

**SCHOOLS FORUM
3 FEBRUARY 2011
4.32 - 6.02 PM**



Present:

Schools Members

Councillor Mrs Maureen Beadsley, Secondary School Governor
Andrew Fletcher, Secondary School Representative
Brian Francis, Primary School Governor
Brian Fries, Secondary School Governor
Ed Glasson, Primary School Governor
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
Councillor Mrs Anne Shillcock, Special Education Governor
John Throssell, Primary School Governor
Kathy Winrow, Secondary School Representative

Non-Schools Members:

George Clement, Union Representative (Chairman)
Gordon Anderson, Diocese Representative (Vice-Chairman)
Kate Sillett, PVI Provider Representative

Also Present:

Paul Clark, Group Accountant, Children, Young People & Learning
Dr Janette Karklins, Director of Children, Young People & Learning
Councillor Alan Kendall, Executive Member for Education
Emma Silverton, Democratic Services Officer
David Watkins, Chief Officer: Performance & Resources, Children, Young People & Learning

Apologies for absence were received from:

Trisha Donkin, Primary School Representative
Gill Harbut, Primary School Representative
Trudi Sammons, Primary School Representative

57. Declarations of Interest

Gordon Anderson declared a personal interest in respect of Item 6 as the Chairman of the Governing Body of Jennett's Park School

58. Minutes and Matters Arising

There were two amendments to be made to the minutes of the meeting held on 9 December: Tony Reading was missing from the list of those present and Ed Glasson had been listed as present however had given his apologies for the meeting.

Following these amendments, it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

59. School Reactive Maintenance

Tony Chadwick, Head of Building Surveyors, BFC, introduced the report on the consultation with schools to change the current Service Level Agreement (SLA) for schools reactive maintenance.

37 Bracknell Forest schools were consulted with 65% opting for 'Pay As You Go' SLA (option 2). With no schools preferring option 1, the pooled insurance type scheme, it was no longer viable for the Council to provide the service for this option.

The minimum charge for the 'Pay As You Go' SLA which would apply to all schools subscribing, would be approximately £1, 808 based on 15% of the average amount allocated to schools' for reactive maintenance and service contracts.

It was further reported that for those schools wanting to buy a service contracts only SLA, that there would be a fee of approximately £426 for the Building Group to manage this, again based on 15% of the average budget allocation.

Regular meetings would be held with schools, the minimum meetings programme being once every six months. It was noted that this was flexible and officers would be available to meet with schools more frequently (up to monthly) if required to do so. The Forum noted that representatives from schools' sat on a focus group for these SLAs which met on a quarterly basis to monitor schools' progress.

RESOLVED that

- i) the feedback submitted by schools which identified their preferred options for the future Reactive Maintenance SLA be noted.
- ii) The current insurance based SLA (Option 1) was not viable, and that a 'Pay As You Go' (Option 2) and a service contract SLA was to be offered to all schools be noted.

60. Outcomes from the survey of providers being funded through the Early Years Single Funding Formula

The Forum received a report which presented the outcomes from a survey of Early Years providers to establish whether any changes should be made to the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF).

31% of providers in the maintained sector and PVI sector responded to the survey which asked 5 questions relating to specific elements of the current funding arrangements. For each question at least 75% of respondents supported the current arrangements with no particular pattern to comments and no indication of common issues with the funding formula.

The Early Years representative on the Forum commented that she had not received a copy of the survey and also knew that other providers were in the same position. Officers were surprised at this as a letter had been sent to all providers alerting them that a survey was to be distributed before it was emailed out. It was agreed that the survey process would be checked and any additional providers' comments would be fed back to the Forum once received.

It was also reported that a small number of items had been identified as budget pressures however, in view of the Local Government Finance Settlement it was not possible to address the issues raised.

The Forum noted that the comments from the survey, which were not all directly related to the EYSFF would be discussed and monitored at the regular Early Years provider meetings.

In response to a question relating to funding providers that admit children with English as an Additional Language it was reported that it was difficult to obtain a consistent quality of data across providers which meant a formula for 'top up' funding was not possible.

