

Slough Schools Forum- Meeting held on Thursday, 17th January, 2013

- Present:** Maggie Waller, Holy Family Primary School (Chair)
Julia Shepard, Beechwood Secondary School (Vice-Chair)
Gillian Coffey, Lynch Hill Primary School
Martin Davis, Colnbrook Primary School
Helen Huntley, Haybrook College
Maureen Mallinson, Westgate Secondary School
Paul McAteer, Slough and Eton Secondary School
Father Kevin O'Driscoll, St Joseph's High School
Mary Sparrow, Wexham Secondary School
Maggie Stacey, St Anthony's RC Primary School
Jo Rockall, Herschel Grammar School
Jean Cameron, Slough Children's Centres
Nicky Willis, Cippenham Primary School
Philip Gregory, Slough Centre Nursery
- Other attendees:** Angela Mellish, Debbie Richards (sub for Jo Matthews)
- Officers:** Robin Crofts, Michelle Perkins, Roger Edwardson, Steve Elson, Mark Taylor
- Apologies:** Barbara Clark, John Constable, Charlie McGeachie, Jon Reekie, Virginia Barrett and Lynda Bussley (Observer)

PART I

188. Apologies

Apologies were received from Virginia Barrett, East Berkshire College, Barbara Clark, Godolphin Junior School, John Constable, Langley Grammar, Lynda Bussley (Observer), Charlie McGeachie, Montem Primary School.

Maggie Waller welcomed Debbie Richards who attended as a substitute for Jo Matthews and Mark Taylor, Interim Assistant Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer at SBC, who attended on behalf of Chief Executive, Ruth Bagley.

189. Declarations of Interest

None.

190. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

Schools Services Review: Roger Edwardson updated the forum that four organisations are moving through to the competitive dialogue stage and two have withdrawn. The simple guide for schools and governors as discussed at the last meeting is in hand.

Concerns relating to ongoing support from SBC Finance: The issues are being addressed and Mark Taylor confirmed that permanent posts are being made in the

SBC Finance structure. Ruth Bagley, Robin Crofts, Maggie Waller and Julia Shepard are meeting to discuss this further. Schools Forum noted very positive feedback from Julia Shepard that Heads are pleased that the new structure reflects the feedback from schools.

Final Schools Budgets – Steve Elson aims to send this information via the gatekeeper by the end of January.

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record. The following addition is needed:

The meeting started at 8:05 and ended at 9:55

191. DfE Update and Replacing LACSEG

The documents have been circulated and Schools Forum noted them.

192. Implementation of DfE Funding Reform - Early Years

MW thanked the input of the Task and Finish group which had a wide representation and achieved beyond expectation within the timescales. MW also thanked Steve Elson for his support with the data and modelling.

The Task and Finish group have considered the current formula and propose simplifying the current formula and reducing it to 3 factors:

- 1) Staffing
- 2) Central costs
- 3) Deprivation

The formula recognises different sizes of providers.

Steve Elson reported that there is an issue with the Deprivation supplement based on IDACI and free school meal eligibility. The DfE state that the child is only eligible if they attend school for the full day. It has been proposed to capture the data using National Insurance numbers.

Action: Robin Crofts and Mark Taylor will explore this further with Social Care colleagues and bring it back to a future Schools Forum meeting once it has been resolved.

The movement of monies between Early Years and High Needs block is still being looked at. Steve Elson will bring a breakdown to the next meeting of what the Early Years block funds and what the High Needs block funds. There is a need to look at where funding for additional support in early intervention comes from in the Early Years block.

The recommendations and proposals had been agreed by the Task and Finish group and Schools Forum endorsed them.

193. Implementation of DfE Funding Reform - 5-16

Steve Elson took Schools Forum through the report exploring the areas of the formula previously agreed following the work of the Task and Finish group and consultation with all schools in the autumn.

Discussion took place around the formula factors and the following points were noted by Schools Forum:

All of the factors apart from Looked After Children and English as an Additional Language were used as the data we were allowed to use was not relevant to Slough.

The Mobility factor is to be kept under review as this is an issue in Slough – part of the future work will be to look at unit values.

The Split Site factor figure needs to be looked at and reviewed in the coming year.

The DfE have asked for the criteria which was proposed as follows:

“A split site is where a school operates on two (or more) distinctly separate sites. The sites will be in separate, not adjacent streets and not connected by a footpath”). Paragraph 14.

