

Slough Schools Forum- Meeting held on Tuesday, 12th January, 2016

- Present:** Maggie Waller, Holy Family Primary School (Chair)
John Constable, Langley Grammar School (Vice-Chair)
Sally Eaton, Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) providers - Early Years
Kathleen Higgins, Beechwood Secondary School
Helen Huntley, Haybrook College
Navroop Mehat, Wexham Court Primary School
Angela Mellish, St Bernard's Grammar School
Eddie Neighbour, Upton Court Grammar School
Jon Reekie, James Elliman Primary School
Debbie Richards, Arbour Vale School
Jo Rockall, Herschel Grammar School
Nicky Willis, Cippenham Primary School
- Observers:** David Harding (Langley Grammar School)
- Cambridge Education:** Robin Crofts
- Officers:** Rajpreet Johal (Clerk), Tony Madden, Coral Miller, Sharon Scott and Krutika Pau
- Apologies:** Virginia Barrett, Gillian Coffey, George Grant, Philip Gregory, Paul McAteer and Paul Wilson

PART I

462. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were noted from Gillian Coffey, Paul McAteer, Virginia Barrett, Paul Wilson, George Grant and Philip Gregory.

Maggie Waller thanked Rajpreet Johal as Clerk of Schools Forum as it is her last meeting.

463. Declarations of Interest

None.

464. Minutes of Previous Meeting

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George Grant to be added to the front sheet of last meeting as he was present.

Maggie Waller confirmed a meeting took place with Nicola Clemo, Chief Executive of the Slough Children's Services Trust and Nicola has been invited to the Early Years Group. No response received, Maggie to follow up.

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Membership: John Constable advised that the terms of office of three members of the Schools Forum have expired. All three members were asked to continue their membership until the end of August 2016. All three have indicated willingness to

continue until August 2016 pending the next review of membership following academy conversions; this extension was formally agreed.

Following a question about attendance at meetings of Schools Forum members, it was noted that the Constitution does refer to non-attendance. Maggie Waller to follow up any issues.

It was noted that Paul Wilson is leaving at the end of January. Krutika Pau has appointed a replacement.

Nicky Willis and John Constable updated regarding progress on the recruitment strategy project: £70k for supporting recruitment to be held by Slough Primary Headteachers' Association (SPHA) for both phases. Krutika Pau agreed that the funding should be transferred as soon as possible. Nicky Willis, Navroop Mehat and John Constable met with PR consultant, developing proposal for use of social media/other methods to develop/share key messages about Slough education and schools. John Constable noted that Dawn Bailey had attended a recruitment fair and made a number of useful contacts.

Robin Crofts referred to Education and Children's Scrutiny Committee and that members wished recruitment to be kept as a live issue, following their interest in recruitment to social care. A meeting of the Committee is due to take place on 9th March and is an opportunity to raise with members and promote education in Slough.

Noted that the transfer of £190,000 to the High Needs Block would need to be reaffirmed later in the meeting.

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School Funding Consultation: Paul Scaife from Tribal has been asked to provide raw data.

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The word 'ruining' at the top of the page should read 'running'.

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De-delegation of Trades Union budget: no further update was available but Robin Crofts agreed to follow up with Montem regarding the current situation. It was agreed that, once this was done, the vote on the de-delegation would take place by email as soon as possible to feed into the LA budget work and submission to the DfE.

Early Years group has not been rescheduled. Lead person to be agreed.

465. Funding Formula changes for 2016-17: SBC decision

Coral Miller reported that the report is to inform Schools Forum of the consultation results and the changes proposed by the Local Authority on the Fair Funding formula budget for 2016-17.

The 3 options outlined in the report are to go to Cabinet on 18th January with the recommendation that the Council approves Option 3.

Navroop Mehat noted concerns regarding the numbers outlined on Appendix A of the report. Coral Miller noted that the consultation figures were based on October 2014 and that the figures in Appendix A had been updated with October 2015 and the new IDACI changes. She reported that the Schools Block figure was higher than expected and the figure was not known before.

There was discussion about the information being presented to members. Maggie Waller raised her concerns that Cabinet members appear not to have been informed of the full impact on budgets nor advised of the Schools Forum response as neither is included in the Cabinet report. Schools Forum had been assured at the last meeting that members would be informed.

Krutika Pau confirmed that members would not have had more detail than was in the report and agreed to share this information with members before Monday's Cabinet meeting. Maggie Waller to send Krutika the Schools Forum response for Krutika to share.

Navroop Mehat noted that the responses provided in the report to members should have been weighted as they are heavily skewed to primary. Other members endorsed this, saying that the figures appear democratic but are not weighted in the report and this is significant.

