

SCHOOLS FORUM
14 MARCH 2013
4.30 - 5.23 PM



Present:

Schools Members

Sue Barber, Primary School Governor
Ed Essery, Primary School Governor
Brian Fries, Secondary School Governor
Martin Gocke, Pupil Referral Unit Representative
Keith Grainger, Secondary Head Teachers Representative
Louise Lovegrove, Primary School Representative
John McNab, Secondary School Governor
Tony Reading, Primary School Governor
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)

Apologies for absence were received from:

Liz Cole, Primary School Representative
Trisha Donkin, Primary School Representative
Joanna Quinn, Primary School Representative
Paul Salter, Secondary School Representative
Trudi Sammons, Primary School Representative
Margaret Saner, Secondary School Governor
Kate Sillett, PVI Provider Representative
Councillor Dr Gareth Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People & Learning

27. Declarations of Interest

Anne Shillcock declared an interest in respect of Item 5 in relation to Kennel Lane Special School as a governor at the school.

Martin Gocke declared an interest in respect of Item 5 in relation to College Hall Pupil Referral Unit as a member of the Management Committee at the school.

28. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Matters Arising

On 1 March 2013, the Department for Education (DfE) announced capital grant funding allocations. In respect of finance to create additional school places, there was £1.6 billion nationally over the next two years, of which the council had been

allocated £5.9 million. This was approximately half the amount received in each of the last two years, which had been used for budget planning purposes.

In addition to the grant allocations, the DfE had also made available £982 million for local authorities to bid against for specific projects. There was also £80 million to bid for post-16 projects. Bids needed to be submitted by the end of April or early May.

In light of the lower than expected funding allocation, coupled with the prospect of being able to bid for additional funding, the Council was currently reviewing options before deciding how to proceed.

There was a one year allocation of £1.8 million for maintenance, which was in line with funding received in previous years and first impressions were that it was in line with needs.

29. **Free Early Education for Two Year Olds**

The Forum considered a report on proposals for the organisational and financial arrangements to be put in place to ensure compliance with the forthcoming statutory duty to provide up to 570 hours per annum of free early years education for the least advantaged two year olds.

There were two strands of funding: place funding to be paid to providers and trajectory funding would be used to support the expansion of funded two year old places in existing provision. This would include provision of additional targeted resources and workforce development training. Vulnerable families would be engaged to encourage use of provision. Provided the year end accounts were sufficiently under spent, the aim was to roll forward any underspend on a ring fenced basis to support this initiative.

Strategic risk assessments had been undertaken regarding issues of insufficient funding, insufficient places, outcomes for children, and family support.

RESOLVED that the Schools Forum recommended to the Executive Member:

- i. That subject to there being a sufficient overall year end surplus balance on the Schools Budget, that any under spend against the two year old element of the grant would be ring fenced and carried forward to 2014/15 for use to support successful delivery of the programme;
- ii. That in 2013/14 two year old early education places would be funded at a flat rate of £5.10 per hour;
- iii. To support the implementation of 15 hours per week of free early years education for eligible two year olds:
 - a. where possible, provision would be secured and funded from April, rather than the statutory implementation date of September,
 - b. that initially, providers would be funded on the basis of an agreed number of places for two year olds, rather than on actual participation.

The Schools Forum **AGREED** that the Trajectory Funding allocation of £251,893 be held centrally within the Schools Budget to support the implementation of free early education for two year olds.

30. **2013-14 Funding Arrangements for Providers of Specialist and Alternative Education**

The Forum considered a report which set out the 2013-14 funding arrangements proposed for specialist and alternative education providers maintained by the council. Changes were required as a result of the new funding framework being introduced by the Department for Education (DfE). The Forum had previously agreed that separate Review Groups be established to make recommendations for change on Alternative Provision (AP) and Special Educational Needs (SEN) and the report presented the findings.

These changes related to Kennel Lane Special School, College Hall Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and the three schools with attached SEN Units; Great Hollands, Meadowvale and Ranelagh. The national funding framework required the providers to be funded on a place plus basis which equated to a guaranteed £10,000 for each agreed place in a specialist provider and £8,000 for each place in a PRU, with top up funding where assessed needs of an individual pupil exceeded those provided for in the place funding.

A number of matters of a local nature needed to be determined, including the number of places to be funded, budget transfers to reflect new responsibilities and the amount of top-up to be charged. The Review Groups were able to resolve all identified issues.

Participants in the Review Groups were thanked for their work.

The Forum:

- i. **AGREED** the proposals from the Review Groups for:
 - a. Kennel Lane Special School (paragraph 5.9);
 - b. College Hall Pupil Referral Unit (paragraphs 5.11);
- ii. **AGREED** that from 1 April 2013, the requirements on mainstream and special schools from the Scheme for Financing Schools would also apply to College Hall Pupil Referral Unit (paragraph 5.12);
- iii. **NOTED** the progress to date on arrangements for SEN Resource Units (paragraphs 5.13 to 5.16);
- iv. **NOTED** the likelihood that in the first instance a flexible approach to charging may be required to ensure the viability of essential provisions for high needs pupils and to be able to limit cost pressures on the Schools Budget (paragraph 5.17).

31. **Department for Education Review of 2013-14 School Funding Arrangements**

The Forum considered a report which set out the details of a DfE review of 2013-14 school funding arrangements. This reflected on issues identified by the DfE arising from the changes to be implemented from April 2013 and sought to identify what changes, if any, needed to be introduced from April 2014.

The DfE published a document on 12 February 2013 titled a 'Review of 2013-14 School Funding Arrangements'. Responses were required by 26 March 2013 which was before the reforms were due to come into effect.

The reforms were an initial set of changes to make some improvements in advance of a national funding formula which would be introduced during the next spending review period, after April 2014.

The review was divided into four sections: Are we moving towards national consistency?; Areas of concern and possible changes for 2014-15; Options for adjusting high needs funding in 2014-15 and beyond; and Schools Forums and the report set out the key matters.

The DfE review document also included analysis of provisional 2013-14 budgets from all local authorities, and in particular, how funds were expected to be distributed through local Funding Formulas. In general, the data recorded for Bracknell Forest Council was in the mid-range of local authority responses.

The Council had drafted a response to the DfE review of 2013-14 school funding arrangements, at Appendix 2.

The Forum:

- i. **NOTED** the proposals from the DfE on the review of 2013-14 school funding arrangements.
- ii. **CONSIDERED** what response if any the Forum should make to the review.

32. **Dates of Future Meetings**

The Forum noted that its next scheduled meeting on 25 April 2013 was expected to be cancelled due to insufficient business. The following meeting of the Forum was scheduled for Thursday 20 June 2013 at 4.30pm in the Council Chamber at Easthampstead House.

CHAIRMAN