

## Schools Forum

**March 13<sup>th</sup> 2014 - Minutes**

<b>Forum Members Present:</b>	
Stella Saje - Chair	Primary Headteacher
Diana Turner – Vice Chair	Academy Governor
Chris Smart	Primary Governor
Philip Johnson	Primary Governor
Larry Granelly	Primary Governor
Phil Clucas	Primary Governor
Ramesh Srivastava	Secondary Governor
Jane Burrows (for David Kelham)	Academy Governor
Cathy Clarke	Primary Headteacher
Gill Humphriss	Primary Headteacher
Chris Errington	Primary Headteacher
Ranjit Samra	Secondary (Maintained) Headteacher
Philip Hamilton	Secondary (Academy) Headteacher
Patsy Weighill	Secondary (Academy) Headteacher
Chris Marshall	Special School Headteacher
Sybil Hanson	Diocesan Board of Education
Steve Dyke	PVI Representative
Andy Summers	Trade Union Representative
<b>Non Members Present:</b>	
Ian Froggett	Union Representative NAS/UWT, Chair of ATP
Sam Kincaid	Trade Union Representative
Cllr Whitehouse	Elected Member
Sara Haslam	Schools Funding & Strategy Manager
Simon Smith	Strategic Finance Manager
Claudia Wade	Interim Head of Service, Learning & Achievement
Ruth Waterman	Clerk

<b>Forum Members Apologies:</b>	
Rachel Gillett	Nursery School Head Teacher
Richard Hawkins	Primary Headteacher
Tony Wilmot	Secondary (Maintained) Headteacher
Andrew Clay	Secondary (Academy) Headteacher
Peter Reaney	Academy Governor
June Tandy	Primary Governor
Latika Davis	Primary Governor
John McRoberts	Primary Governor
Lisa Capper	14-19 representative
Margaret Buck	Catholic Diocese
Max Hyde	Trade Union Representative

### 1.0 Apologies

1.1 See above for all apologies.

1.2 Members formally noted thanks and congratulations to Max Hyde, who is standing down from the Forum to take on the role of President of the NUT. Her input to the Forum has been invaluable.

## **2.0 Minutes from Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

2.1 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Matters Arising:

2.2 Development of School Consortia arrangements (Item 4, page 3):

- Claudia advised that the LA is still moving forward with the consortia model and hope to develop this further in collaboration with headteachers. The funding model for Year 2 is in the process of being developed. It will not be blanket funding as in Year 1, but consortia will identify priorities and bid into a School Improvement fund. Further details will be shared with all headteachers in due course. Papers requested at the last meeting were tabled.
- Governor members expressed concerns that there seems to have been no consultation or involvement of Governors in developing the consortia model and there has been no progress on this since it was raised at the last Forum meeting.

**ACTION: Follow up item to be added to Forward Plan for May meeting, to discuss papers circulated and proposed funding model for Year 2. Funding model will also go to the School Improvement Boards for discussion.**

**ACTION: Claudia Wade to arrange a meeting with Governors to discuss their involvement in the consortia model and to move this forward.**

2.3 Area Behaviour Panel Update (Item 5, page 4):

**ACTION: Additional figures were to be provided for the number of pupils at KS3 whose needs could not be met. Sara to chase Steve Pendleton for these.**

#### 2.4 Primary ISG Update (Item 6, page 5):

- Report on Primary ISGs to be presented at the May meeting.
- Secondary provision: Quality Assurance framework is not ensuring quality of alternative provision. Schools could be left with no option but to permanently exclude as alternative providers are not high quality enough. Claudia noted that the Quality Assurance Framework is being looked at and they hope to bring this to the next Forum in May.
- Ranjit Samra noted that the clientele is different now to when funding was first given to ABPs, as they are much more proactive in tackling issues early.
- IYFAP – some concern that certain schools are taking a disproportionate amount of IYFA students. Suggestion that data is provided on the number of managed moves to inform monitoring process.

