

SCHOOLS FORUM

WEDNESDAY, 27 JUNE 2007

PRESENT: -

School Members: Gill Llewellyn, Primary Headteacher
Terri Menham, Primary Headteacher
Debbie Kalynka, Primary Headteachers
Paul Kohn, Primary Headteachers
Chris Davies, Primary Headteachers
David Easter, Primary Governor
Rachael Matthey, Secondary Headteacher
Peter Wells, Secondary Headteacher - **Chair**
Bob Walker, Special Headteacher
Kim Davies, Secondary Bursar

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

Officers: Ian Bickerton (Director of Local Provision), Geoff Hogg (Director of Services to Children and Young People), Stuart McKellar (Director of Finance), Karen Murray (Interim Group Finance Manager) and Lorraine Billis (Deputy Head of Finance for Schools)

Apologies for absence were received from Paul Boyles (Primary Governor), Steve Colledge (Secondary Headteacher), Steve Flavin (Secondary Headteacher) and John Newman (Secondary Governor) and Sue Wald (Director of Strategy and Commission).

1. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 28th March 2007, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

With reference to Minute 39, officers agreed to circulate an outline of the consultation proposals on the funding of alternative out of school provision to all members of the Schools Forum within the next week. Any concerns or comments were to be forwarded to Geoff Hogg as soon as possible so that the documentation could be sent to all schools.

2. Annual Performance Assessment and the Review of the Children and Young People's Plan

The Forum considered a report by the Group Director, Children, as presented by Geoff Hogg (Director, Services to Children and Young People) regarding the Annual Performance Assessment and the review of the Children and Young People's Plan. This had been considered and endorsed by the Children and Young

People's Partnership Board on 14th June 2007.

The JAR Action Plan update and the results of the review of the Children and Young People's Plan, as submitted to Ofsted on 14th June 2007, were attached as appendices to the report.

Resolved – That the Schools Forum (1) endorse the self-assessment reviews as set out in Appendix 1 and 2 to the report; and (2) receive an updated report on the outcome of the Annual Performance Assessment in November 2007, when the process will be completed.

3. Consultation on School, Early Years and 14-16 Funding 2008-2011

Ian Bickerton (Director of Local Provision) presented a report by the Group Director, Children regarding the consultation on School, Early Years and 14-16 funding for 2008-2011. The Local Authority had prepared a consultation document for schools that had been distributed to members of the Forum prior to this meeting and advised that the DfES had also only just published the outcome of their consultation. Officers reported on the impact that this would have on the LA's consultation, specifically in the areas of Nursery funding, the pupil count date and on changes to the rules regarding school balances.

Members of the Forum considered the LA's consultation document in light of this impact and agreed that the following areas be removed:

- Proposal No.1 – Nursery Funding – per pupil funding. Geoff Hogg advised that the Early Years Group would undertake a separate consultation exercise on this issue and would report back to the Forum at a later date.
- Proposal No.16 – Pupil Count - As the DfES had advised that the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations would continue to use January pupil census data, it was agreed that there was nothing to be gained from consulting on this.

It was also agreed that the timetable for the consultation be slightly amended to allow for further work to be undertaken on specific issues, such as the inclusion of eligibility criteria under proposal No.11 – Social Deprivation. The closing date for consultation would therefore be moved until the end of September with the two seminars being held during September.

Resolved – (1) That the DfES consultation response document be noted;
(2) That the Forum recommends that the Local Authority adopts the timetable set out in Appendix B to the report, subject to (a) the closing date for consultation being moved to the end of September; (b) the two seminars being held during September; and (c) the date of the next Schools Forum meeting to be advised by officers, to undertake the review with all schools and education partners on the potential changes to the Swindon Formula, the Swindon Scheme of Delegation and Finance Regulations for Schools that may result from the outcome of the DfES consultation;
(3) That the Forum recommends that the Local Authority adopts the timetable set out in Appendix B to the report, subject to those amendments contained in (2) above, to undertake the review of deprivation funding within the authority and that the outcome of the review inform the review of the Swindon Formula and Swindon Scheme of Delegation; and
(4) That the Forum welcomes the recommendations from the Sub-Group and that no changes are deemed necessary to the powers and responsibilities of the Sub-Group in respect of its future meetings.

