

SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 19th September 2019 Winterbourne Academy, Winterbourne

PRESENT:

Dave Baker (Vice Chair)	CEO, Olympus Academy Trust
Nicky Edwards	Natural Choice Nurseries
Kim Garland	Headteacher, Brimsham Green
Clare Houghton	Paige Park Pre-School
David Jenkins	Governor – Crossways Schools
Carl Lander	Governor - Hanham Primary Federation (HPF)
Keith Lawrence (Outgoing Chair)	Governor, Enable Trust
Louise Leader	Headteacher, Pathways Learning Centre
Sarah Lovell (Newly Elected Chair)	Finance Director, Cabot Learning Federation
Pippa Osborne	Headteacher Christ Church Junior School
Diane Owen	Chair, Kings Oak Academy
Susie Weaver	Executive Principal, Cabot Learning Federation
Bernice Webber	Headteacher, Old Sodbury Primary School

Officers:

Mustafa Salih, Head of Financial Management and Business Support
Hilary Smith, Head of Education, Learning and Skills
Duane Chappell, Strategic Lead 0-25
Caroline Warren, Finance Business Partner – CAH Children
Management Accounts
Stuart Thomas, SEND Financial Planning Lead
Sue Morgan, Integra (SIA/Finance)

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Attendees were welcomed by the Chair.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Richard Aquilina, Mark Freeman, Cllr Trevor Jones, Steve Moir, Lisa Parker,
Erica Williams

3. EVACUATION PROCESS

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure

4. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIR DECIDES ARE URGENT

None.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18th July 2019

Minutes agreed as a true record.

6. CHAIR – ELECTION

Member of the Forum had been asked to self-nominate to act as Chair of the Schools Forum for the next 2 years. Keith Lawrence (Chair) and Sarah Lovell self-nominated and a ballot was held at the meeting. The result was 8 - 3 votes for Sarah and it was declared that Sarah was the newly Elected Chair. Sarah thanked Keith for the time he has Chaired Schools Forum and a huge thanks to those members for their votes. Sarah then chaired the rest of the meeting.

Dave Baker (Vice Chair) thanked Keith for his participation in the Forum.

Dave Baker was nominated to continue as Vice Chair.

7. SCHOOLS BUDGET CONSULTATION

Mustafa Salih produced a presentation on the Schools Budget Consultation (which is attached).

Mustafa said until we get the release of the authority proforma tool (APT) and national funding formula (NFF) figures in October we can't really model what the funding settlement will mean at school level.

The timetable we have to operate within is even tighter than the normal timeline as the information LAs need is being released much later than normal. This means we will need to move Forum meetings around and plan to run a short 2-week consultation with all schools. It also means a very focused approach from finance colleagues etc. at key stages.

Potential options for Consultation as set out in the slides by the council are:

- a. Continue existing £2.9m transfer
- b. Transfer further 0.5% (circa £800k) from schools Block to High Needs Block
- c. Transfer further £2m from 2020/21 Schools Block Growth
 - The £2m would be used to: continue cluster funding £1m, HRG Group to prevent exclusions £0.5m, Special Schools base rates £0.2m, £0.3m Schools Forum/HNWG to impact on SEND spend.

- We would consult on 2 options regarding the way remaining growth is passed to schools: levelling up schools below the NFF mins of £3750/ £5,000 or based on the NFF and more skewed towards deprivation etc.
- The impact of any of these transfers is that SG per pupil funding levels would be below announced NFF minimums

The plan is to model these options for the next Schools Forum on 4th November, and then start the Consultation with Schools following the agreement on the consultation options with forum

A question was raised regarding the 0-5 yr olds being factored into this funding but we don't know when the early years block will be released.

Action – It was agreed the figures presented at the next meeting would include reference to early years funding even if it is indicative.

Action – It was agreed the impact at school level for each of the consultation proposals would be included in the next set of papers.

Timeline. The DfE will be releasing the NFF figures in October. Therefore, new meeting dates have been arranged.

