

Minutes

<p>Meeting of the Oxfordshire Schools Forum 7 February 2018 1000</p>

<p>Holiday Inn Hotel, Pear Tree Roundabout, Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 8JD</p>

Present:

Maintained Primary School Headteacher Reps	Sue Tomkys ST Maureen Thompson MT
Maintained Primary School Governor Reps	Brenda Williams BW
Academy Secondary School Headteacher Reps	Catharine Darnton CD Lisa Hughes LH
Academy Secondary School Governor Rep	Michael Dennison MD
Maintained Nursery School Headteacher Rep	Rebecca Saunders RS
Post 16 Rep	Tristan Arnison TA
PRU Rep	Nicola Partridge NP
OCC Member Rep	Cllr Hilary Hibbert-Biles HHB
Oxfordshire County Council Officers	Jo Moxon JM Nick Baggett NB Margaret Whitaker MWh
Clerk	Kit Howells KHo
Observers	Jacqui West JW , Assistant Head, Meadowbrook College
In Attendance	Sandra Higgs SH (<i>Item 4 only</i>)

	Item Discussed	Action	Due Date
1.	<p>Apologies, Introductions, Housekeeping and Declarations of Interests CD (Vice Chair) welcomed all Forum Members, including new member Lisa Hughes LH, and also Interim Deputy Director Jo Moxon JM, and Observer JW.</p> <p>Apologies were received from: Carole Thomson CT (Chair), Lucy Butler LB, Sarah Fogden SFo, Breda Bowles BB, Kevin Moyes KM, Sean O'Sullivan SO'S, Laura Reineke LR, Sarah Steel SSt, Kerrie Blaker KB, and also from Cllr Michael Waine MW, Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>Kathy Ethelston KE, Academy Primary Governor Rep, has resigned and due process will be followed for replacement. There were no declarations of Interests.</p> <p>There was no Notice of urgent business. However, it was agreed to take Item 11 (Schools Forum Budget) under Item 9: Other Business, due to need to make recommendations.</p>		

2.	<p>Minutes of Meeting held on 9 January 2018 The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 January were agreed.</p> <p>Matters Arising from Minutes of 9 January, <u>where not actioned or not otherwise on the Agenda</u></p> <p>(a) National Funding – concerns (Item 2g) LB is taking CT's suggestion that CT join the F40 Executive forward.</p> <p>(b) High Needs Funding (Item 2h) Transparency and clarity in relation to how High Needs funding is spent in the County will be discussed at the next Schools & High Needs Committee on 27 February 2018.</p> <p>(c) De-delegated functions – Union Facilities (Item 2(i)) NB will ensure Special and Nursery Schools also receive information and are encouraged to commit to buying-in. To date all responses received (44 out of 120) have been positive for buy-in. The issue has been widely disseminated via <i>Schools News</i> and OSSHTA (which has encouraged Secondary Academy Headteachers to support buy in; CD will assist with any issues raised by them).</p> <p>(d) Schools Forum Constitution (Item 3) OCC is to write to proprietor bodies of Academy Primary and Secondary Schools, and Special School Academies, regarding representation on Forum. Taking account of responses, SFo will bring revised Forum Constitution to the 21 June Forum meeting. KH to ascertain if the letters have been sent.</p> <p>(e) Schools Forum Constitution (Item 3) OSSHTA had supported LH's appointment to Forum.</p> <p>(f) Forum's response to Government Consultation on Eligibility for Free School Meals and Early Years Pupil Premium Grant under Universal Credit (Item 4) CT had submitted the agreed response from Forum.</p> <p>(g) Schools Funding Formula 2018-19 Authority Proforma Tool (Item 5) OCC had requested Academies to let Officers know the cost of their Rates bills in order to aid sample checking and comparison with figures received from the DfE; NB reported that samples taken to date correlated.</p> <p>(h) Schools Funding Formula 2018-19 Authority Proforma Tool (Item 5) The SEND figures will be reported to Schools & High Needs Committee on 27 February. The significant issue of the high</p>	<p>JM/LB</p> <p>JJ/SF/NB/ KH for SHN Agenda</p> <p>NB email Special & Nursery Schools re buying in to Union facilities</p> <p>KH check letters to Academies have been sent</p> <p>JJ/SFo</p>	<p>Paper for SHN Committee 27.2.18</p> <p>7.2.18</p> <p>By end Feb 18</p>

