

SCHOOLS FORUM
MEETING HELD ON 9th JULY 2013

PRESENT:

Primary School Headteachers: Mrs J Conway and Mrs J Rea

Primary School Governors: Mr H Smith and Mr C Wilson

Secondary School Headteachers: Mr C Walker and Mrs J Wilson

Secondary School Governors: Mr I Bartle and Mr L Wadey

Special School Headteacher: Mrs E Horne

Academy Representative: Mrs M O'Connor

Diocesan Representative: Dr P Mackie - Chair

L A Representative: Councillor Mrs C Clark

Trade Union Representative: Mr D Campbell

Observer: Councillor Mrs A McCoy – Cabinet Member Children and Young People

Officials: Mr D New – Senior Finance Manager
Mrs N Fletcher – Secretary to the Forum

1. **EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

Members noted the Evacuations Procedures to be used to exit the building in the case of an emergency.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Mrs M Carlton, Mr T Gittins, Mrs A Cains, Ms J Humphreys and Mrs L Brown.

3. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Members were invited to declare any personal or business interests they may have in any item included on the agenda.

No interests were declared.

4. **MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING – 7th MAY 2013**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 7th May 2013, be approve as a true record.

5. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

5.1 **Scheme for Financing Schools**

Members were informed that the consultation was not yet fully completed

therefore the report was deferred

6. UPDATED OPERATING PROCEDURES & RESPONSE TO THE AUDIT REPORT

D New reported that the Operating Procedures for Schools Forum had been reviewed in light of the recommendation from the internal audit report and the resolution from the previous meeting, the circulated report outlined the proposed changes.

Mr New also informed members that the DfE are to change the Schools Forum Regulations for 2014/15 to require one representative to be from an establishment (other than a school or academy) providing education beyond age 16. This will replace the current requirement for a representative from the 14-19 Partnership.

Mr I Bartle entered the meeting.

Following discussion of the circulated paper, members,

RESOLVED to approve Operating Procedures with the following agreed changes;

- a) the terms of office of members be changed from three years to two years duration to enable the Forum to better review its constitution to reflect the changing proportionality between schools and academies;
- b) in order to move forward to the two year terms of office, all current members would serve out their existing term of office and when recruiting into the vacancies the terms of office would reduce to two years;
- c) all appointing bodies nominate substitutes (to the maximum of the total number of positions they hold) with the exception of governor appointments, when the unsuccessful candidates from the selection process would be the governor substitutes. The Clerk to Schools Forum would maintain a register of substitutes and provided that one weeks' notice of non-attendance was given, substitutes would be put in place from that particular category;
- d) Where ever possible decisions of the Forum would be taken by a consensus of members;
- e) either the Chair or Vice Chair must be a voting member of the Forum, if the Chair was a non-voting member in the case of a tied vote the Vice Chair would have a casting vote;
- f) to remove the position of Early Years Representative as the position was no longer a requirement.

7. SCHOOLS BUDGET OUTTURN 2012/13

The circulated report outlined the outturn position from the 2012/13 financial year. D New highlighted that the final overspend was £149k, compared to the previously reported overspend of £243k (to the end of October 2012). He gave a resume of the significant variances between planned and actual spending.

J Conway as Chair of the PRU informed members that the £111k under spend for the PRU was due to the freeze on the appointment of a Headteacher. She highlighted that during the recent flood the PRU had lost all its resources and had recently failed to set a budget for 2013/14. She advised members that the PRU was struggling financially to replace resources and refurbish a new location, especially with the LA taking the

£111k under spend away. She suggested that in future the funding of the PRU may have to be revisited, as based on the current formula the allocation per place at the PRU was lower than for Support Bases.

C Walker informed members that Northfield would be vacating the Marsh House Avenue site at the end of term and suggested that perhaps this would be an opportunity to review the provision required.

A McCoy suggested that a meeting take place with J Humphreys to discuss matters relating to the PRU.

D New continued his resume reporting that the final Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2012/13 was £154k higher than budgeted and this had been used to offset the overspend. Members were reminded that in February an overspend of £300k had been anticipated when setting the 2013/14 budget, therefore, the final overspend would be met from the DSG funding set aside for this purpose.

RESOLVED

a) to note the position for 2012/13;

b) that discussion is held with the Corporate Director regarding the PRU budget position

D New

c) to establish what schools have in place for insurance cover for flooding.

D New

8. SCHOOL BALANCES 2012/13

Members had been circulated with a report which set out the position on schools balances as at 31st March 2013. Overall the school balances had increased by £108k (1.87%) compared to the same time in 2012. There were 10 schools which held balances above the threshold; all the schools concerned had received permission to hold excess surplus balances. Also 2 schools were in a deficit position, with plans in place to repay their deficits in full in 2013/14. Overall the schools balances equated to 4.9% of the annual Individual Schools Budget plus devolved revenue funding.

In response to a member's question D New advised that the report related to maintained schools only, academies were not included.