**ACTION: Agenda item for May meeting to include further report from ABP Chairs detailing investments and impact to date.**

#### 2.5 Capital Update including decision making criteria (Item 8, page 7):

- Sara Haslam will raise concerns expressed around the DfE Targeted Bids Programme criteria at DfE meeting taking place tomorrow (14 March) and feedback at next Forum meeting.
- Appendix B (proposals for 2013/14 Capital Programme) third column - the 'Y' indicates that a consultation needs to take place (not that the consultation has already taken place).

**ACTION: June Maw, Interim Service Manager for Access and Organisation will be invited to attend the May meeting to discuss the criteria for Targeted Bid Funding and the long term strategy for ensuring sufficient places for learners in Warwickshire. This strategy will also go to the School Improvement Boards.**

#### 2.6 (Not scheduled) Announcement: Central Government Schools Funding

- Sara shared news just announced that the Government have earmarked an additional £350m for schools to be available for 2015-16. A minimum funding rate will be introduced and the funding will be used to ensure all local authorities receive the minimum amount. This will impact 62 authorities of which Warwickshire is one. Initial indications are that Warwickshire could receive an additional £13m into the schools block

funding. Headteachers asked for confirmation of the funding amounts for schools as soon as possible so they can set budgets.

- There will be a consultation on these changes ending 30 April 2014 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/fairer-schools-funding-2015-to-2016>) Sara draft a response to this and send further information out to schools and governors as quickly as possible.

### **3.0 DSG Budget 2014/15 (Chris Norton)**

3.1 Chris Norton presented the report outlining the proposals for the DSG budget for 2014/15 and the medium term recovery plan. The following comments were made:

- Nursery Education Funding: Steve Dyke, representative of the PVI sector raised concerns around the suggestion that costs could be managed down in this area, as currently nursery funding is based on only 80% of the minimum wage. Therefore good or outstanding nurseries in particular will not be able to continue to offer the quality of provision as they will not be able to cover their costs. Potential solutions were suggested including:
  - Nurseries to charge top-up fees
  - Increase hourly rate however this would put too much pressure on the DSG
  - Means test access to Nursery Education Funding (NEF)
- Members took on board these concerns but agreed the Schools Forum were powerless to make any changes. This is an issue for the County to address at national level.

**ACTION: Cllr Whitehouse agreed to raise this issue and relay the concerns at the Overview & Scrutiny planning meeting tomorrow (14 March). Sara will find out from meeting with DfE (14 March) when the national review of Early Years funding is taking place.**

- Some discussion was had around the cost to the LA of schools converting to academy status who are in a deficit situation. Claudia confirmed that the LA must write off the deficit of a school that is converting to academy status and has no redress in this situation. It was noted that there are only a small number of sponsored academy schools that are in deficit and the LA has little control over when an academy order is issued.

- Criminal Records Bureau checks – members questioned the effectiveness of CRBs and suggested there may be more effective ways of checking potential employees' suitability which are also more cost effective.

**ACTION: Simon Smith to provide additional data on how the £225k was spent in 2013/14.**

- Proposed Savings to PRU Legacy Cohort – concerns raised that the forecast demand has been based on the first year's data which could be insecure particularly as protocols are new.
- Concerns that there is still such a big overspend on SEN Out of County and progress on reducing this has been slow. It was noted that from September 2015 there will be a new Additional Educational Needs (AEN) school opening in the county and the local authority is looking at increasing the capacity within special schools, as well as trying to bring other pupils back into the county. Predicted savings are not reflected in the DSG plan.

**ACTION: Further information to be provided detailing the predicted savings around the SEN Out of County spend and the current gap in provision that needs to be filled. (Update report on the High Needs Funding will be presented in May to include progress report on the AEN school).**

3.2 Forum members were asked to consider the recommendations to note the proposals for the 2014/15 DSG budget and the medium term recovery plan; and subject to comments, to support these proposals. However, members were reluctant to support the proposal for a deficit budget without further details of the medium term recovery plan that will be necessary for writing off the deficit budget. Advice was taken from outside the meeting on whether the Forum could agree to part of the recommendation with the other being carried over for a decision at the next meeting. It was confirmed that this was acceptable.

