

Schools Forum

December 5th 2012 - Minutes

PRESENT:	
Diana Turner	Governor
David Kelham	Governor
Peter Reaney	Governor
Latika Davis	Governor
Phil Clucas	Governor
Cllr June Tandy	Governor
Stella Saje	Primary Headteacher
Chris Errington	Primary Headteacher
Ramjit Samra	Secondary (Maintained) Headteacher
Tony Wilmot	Secondary (Maintained) Headteacher
Patsy Weighill	Secondary (Academy) Headteacher
Iain Blaikie	Secondary (Academy) Headteacher
Judith Humphrey	Special School Headteacher
Sybil Hanson	Diocesan Board of Education
Steve Dyke	PVI Representative
David Hazeldine	County Secretary ASCL
Max Hyde	County Secretary NUT
Sam Kincaid	Trade Union Representative
Cllr Carolyn Robbins	Elected Member
Cllr Rickhards	Elected Member
Wendy Fabbro	Strategic Director – People Group
Mark Gore	Head of Service – Learning & Achievement
Simon Smith	Strategic Finance Manager
Sara Haslam	Schools Funding & Strategy Manager
Clare Morris	Budget Planning Officer, Schools Funding Team

1. Apologies – Apologies were received from the following:

Larry Granelly	Governor
Chris Smart	Governor
Philip Johnson	Governor
Ramesh Sirvastava	Governor
Laurel Penrose	14-19 representative
Margaret Buck	Catholic Church Schools Representative
Gill Humphriss	Primary Headteacher
Cathy Clarke	Primary Headteacher
Karen Ferguson	Primary Headteacher
Philip Hamilton	Academy Headteacher
Rachel Gillett	Nursery School Headteacher
Max Hyde	County Secretary NUT – attended meeting but apologies as arrived late.
Ian Froggett	Union Representative NAS/UWT, Chair of ATP
John Collins	Trade Union Representative

2.0 Minutes from Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

2.1 It was requested that the following amendments be made to the Minutes of the meeting on 18th October.

- Page 3 bullet point 2. The following sentence to be added. *Iain Blackie asked who had made the decision that it was pragmatic to include Option 4 in the voting process, but this question was over ruled by the chair.*
- Page 4, 6.2. To be revised as follows: *Votes were taken on the de-delegation of funding for services to enable the LA to continue the delivery of these services on behalf of **primary maintained and secondary maintained schools only.***

2.2 There were no matters arising.

3.0 Update on the Schools Funding Reforms

3.1 Sara presented a report.

3.2 Seminars are being arranged in January for schools who are seeing a reduction in funding and would value some advice on how to make efficiency savings. The intention is that these will involve both financial and other Learning and Achievement Officers so that the advice is both financial and operational.

3.3 An update on SEN funding issues was requested. Sara confirmed that work is continuing between LA officers from the SEN team, School SENCOs and Headteachers to clarify what level of support schools are expected to provide within their core funding.

3.4 A copy of Mark Gore's letter to all schools regarding the decision making process for recommending option 4 was provided. It was clarified that the percentages in Mark's letter for funding allocated through basic per pupil entitlement and additional needs do not equal 100% because there are other elements of funding that are not related to these two factors.

4.0 Out of County SEN Provision

4.1 Wendy explained that a previously requested report on this subject had been drafted but it was not provided at the meeting as it did not answer the core questions from Schools Forum regarding Out of County SEN provision in terms of value for money and pupil outcomes. However, a report for Schools Forum will be produced and issued in due course.

4.2 Wendy updated Schools Forum with the following facts and took questions regarding Out of County SEN Provision:

- 250 pupils are placed at out county establishments . 50% of these are BESD pupils. There is currently a 6% rise year on year of BESD pupils. Work is being done to explore whether this is also the position nationally and what the reasons are for increases (increased awareness/diagnosis or other factors).
- There are approximately 2,600 pupils with statements in Warwickshire and 350 requests for statements pa.
- The budget for Out of County and mainstreamed statements is expected to overspend by £1.7m in 2012/13.
- A review of the ASRS (Assessment, Statementing Review Service) is being undertaken. This includes continuing work to clarify the level of services schools should provide, in order to set the specification for the service.
- A business case is being put together for the development of an Additional Needs School in Warwickshire.