4.

School Meals

Members of the Forum considered a paper by Steve Flavin, Headteacher of Churchfields School regarding Free School Meals.

Resolved – That, in Mr. Flavin's absence, members of the Forum noted the comments made regarding Free School Meals.

5.

Schools Block Outturn 2006-07

Ian Bickerton (Director of Local Provision) presented a report by the Group Director, Children regarding the Schools Block Budget for 2006/07. Mr. Bickerton made reference to there being an underspend of £51K and to the percentage of a schools budget that could be carried forward (currently 8% for primary and special schools and 5% for secondary schools) and asked that a detailed review be undertaken of those schools that fall above these recommended thresholds.

With regards to Headlands School, it was agreed that any decision to recover funds once the school had closed would be taken by officers.

Resolved – (1) That the underspend of £51K on the Schools Block Outturn be noted;

(2) That the Forum recommends that the Local Authority undertakes a detailed review of the individual schools balances as at 31st March 2007 that fall above the recommended thresholds for each type of school;

(3) That the Forum receive a report back on the findings of this review and makes recommendations to the Local Authority on the use of any "surplus", taking into consideration financial risks within the wider Schools Block; and

(4) That the Forum recommends that officers take appropriate action to claw back any funds from Headlands School once the school has closed on 31st August 2007.

6.

Schools Block Budget 2007-08

Ian Bickerton (Director of Provision) presented a report of the Group Director, Children regarding the Schools Block Budget for 2007-08 and advised that the DfES regulations now state that PFI schools should receive 30% of the Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) grant which amounts to £94K for 2007-08.

Members of the Forum considered and made recommendations on the contingency budget within the Schools Block. All the proposals put forward were agreed, with the exception of:

- **"One-off" loss of pupils funding – Bridlewood Primary - outside formula.** Members were sympathetic but felt that, on the case made and in the best view of officers, paragraph 5.8.4.3 of the Formula did not apply at this stage and therefore this could not be approved.
- **SsAMP Database funding.** Members were advised that the £15K proposed related to the licence for the database and the actual operational costs would be nearer to £75K per annum over the next three years. Members felt that, as the database was of benefit to the Council as a whole, this should be funded centrally. Mr. Bickerton agreed to pursue this and would report back at the next Schools Forum meeting. The Chair also asked that Councillor Nick Martin, Cabinet Member for Resources, be invited to the next meeting of the Schools Forum.

With regard to the admission of additional pupils in North Swindon, members expressed concerns that these additional places may not alleviate the problem in

the future as many families were still moving into the area. Members were also concerned that this would have a knock-on effect on Secondary Schools and felt that this issue should be addressed in the near future.

Resolved – (1) That the Forum notes that the final Dedicated School Grant (DSG) allocation for 2007/08 exceeds the agreed Schools Block budget by £200K;

(2) That the Forum recommends to the LA that the balance is added to the contingency fund for 2007/08, bearing in mind that the existing calls on the fund already exceed the original level of contingency allocated as part of the 2007/08 budget;

(3) That the Forum recommends to the LA that the proposed use of the Schools Block contingency as set out in Section 2.1 (b) to the report be agreed with the exception of the “one-off” loss of pupils funding and the SScAMP database funding;

(4) That the Forum recommends to the LA that the re-allocation of the Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) grant to PFI schools of £94K be agreed; and

(5) That the Forum recommends to the LA that the set up costs for Isambard Community School be met from the 2007/08 Dedicated Schools Grant.

(6) That further updates on Bridlewood and SScAMP be made to the Forum in Autumn 2007.

(7) That Councillor Nick Martin, Cabinet Member for Resources, be invited to attend the next meeting of the Schools Forum.

7.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Forum that was due to be held on 2nd October 2007 had been postponed and officers would advise members of a new date.