It was noted that the two sums relating to PFI (each of £500k) are included in the figures which is misleading. It was agreed that these figures would be shown separately when budgets go out so that schools are clear.

It was noted, with concern, that figures for a number of schools, including Wexham Secondary, do not appear to be robust and a breakdown was requested. It was also stated that Wexham Secondary had a significant reduction in number on roll of 36 children from last year which contributed to the deduction. It was agreed that a breakdown would be provided as soon as possible.

466. Funding Formula 2016-17 IDACI consultation

Coral Miller presented the item to consult with Schools Forum on the changes in the income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI) banding made by the DfE and the local changes proposed by the LA as a result. The DfE changes affect the designation of Slough's banding in terms of deprivation. Coral noted that the IDACI information came late, on 17th December 2015.

She stated that many London boroughs have been hit. The LA is liaising with other Local Authorities to see how they are dealing with this.

Concern was raised that there had been limited time available to model the impact of the banding changes and to consult all schools on the IDACI changes therefore the Schools Forum was being consulted in line with other Local Authorities as there had been no time to provide and produce consultation papers for all schools.

It was confirmed that the banding changes have been set by the DfE but that the cash value of the factor is set locally.

The LA has modelled the changes whilst aiming to keep the total funding in the deprivation factor similar to last year. This was done by making the following

changes: increasing the Free School Meal rate by 31%; using IDACI band 2 and increasing the band value 2 by 37% and band 3 to 5 by 36%.

There was some discussion about ways of smoothing the impact and the need for the LA to be mindful of this overall in the context of other changes.

467. 2016-17 Budget Timetable - for information.

Coral Miller provided a report to Schools Forum to inform about the budget process for 2016/17 and the DSG block allocation, including £118.7 million for the Schools Block.

It was noted that, on 25th February 2016, schools will receive budgets (5 to 16), indicative early years and high needs budgets.

**468. School Improvement to include:
Cambridge Education Centrally Retained underspend from 2014-15 and the allocation of the Centrally Retained budget (held by the Local Authority) for 2016/17 (not approved in December 2015)**

Robin Crofts outlined the proposals as set out in the report and Appendix A:

It was proposed that the Cambridge Education centrally retained school improvement budget underspend from 2014-15 would support:

School improvement consultant exploring future options (already agreed by Schools Forum):	£ 20,000
Maths Booster Programme for Year 6 (already agreed by Schools Forum)	£ 35,000
Maths Project: Sustainability across the primary phase (KS2)	£ 70,000
Learning support for Looked After Children (LAC)	£ 35,000
To be returned to School Block budget for 2016-17 (one off allocation across all schools)	£72,994
Total	£ 232,994

In terms of the school improvement (£20k), Robin advised that Sharon Scott will be making contact with schools to get views. Sharon was later introduced at the meeting.

The maths sustainability project: 'Slough Mathematics Project Improving teacher subject knowledge and raising children's attainment' was a proposal from the Slough primary headteachers. It was noted that the maths booster programme (already agreed) is a booster programme focusing on the Year 6 pupils taking their end of Key Stage assessment in May 2016. The second programme is to achieve improvements across KS2 which are sustainable over time (details in Appendix B).

It was noted that the learning support for Looked After Children (LAC) is funding to be provided to the Trust as this is an ongoing requirement which has been in place in previous years.

The proposals were agreed and it is noted that these are one off allocations as the Schools Forum agrees these budgets line by line annually.

School Improvement activities provided by SBC: it was noted that the centrally retained SBC Combined Budget for 2016-17 is made up of £28,400 (school improvement and raising standards) and the £120,246 remainder (previously within the Cambridge Education budget – available as the Cambridge Education spend is reduced to approximately £930k), making a total of £148,646.

It was proposed that this combined budget would support:

Virtual Head statutory function	£ 100,000
Strengthening safeguarding across all Slough schools: support and training (to be shaped and determined with schools)	£ 48,646
Total	£ 148,646

Krutika Pau outlined the proposals.

It was asked if the Virtual Head was a Social Care function. Krutika said that the education element is not and, in many LAs, this is funded from the DSG. She explained that there has not been an established Virtual Head post. Debbie Rigby is currently fulfilling the role on an interim basis. The wish is to appoint a Virtual School Head who will be working in the Trust as the Council felt this was an opportunity to get this right for vulnerable children as part of the new Trust arrangements.

Jo Rockall referred to the £1,900 pupil premium available for each looked after child, only some of which is given to schools to support these children. Krutika said that it was not permissible to use that for funding this post, it is to support strategies and intervention.

