

**SCHOOLS FORUM
15 MARCH 2012
4.30 - 5.10 PM**



Present:

Schools Members

Mike Beadsley, Secondary School Governor
Andrew Fletcher, Secondary School Representative
Brian Fries, Secondary School Governor
Ed Glasson, Primary School Governor
Gill Harbut, Primary School Representative
Louise Lovegrove, Primary School Representative
Joanna Quinn, Primary School Representative
Paul Salter, Secondary School Representative
John Throssell, Primary School Governor (Vice-Chairman)

Non-Schools Members:

George Clement, Union Representative (Chairman)

Also Present:

Paul Clark, Bracknell Forest Council
Amanda Roden, Bracknell Forest Council
David Watkins, Bracknell Forest Council

Apologies for absence were received from:

Maureen Beadsley, Secondary School Governor
John McNab, Secondary School Governor
Tony Reading, Primary School Governor
Trudi Sammons, Primary School Representative
Anne Shillcock, Special Education Representative
Kathy Winrow, Secondary School Representative
Councillor Alan Kendall

34. Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members

The Forum noted the attendance of the following Substitute Member:

Mike Beadsley for Maureen Beadsley

35. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

36. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2012 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

- The Primary School Representative vacancy would be filled by Liz Cole, rather than Liz Cook, Headteacher at Owlsmoor Primary School.

Arising on the minutes the Forum noted that:

- The Leader had re-organised the Executive Member Portfolios and Children and Young People had been merged with Education. Councillor Dr Barnard now held the Executive Member Portfolio for Children, Young People and Learning and consequently would be the new Observer at Schools Forum meetings.
- The Forum thanked Councillor Kendall for his support to schools and education in Bracknell Forest in general.

37. **Local Authority Proposals for the 2012-13 Schools Budget**

The Forum received a report which updated members of the Schools Forum on the Schools Budget for 2012-13 and sought views on the final budget proposals from the Local Authority (LA), and whether requests from the LA to the Forum to exercise its statutory decision making powers were agreed.

In terms of available income, this had increased by £0.139 million and resulted from the £0.400 million surplus balances from 2011-12 now expected to be nil, an additional £0.473 million of DSG income from an increase in pupil numbers, and incorporating the £0.066 million funding not previously allocated. There had also been £0.281 million of cost reductions from fewer early years placements in the PVI sector, less pupil eligibility to a free school meal, and lower MFG top ups. Overall, there was a further £0.420 million available for allocation

The areas the extra resources were proposed to be spent on were mainly centred around support to pupils with SEN where there had been a significant cost increase towards the end of 2011-12 and which was expected to continue into 2012-13. In total £0.321 million had provisionally been allocated to SEN budgets. The other main budget proposed to be increased related to early years provisions in maintained schools, where a pressure of £0.091 million had been calculated.

A switch in funding between centrally managed budgets to those delegated to schools in respect of internet and broadband services for schools was also proposed. The new contract did not require a centrally managed element and therefore all funds were now being delegated to schools.

In response to questions, the Forum was advised that:

- £86,000 had been set aside to finance the DSG top slice that the DfE would remove in respect of Ranelagh, which as an Academy school, was now responsible for paying directly for a range of services that were funded centrally for maintained schools.
- Any additional schools becoming academies may create an additional budget pressure.

RESOLVED that the Schools Forum:

1. **RECOMMENDED** to the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning that the 2012-13 Schools Budget include funding the budget proposals as set out in the shaded column of Annex B calculated at a total of £1.576 million.
2. **AGREED** the following decisions that it is solely responsible for:

- i. that the school specific contingency for 2012-13 be set at £0.302 million (paragraph 5.30 (1), Table 3).
- ii. that the combined services budget that supported joint education and children's social care initiatives was set at £0.691 million (paragraph 5.30 (2)).
- iii. that in agreeing the budget proposals, the central expenditure limit can be exceeded by the required amount (paragraph 5.31).

3. NOTED:

- i. that most units of resource used in the BF Funding Formula for Schools would be frozen at 2011-12 rates, as would the hourly funding rates paid to Early Years providers (paragraph 5.4).
- ii. that to comply with the latest DfE requirements, the schools contingency budget would be restructured so that SEN related funding that was allocated to the schools in-year was held as a discrete SEN budget (paragraph 5.30 (1)).
- iii. some centrally managed budgets would need to be restructured in year to reflect the academy funding related DSG top-slice (paragraph 5.35).
- iv. that the 2012-13 budget for each service was set out in Annex D.

38. The Scheme for Financing Schools - DfE Consultation on Mandatory Changes

The Forum received a report which updated members of the Schools Forum on a Department for Education (DfE) consultation on mandatory changes proposed for local authority Schemes for Financing Schools.

The DfE issued statutory guidance that needed to be taken into account in developing Schemes. This set the minimum subjects to be covered, and in certain instances could prescribe text that must be included. To reflect current policy, the DfE had issued a short consultation on changes it was proposing which must be made to all Schemes. These directed revisions were compulsory and were expected to become effective from 1 April 2012.

The revisions were set out at 5.4 of the report. There were seven changes altogether and the first two had been dealt with through changes recently. The deadline for responses for the consultation was 19 March 2012. The Council was satisfied with the proposed changes and so would not be making a response but individual Forum members could make comments on the consultation before 19 March 2012.

In response to questions, the Forum was advised that:

- The LA would issue to schools accompanying guidance to any new requirements from directed revisions to the Scheme.

RESOLVED that the Schools Forum:

1. **NOTED** the proposed directed revisions to the Scheme for Financing Schools, as set out in Annex A.
2. **CONSIDERED** what responses, if any, it wished to make to the consultation.

39. **Dates of Future Meetings**

The Forum noted that the next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 26 April 2012 at 4.30pm in the Council Chamber at Easthampstead House but meetings would be cancelled if there was no business to discuss.

CHAIRMAN