

## **SCHOOLS FORUM**

**TUESDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2006**

PRESENT: -

**School Members:** Gill Llewellyn, Primary Headteacher  
Terri Menham, Primary Headteacher  
Debbie Kalynka, Primary Headteachers  
Paul Boyles, Primary Governor  
Steve Colledge, Secondary Headteacher  
Steve Flavin, Secondary Headteacher  
Rachael Matthey, Secondary Headteacher  
Peter Wells, Secondary Headteacher  
Bob Walker, Special Headteacher

**Non-School Members:** Sally Inskip, Diocese Representative  
Phil Baker, Trade Union Representative  
Debbie Waldron, Early Years Representative

**Officers:** Ian Bickerton, Martin Coles, Geoff Hogg, Stuart McGregor,  
Lorraine Billis, Nick Hobbs, Patrick Weir, Karen McMahon.

Apologies for absence were received from Pat Porter (Secondary Governor).

### **13. Appointment of Chair**

Resolved – That Mr Peter Wells be Chair of the Schools Forum

(Mr Peter Wells in the Chair).

### **14. Appointment of Vice-Chair**

Resolved – That Mr Paul Boyles be Vice-Chair of the Schools Forum

### **15. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2006, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **16. Report from Schools Forum Review Group**

The Forum noted the report by the Schools Forum Review Group on the re-constitution of the Forum that had originally been submitted to the meeting on 6 June 2006.

The Director of Local Provision explained that the report had been included in the agenda for information and highlighted the main points. It had been agreed that a standing sub-group of the Forum would be established and he asked for

members' views on the size and membership of this group. It was agreed that the sub-group should consist of six members comprising two primary representatives, two secondary representatives, one special school representative and one non-school representative. It was also agreed that one of the school members would represent the Voluntary Aided sector. Rachel Matthey (Secondary Head Teacher) and Bob Walker (Special School Head Teacher) volunteered to serve on the sub-group. The names of further nominations or volunteers were to be submitted to Helen Harris or Stuart McGregor promptly.

The Chair remarked that it was important that Councillors were kept informed of the Forum's work and also that it would be helpful for the Forum to receive feedback from Councillors, especially in relation to the impact the Forum's recommendations had on Council decisions.

The Chair requested that all reports to the Forum were to be contained in the agenda and that no late papers should be distributed at the actual meeting. He asked members to advise officers or the Forum if they required further information at any time or considered that an induction would be appropriate. It was noted that the term of office for each phase of the membership had yet to be determined.

Resolved - That a standing sub-group of six members be appointed, comprising of two primary representatives, two secondary representatives, one special school representative and one non-school representative, with one of the school members also representing the Voluntary Aided sector.

## **17. Aspire Update**

The Director of Business Transformation submitted a report to provide an update on the Aspire Programme and its implications for schools.

In response to questions regarding the quality control measures in place, the Human Resources Manager for Employee Relations explained that the performance framework focused on measurable outcomes that had to be achieved and that appropriate monitoring would be in place. An enquiry was raised as to whether the Forum should be involved with the monitoring process and it was agreed that the Business Performance Manager would provide details of the outcomes to members before the next meeting on 11 January 2007. Reservations were also expressed about the arrangements for schools (Appendix 1) and clarification was sought on some of the points. It was decided that further information would be provided at the next meeting.

The Director for Early Years and Pupil Services remarked on the problems that could be encountered with multi-agency working if not all the staff involved were in-scope for transfer to Capita. He was therefore seeking to include additional staff in the transfer.

Resolved – (1) That the report and the implications for schools be noted.  
(2) That the proposed arrangements for engagement with schools as the programme develops be endorsed, with some reservations.  
(3) That the Director for Early Years and Pupil Services submit a report to the January meeting concerning the proposal to include additional Children Services staff in the transfer to Capita.

## **18. Financial Management Standard in Schools**

The Forum considered a report by the Group Director Resources concerning the Financial Management Standard in Schools external assessment process.

The Head of Internal Audit clarified that should a school not have attained the required standard at the initial assessment, a further check would be made in March 2007. After 31 March 2007, the Director of Finance (S151 officer) would report to the DfES on whether the secondary schools had or had not reached the Financial Standard.

Steve Flavin (Secondary Head Teacher) commented on the unrealistic timescales involved and the additional, unreasonable requirements of the process that placed an additional burden on schools.

Resolved – That the Forum notes the process for the external assessment of the Financial Standard in Swindon schools

## **19. Severance Payments**

The Group Director Children submitted a report concerning severance payments in the financial year 2006/07.

Reference was made to a balance of £750k brought forward from 2005/06 and further clarification was sought, and was to be provided, as to where this sum had originated. Members agreed that this was an issue for the standing sub-group to review.

Resolved – That the severance payments arising in the financial year 2006/07 be charged to the Schools Budget.

## **20. School Balances 2005-06**

The Group Director Children submitted a report setting out the level of school balances at 2005/06 year end.

The Group Finance Manager (Children Services) confirmed that enquiries had been made to all schools with a surplus balance of between 5% and 10% and those over 10% had been visited. All the schools that had applied to carry forward the balance had received agreement from the Group Director and a further monitoring exercise had been undertaken in September 2006. He was satisfied that the balances had been properly accounted for.

Resolved – That the schools' individual level of balances be noted and that all schools be allowed to retain their balance carried forward from 2005/06.

## **21. Dedicated Schools Grant**

The Forum considered a report by the Group Director Children advising of additional Dedicated Schools Grant for 2006/07 and the indicative grant for 2007/08.

Resolved – (1) That the proposal for using the additional Dedicated Schools Grant, as set out in paragraph 2.2 of the report, be agreed.

(2) That the indicative Dedicated Schools Grant for 2007/08 be noted.

**22.**

#### **Increased Flexibility at Key Stage 4**

The Forum considered a report by the Director of Quality and Standards concerning changes to the funding source for the Increased Flexibility programme 2007/08 and putting forward proposals to secure that funding.

Steve Colledge (Secondary Head Teacher) stated that there had been a decision by Swindon Association of Secondary Heads (SASH) that the current arrangements should be discontinued. He supported that view as each school could then buy-in whatever it required and it would give them more control over the service provided. The Director of Quality and Standards stated that the change would have an impact across the Borough and expressed his concerns at the wider implications. He confirmed that any change would not affect current Year 10 students who were part way through a vocational course.

Resolved - That the Forum does not agree that part of the Dedicated Schools Grant be retained to guarantee the infrastructure of the Increased Flexibility programme, as set out in paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4 of the report.

**23.**

#### **Directed Revisions to the Scheme for Financing Schools**

The Group Director Resources submitted a report concerning a directed revision to the Scheme for Financing Schools with effect from 1 January 2007

Resolved – (1) That the directed revisions, as set out by the DfES, be implemented within the Swindon Scheme for Financing Schools with effect from 1 January 2007.

(2) That the standing sub-group, established under Minute 16, review the funding formula for the next funding period to commence in 2008, to ensure that it meets the updated requirements of the Scheme

**24.**

#### **Deprivation Review**

The Group Director Children submitted a report concerning a review of arrangements for funding deprivation in the schools.

Resolved – That a review of the arrangements for targeting social deprivation funding in schools be undertaken by the standing sub-group established under Minute 16.

**25.**

#### **Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Forum would be on Thursday, 11 January 2007.