



**SCHOOLS FORUM  
27 NOVEMBER 2014  
4.30 - 4.56 PM**

**Present:**

**Schools Members**

Ed Essery, Secondary School Governor  
Brian Fries, Secondary School Governor  
Martin Gocke, Pupil Referral Unit Representative  
David Matika, Primary School Governor  
John McNab, Secondary School Governor  
Tony Reading, Primary School Governor  
Anne Shillcock, Special Education Representative  
John Throssell, Primary School Governor (Vice-Chairman)  
Mark Williams, Academy School Representative

**Non-Schools Members:**

George Clement, Union Representative (Chairman)

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Sue Barber, Primary School Governor  
Liz Cole, Primary School Representative  
Liz Cook, Secondary School Representative  
Keith Grainger, Secondary Head Teachers Representative  
Trudi Sammons, Primary School Representative  
David Stacey, Primary School Governor

**11. Declarations of Interest**

Tony Reading, David Matika, Ed Essery and John Throssell declared an interest in respect of Item 6 with regard to the claw-back of funds for schools.

**12. Minutes and Matters Arising**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The Forum was provided with an update on membership. Liz Cook from Easthampstead Park Community School would be a new Secondary School Representative. Mark Williams currently acting Headteacher at Ranelagh would be replaced as the Academy School representative from January 2015 by Beverley Stevens the new Headteacher at Ranelagh.

**13. Education and Children's Services Financial Benchmarking - 2014-15 Original Budget Data**

The Forum received an annual information report that provided members of the Forum with financial benchmarking data in respect of the 2014-15 original budget that had been made available by the Department for Education (DfE). This could be used

to help identify budget areas that might require review due to their relative high or low cost when compared to other Local Authorities in England or the Council's statistical neighbours. The report highlighted the significant variances to the average of the statistical neighbours.

14. **Outcomes from the second Financial Consultation with Schools and other related matters**

The Forum considered a report summarising the results of the second Financial Consultation exercise with governing bodies and other interested parties which concentrated on budget matters. It reported on schools' views regarding the questions raised and was intended to assist the Forum in making recommendations in respect of the 2015-16 Schools Budget.

All the recommendations for change represented the majority view of responses to the consultation and by the publication date for the report, a response had been received from 21 out of 37 schools; a 57% response rate. A response had been received from 17 primary schools; a 55% response rate, and 4 secondary schools; a 67% response rate. Responses were not received from all sectors as not all the questions in the consultation affected every school.

Preliminary decisions taken at this time would be used in the calculation of indicative 15-16 budgets to schools, subject to changes agreed by the Director of Children, Young People and Learning as a result of more up to date information. These were expected to be with schools by the end of term in order to assist in the early stages of financial planning.

The Council was required to make a final return to the Department for Education on the actual 2015-16 School Budgets no later than 20 January 2015. Final decisions on the 2015-16 Schools Budget would need to be taken at the next meeting of the Forum on 15 January 2014.

The Forum **NOTED**:

- i. The outcomes from the financial consultation with schools as summarised in Annex 2;
- ii. The additional comments made by schools, as set out in the confidential Annex 4;

The Forum **AGREED**:

- iii. That any additional funds for schools in 2015/16 should be distributed via the per pupil factor only;
- iv. That due to the anticipated significant cost increase on supporting High Needs Pupils, only £0.5m of the additional £1.5m of School Block income due next year should be included in indicative 2015-16 school budgets, subject to update by the Director of Children, Young People and Learning in the light of more up to date information;
- v. That revised text be produced for the scheme to claw-back significant surplus balances from schools for consideration at a future meeting of the Schools Forum, taking account of the changes supported by the majority of schools responding to the consultation (paragraph 5.14);

- vi. That the cost of those schools losing money, and receiving a funding top up through the Minimum Funding Guarantee, should continue to be funded by on-going use of a cap on the increases being received by schools gaining through the changes (paragraph 5.16);
- vii. The revised criteria to provide financial support to schools experiencing significant in-year growth in pupil numbers, for implementation from April 2015 (paragraph 5.17 and Annex 3);

Primary School representatives only **AGREED**:

- viii. The recommendations relating to de-delegation set out in the box in paragraph 5.13.

Secondary School representatives only **AGREED**:

- ix. The recommendations relating to de-delegation set out in the box in paragraph 5.13.

**15. Update on The Brakenhale Secondary School**

The Forum received a report updating members on the current situation at The Brakenhale Secondary School and the likelihood that a request would be made for additional financial support to aid the school's recovery from 'Requires Improvement'.

At 5.3 of the report, it should read: 'The recruitment process is underway but it is unlikely there will be a substantive Headteacher in post before September 2015. It has been agreed that the role of the Executive Headteacher will be reviewed on a termly basis.'

A funding proposal would be brought to a future meeting of the Forum and in the interim Bob Eley, Headteacher of Edgbarrow, a school rated as Outstanding had been appointed as Executive Headteacher at The Brakenhale School until a permanent replacement was appointed. The members of the Forum were informed that resources would be used to help the school to improve and there had been positive feedback from staff regarding the new working arrangements.

The Forum:

- i. **NOTED** that The Brakenhale School had interim leadership arrangements in place following the resignation of the headteacher and a support programme funded through the Local Authority.
- ii. **SUPPORTED** the in principle proposal to allocate funding from the budget to support schools in financial difficulty to The Brakenhale, on the terms set out in the body of the report.

**16. Exclusion of Public and Press**

**RESOLVED** that pursuant to Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) Regulations 2012 and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of item 9 which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

(3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.

17. **Confidential Annex**

18. **Dates of Future Meetings**

The Forum noted that the next meetings were scheduled at 4.30pm in the Council Chamber at Easthampstead House for:

Thursday 15 January 2015

Thursday 12 March 2015

Thursday 23 April 2015

Thursday 18 June 2015

Thursday 16 July 2015

Thursday 17 September 2015

Thursday 22 October 2015

Thursday 10 December 2015

Thursday 14 January 2016

Thursday 10 March 2016

Thursday 21 April 2016

If there was no business to discuss, meetings would be cancelled. Attendance at the January 2015 Forum meeting was important in order to discuss and make decisions on schools budgets.

**CHAIRMAN**