4.3 The following questions/comments were made:

- Residential places address social issues in addition to educational issues. Does the total Out of County SEN spend of £10.4m take account of the social care element of residential provision? Wendy confirmed the total cost of residential care is allocated to Learning and Achievement.
- How will the forecast overspend be covered? Wendy said it is not currently known how this will be covered.
- The costs of Out County SEN includes travel costs. It was confirmed that Out County refers to outside of Warwickshire's maintained provision and not necessarily outside the geographical area.
- The failure to statement challenging pupils in earlier years along with the lack of BESD provision results in pressure for Secondary Schools to permanently exclude pupils.
- In order to review the value for money of Out of County expenditure, there is still a need for a report to detail the number of pupils involved, the establishments used and pupil outcomes. Wendy agreed that this can be provided for the next meeting. David Hazeldine agreed to liaise with Wendy regarding the level of detail required.
- The non BESD pupils placed out of county have very specialised needs. The provision of special school places is not sufficient for these pupils and there is often need to educate at a residential school for which Warwickshire has no provision. Therefore it would be impossible

to reduce the number of these pupils educated out county to zero. Wendy confirmed the intention is to review best value and not to reduce the number of these pupils educated out of county to zero.

4.4 Action: A report regarding Out of County SEN provision to be brought to a future Schools Forum (Wendy Fabbro)

5.0 Funding for Disadvantaged 2 year old pupils

5.1 Sara presented a report: Introduction of disadvantaged 2 year old funding into the Dedicated Schools Grant and the implementation of a formula to allocate funding to providers.

5.2 The following members of Schools Forum volunteered to join the Project Team:

- Steve Dyke - PVI sector representative
- Rachel Gillett - Nursery school representative
- Chris Errington – Nursery classes within schools representative

5.3 It was questioned whether there should be a Governor representative on the Project Team. Sara said she was happy to add a Governor Representative to the Project Team. Diana Turner recommended Latika Davis. Latika requested further information from Sara in order to consider volunteering.

5.4 It was asked whether the formula to allocate funding would exclude Special schools. Sara said there may be possible implications for Special schools and agreed to liaise with Judith Humphry regarding this.

5.5 It was asked what were the preliminary ideas regarding the basis for expanded capacity? Sara said the Early Years and Childcare Transformation Board, who are also to be the project board for this project, will pick up issues at their meetings including any shortfalls in capacity. There is a capital allocation available of £680k and priority of work will need to be considered. There is an incentive to have places available as funding will be participation based in the future.

5.6 Action: Project Team volunteers to be contacted regarding project meetings and project documentation (Sara Haslam)

6.0 Pupil Increase Framework

6.1 Sara presented a report detailing a proposed framework.

6.2 The following comments were made:

- The proposals take account of additional staffing costs. However, there are additional resources costs regardless of whether a new class structure is required for increase in pupils.

- The secondary school proposals are that additional funding be available to schools where there is a bulge in pupils in year 7. It was suggested that this be reviewed. Small increases in overall pupil numbers can be absorbed but larger increases with no additional funding puts a strain on school budgets. It was requested that more work be done to review possible funding for in year arrivals.
- For cases of Primary expansion, Governors would be reluctant to accept expansion if there was a diverse effect on the budget.
- There was an opportunity to use a mobility factor within the school funding reforms in terms of reception pupils. However, data suggested change between October and January census figures were associated with moves between schools for many different reasons and therefore a mobility factor was not used in Warwickshire's formula.
- Data regarding average pay scales of teachers in Warwickshire would be useful to determine whether it was appropriate to allocate maximum funding based on M4 pay scale rate.
- A primary school that has never had mixed age classes may consider that they have to change structure as a result of increased pupils, whereas a school that has had mixed age classes may consider alternative class structures to accommodate increased pupils.

