

SCHOOLS FORUM
20 JUNE 2013
4.30 - 5.30 PM



Present:

Schools Members

Ed Essery, Primary School Governor
Martin Gocke, Pupil Referral Unit Representative
Joanna Quinn, Primary School Representative
Tony Reading, Primary School Governor
Margaret Saner, Secondary School Governor
John Throssell, Primary School Governor (Vice-Chairman)

Non-Schools Members:

George Clement, Union Representative (Chairman)
Robin Sharples, Oxford Diocese

Apologies for absence were received from:

Sue Barber, Primary School Governor
Liz Cole, Primary School Representative
Trisha Donkin, Primary School Representative
Brian Fries, Secondary School Governor
Keith Grainger, Secondary Head Teachers Representative
Louise Lovegrove, Primary School Representative
John McNab, Secondary School Governor
Paul Salter, Secondary School Representative
Anne Shillcock, Special Education Representative

33. Declarations of Interest

Ed Essery declared an interest in respect of Item 7 in relation to Wildmoor Heath School as a governor at the school.

34. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

- *Minute 28*: 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.
- *Minute 28*: This was approximately half the amount received in each of the last two years, which had been used for budget planning purposes.

35. Membership of the Schools Forum

The Forum received a report regarding a change to the membership of the Forum.

Nominations were recently sought to fill three vacancies for primary school governor representatives, three vacancies for secondary school governor representatives, and one vacancy for a special education representative on the Forum following the end of the terms of office for John Throssell, Edward Essery, Sue Barber, Brian Fries, John McNab, Margaret Saner and Anne Shillcock.

Seven application forms were received; from John Throssell, who was a governor at Crown Wood Primary School; Sue Barber, who was a governor at Winkfield St Mary's School; David Stacey, who was governor at Wooden Hill Primary School; Brian Fries, who was a governor at Easthampstead Park Secondary School; John McNab, who was a governor at Edgbarrow Secondary School; Ed Essery, who was a governor at Sandhurst School, and Anne Shillcock, who was a governor at Kennel Lane Special School.

In accordance with the Forum's Constitution and as the nominations were uncontested Mr Throssell, Mrs Barber, Mr Stacey, Mr Fries, Mr McNab, Mr Essery and Mrs Shillcock were duly appointed to fill the vacancies.

The Forum noted that Mr Throssell, Mrs Barber, Mr Stacey, Mr Fries, Mr McNab, Mr Essery and Mrs Shillcock would be appointed to the Forum for a period of three years until 31 August 2016.

The Forum were also updated on further changes to its membership:

- Louise Lovegrove, Cranbourne Primary School Governor had resigned as a member of the Forum.
- Robin Sharples, Diocesan Schools Link Adviser in Bracknell, would be the new Church of England Representative on the Forum from the Oxford Diocese.

36. **Capital Funding Bids**

The Schools Forum considered a report on the bids to Department for Education (DfE) for grant funding to support the Education Capital Programme.

DfE Basic Need Funding grant was used by the Council to create the additional school places required to keep pace with rising rolls. In the most recent funding announcement, the DfE had made a two year allocation of Basic Need Grant for 2013/14 and 2014/15; however, this was at a 40% reduction in annual funding when compared to the level of grant received in 2012/13.

The Education Capital Programme had to be reviewed in the light of the reduced funding and was no longer affordable as originally envisaged; with all newly proposed schemes now on hold.

At the same time as making announcements for Basic Need Funding, the DfE also set out two new grants that Local Authorities could bid for from a national pool of around £1bn. The new grants would be available to support the cost of additional places needed by young people. The Council had bid for £5.146m to undertake projects at Garth Hill, Owlsmoor Primary, a primary aged surge class for North Bracknell and a secondary SEN facility.

Outcomes from the bid process would be known in June or July 2013 at which time the Education Capital Programme would be determined.

The Schools Forum **NOTED**:

- The bids to DfE for grant funding to support the Education Capital Programme;
- The potential revenue pressure that may arise in the short to medium term in developing a new in-borough SEN facility.

37. **Department for Education School Funding Reform - Arrangements from 2014-15**

In 2012, the Department for Education (DfE) started a process to reform school funding so that it was “fairer, more consistent and transparent and so that funding intended for education reaches schools and the pupils that need it most”. From April 2013, following consultation with schools and agreement of the Forum, significant changes were introduced to the formula used to distribute funds to schools in Bracknell Forest (BF).

The DfE had now undertaken an evaluation of the impact arising from the changes and had outlined further amendments of which the most significant areas for BF included:

- Changing the criteria to be used to fund schools for low prior attainment;
- Needing to consider whether the right amount of funds was being allocated to schools based on deprivation measures;
- Whether the lump sum allocation paid to schools should be changed, including the possibility of setting differential rates for primary and secondary schools;
- Requiring a non-school representative on the Forum to represent 14-16 education providers;
- Needing to set the funding threshold at which schools could seek additional financial support for pupils with high support needs from £6,080 to £6,000;
- Helping schools funded on the place-plus methodology to adopt to the more flexible approach to setting funded places than is currently the case.

In terms of making changes to the Funding Formula for Schools, the Council did not consider this necessary as no significant issues had been raised by schools or the latest DfE guidance on school funding.