Schools Forum agreed the criteria.

Rates – it was noted that Steve Elson is waiting to build 13/14 figures in.

Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG): it was noted that the DfE have stated that the Minimum Funding Guarantee has to be 1.5% and this cannot be changed. It was noted that the MFG does create anomalies for a few schools and this needs to be looked at further. In particular the change to October pupil numbers compared to January 2012 causes shifts DfE may not have anticipated. This is the case for Beechwood. It was noted that there is an issue for Colnbrook school and further work will take place to get the school into a financially sound position.

De-delegation: it was noted that it had been agreed that this applies to the Behaviour Support Service and TU support. It was noted also that there is an LA review around professional associations.

In terms of 2014-15 onwards Schools Forum agreed the need for continued consistent support from SBC Finance along with extra support for governors to provide understanding and ensure effective financial management in schools.

Mark Taylor suggested that schools determine what level of resource is needed to tackle the issues. Maggie Waller said that the work on the formulae needs to continue going forwards along with the LA's statutory requirement to provide ongoing support to Schools Forum.

Julia Shepard highlighted what she felt were the areas to keep financial management of schools intact at a strategic level which were agreed by Mark Taylor:

- 1) Partnership Working – a joint understanding and working on the formula together.
- 2) Finance staff who have a clear understanding of the formula and schools' budgets.
- 3) Support for headteachers and governing bodies.

- 4) Monitoring of budgets of maintained schools and clarification of what support can be provided to academies.

Mark Taylor will look further at what the LA can provide. Schools Forum agreed that they need a pool of resources that they can turn to for trouble shooting and supporting schools in times of crisis.

Action: Mark Taylor suggested he send a communication to all head teachers and governing bodies asking what level of support they require.

There is also a meeting scheduled with Maggie Waller, Ruth Bagley, Robin Crofts and Julia Shepard on this issue. It was also suggested that it is important to provide direct communication with governors and to provide training; to look at the relationship between finance and school improvement and the part finance plays in this and look at the relationship between audit and schools and whether there can be any developments in that area.

Action: MT will feed back to RSM Tenon.

Primary: secondary ratio: Steve Elson provided models (1:1.37 and 1: 1.39) as requested by the Task and Finish group. The two models were discussed further. It was noted that the Task and Finish group had not had the opportunity to meet further to this work being done. It was also noted that whatever the outcome for 2013/14, that there was a commitment that the evidence based work begun by headteachers to assess the real costs of delivery in each phase needs to continue alongside the LA to provide a basis for 14/15.

It is felt that an issue of this importance ought to be discussed by both phase groups and with governors. Primary schools agreed that the principle needs to be considered carefully before a decision is made.

Mark Taylor confirmed that the MFG (1.5%) will support those schools that lose out in the interim.

Schools Forum was not able to agree a single option but it was agreed that the two options under consideration for recommendation were the status quo of 1:1.43 (a slight shift in latest models from 1:1.45) and 1: 1.39. It was agreed that Maggie Stacey would contact all primary schools for their views and that it would also be considered at SASH. If no formal agreement could be made by early next week then there would need to be a vote of those Schools Forum members eligible to do so.

Action: Schools Forum vote if required to inform LA decision and the final figure submitted to the DfE to be circulated to Schools Forum members.

194. Final Statutory Schools Budget 2013-14

Schools Forum noted the statutory schools budget. Steve Elson reported that the situation about copyright licensing is to be confirmed. NQT funding would be discussed at a future meeting.

195. Academies Update

Robin Crofts provided an update as follows:

Willow are converting as a sponsored academy within Marish on 1st February.

James Elliman conversion planned for 1st April.

Foxborough were due to convert on 1st April subject to further work but it is more likely to be September now.

Robin Crofts met with Tom Peryer from the DfE, the outcome of which was that there will be no pushing towards sponsored arrangements in Slough.

33% of Slough schools are now academies (44% of pupils)

85% are expected to have converted over the next two years.

The residual LA responsibility re standards, including those in academies, was noted.

196. 2012-13 Work Programme and Key Decisions Log

Schools Forum noted the Work Programme and Key Decisions Log.

The agenda for February is subject to change.

(Note: The Meeting opened at 8.05 am and closed at 10.19 am)