CANCELLED 24 TH October 2019	NEW DATE Monday 4 th November 2019 4.30pm – Room 0012, Badminton Road Offices	Consultation Options will be modelled.
CANCELLED 28 TH November 2019	NEW DATE Thursday 21 st November 2019 4.30pm – Room 0012 Badminton Road Offices	To discuss result of 2-week consultation with schools

8. PUPIL PROJECTIONS/SEND PLACE PLANNING REPORT

Duane Chappell gave a short update on this report and said that she will be working with Tanya Smith to look through the data and that Duane or Tanya will give an update at the next Schools Forum.

Members requested clarity over the expected use of this report and how place planning affected the role of forum in financial decision making. Hilary Smith confirmed this would be discussed at the next meeting

Action: Tanya Smith to be asked to attend next Schools Forum and provide context to the pupil place planning report.

9. HIGH NEEDS WORKING GROUP – VERBAL UPDATE

Susie Weaver said that there was still a small number attending the group but it is getting better. She said that SEND should have representation at the meeting. There is work in progress creating an overarching plan regarding inclusion which will be brought back to Schools Forum in the future.

Hilary Smith gave a summary of the overarching plan. An engagement exercise is to start with schools to define 'South Glos Way' and to drive the culture and hold each leader to account so make a substantial strategy.

Action: Members requested an update on the high needs' strategy and its current impact on the high needs budget.

10. CONSULTATION UPDATE RESOURCE BASE/ACCESS CENTRE – REPORT

Duane gave an update on this report which was presented at Schools Forum in July 2019 to go out to consultation.

At the end of July the consultation was in the public domain and Toby Savage met with parents from Emersons Green.

A second batch of questionnaires was re-sent to Parents/Carers and 25 out of 100 questionnaires were returned.

Engagement sessions have been set up and the first one was on Monday 16th September. These sessions have now been extended to key stakeholders in Health and other professionals.

Stuart Thomas said he had spoken to the Consultation Institute regarding the current engagement. The purpose of this was to ensure that correct procedures were being followed and that the engagement process is fair.

Next steps are that after the engagement sessions officers need Executive Member approval on 4th November as to whether a formal consultation will take place.

IF there is an agreement, then a public consultation will run from 11th November 2019 to 4th January 2020. **IF** we went to consultation a Cabinet decision on the 2nd March 2020 will move on this statutory process. During this statutory process period this will identify what our intentions are and if we can't reach an agreement than we go to adjudication.

Hilary Smith said academies fall under a different legislation and academies are required to lead on any proposed consultation rather than the LA. The LA will

facilitate and engage with Academy Trusts in advance of any consultation that is required..

11. INTEGRA UPATE - POSITIVE OUTCOME WORKING WITH SCHOOLS IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES 2018/19 – REPORT

Sue Morgan presented this item. She said this is the first Schools in Financial Difficulty report to come to Schools Forum.

There are 8 schools in deficit and 21 schools have received additional support from the Finance team.

The same exercise will be carried out for 2019/20.

A report will be compiled by Integra, Schools Finance and taken to the SIFD management group in early spring.

A request was made raised enquiring a need for training for schools with finance, support and engagement to help with budgets.

Hilary Smith confirmed that some of the financial issues in the report could be attributable to low student numbers for small rural primaries. A small schools strategy is an area the LA will be considering during this academic year.

Action: To take back to the SIFD group the request to help with schools' budgets.

To prepare a summary letter of what the SIFD group is achieving with schools.

To communicate with schools that a report has been issued into the public domain regarding their financial position.

To provide a further update to forum on progress in the spring.

12. NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE FINDINGS

In March 2019, the National Audit Office contacted Duane with a view to set up a group of senior leaders of Local Authorities.

Their office visited South Gloucestershire on 1st April 2019. This visit was part of a small number of visits to local authorities for their value for money examination on supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

They have now published their findings and the report has been issued.

Any further information can be found on the National Audit website.

Date of Next Meeting:

Monday 4th November 2019 at 4.30pm in Room 0012, Badminton Road offices, Yate.