

**SCHOOLS' FORUM**  
**MEETING HELD ON 10<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2012**

**PRESENT:**

Primary School Headteachers: Mrs J Conway, Mrs S Jones and Mrs M Carlton

Secondary School Headteachers: Mr D Litchfield, Mrs J Wilson and Mr J White

Special School Headteacher: Mrs E Horne

Primary School Governors: Mr H Smith and Mr C Wilson

Secondary School Governors: Mr I Bartle and Mr L Wadey

Diocesan Representative: Dr P Mackie

LA Representative: Cllr. Mrs C Clark

14 – 19 Representative: Mr M Clinton

Trade Union Representative: Mr D Campbell

Officials: Ms J Humphreys – Corporate Director, Children, Education and Social Care

Mrs L Brown – Head of Education, Early Years and Complex Needs

Mr D New – Senior Finance Manager

Mr A l'Anson – Acting Secretary to the Forum

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Mrs A Cains, Mr T Gittins and Councillor Mrs A McCoy

The Vice Chair welcomed members to the meeting. As a mark of respect to the previous Chair, John Morgan, members were asked to observe a minute's silent reflection.

As there were a number of new members on the Forum a round of introductions were made.

2. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

RESOLVED that Dr P Mackie be appointed Chair.

3. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**

RESOLVED that Mrs J Wilson be appointed Vice Chair.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2012 be approved as a true record.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising that were not covered on the agenda.

It was agreed by the members that items 9, 12 and 11 on the agenda be taken before the rest of the agenda.

6. COMBINED SERVICE FUNDING

As agreed at the meeting of the Forum held on 28 February 2012 a report on the use of Combined Service Funding was presented to members by J Humphreys.

The funding had been used for a variety of initiatives. Funding had supported the management and operation of the Virtual School, including the funding of an IT system which had helped develop a tracking system for individual pupils such as looked after children. The data provided helped improve the outcomes for looked after children.

The money also supported ;

- Mental health and parenting support
- The post of Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- The sex and relationship education(SRE) post

Members were informed of the activities carried out by the above.

Details of the referrals dealt with by the LADO for 2010/11 were given to the members. The annual report for the work carried out by the LADO for 2011/12 was to be presented in the next week to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

Much of the work carried out by the SRE post holder was working directly with schools.

The Chair thanked J Humphreys for her report.

7. TaMH's

The Schools' Forum had provided funding to support the TaHM's service to schools, which had been commissioned to March 2013.

J Humphreys asked the members if they wished to commission the service beyond March 2013 and would they commission the service for more than a year.

The Chair queried who was doing the referrals to the service and he also felt that it was money the Health Service should be spending and not the LA. Confirmed all referrals come from schools.

J White was very positive of the work carried out by TaHM'S and he supported the continuation of the provision beyond March.

E Home commented that the Federation would still be keen to buy into the service although there were some concerns over the accuracy of the activity reports.

J Humphreys proposed that the service be procured for a further period of two years.

In answer to a query from L Wadey members were informed by D New that the funding would be likely to fall under the higher needs block in future.

L Brown felt that the Forum needed to make an in principle decision to go forward or otherwise. Suggested that a paper be brought to the Forum detailing the issues and the scope of the service for which they would go out to procurement.

As the current service contract ended in March 2013 it did not leave a lot of time to draw up the service specification and go through the tender process.

A number of members expressed the need for continuity of service.

RESOLVED that a further paper be brought to the October meeting with detailed service requirements.

A member queried what would be the effects of a different service provider winning the contract. If that was the case would need to accomplish as smooth as possible transition between suppliers. TUPE regulations may also come into force with employers transferring between organisations.

## 8. SCHOOL FUNDING REFORM CONSULTATION

D New presented a paper on the proposed consultation on the school funding reform. The changes in the funding reform are seen as the first step towards a national funding formula.

The timescales imposed on the LA meant there needed to a quick turn round in the consultation process. The LA had to submit its draft budget for 2013/14 to the Department of Education (DfE) by 31 October 2012.

It was proposed therefore to send the consultation document to all schools early in the week commencing 17th September requesting responses on the attached template by 19 October 2012. Thereby allowing the Forum to consider responses at its meeting on 23 October prior to responding to the DfE.

The new regulations gave LAs very little flexibility and there were now only 11 funding factors, which could be including in the local funding formula, the LA previously used 40.

D New presented the members with four options to consider for consultation. He told members that he felt Option B was not realistic given the high value of EAL units. Therefore he would not want this option to be included in any consultation. It had only been included as members had asked to see models which would minimize changes to school's budgets.

Members were taken through the four options and the effect they would have on school budgets.

The Forum discussed the merits of including Pupil Premium Funding, as it was 'targeted funding' for a certain group of pupils and there was also no long term guarantee of this funding.

The members felt they would wish to minimise any winners and losers through the change in formula. There was a minimum funding guarantee of minus 1.5% and therefore there would be no drastic change in funding to individual schools.

Members discussed the possibility of increasing the lump sum as a further option alongside options A, C and D.

D New took members through the different funding for high needs pupils and the funding available depending on pupils needs. Some concern was expressed over the fact that funding would follow a pupil in real time and this could leave schools with redundancy situations.

The position with early years was also explained together with proposed changes to deprivation funding.

Discussion took place as to what options to send out as part of the consultation.

RESOLVED that the Chair, Vice Chair, J Humphreys, L Brown and D New meet to agree the options to consult upon.

9. UPDATE DRAFT OPERATING PROCEDURES

D New presented a paper to members regarding the updated operating procedures for Schools Forums.

One of the major amendments was to be the use of substitute members, which were previously not allowed. There was some debate as to whether a substitute was required to attend or was it optional.

RESOLVED that the operation procedures be agreed and that;

- a) Members other than school governor groups self nominate substitute if they are unable to attend a meeting;
- b) School and Governor support to maintain list of governor substitutes in the event of one of the school governors being unable to attend a meeting of the Schools Forum.

Members

Secretary

10. SCHOOL BUDGET OUTTURN 2011/12

Members were informed of the School Budget outturn position for the financial year 2011/12. An overall under spend of £78k was reported, compared with a £65k overspend previously reported in December.

Details of the significant variances in spend were reported to the Forum.

RESOLVED that the Schools Forum received the report on the School Budget Outturn 2011/12.

11. SCHOOL BALANCES 2011/12

Members received a paper setting out the position on school balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012. D New reported that school balances had increased by just over £1.5m in the last financial year.

It was considered that there were two major reasons for this increase in balances. Firstly, it was thought that Schools were being more cautious with new funding arrangements being introduced and not knowing how the full effects of these changes would affect their individual schools. Secondly more schools had requested permission to carry forward balances to fund projects. Ten schools had requested permission to carry forward surplus balances, compared to five in the previous year.

RESOLVED noted the content of the report.

12. SCHOOLS BUDGET POSITON UPDATE 2012/13

Members were updated on the Schools Budget position, as at end of July 2012.

The report forecast spend was showing a projected under spend of £35k. The major reasons for the variance between planned and projected positions were outlined to the Forum.

RESOLVED noted the content of the report.

13. FUTURE MEETING DATES AND WORK PROGRAMME

Members were issued with details of future meeting dates together with the work programme.

The February 2013 date was still to be confirmed but D New reported he was working towards the meeting taking place on 5 February 2013.

The meeting on 23 October was to consider the responses to the New Funding Formula Consultation, which closes on 19 October. Due to the quick turnaround no papers would be issued prior to the meeting.

14. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting would be held at 2.00pm on Tuesday 23 October 2012.