

SCHOOLS FORUM
MEETING HELD ON 2 MAY 2017

PRESENT:

Primary School Headteachers: Mrs J Conway (Chair), Mrs S Randle and Mrs S Richardson

Primary School Governors: Mr B Winter, Mrs S Symington and Mrs J Gair

Secondary School Governor: Mr J Thompson

Academy Representatives: Mr S White and Mr E Huntington

Special School Representative: Ms Y Limb

LA Representative: Cllr C Clark

Trade Union Representative: Mr L Russell

14 – 19 Representative: Mr P Cook

Officials: Ms D McConnell – Assistant Director, Schools and SEN
 Cllr A McCoy – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
 Mr G Waller - Accountant
 Mr A Bryson – Finance Manager
 Mrs E Barrett – Secretary to the Schools Forum

Also in Attendance (part): Mrs L Purdy, Mrs C Bell and Mrs J Douglas - HR

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 were submitted on behalf of Mr C Hammill, Mr M Gray, Mrs M Carlton and Mr C Walker.

3. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

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

There were no interests declared.

4. **MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING 24 JANUARY 2017**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2017 be approved as a true record.

5. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

5.1 **Designated Education Officer (DEO)**

It was explained that all Primary and Secondary colleagues had been happy to fund through their School budgets the DEO. The appointment had been made

last term via Hartlepool LA.

6. STOCKTON STRATEGIC EDUCATION BOARD (SSEB)

D McConnell referred to a previously circulated paper. It was explained that there needed to be a clear voice to inform priorities and bidding for a School Improvement Fund. This was a central Government move away from funding through the Education Support Grant (ESG) to a national bidding process for a share of a £140 million pot.

Stockton needed a clear idea of the local priorities and consequently the SSEB was established through Campus Stockton Alliance Board. Roadshows and cabinet had both been postponed due to the impending elections.

An initial meeting had taken place with representatives noted. J Conway and A Bryson had attended as Schools Forum representation for the inaugural meeting however a nomination was required moving forward. *It was questioned if the membership had been agreed and should there be an Academy Primary representative.* These were interim arrangements pending elected posts. D McConnell could take this forward to the next Primary Heads meeting. *It was asked why J Conway and A Bryson did not continue.* A Bryson was not a Schools Forum representative and not eligible to be a representative, J Conway would prefer the voice of a different Schools Forum member.

It was explained that the group needed to be relatively small in order to get the group operating to ensure that the timelines for bidding were met. Once the first bid had been placed then the membership could be reassessed. It was noted that communication was key from the SSEB. It was agreed that joint thinking was the way forward. D McConnell had written to all School leaders about the proposals and membership.

Co opted members could be added to bring experience if there was a particular specialism not covered within the membership. Members discussed if the Unions should be represented. The next meeting was scheduled for 6 June 2017.

RESOLVED that L Russell be the Schools Forum representative on the SSEB.

7. SCHOOLS FORUM FEEDBACK / OPERATIONAL GUIDE

A Bryson referred to Appendix A which outlined the collated responses to the toolkit. There had only been 5 responses received with the main issues being concerned with processes. It was agreed that the Secretary would circulate the operational guide as a refresher.

Secretary

8. NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA UPDATE

A Bryson gave a verbal update. The High Needs and National Funding Formula consultations had closed on 22 March 2017. The LA had submitted a formal response with the main points highlighted:

- The Government would provide feedback from the consultation during the summer ;
- The pressures that Schools were facing that had not been addressed in the National Funding Formula had been reported with examples of the Apprenticeship Levy, pensions, inflation and increased staff costs;
- Protection needed to be applied in line with the current -1.5%;
- High Needs Funding – the main issues were around weighting and criteria applied in the formulae;
- Flexibility to transfer funds via Schools Forum was key in order that local priorities could be addressed through moving funds between blocks;
- A Bryson would provide an overview of the Governments feedback once available;

- It was noted that the NUT had published a financial outcome map online using assumptions around the changes to the National Funding Formula and the impact on individual Schools budgets. It was important to note that this was speculation;
- Letters had been sent out from some Local Authorities to parents outlining the cuts in funding and the impact on their School. It was questioned if Stockton should circulate something. L Russell would raise this at the next JCC meeting.

L Russell

9. HIGH NEEDS SUB GROUP UPDATE

S Symington referred to a previously circulated report and members were asked for any questions. It was noted that there were some outstanding actions that had been distributed out to specific groups.

D McConnell expressed her thanks to S Symington and the sub group for their work. Out of Borough placements would need further work although the NE12 arrangements had not yet been embedded. There was a crisis in placements and the Director of Children's Services would like this area reviewed.

Members were asked if they would like the sub group resurrected in order to review Out of Borough placements. It was discussed that members would include G Waller, A Bryson, J Mills, J Lee and a special School representative. *It was questioned if this included Post 16.* The majority was pre 16. M Skipsy could be co opted if required in his procurement capacity.

RESOLVED that S Symington head up a new sub group to investigate Out Of Borough placements.

S Symington

10. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no other items to discuss.

All members withdrew with the exception of those representing maintained and voluntary controlled Schools. P Cook requested permission to stay and observe. C Bell, J Douglas and L Purdy joined the meeting.

11. APPRENTICESHIP LEVY (MAINTAINED AND VC SCHOOLS ONLY)

HR Officers gave an overview of the circulated paper. The following was discussed:

- Maintained and Voluntary Controlled Schools were liable to pay the Apprenticeship Levy;
- At the previous Schools Forum meeting it had been agreed that the levy would be deducted from individual School budgets and the funds would be ring fenced to pay for an apprentice in School but only for their training;
- It was estimated that £170,000 would be generated per year;
- The LA transfer the funds into a digitalized account, it was anticipated that the funds would be available today to draw down;
- The levy could only be used for training and upskilling current Staff, it did not contribute to staff salaries;
- A list of the training available had been provided. A Teaching Apprenticeship and School Business Manager Apprenticeship was being developed;
- Schools who paid into the levy must decide how the funds be allocated and two options were proposed;
- It was important to spend the levy as this was time limited and after two years the funds would go back to Central Government;
- HR were recommending Option 1;
- A report would be provided in six months to outline how the levy had been allocated;

At this juncture P Cook declared an interest as a College provider.

- The levy was a new form of vocational training;
- *The regularity of the panel meeting was questioned.* It was noted that support training was provided whole time and meetings need to be arranged accordingly;
- It was important that a real term vacancy was a possibility at the end of the Apprenticeship;
- It was noted that Governing Bodies needed a precis of the levy and HR were requested to provide a one page summary. This could also gauge interest in the drawing down of the levy per School as it was important that Schools could access at the minimum their own contribution to the fund;
- There were still some issues around procurement;
- It was discussed that a briefing for all relevant Schools be arranged to discuss the levy and appropriate allocations of funding and maybe shared LA roles;
- It was agreed that it would be difficult to make decisions at panel level and local solutions would work better;
- Option two was preferred in partnership with other local Schools.

RESOLVED to:

- a) move forward with Option B with an additional layer of local management;
- b) arrange a HR Apprenticeship workshop with training providers, finance, HR, maintained and VC Schools after half term.

12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting would be held at 1:30pm on Tuesday 4 July 2017 at The Education Centre in Stockton Sixth Form College.