RESOLVED that the responses to the provider survey at Annexes A and B be noted.

AGREED that

- i) none of the identified budget pressures could be afforded next year (paragraph 5.8).
- ii) No changes to the Early Years Single Funding Formula (paragraph 5.9) be made.

61. **Initial 2011/12 Schools Budget Proposals and other financial matters**

The Forum considered a report on preliminary budget information provided to schools on the potential 2011/12 budget. Paul Clark, Group Accountant for Children, Young People and Learning gave a presentation which detailed key areas of focus for the Schools Budget including; confirmation that the per pupil funding allocation from the Department for Education would be frozen at 2010-11 values (so no addition for inflation or other pressures), the estimated level of income compared to budget pressures and developments, how the resultant budget gap could be managed, the unavoidable cost pressures that schools would face without additional funding and an update on new education related capital funding to be received by the Council.

With total pressures and developments of £3.7 million and income increasing by only £1.2m, a budget gap of £2.5 million existed. To reduce this gap, a number of pressures and developments would not be affordable, with the LA proposing only the following items be added to next year's provisional budget:

Ref	Item	2011-12 Estimates		
		Delegated to schools £ 000	Managed by LA £ 000	Total £ 000
2	Mainstream pupil number changes	549	0	549
3	New Jennett's Park School	400	0	400
4	KLS pupil number changes	193	0	193
7	Early Years Single Funding Formula - free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds	8	0	8
8	4 year olds from September 2011	230	0	230
9	Mainstream statements number / needs changes	120	0	120
10	Non pupil data changes	105	0	105
11	Caterhouse school meals contract	-30	0	-30

14	Crownwood Language and Literacy Unit (LAL) - pupil transport	-47	0	-47
17	SEN provisions and support	0	-50	-50
18	Staff transport costs - Crownwood LAL	0	9	9
19	Maternity leave	0	40	40
21	Early Years	0	-10	-10
22	Support to schools in categories	0	100	100
23	Practical Learning Opportunities	0	-20	-20
25	Sensory support (SALT)	0	-100	-100
	Remove duplicate Pupil Premium Funding	-290	0	-290
26	Total pressures and savings	1,238	-31	1,207

In respect of the new Pupil Premium, it was noted that by 2015, based on current forecasts, around 10% of funding for schools would be paid through this grant. This is likely to result in a redistribution of funding between schools and is expected to be addressed through the review of Education Funding to be undertaken by the Department for Education during 2011, with any agreed changes to be implemented for 2012/13.

A number of comments and questions were raised made by members:

- There was some concern about the proposed removal of funding duplicated in the new Pupil Premium.
- It was confirmed that there would be no loss of funding for family support advisors however the way in which they were funded would change.
- It was confirmed that there was an expectation that more schools would be likely to face financial difficulties and that support would be available from the licensed deficit scheme, a proposal to increase the budget to support schools in financial difficulties from £0.2m to £0.3m, and £0.22m general contingency in the grant income projections.
- It was agreed that the LA would consider how schools could be supported with strategic planning to help understanding which areas of the budget may be reduced in the future
- The condition surveys at schools needed to be updated to reflect work completed by schools

It was confirmed that the Forum would need to agree final recommendations for the 2011/12 Schools Budget at its next meeting in March, before sign off by the Executive Member for Education.

The Forum congratulated the officers for their work on the budget particularly given the tight timescales involved.

AGREED that

- 1) based on current information, an existing funding gap of £2.515m (Table 1, paragraph 5.15) be noted.
- 2) In light of the financial position:
 - i. the items set out in Table 2 were not affordable (paragraph 5.19).
 - ii. the budget proposals set out in Table 3 be included in the provisional Schools Budget for 2011/12 (paragraph 5.26).