D Campbell suggested that the LA write to all the academies within Stockton to request copies of their annual accounts.

RESOLVED to note the report.

9. TaHMS UPDATE

Members were informed that after the last meeting of the Forum all Stockton Headteachers had been contacted to ask whether they wished their school to be part of a collaborative agreement with regard to the provision of TaHMS. Approximately 50 schools/academies had indicated that they would be interested in the current provision being extended until 31st March 2014. The extension of the contract was the process of being completed.

Mr H Smith left the meeting.

10. GROWTH FUND UPDATE

Members had received a report which provided an update on the process followed and the awards of funding made when the School Growth Fund criteria (as discussed and agreed at 11th December 2012) was applied, for implementation in 2013/14. An amendment to the previously agreed criteria was recommended, the recommendation was that the following criteria be changed;

FROM

“Where the predicted numbers for a Primary School (excluding nursery classes) for the following September show an increase of more than 15 pupils in a Key Stage or 10% of their total roll, they may be able to access additional funding”.

TO

“Where the predicted numbers for a Primary School for the following September show an increase of more than 15 pupils entering reception or 10% of their total roll consistent with an increase in their PAN, they may be able to access additional funding. This should apply until the PAN has been effective through all year groups”

RESOLVED to note the report and approve the amendment to criteria of the School Growth Fund 2014/15 as outlined above.

11. SCHOOLS FUNDING REFORM – DfE FINDINGS FROM THE REVIEW OF 2013/14, ARRANGEMENTS AND CHANGES FOR 2014/15

A DfE document entitled School Funding Reform had been circulated for members information, D New advised governors that the document had been produced following consultation on the funding arrangements for 2013/14 and contained proposed changes for 2014/15.

D New gave a brief précis of the document highlighting;

- Pupil Led Funding - in 2014/15 Local Authorities would be required to allocate a minimum of 80% of the delegated schools block funding through the appropriate and locally determined combination of the pupil led factors. Stockton already allocates more than 80%.
- Primary Prior Attainment - continued use of the EYFS but DfE considering change due to the new measure.
- Secondary Prior Attainment - “Currently, pupils qualify for the prior attainment factor at KS2, if they fail to achieve a level 4 or higher in English and maths. This measure picks up around 10% of pupils. We want to ensure that the prior attainment measure identifies pupils who are less likely to go on and attain well at KS4. We have reviewed attainment data, which shows that currently only 20% of pupils who achieved a level 4 in English or maths went on to achieve the 5 (A*-C) GCSEs including English and maths. In light of this, we will be changing this measure so that in 2014-15, pupils will be identified as having low prior attainment, if they fail to achieve a level 4 or higher in English or a level 4 or higher in maths”.
- Sparsity factor - During the 2013/14 consultation concerns had been raised regarding lump sum arrangements in rural areas, as a result the DfE was proposing in 2014/15 to introduce an optional “sparsity” factor;
- Lump Sum - “In 2014/15 the maximum lump sum would be £175,000, Local Authorities would be able to differentiate the lump sum by phase provided that for each phase the lump sum does not exceed £175,000”. This was lower than in the current year; Stockton lump sum is £169k approximately

- Schools with Falling Rolls - "in 2014/15 Local Authorities would be able, using top-sliced DSG funding, to create a small fund to support schools with falling rolls in exceptional circumstances".
- School Forum Membership - In 2014/15 Forums would be required to include one elected representative from an institution (other than schools and academies) providing education beyond age 16 (but may also be providing education for 14 – 16 year olds). This would replace the requirement for a representative from the 14 – 19 partnership. This would be a change to the current constitution.

Mrs J Wilson left the meeting.

- SEN Needs - in 2014/15 the DfE will make the £6k threshold a requirement.

D New recommended that minimum changes be made to the formula in 2014/15, in order to provide maximum stability for schools.

E Horne expressed concern that special schools may have been disadvantaged by the introduction of the new formula in 2013/14, therefore the LA may have to revisit the SEN top up funding for 2014/15.

J Conway highlighted that some of the greatest losses had been experienced by schools in the highest areas of deprivation.

M O'Connor explained that the financial year for academies operated in line with the school year (1st September until 31st August), therefore academies were having to set budgets without knowing the SEN top up.

Members AGREED that minimum changes be made to the 2014/15 formula, in order to provide maximum stability for schools.

12. WORK PROGRAMME AND FUTURE MEETING DATES

Members had been circulated with a suggested programme of work for the 2013/14 academic year. D New highlighted that the programme needed to be flexible in order to cater for any new or changing circumstances, particularly those relating to further school funding reforms.

RESOLVED to approve the programme of work for the 2013/14 academic year. It was agreed that future meetings would commence at 1:30pm and the likely venue would be Grangefield Media Centre.

13. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business raised.

14. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting would be held at 1:30pm on Tuesday 15th October 2013, at the Media Centre, Grangefield School, Oxbridge Avenue TS18 4LE.