primary School, Fox Hill Primary and College Town Junior School were all on target to meet the terms of the previously agreed licensed deficit arrangements (paragraphs 5.4 to 5.6) be noted,
- b) the proposal to allocate £0.150m from the budget to support schools in financial difficulty to Easthampstead Park Secondary School to aid recovery from the Notice to Improve, on the terms set out in the body of the report (paragraph 5.15) be agreed,
- c) the LA funded budget to support school improvement would in future be directed to schools at risk of entering an Ofsted category as well as those in categories 4 or 5 of the LA's policy for school improvement (paragraph 5.17) be noted,
- d) the confirmed amount of Dedicated Schools Grant for 2011-12 is £75m, £0.476m more than anticipated when the budget was set, and that proposals

for budget changes, if relevant, would be presented to the Schools Forum for consideration in October (paragraphs 5.19 - 5.20) be noted.

9. **Implementing the Schools Financial Value Standard**

The Forum received the report on the new requirement on schools to complete the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) from Paul Clark, Group Accountant for Children, Young People and Learning. The SFVS represented the Coalition Governments view of financial standards and was a lighter touch approach to that of the previous government.

The new SFVS had been developed to provide a clear and concise method for financial management and to provide a meaningful benchmark to encourage self-improvement. The SFVS became available from 1 September 2011 and was primarily aimed at school governors as governing bodies were now responsible for the financial management of their school.

The SFVS consisted of 23 questions which covered four areas; the governing body and the schools staff, setting the budget, value for money and protecting public money. Once completed that assessment would need to be agreed by the Governing body and then sent to the LA.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the expectation that maintained schools would be required to complete the SFVS on an annual basis, no later than 31 March 2013, be noted,
- b) one Bracknell Forest school had failed to meet the Financial Management Standard in Schools and would therefore be required to meet the SFVS by 31 March 2012, be noted.

10. **DfE Consultation on School Funding Reform: Proposals for a Fairer System**

The Forum received a report which gave details of the proposals set out in the Department for Education (DfE) Consultation on school funding reform; proposals for a fairer system.

It was reported that the current consultation followed on from an earlier consultation which was reported to the Forum in July. The latest consultation was complex with the DfE seeking comments on proposals for change in a number of sensitive areas with the potential for significant redistribution of funding. The consultation would dictate the future distribution of funding for education services to LAs and schools.

Key elements of the consultation focussed on transparency, making processes more uniform across the country and targeting resources to areas of most need.

The Forum had received additional papers which showed the LA response to the consultation. Members were asked to consider whether they wished to send their own response on the consultation to the DfE, the deadline for which was 11 October 2011.

The Forum noted the DSG did not include provision for academies. The LA was not obliged to provide services to the Academy however, the academy could buy services from the LA should it decide to do so.

Concern was expressed in relation to the short period of time in which to formulate a response to the consultation which left little time for representatives to consult with their schools. It was noted that the Forum did not have to send a response to the DfE and if individuals schools wished to they could send their own responses to the consultation.

It was agreed that members of the Forum would consult with their schools to see if they wishes to respond to any sections of the consultation. Any comments from members would be sent to Emma Silverton, who would collate the responses received and pass them on to the Forum's Chairman. The Chairman would fill in a response from the Forum and send it to the DfE on their behalf.

RESOLVED that the content of the DfE consultation on school funding reform be noted.

11. **Dates of Future Meetings**

The next meeting of the Schools Forum was scheduled for Thursday 13 October 2011, 4.30pm, Council Chamber Easthampstead House.

Future meetings

- Thursday 8 December 2011
- Thursday 9 February 2012
- Thursday 8 March 2012
- Thursday 26 April 2012

CHAIRMAN