There was some further discussion about the LAC pupil premium and Krutika indicated that she would ask Debbie Rigby to start some work to revisit this and this would be completed once the virtual school head was in post.

Helen Huntley noted that over 60% of Slough's looked after children are not educated in Slough.

Robin Crofts and two headteachers (Jane Girle and Helen Huntley) are on the governance group for the virtual school. It was agreed that this role would be accountable to Schools Forum related to this financial commitment and that a report would be brought back to the Forum, with clear KPIs, in the autumn term.

Schools Forum agreed to the funding for the Virtual School Head and it was noted that, even though this is a statutory function, the allocation can only be agreed by Schools Forum for one year.

With regard to the second proposal; 'Strengthening safeguarding across all Slough schools: support and training (to be shaped and determined with schools)', Krutika stated that this was to strengthen safeguarding, early help and intervention.

This funding for this was agreed in principle, subject to details being brought to the March Schools Forum meeting.

The £190k previously agreed from the 2015/16 underspend for supporting the High Needs Block was re-affirmed, with the understanding that this is a permanent reduction from centrally retained DSG in the Schools Block budget into the High Needs Block budget, not one off as previously thought.

469. Centrally Retained DSG Items for Early Years - for approval

Coral Miller presented the report and Appendix A which proposed a similar level to 2015-16 for centrally retained DSG for early years for 2016/17.

This was agreed by Schools Forum.

470. Growth Fund

Tony Madden went through two reports: one which was tabled at the meeting and one circulated previously.

One report was seeking approval from Schools Forum for a mechanism for funding additional school places over and above the existing Planned Admissions Number (PAN) of schools, when requested by Slough to meet Basic Need requirements (set out in paragraph 5.3 of the report).

The other report was to set out the overall requirement for the 2016/17 Growth Fund of £1.1 million and to seek approval to fund this from the Schools Block budget.

Tony Madden went through the process and reports.

The total demand is currently forecast at £1.25 million and it was noted that the likely carry forward from 2015-16 is estimated as £150k.

The Growth Fund will fund bulge classes, permanent expansion, and new places in excess of PAN in both primary and secondary (e.g. +2 per class in primary, places over PAN in secondary).

It was noted that where AWPU was the basis of funding, this would be based on 2015/16 values.

Academies taking additional pupils in 2016-17 are not funded for the summer term as the Growth Fund works on April-April financial year. This will need to be a first call on the 2017-18 Growth Fund allocation.

Schools Forum agreed to formalise the funding but also agreed that the criteria should be brought back to the March meeting for formal agreement and further updates are to be given in year on the Growth Fund.

471. Scheme of financing schools - finalising 2015-16

It was noted that two changes had previously been proposed and agreed in 2015. An additional change proposed at that time to the Balance Control Mechanism has now been withdrawn.

The updated scheme will be on the SBC website in February 2016.

472. Update from Task Groups: 5-16, SENSOG and Early Years (verbal)

Helen Huntley reported there are significant issues that need to be addressed by SENSOG to ensure that the revenue funding required is fully considered and agreed alongside capital projects. This will impact on the High Needs Block. Haybrook College's governing body is concerned about this.

473. Cambridge Education (verbal)

Robin Crofts reported that there are 8 months left of the CE contract. It is currently 'business as usual' including a priority focus on Children's Centres, early years and vulnerable groups. They are also preparing for an inspection of LA school improvement. In primary, KS2 is an issue and the aim is to get all maintained primary schools to good or better (currently 77% against national average of 85%).

They are starting to engage with the LA and the Trust regarding transfer of services over to the Trust or elsewhere. Children's Centres and SEN support, advice and training are likely to transfer to the Trust but this has not yet been finalised.

474. Academies Update (verbal)

There are a number of schools moving to academy status in the next 6 to 9 months. This would result in about 65% of schools as academies, with about 70% of pupils educated in academies. The next meeting with the Regional Schools Commissioner is in about 8 weeks' time.

475. 2015-16 Forward Agenda Plan and Key Decisions Log

Noted.

476. Any Other Business

Nicky Willis reported a formal complaint which has been made by St Anthony's Primary School in a letter to Joseph Holmes in December. At the time of the Schools Forum meeting no response had been received. The letter referred to errors in finance issues by SBC e.g. in relation to bank accounts/statements and carry forwards. The Slough Primary Heads Association also echoed the concerns e.g. in relation to pension adjustments and explanations, an issue which has been raised previously at Schools Forum.

The School Bursars' group has also met with Paul Wilson.

Schools Forum raised concerns about these matters and requested a strategic response to both the Secondary Association of Secondary Headteachers (SASH) and the Slough Primary Heads' Association.

(Note: The Meeting opened at 8.15am and closed at 10.30am)