**AGREED: The Forum agreed to support the allocation of the DSG as outlined in the report.**

**ACTION: The Forum requested further detail around the savings already identified and the medium term recovery plan in order for an informed decision to be made at the next meeting.**

#### **4.0 Update on the Special Schools Funding Matrix (Sara Haslam)**

4.1 Sara Haslam presented a progress report on the Special Schools Top Up Matrix. The Project Team have attempted to develop a consistent approach across mainstream and special schools. This should be ready for implementation in September 2014 ready for the new legislation. The DfE has now recognised that this will be the start of the process and that a phased approach will be needed to introduce these changes.

4.2 A request was made for case studies to be produced looking at the impact on pupils with complex needs in mainstream schools. Sara noted that this is currently being thought through by the Assessment, Statementing and Review Team (ASRS).

**ACTION: Further progress report to the meeting in May.**

#### **5.0 Update on the Scheme for Financing Schools (Sara Haslam)**

5.1 Sara Haslam presented the report which outlines the relationship between the local authority and maintained schools. Changes to the Scheme for Financing Schools are made according to DfE guidance, and as national guidance only suggests minimal wording changes this year it was recommended that Schools Forum agree these without any further discussion.

**Agreed: Members approved the minor revisions to the Scheme for Financing Schools without the need for further consultation with schools.**

#### **6.0 Schools Forum Re-elections (Sara Haslam)**

6.1 Sara Haslam presented the report outlining the required changes to the Schools Forum membership and the suggested process for elections.

6.2 There was some discussion concerning the recommendation that the Local Authority should facilitate the elections on behalf of the academy representatives, as it was suggested that the DfE could accuse the LA of interfering with the process and that the DfE should be funding this process. However, after some discussion it was agreed that it would be most appropriate for the Governors to facilitate the elections on behalf of Academy Governors and that the LA should facilitate the elections on behalf of Academy Headteachers. There was a recognition that Academy members

who are voted on would not be there to represent the views of their academy sponsor or chain but all WCC children.

**Agreed: Letter to go out to all Headteachers and Governors (through the Governors Steering Group) to confirm they are happy with this process. It was noted that this would delay the timescales by 2 weeks.**

## **7.0 Schools Capital Update (Sara Haslam)**

7.1 Sara Haslam presented the report asking members to note the schools related capital projects for 2014/15.

7.2 Some members of the Forum requested clarification on whether or not their schools could bid for the funding originally allocated for the expansion of Queen Elizabeth School and asked for details of the process for making a legitimate bid for this.

7.3 Sara clarified that the Targeted Basic Need funding was allocated for a specific school and any changes to the way in which this funding is used must be agreed by the DfE.

7.4 Members asked for reassurance from the local authority that planning is being carried out to ensure sufficient future provision. Claudia Wade confirmed that there is a draft plan being produced and that this would be shared for wider consultation with the appropriate stakeholders shortly.

7.5 It was noted that there is a real concern about the capacity of schools in the Rugby area and that a plan is required to be in place quickly to ensure children can attend a school in their local area. Claudia commented that the LA is working with partnerships of schools in Rugby to manage this and to prevent children having to be transported across the county.

**Action: Clarification to be provided at the next meeting regarding the criteria for both the Priority Schools Building Programme and the Targeted Basic Need Programme.**

## **8.0 Academy Update (Sara Haslam)**

8.1 A current Position Statement on the Status of Warwickshire Schools was provided and noted by members. No further comments were made.

## **9.0 Forward Plan (Chair)**

9.1 Given that the following items were requested for the next agenda in May, it was agreed to start the meeting at the earlier time of 1pm.

Items for Forward Plan:

- School Improvement Consortia – discussion of papers circulated, update on funding for year 2 and governor involvement
- Review of ABP allocations
- Update on Primary ISGs
- Criteria for Targeted Bid Funding and long term sufficiency strategy (June Maw)
- High Needs Funding Block including update on AEN school and estimated savings against Out of County spend.
- DSG Budget – further details around the Medium Term Recovery Plan
- Special Schools Funding Progress Report