

Slough Schools Forum- Meeting held on Wednesday, 19th March, 2014

Present: Maggie Waller, Holy Family Primary School (Chair)
Louise Lund, Barney Bees Day Nursery
Debbie Richards, Arbour Vale School
Barbara Clark, Godolphin Junior School
Paul McAteer, Slough and Eton C of E Business and Enterprise College
Maggie Stacey, St Anthony's RC Primary School
Jo Rockall, Herschel Grammar School
Jean Cameron, Slough Children's Centres
Philip Gregory, Baylis Court Nursery School
Hardip Singh, Khalsa Primary School

Observers: None

Attendees: Helen Huntley (Haybrook College), Robin Crofts (Cambridge Education), Tony Smith (Cambridge Education), Eddie Neighbour (Slough Grammar School), Angela Mellish (St Bernard's Grammar School), Mike Hartley (Cippenham Primary School)

Officers: Jane Wood, Chris Aston, Barry Stratfull, Steve Elson, Atul Lad and Rajpreet Johal (Clerk)

Apologies: Paul Adams, Gillian Coffey, John Constable, Jon Reekie, Mary Sparrow, Virginia Barrett, Lynda Bussley, Nicky Willis and Navroop Mehat

PART I

310. Apologies

Apologies noted from John Constable, Jon Reekie, Navroop Mehat, Nicky Willis, Lynda Bussley, Mary Sparrow, Gillian Coffey and Virginia Barrett

Maggie Waller welcomed Jane Wood, Strategic Director of Wellbeing (Slough Borough Council), Chris Aston, Interim Head of Early Years, School and SEN Services (Slough Borough Council) and Barry Stratfull, Corporate Financial Controller (Slough Borough Council)

311. Declarations of Interest

None

312. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

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Maggie Waller to write to the Department for Education (DfE) to raise the concern on the impact of no funding being provided to support permanent expansions.

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Robin Crofts reported that two dates have been set for the Chairs of Governors' Conferences: 7th July and 28/29 November.

Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring – Atul Lad confirmed that the majority of schools have responded regarding plans for balances and a response is awaited from St Joseph's.

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Robin Crofts confirmed the draft SLAs will be sent out before the end of this term. The layout of SLAs is to be broken down into two components indicating those services without cost and traded elements.

313. 2014-15 Budget Process Update

Atul Lad presented the report to inform the Schools Forum of the current position regarding 2014-15 school budgets. The budget allocation process is now complete for 2014/15.

Paul McAteer noted that the resource base places figures seem incorrect. Atul Lad and Steve Elson are to look into this outside of the meeting. (Note: since the meeting, resource base place figures have been clarified and agreed, with no changes being required.)

Maggie Stacey asked what data is used for primary lower attainment. Atul Lad to check with the Department for Education (DfE).

314. Growth Fund Outturn

Atul Lad presented the report to inform the Schools Forum of the 2013-14 Growth Fund outturn.

Atul reported the fund was set at £385,000 and the report details the schools it has gone to. It was noted that the underspend of £54,353 will carry forward into 2015/16.

Atul reported that the agreed criteria for 2013/14 was that schools that have a bulge class or are in the first year of expansion receive funding.

There was discussion about the gap in funding for schools because of lag funding meaning that those schools not in the first year of expansion have been underfunded. This has been put right for 2014/15 by the change to the Growth Fund criteria and the increase of that fund to £1.5 million. However, schools missed out in 2013/14. Maggie Stacey proposed that there is a check on how many schools were not funded in 2013/14 as they were not in the first year of expansion.

Schools Forum agreed the need to look back at figures for 2013/14 and that this information be brought back to the 2nd May meeting alongside wider information regarding any schools which were not funded in the same way prior to 2013/14.

The DfE does not fund the LA for the additional pupils which the Growth Fund will fund in 2014/15. Barbara Clark asked who is responsible for going back to the Department for Education to argue this case for the Forum.

Maggie Waller to write to the Department for Education as the Schools Forum Chair, however the Forum felt it would be better to have a joint letter to go from the Forum and Local Authority. Jane Wood agreed to take this back to the Local Authority and Robin Crofts to take back through the School Places work. Jane Wood will raise the issue with Joseph Holmes.

It was noted that the current DfE Fair Funding consultation will also provide another vehicle by which to lobby the DfE.

Tony Smith suggested that other LAs will be in a similar position and a collective approach may be useful.

Report on Growth Fund outturn to come back to July's meeting.

315. PFI - paper to follow

Maggie Waller updated the Schools Forum. Ruth Bagley has agreed that the paper on PFI will be coming to 2nd May meeting.

316. Funding for Specialist Leaders of Education

Robin Crofts presented the paper on behalf of John Constable. The purpose of the report was to inform the Forum of the proposed allocation of a maximum £68k of funding currently held by Cambridge Education for School Improvement to be directed towards supporting the deployment of Specialist Leaders of Education through the Teaching Schools Alliance.

Reporting will be put in place on the use of the money through Cambridge Education and it will be evaluated and reviewed through the early stages of next year.

Maggie Stacey asked how schools will know what is available. Robin Crofts reported it will be promoted through Slough Learning Partnership, and Cambridge Education will link with them to identify particular priorities.

Helen Huntley asked that this also include special schools and PRUs.

317. Cambridge Education

Robin Crofts provided a verbal update:

Further to the review that is being undertaken, Robin reported they have now met with all the team members in Cambridge Education. The Local Authority is in support of the recommendations in principle. Stakeholder meetings will be held in the near future with schools and early years providers being invited. Robin to

circulate some slides to the Forum with the minutes of this meeting giving an overview of the proposed developments.

318. Academies Update

Formal arrangements are proceeding with Western House moving to academy status on 1st June.

Robin also informed the Schools Forum that some academies are looking at making payments to Chairs of Governors and that Ofsted is interested in maintained schools having similar flexibility. This is being pursued where academies consider it beneficial in strengthening governance and in turn strengthening schools and their standards.

319. 2013-14 Work Programme and Key Decisions Log

Noted

320. Membership

A review has been carried out of the balance of the current Schools Forum membership across phases, academies and maintained schools.

Table presented to the Forum shows current position regarding membership.

It was agreed that:

- Schools Forum membership should be increased to 21.
- Academy proprietors be asked to elect an additional academy representative, giving 9 academy members in total
- Academy proprietors be asked to consider this being Helen Huntley to represent the PRU and special academies.

The Schools Forum Constitution states that if members do not attend a number of meetings then the clerk will write to them. The Chair will follow up those who have had significant non-attendance.

Maggie Waller suggested that at July meeting there is a further update on membership.

321. Any Other Business

None

322. DfE Fair Funding Consultation

Atul Lad presented a supplementary paper on the DfE consultation on reform to the school funding system.

The consultation closes in April and a suggestion was put forward for a meeting of the formula 'Task and Finish' group. Paul McAteer to join the group. Thursday 24th April was suggested as the date of the Task and Finish group to be hosted at Slough & Eton School at 2pm.

Atul Lad reported that the changes proposed in the consultation do not impact on Slough except in relation to the area cost adjustment which is a concern in terms of salary bands for teachers. It was noted that this is also an opportunity to raise concerns with the DfE about the loss of the small school factor.

Jane Wood suggested information on the Growth Fund and expansions is ready for the Task and Finish group meeting

(Note: The Meeting opened at 8.15 am and closed at 9.35 am)