(i)	<p>cost of, and increasing number of, pupils with high needs and funding for SEND pupils whose needs cost less than £10K and for whom support has to be found in schools, will also be discussed at that Committee meeting.</p> <p>Schools Funding Formula 2018-19 Authority Proforma Tool (Item 5) CT planned to write to the DfE to comment on the unacceptably short timescales to which Officers are being asked to work. CD was also thanked for her continuing pressure on Government with regard to the shortfall in education funding in the County. CD and MT had represented Oxfordshire Secondary and Primary schools in the delegation of Secondary and Primary Headteachers from 25 Local Authorities wishing to protest about the funding which had visited Downing Street In November 2017, linked to the 'Worth Less?' campaign.</p>	JJ/SFo	Paper for 27 February SHN Committee meeting
3.	<p>Committee Reports :</p> <p>Services & Contracts Committee, meeting of 18 January 2018 Forum members were disappointed to hear that the repeatedly requested Hampshire CC-Oxfordshire CC Partnership cost-benefit analysis had again not been provided to the Committee, which is concerned to ensure that savings have indeed been made as promised when the Partnership was confirmed and when schools have been so disadvantaged by the difficulties of the change. It is not possible for Forum to work on behalf of schools if timely and relevant information is not provided when requested or prior to contracts being agreed.</p> <p>The Committee had also highlighted serious concerns of school budget managers about lack of resources within the LA to support them. (<i>This issue addressed under Item 4</i>).</p> <p>Forum members have expressed concern about Carillion's contract with OCC since it was signed and had been pleased to note that the LA had been in the process of ending the contract before Carillion's demise. However, it is clear that the cost to the County and its schools through this contract and Carillion's overall poor service had been immense, including the impact to staff involved.</p> <p>The LA was asked to consult with Forum on any new contractual arrangements so that schools' needs are fully understood.</p> <p>Forum acknowledged OCC's rapid implementation, following Carillion's collapse, of replacement food service and other</p>	<p>HHB will follow up</p> <p>Officers to note</p>	

	support being provided to schools which had been in receipt of Carillion services, whether through the LA or direct.		
4.	<p>LA Services Offer to Schools (for information and comment)</p> <p>The paper to Forum had been updated to take account of comments received from Services & Contracts Committee on 18 January. Key issues and charges for services were noted. Governor support services are being remodelled as a result of the review undertaken last year, and further discussions are being held with schools; that package is not yet finalised.</p> <p>Forum noted with satisfaction that all services are available through one point of purchase. The flexibility made possible by not having a hard copy brochure but solely providing online information, is understood.</p> <p>The closing date for buy-back of services is 27 April.</p> <p>Forum discussed proposals for future service provision to LA Maintained Schools, taking account of essential/statutory services, current traded services and other services which might be desirable, how these services might be provided on a sustainable basis and at what cost. Forum agreed that SEND will be added to the list of services; Inclusion Support is the preferred term to Exclusion Prevention Support; and Safeguarding will be brought into the list of statutory requirements.</p> <p>Forum agreed that the LA should continue to consult with Maintained Schools about making essential/statutory services, current traded services and other desirable services available to Maintained Schools as standard and as a bundle, to enable sustainable planning to provide them with guaranteed services.</p> <p>These outline proposals will continue to be discussed with schools at the Briefings scheduled throughout this academic year and consideration will be given to having a focused meeting with Headteachers on the proposals.</p> <p>Noting that new General Data Protection Regulations are being brought in at the end of May 2018, Forum members advised that Maintained Schools should have LA assistance to ensure compliance through professional staff support. The LA has issued recent initial guidance in <i>Schools News</i> and the matter will be addressed at the upcoming Heads & Chairs Briefings. SH confirmed that the LA is discussing provision of a statutory professional data protection service for Maintained schools, into which academies might also buy. The needs of schools in this area are understood; and</p>	<p>S Higgs to note</p> <p>S Higgs to note</p>	