6.3 Schools forum are also asked for suggestions for prioritisation of bids if the overall budget of £400k is exceeded. It was asked whether it is expected that demand for this funding will be increased. Sara said this is difficult to know. We have a degree of control over the primary expansion programme, but we cannot predict parental choice and therefore we will not know which schools are affected until places are applied for. However, there is a risk that £400k is not enough.

6.4 Action: Further work to be undertaken in response to the comments raised offering further proposals for discussion at the next Schools Forum meeting (Sara Haslam)

7.0 Amendment to the Schools Forum Terms of Reference

7.1 Sara presented a report. Members of Schools Forum were asked to comment on the amendment to the current Schools Forum Terms of Reference to include a Trade Union representative as a non –school member.

7.2 The following comments were made:

- There is a Trade Union representative non-school member on the Coventry Schools Forum and in fact there has been from inception. This works very well.
- It was confirmed that all members can send a representative if unable to attend Schools Forum themselves and a representative can vote on behalf of members eligible to vote.
- There may be other groups who have not been considered that may wish to be a non-school member.

7.3 Action: Work is required to establish whether any other groups should to be considered for membership to the Schools Forum (Sara Haslam)

7.4 It was clarified that the recommendation was for 1 union representative to be a non-school member, representing all of the unions.

7.5 A trade union non-school member would be able to speak at Schools Forum but would not have a vote on school funding issues.

7.6 Agreed: Members voted in favour of an amendment to the current Schools Forum Terms of Reference to include a Trade Union representative as a non-school member. However, this agreement is on the basis that there are no other groups to be considered.

8.0 Balances Control Mechanism Policy 2012/13 – Update

8.1 Sara presented a report. The conclusions of the Schools Forum Sub Group were not to claw back any funds from the March 2012 maintained school balances.

8.2 It was commented that although there would be no claw back, school balances are a key issue that should continue to be monitored. This is particularly important in the context of lobbying for reallocation of regional funding. We need to continue to show management of balances in a reasonable way.

8.3 It was confirmed the reserves of the LA include school reserves.

9.0 Schools Forum – Forward Plan 2012.

9.1 A Forward Plan containing a provisional programme of possible issues for Schools Forum to consider over the next year was provided.

9.2 During the meeting it was agreed that the following items would be added to the Forward Plan for the next meeting:

- SEN Out County Report.
- Schools Forum Terms of Reference

9.3 The following item should also be added to the Forward Plan for the May meeting:

- Schools Forum New Membership

10.0 Any Other Business

10.1 Simon updated the group on the following points:

10.2 It is to be recommended that the Resources Policy Group be disbanded. The current focus of this group (feedback on WES and schools funding issues) has become superseded by more wide ranging consultation on schools funding reforms and a need to review the feedback mechanism for WES. However, there are some financial matters that need to be placed at other groups and so it is suggested that schools' capital issues will now be brought to Schools Forum for information and comment.

10.2 It was also noted Warwickshire is unlikely to receive any additional funding from the recent Local Government Settlement announced by Government.

11.0 Chairs Business

11.1 This was Mark Gore's last Schools Forum meeting and the Chair paid tribute to his excellent relationship with schools. 'He really does understand and is appreciated. He is trusted, accepted, truly committed and has always protected the interest of pupils, especially those that are disadvantaged. Officers will miss him enormously and we wish him well for the future'.

11.2 Mark responded saying he was proud with what had been achieved and success had been due to the quality and commitment of colleagues and partnerships.

12.0 Next Meeting.

12.1 The next meeting will be held on 7th March 2013, Conference Room, Northgate House, Warwick at 2pm.