- iii. subject to other decisions in the paper relating to funding pressures and savings, the funding rates to be used in the BF Funding Formula for 2011/12 remain unchanged from the 2010/11 values (paragraph 5.23).
 - iv. the hourly funding rates paid to providers of the free entitlement to early years education and childcare for 2011/12 remain unchanged from 2010/11 values, subject to previously agreed transitional adjustments (paragraph 5.23).
- 3) Relevant grants be “mainstreamed” into school funding mainly on the existing basis, as set out in paragraphs 5.24 to 5.25.
 - 4) It be noted that schools faced real term reductions in funding (paragraph 5.27).
 - 5) £0.030m of early years funding would in future be allocated to maintained schools as an equal amount per provider, rather than an equal amount per pupil (paragraph 5.30).
 - 6) The arrangements in place for the following were appropriate (paragraph 5.36):
 - a. provisions for statemented pupils.
 - b. pupil referral units and other education out of school.
 - c. arrangements for insurance.
 - d. administrative arrangements for the allocation of central government grants.
 - e. arrangements for free school meals.
 - f. arrangements for early years.
 - 7) The extent to which the Forum was expected to be requested to exercise its statutory powers (paragraph 5.38) be noted.
 - 8) The Council would receive £5.2m of un-ring fenced education related capital grants that were intended to meet pressures for additional pupil places and to improve the condition of school buildings (paragraph 5.39) be noted.
 - 9) there would be a need to revisit any preliminary budget decisions agreed now in March (paragraph 5.42) in order that final budgets reflected the most up to date data, be noted.
 - 10) No further work was required in respect of the 2011/12 Schools Budget (paragraph 5.42).

62. **Local Authority budget proposals for 2011/12**

Janette Karklins, The Director of Children, Young People and Learning presented the report, including the supplementary information emailed to Forum Members on 1 February, which gave an overview of the Council’s proposed budget position for 2011/12 and the specific proposals relevant to the Children, Young People and Learning Department.

Due to the late announcement of the Local Government Financial Settlement, there had been two stages to the Council’s budget proposals for CYPL. Initial savings of £0.325m were proposed in December based on estimated information as the

Settlement had not been announced, and these were set out in Annex B of the main report.

Once the Settlement had been confirmed, it had become clear that the Council would receive nearly £2m less income than originally expected, with the majority of the reduction being in respect of ceasing education related grants. Therefore, a second stage of savings was required which was set out in the supplementary report. Annex A of this report set out the £0.932m of savings arising from the full impact of grants which had been cut in 2010/11 and not reinstated and a further set of proposed savings that amount to £0.843m was set out in Annex B. In total, CYPL was proposing to make savings of £2.1m.

It was reported that whilst there would be increase flexibility in relation to spending of grants due to the removal of ring fencing, it would still be a very difficult financial year which was a situation which was not unique to Bracknell Forest.

In respect of the capital budget, it was noted that subsequent to the publication of the initial budget proposals in December, the DfE had indicated that the council would receive £5.2 million of un-ring fenced grant funding, of which £2m was allocated to spend on improving the condition of buildings, and £3.2m to meet increased demand for school places. The original budget assumptions anticipated grant of £2.1m for school places..

Some Members of the Forum expressed concern in relation to the reduction in funding particularly in relation to early intervention and the effects on the wider community.

RESOLVED that

- 11) the 2011/12 full year savings required following withdrawal of DfE grants during 2010/11 (Annex A) be noted.
- 12) Comments made by the Schools Forum on the additional 2011/12 budget proposals of the Executive for the Children, Young People and Learning Department be considered by the Executive Member for Education.

63. Education and Children's Service Financial Benchmarking - 2010-11 original budget data

The Forum received the annual information report which provided financial benchmarking data in respect of the 2010-11 original budget which had been made available by the Department of Education.

The Forum noted that the extent to which the results were distorted by contextual circumstances should be kept in mind when the figures were viewed.

64. Dates of Future Meetings

The next meeting of the Schools Forum was scheduled for Thursday 3 March 2011 at 4.30pm in the Council Chamber, Easthampstead House.

Future meetings

Thursday 28 April 2011.

CHAIRMAN

This page is intentionally left blank