	<p>will be supported through Briefings. Model Policies are being updated in light of the new Regulations. Schools should not rush into purchase of external support and the LA will write to all schools to reassure them that the LA has proposals in hand.</p> <p>Oxfordshire Business Managers Group is offering training this week.</p>	S Higgs	asap
5.	<p>Early Years Funding Formula and Centrally-retained Early Years funding 2018-19: (for decision)</p> <p>Forum discussed the EY Funding Formula for 2018-19 and additional funding streams for three- and four-year olds, and members took account of written responses to the Paper from absent members SSt and SO'S in their discussions.</p> <p>The complexity of setting Early Years budgets was acknowledged.</p> <p>Concerns about the low take-up across all areas, but particularly of extended offers, and of assistance from the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Inclusion Fund and the Disability Access Fund, were expressed and Forum is pleased that Officers will seek explanations and continue to promote entitlement. It may be that the application process and associated paperwork for PVI's is too complex, and thus these settings may not be receiving funds to which some children may be entitled. The Disability Access Fund (DAF) was also discussed. It was commented that funding may not follow the child, for instance if a child moves from mainstream, to which the funding has been allocated, to Special School; and more often than not the mainstream setting is the first setting a child attends.</p> <p>Forum remains concerned that the increase proposed will not meet the additional costs pressures, but given that there is no additional income being provided by the DfE to the LA, members welcomed the fact that the LA has been able to increase the rate slightly.</p> <p>Forum members and others (including F40 group) continue to lobby Government for increased funding for education.</p> <p>The funding rate for 2-year-olds is unchanged at £5.52 and is fully delegated.</p> <p>Forum agreed the Early Years centrally retained funding and related proposals and acknowledged the welcome, albeit small, increase in the underlying universal base rate for providers, given the funding circumstances. Forum noted the funding rate for 2-year olds.</p>		

6.	<p>Special Schools Budgets 2018-19 (for decision)</p> <p>Schools Forum noted the report, and that Meadowbrook's and OHS's budget remain under discussion and will be reported to Schools & High Needs Committee's meeting on 27 February when clarity of High Needs funding will be provided (see 2b above).</p> <p>The Paper directs schools to agree top-up funding with out of County providers but omits to note that the Local Authority (LA) expects schools to also seek place funding from those same providers when the number of pupils in the school exceeds the agreed OCC place funding. It would be useful to see an analysis of OCC's given place numbers in April each year and how this might differ from actual numbers between that month and the following September, the start of the next academic year. Schools need a clear statement that if children from out of County settings arrive mid-year and take schools over agreed place numbers, they need to seek that place funding from the commissioning LA, and the LA will provide this.</p> <p>There has been a massive increase in demand for Special School places and the LA is increasing places as quickly as possible but there are difficulties at some schools where it is not possible to expand if premises or sites are unsuitable. The LA is also commissioning more widely and working on a range of different strategies to urgently address the continuing overspend in High Needs funding, while also seeking to enhance the provision.</p> <p>Forum queried the arrangements for split site allocations in relation to academy conversions and noted that these need review.</p> <p>Forum queried the arrangements for supporting hydrotherapy schools and the LA will provide further detail on pools and funding allocations.</p> <p>Referring to the estimated numbers of pupils in Special Schools and subsequent top-up payments, Forum members are concerned that the schools work on such small numbers of pupils per class that they have to provide staffing and resources from the outset for the anticipated number of pupils, but the LA may set a lower place value and thus a setting may be significantly disadvantaged until the estimated number of children actually join the school roll, and losses can mount up. This situation is exacerbated by the lengthy amount of time that the LA is taking to complete Education Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) so that children can move into Special School places. Schools have to make staffing decisions to meet the needs of the number of</p>	<p>NB provide statement</p> <p>NB provide detail</p>	
----	---	--	--