The Council would now consider options for change from 2014-15 and seek views from the Forum in September as to whether a consultation on the issues should be undertaken with all schools during October and November.

This process would allow the Council to confirm to the DfE by the 31 October 2013 deadline the intended Funding Formula to be in operation for the next financial year.

38. **Update to the Scheme for Financing Schools**

The Forum considered a report relating to making changes to the Bracknell Forest Scheme for Financing Schools. The report sought to obtain agreement from members of the Schools Forum to make one change to the provisions relating to loan arrangements for schools and to provide an update on mandatory changes that the Department for Education (DfE) required all local authorities (LAs) to implement.

Forum Members representing maintained schools **AGREED** that the Bracknell Forest Scheme for Financing Schools be updated to include:

- The additional condition on loans to schools (paragraphs 5.5 and 5.6);

- The changes required in the latest statutory guidance from the DfE (paragraph 5.9).

39. **Additional Financial Support to Schools**

The Forum considered a report which updated members on:

- Direct financial support provided to schools during 2012-13 under powers delegated to the Director of Children, Young People and Learning;
- Progress made by schools against current licensed deficit agreements;
- Requests from schools for new loan arrangements;
- The amount of Dedicated Schools Grant income expected to be received in 2013-14.

The Forum was also requested to approve the release of funding from the Schools Specific Contingency to Jennett's Park Primary school to finance the additional costs arising from moving from a one form of entry school to a two form of entry school from September 2013.

RESOLVED that the Schools Forum:

- NOTED** the £46,267 of direct financial support provided to schools during 2012-13 under powers delegated to the Director of Children, Young People and Learning (paragraphs 5.6 to 5.9);
- NOTED** that Cranbourne Primary School was on target to meet the terms of the previously agreed licensed deficit but with a risk that a small deficit may carry forward into 2014-15 (paragraph 5.15);
- AGREED** the request from Ascot Heath Infants school for a new loan advance would be presented to the Executive Member for formal agreement (paragraph 5.18);
- AGREED** the release of £110,000 from the School Specific Contingency to finance the additional costs arising at Jennett's Park Primary School from moving from a one form of entry school to a two form of entry school from September 2013 (paragraph 5.19).
- NOTED** at this stage the estimated amount of Dedicated Schools Grant for 2013-14 is £74.992m (after deduction to fund Ranelagh Academy), (paragraphs 5.23 and 5.24);
- NOTED** the £408,521 of post 16 SEN funding that would be received in respect of Kennel Lane Special School which was not taken into account in setting the 2013-14 budget (paragraph 5.25).

The request from Wildmoor Heath school for a new loan advance would be considered at the next meeting of the Forum, as due to a member interest the Forum was in quorate for this decision to be undertaken.

40. **2012-13 Provisional Outturn on the Schools Budget**

The Forum considered a report informing members on the provisional outturn on the 2012-13 Schools Budget and an update on the level of Dedicated Schools Grant that was expected to be received in 2013-14.

The main changes from the approved budget plan, after transfers to or from reserves and balances, were as follows:

- Delegated School Budgets showed nil variance;
- Other School Grants showed a £0.013m under spend;
- SEN provisions and support services showed a £0.536m over spend;
- Pupil behaviour showed a £0.067m under spend;
- School staff absence and other items showed a £0.135m under spend;
- Combined Service Budgets showed a £0.050m under spend;
- Early Years provisions and support services showed a £0.022m under spend;
- Support to schools in financial difficulty showed a £0.258m under spend;
- DSG, change from original estimate, showed £0.340m additional income.

Overall, the centrally managed items in the Schools Budget had under spent by £0.119m, which must be retained in a ring fenced earmarked reserve for use in a future Schools Budget. When added to the £0.368m accumulated surplus at the start of the year, this resulted in £0.517m of unallocated reserves of which £0.040m was proposed to be transferred to a new earmarked School Meals Catering Re-tender Reserve.

In terms of making use of earmarked reserves, the main change in-year related to the £0.088m set aside to finance the Turnaround Project which had now been fully spent. This project was for a new provision for pupils at risk of exclusion who would receive specialist support away from the school but still be on the school roll. Turnaround was a good programme with obvious benefits to young people, their families and schools. Future work in this area was dependent upon resources being identified from school budgets.

RESOLVED that the Schools Forum:

- NOTED** that the outturn expenditure for 2012-13, subject to audit, showed spend of £77.515m which was £0.025m more than the approved budget (paragraph 5.4);
- NOTED** that after transfers to and from earmarked reserves, the Schools Budget under spent by £0.349m, which when added to the £0.168m year end balance, created a general reserve that amounts to £0.517m (paragraphs 5.5 and 5.9);
- NOTED** that the current balances on specific earmarked reserves within the Schools Budget amount to £5.955m (Table 1, paragraph 5.7);
- REQUESTED** to the council's Executive that a new School Meals Catering Re-tender Reserve was created within the Schools Budget in the value of £0.040m (paragraph 5.11).

41. **Dates of Future Meetings**

The Forum noted that its next scheduled meeting on 18 July 2013 was cancelled due to insufficient business. The following meeting of the Forum was scheduled for Thursday 12 September 2013 at 4.30pm in the Council Chamber at Easthampstead House.

CHAIRMAN