

SCHOOLS FORUM
26 APRIL 2012
4.30 - 5.05 PM



Present:

Schools Members

Maureen Beadsley, Secondary School Governor
Liz Cole, Primary School Representative
Trisha Donkin, Primary School Representative
Brian Fries, Secondary School Governor
Gill Harbut, Primary School Representative
John McNab, Secondary School Governor
Kelvin Menon, Primary School Governor
Joanna Quinn, Primary School Representative
Tony Reading, Primary School Governor
Paul Salter, Secondary School Representative
Anne Shillcock, Special Education Representative
John Throssell, Primary School Governor (Vice-Chairman)
Kathy Winrow, Secondary School Representative

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
Bob Welch, Bracknell Forest Council

Apologies for absence were received from:

Andrew Fletcher, Secondary School Representative
Ed Glasson, Primary School Governor
Louise Lovegrove, Primary School Representative

40. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

41. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2012 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

42. Financial Support to Schools in Categories

The Forum received a report which requested that the Schools Forum agree a set of principles to be applied by the Director of Children, Young People and Learning in relation to the allocation of funds to schools in, or in danger of entering an Ofsted

category from the retained budget for schools in financial difficulty without having to first obtain agreement of the Forum.

School Funding Regulations allowed for additional funds outside the normal operation of the Funding Formula to be provided to schools considered to be in financial difficulty. In agreement with the Schools Forum, funding of £304,000 had been set aside in the School's Budget for this purpose.

In order to allow funds to be allocated within an appropriate time scale and to provide certainty of funding to qualifying schools, it was recommended that a set of principles be agreed by the Schools Forum which allowed the Director of Children, Young People and Learning discretion to allocate funds up to but not exceeding a set level dependent on the Ofsted category of the school.

The new Ofsted inspection framework was challenging and proposed changing the category of 'satisfactory' to 'in need of improvement' which would make this a category of concern. Early intervention and available funding was needed to avoid further expenditure.

RESOLVED that the Schools Forum:

- i. **AGREED** the set of principles and arrangements as contained in the report related to the allocation of funds to schools in, or in danger of entering an Ofsted category as at paragraphs 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 of the report.

43. **DfE School Funding Reform - Next Steps**

The Forum received a report which updated members of the Schools Forum on the latest consultation from the Department for Education (DfE) on proposals for school funding reform that were expected to be implemented from April 2013 together with their anticipated impact.

The DfE issued a third and final consultation on a small number of outstanding issues at the end of March 2012 which confirmed that there were two timescales for funding reform: to make local changes for April 2013 and to seek to introduce a national funding formula between 2014-2017 and beyond.

The immediate task for local authorities and Schools Forums was a need to simplify the local authority funding formula for primary and secondary schools as new restrictions would apply from April 2013. This would require the Council to review the basis of charging schools for traded services as the number of available factors in the funding formula would be significantly reduced. There was also a need to delegate a range of budgets which could currently be retained centrally by local authorities which were estimated to total around £2 million.

Once the reforms were fully implemented, there was likely to be a significant redistribution of funding between schools and local authorities. For schools, there would be at least two years of funding stability with the Minimum Funding Guarantee set at a maximum reduction of 1.5%. However, continuation of this protection was subject to review in the next spending review.

It was proposed that a School Funding Review Group (SFRG) be established with Schools Forum representation with the aim to completing review work by the end of the summer term. Consultation with all schools on the proposed changes would be between 9 July 2012 and 28 September 2012, with governor and headteacher briefings to be held week commencing 9 September. The Schools Forum would need

to agree the changes at its meeting on 18 October 2012 as there was a requirement to inform the DfE of the new funding formula by 31 October 2012.

The draft proposals for the SFRG at Annex E of the report were amended to also include an SEN Governor, and one primary and one secondary bursar. Representatives could send substitutes to meetings from their sector but they would also need knowledge of the budgetary matters of the school. It would be raised at the next Secondary Schools Headteachers' meeting of the need for one secondary headteacher representative and one secondary headteacher substitute as there would only be one secondary headteacher representative on the SFRG.

Meetings of the SFRG would be held on the 10 May, 31 May, 14 June and 28 June 2012 at Seymour House, 10.30am – 12.00noon.

The Schools Forum would agree 2.3 of the report in relation to a response to the DfE consultation at a later date as this had not been completed yet. When the consultation was completed it would be circulated to the Schools Forum for a response by the deadline of the end of May 2012.

RESOLVED that the Schools Forum:

- i. **NOTED** the proposed DfE school funding reforms and their potential impact.
- ii. **AGREED** the programme and other related matters of the School Funding Review Group, and members from the Schools Forum as at Annex E of the report.

44. **Dates of Future Meetings**

The Forum noted that the next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 14 June 2012 at 4.30pm in the Council Chamber at Easthampstead House but meetings would be cancelled if there was no business to discuss.

CHAIRMAN