

**SCHOOLS FORUM
16 JANUARY 2014
4.30 - 5.45 PM**



Present:

Schools Members

Liz Cole, Primary School Representative
Ed Essery, Primary School Governor
Martin Gocke, Pupil Referral Unit Representative
John McNab, Secondary School Governor
Joanna Quinn, Primary School Representative
Tony Reading, Primary School Governor
Trudi Sammons, Primary School Representative
David Stacey, Primary School Governor Representative
John Throssell, Primary School Governor (Vice-Chairman)

Non-Schools Members:

George Clement, Union Representative (Chairman)

Apologies for absence were received from:

Sue Barber, Primary School Governor
Karen Davis, Primary Head Representative
Brian Fries, Secondary School Governor
Keith Grainger, Secondary Head Teachers Representative
Paul Salter, Secondary School Representative
Robin Sharples, Oxford Diocese (Church of England)
Anne Shillcock, Special Education Representative
Kathy Winrow, Academy School Representative
Councillor Dr Gareth Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People & Learning

19. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

20. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

21. Local Authority Budget Proposals for 2014/15

The views of the Forum were sought on the Local Authority Budget Proposals 2014/15. Under the Council's constitution, the Executive was required to consult on its detailed budget proposals with the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Commission and any other interested parties or individuals for a period of at least six weeks. The report summarised the current position on the Council's budget preparations for 2014/15, and included proposed pressures and savings in relation to the budget with a focus on the proposals from the Children, Young People and Learning Department.

Comments received on these budget proposals would be submitted to the Executive on 11 February 2014 along with details of the final Financial Settlement which would allow for the consideration of views received in making final decisions. The 2014/15 budget and Council Tax was due to be formally approved by full Council on 26 February 2014.

RESOLVED that the Schools Forum requested the following comment be presented in respect of the 2014/15 budget proposals of the Executive for the Children, Young People and Learning Department on:

- i. The revenue budget (Annexes B and C), and
- ii. The capital programme (Annex D).

The Schools Forum were concerned regarding all of the proposed budget cuts in services in relation to Children, Young People and Learning and the potential impact on education and children and young people in Bracknell Forest, but were particularly concerned with budget cuts affecting the most vulnerable children, including the Early Years Service, and looked after children. The Forum noted that economies needed to be made but were concerned about the impact on frontline services at the Borough Council.

22. **Local Authority Proposals for the 2014/15 Schools Block Element of the Schools Budget**

The Forum received an update report on school funding and comments were sought from Forum members on proposals from the Council for the 2014-15 Schools Block element of the Schools Budget. Within the overall budget setting process, there were a number of areas that the Forum had responsibility for, and these were presented for a decision.

The views of the Schools Forum on the proposals were sought in advance of the 21 January 2014 deadline for submission to the Department for Education (DfE) and the actual Funding Formula for Schools to be used in 2014-15 with associated units of resource.

Adding together the estimated increase in Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) income of £1.352m and £0.144m draw down from the Job Evaluation Reserve, there was additional income of £1.496m for next year's Schools Block budget. After taking account of £0.291m of savings and applying the agreed budget strategy in the development of pressures that should be funded, there was £0.404m remaining for general allocation to schools on the basis of pupil numbers, deprivation and low prior attainment. Added to this, there was around £0.5m additional income to schools from the Pupil Premium making £0.904m of unallocated funds for school use. This overall increase in funding was estimated to be around £0.156m more than the unfunded costs schools would face.

In order to take account of the most up to date cost and income forecasts, proposals in respect of the High Needs and Early Years Block budgets would be presented to the Forum for consideration at the next meeting.

RESOLVED that in its role of statutory decision maker, the Forum **AGREED**:

- i. that the arrangements in place for the administration of central government grants were appropriate (paragraph 5.38);

- ii. that the initial budget amounts for School Block DSG funded services to be centrally managed by the council were as set out in Annex 1 (paragraph 5.41);
- iii. the revised criteria to be used from the 2013-14 financial year to allocate funds in-year to schools experiencing unavoidable costs arising from Key Stage 1 class size regulations be amended to that set out in Annex 6 (paragraphs 5.42 and 5.43).

RESOLVED that in its role as the representative body of schools and other providers of education and childcare, the Forum **REQUESTED** that the Executive Member **AGREE** the following decisions for the 2014-15 Schools Budget:

- i. that a new School Expansion Rates Reserve was created to finance future anticipated cost increases arising from the school expansion programme, and that it was initially funded through a £0.112m transfer from the Schools Budget General Reserve (paragraphs 5.25 and 5.26);
- ii. that with effect from 1 April 2014, schools implement the £ equivalent of the Living Wage for non-teaching staff, and that £0.144m was drawn down from the Job Evaluation Reserve to fund estimated 2014-15 costs and allocated to schools through reference to pupil numbers and £0.023m for Kennel Lane Special School (paragraphs 5.19 – 5.22);
- iii. that the £0.180m of savings proposed on the Schools Block were agreed (paragraph 5.24);
- iv. the £1.496m of additional resources was allocated to the budget areas set out in Annex 3 (paragraph 5.29);
- v. that in accordance with the budget strategy, the unallocated budget balance at Annex 3 of £0.404m be distributed to schools by reference to pupil numbers, deprivation and low prior attainment (paragraph 5.32);
- vi. that the DfE pro forma template of the BF Funding Formula for Schools as set out in Annex 7 be submitted (paragraph 5.6).

RESOLVED that the Forum **NOTED** the following matters:

- i. that after meeting the cost of unavoidable cost pressures, schools would receive around £0.156m of unallocated funds to target towards their priorities or other local pressures (paragraph 5.46);
- ii. that proposals in respect of the Early Years and High Needs Block elements of the Schools Block would be presented to the Forum in March when more information was available in respect of funding and likely costs (paragraph 5.53);
- iii. that information in respect of funding allocations made to schools experiencing significant in-year growth in pupil numbers would be presented to the Forum in March (paragraph 5.45).

Primary School Representatives only:

- iv. In its role as statutory decision maker, Primary School Representatives **AGREED** the de-delegation of primary related Behaviour Support Services (paragraph 5.40).

Secondary School Representatives only:

- v. In its role as statutory decision maker, Secondary School Representatives **AGREED** the de-delegation of secondary related Behaviour Support Services (paragraph 5.40).

23. **Dates of Future Meetings**

The Forum noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 13 March 2014 at 4.30pm in the Council Chamber at Easthampstead House. If there was no business to discuss meetings would be cancelled.

CHAIRMAN