

**SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**MEETING HELD ON 8 JULY 2014**

**PRESENT:**

Primary School Headteachers: Mrs J Conway, Ms M Carlton, Mrs J Rea and Mr T Gittins.

Primary School Governors: Mr H Smith and Mr C Wilson

Secondary School Governor: Mr L Wadey

Special School Headteacher: Mrs E Horne

Diocesan Representative: Dr P Mackie - Chair

L A Representative: Councillor Mrs C Clark

Officials: Mr D New – Senior Finance Manager  
Cllr A McCoy – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People  
Mrs E Barrett – Secretary to the Schools Forum

Also in attendance: Mrs L Russell – Bond – Headteacher of Virtual Schools

1. **EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

Members noted the evacuations procedures to be used to exit the building in an emergency.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Mrs L Brown, Mr G Cummings, Ms J Humphreys, Mr D Campbell, Mr B Jordan, Mrs M O'Connor and Mr C Walker.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

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 – 6 MAY 2014**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2014 be approved as a true record.

5. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

6. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**

RESOLVED that Mrs J Conway be appointed as Vice Chair to the Schools Forum.

## 7. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) PUPIL PREMIUM GRANT 2014 – 2015

L Russell-Bond updated members on the Looked after Children Pupil Premium Grant. There were three main changes to note:

- The Pupil Premium Grant for LAC would increase from £900 to £1900 per eligible child.
- From the first day of care the child would be entitled to funding.
- The funds would be managed by the virtual School Headteacher.

CYMPT had agreed that of the £1900 fund received per child, £1400 would be allocated to the specific School educating the LAC.

Targeted support using Pupil Premium funds was tracked in line with the Personal Education Plan for each LAC. Attainment would be tracked and interventions reviewed.

Through the funding received, there were two positions identified. There was a post to support Stockton LAC outside the Borough and one Youth Direction Post to support the transition, enterprise, employability skills as part of 14-19 entitlement for LACYP and care leavers.

It was highlighted that due to uncertainty around future funding it was difficult to formulate a three year plan.

Members questioned what other LA's had agreed with regards to the funding arrangements. It was noted that some LA's had yet to consult with their members. However, certain LA's had resolved to retain the £1900 and employ Staff directly via the LA.

D New confirmed that overall the LA would pay nearly £2700 per LAC to schools including the £1400 received from the LAC Pupil Premium grant and the £1,295 included in the funding formula.

Discussion took place on the timing of payments to schools and academies. Members also mentioned other LA's who were slow at transferring funding to Stockton Schools for their resident LAC pupils.

RESOLVED to support the LAC Pupil Premium Grant proposal as set out in the paper.

*L Russell-Bond withdrew from the meeting*

## 8. SCHOOL BALANCES 2013 - 2014

D New outlined the Schools balances at 31 March 2014. Overall School balances had increased from 2012/13 by £335,000 and now stood at £6.24m. This equated to 6.2% of the Individual Schools budget. It was noted that this figure excluded any School that had converted to Academy status during 2013 – 2014.

Members perused the analysis of School Balances report which highlighted there were eight Primary Schools and four Secondary Schools with a surplus budget over the permissible 8% and 5%. All twelve Schools had applied to carry forward their surplus with a detailed justification. The Corporate Director had approved all twelve applications to carry forward the surplus.

Only one Primary School reported a small deficit and planned to repay in full in 2014 – 2015.

Appendix 2 detailed the historic balances of Schools in the Borough.

Members questioned if any analysis of Schools who consistently reported a surplus budget was made. D New highlighted that analysis was completed for the two previous financial years. It was confirmed that in the current climate of uncertainty, many Schools had reported being more cautious with their funds. Many surplus funds were allocated to specific building projects.

Members questioned if Academies followed the same principals of surplus budget funding as Maintained Schools. D New confirmed that the Secretary of State monitored funding balances for the Academies through EFA and all accounts had to be submitted to Companies House. Members discussed if Academy balances were available and if Directors minutes were available to parents

RESOLVED that:

- a) members note the Schools Balances 2013 – 2014 report,
- b) P Mackie investigate if Academy balances and Directors minutes were publicly available

P Mackie

#### 9. SCHOOL BUDGET OUTTURN 2013 - 2014

D New presented members with Schools Budget / Dedicated Schools Grant outturn 2013 – 2014 report.

There was a reported under spend of £1,438,502.

The following points were noted:

- £594,000 underspend reported on the Individual Schools Budget. The two year funding had been allocated to the LA on a planned place basis. There had been a lower than anticipated take up of the scheme and therefore the funds had not been allocated to providers.

*E Horne joined the meeting*

- There had been some uncertainty regarding High Needs funding, consequently the LA did not commit the funds elsewhere.
- £910,000 had been committed across Early Years funding and the High Needs Block.
- There was a balance of £529,000 uncommitted however the recommendation was for this to remain until there was a clearer picture particularly around High Needs funding.

Members asked if the funds were not committed would there be any penalty from the DfE. It was confirmed that the funds would carry forward as ring fenced Schools budget.

Members questioned the “Contingencies” budget allocation and if this could be listed separately for clarification with regards to School Improvement Services. D New confirmed that the LA used the same headings as within Schools Budget as those for statutory reporting however a note could be added with specific reference to School Improvement Services.

RESOLVED that members note the position for 2013 – 2014.

10. CONSULTATION RESPONSE ON THE EDUCATION SAVINGS GRANT (ESG) 2015 – 2016

Members noted the consultation response to the ESG 2015 - 2016 that had previously been drafted at a special meeting of the Forum and forwarded to the DfE.

11. DfE CONSULTATION ON EARLY YEARS PUPIL PREMIUM AND FUNDING FOR 2 YEAR OLDS

D New outlined the DfE consultation on Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) Funding for 2 year olds highlighting a response date of 22 August 2014.

The proposal was to introduce an EYPP of £300 per eligible child aged between three and four from April 2015. This would bridge the gap for disadvantaged children between the current two year funding and the school age Pupil Premium. £300 per child would be paid to the Early Years provider who took disadvantaged three and four year olds.

It was noted that the two year funding would no longer be paid on planned places but on actual children taking up the places.

J Wright, Planning and Partnership Manager would submit an official LA response. It was noted that the response date fell within the school holidays and as such it would be difficult to co ordinate a Schools Forum response.

Members highlighted the importance of collating Headteacher's responses to the consultation. It was noted that there were capacity issues within School nurseries to offer additional provision to younger children. With the introduction of Universal Infant Free School Meals for Key Stage 1 children, it was agreed that there may be an issue identifying eligible children if parents did not complete the necessary Free School Meal forms.

It was noted that there was capacity in private settings to offer more places to disadvantaged children however many parents preferred the School nursery option.

RESOLVED that Members were requested to forward any comments for the response to J Wright.

12. WORK PROGRAMME AND FUTURE MEETING DATES

RESOLVED to approve the proposed work programme and future meeting dates that had been previously circulated to members.

11. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

11.1 Resignations

Members noted the resignations of Mr G Leck, Mrs A Cairns and Mrs J Wilson from the Schools Forum.

RESOLVED to send letters on behalf of the Schools Forum thanking the members for their hard work and commitment.

Clerk

12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting would be held at 1:30pm on Tuesday 21 October 2014 at the Media Centre, The Grangefield Academy.