	<p>pupils expected and are therefore bearing the cost of staffing even if there are no pupils and due to the even greater shortage of funding currently schools are no longer able to bridge the gaps. The LA is taking action to improve the timeliness of EHCP completion. NB agreed to discuss this further with SO'S, and to attend an OASSH meeting if required.</p> <p>In conclusion, Schools Forum confirmed approval of the proposed arrangements of no change for 2018-19 to the principles of the Special School /Special Academy funding model used in 2017-18 as detailed in Annex 1 to the Paper. However, concerns raised require to be addressed for the following year</p> <p>Schools Forum noted the increase in top up rates to replicate the 0.5% pupil related factors increase to be received by primary and secondary schools in the financial year 2018-19 and thanked LA Officers for their work to enable this to be the case.</p>	<p>NB discuss further with SO'S</p> <p>SFo/ Janet Johnson</p>	
7.	<p>Schools Funding Formula 2018-19: update re Authority Proforma Tool (APT)</p> <p>Forum noted that the LA awaits feedback from the ESFA having submitted the APT by the 19 January deadline. The only comments received have been on presentational and narrative aspects of the APT, and one very minor change of £79. In a year of major change, this may have significant implications for the DfE's checking processes; this may delay confirmation of budgets beyond Half Term.</p> <p>OCC will confirm to all schools as soon as possible, but expects that the National Funding Formula unit rates will be delivered in full, despite pressures, due to a significant increase in pupil numbers, particularly secondary.</p> <p>Forum noted the minor textual changes to the Growth Fund Criteria in the submitted APT, where the DfE requested that the generic term of schools was replaced by schools and academies, and the specific terms of diseconomy of scale /costs and start-up costs were used.</p> <p>Forum, while having agreed to follow the National Funding Formula, remains seriously concerned that the increased funding for Oxfordshire that has been sought for many years in order to reduce disparities in funding in relation to other Authorities has not been forthcoming. The F40 group remains active in drawing the differentials between the best and worst funded Authorities to the attention of Government. The basic per pupil funding rate (AWPU/basic entitlement) has been set too low, so that schools without significant deprivation and additional needs are struggling to balance</p>		

	<p>their budgets. HHB and LB took the opportunity of explaining Oxfordshire's underfunding situation to a senior civil servant at a recent education conference and have been invited to meet DfE staff this month for further discussion. CD continues to lobby local MPs.</p>		
8.	<p>Future arrangements in LA Education (Standing Item) JM briefed Forum. Appointments are being made to the positions of Deputy Director, Children's Services and of Head of Children's Services; this demonstrates OCC's commitment to re-evaluating its statutory function in relation to education to ensure it is fully accountable. The LA's School Improvement Strategy has been revised and will be presented to Ofsted in March alongside work on Inclusion, in response to Ofsted's challenge to the LA on delivery of its statutory functions.</p> <p>Following the Ofsted Inspection of High Needs, the LA is drawing up a Statement of Action, due in early March, covering OCC's intentions to address issues raised during the Inspection, including reducing Exclusions and tightening up the process related to Education Health & Care Plans (EHCPs).</p> <p>The Review of the High Needs Block funding continues and is accountable to the OCC Transformation Board under the 'Fit for future' programme. The overspend in this Block is accelerating and of major concern and therefore re-evaluation of the programme is being urgently undertaken to ensure improved provision at the same time as reducing costs where possible.</p> <p>Other issues of concern in the County currently being addressed include: low attendance in some areas; increasing numbers of Exclusions and the reasons for them; higher than average SEND numbers; dealing with persistent low level disruptive behaviour; and ensuring appropriate systems are in place to understand and address where children are missing education.</p> <p>Recent Briefings for Headteachers and Chairs of Governors have been well attended and written responses to issues raised at the Briefings will be emailed to all Headteachers this week. Further Briefings are scheduled in the next Term.</p> <p>Forum emphasised the need for Health Services to be fully involved and supporting the education sector in relation to SEND pupils in order to speed up processes and build increased capacity, to ensure children are receiving appropriate funding and support. A neighbouring Authority has established a 'fast track EHCP' team to deal with increased need. JM confirmed that systems have now been</p>		

	<p>put in place to ensure that EHCPs are dealt with in a more timely way and to monitor the process. Additional staffing resources have been recruited, including additional Education Psychologists and Attendance Officers and links have now been clearly established with Early Health. Health is now fully involved and contributing to action planning, as are parents. Headteachers are also invited to contribute. The full involvement of Health will also be key to reducing the number of Exclusions.</p> <p>Forum members remain concerned that urgent needs are not being addressed quickly enough and processes are not working well enough to ensure children are appropriately placed and funded. There are also concerns that pupil absence is often certified as illness by parents erroneously and there need to be more safeguards in relation to these circumstances, as well as the fact that attendance support will not be provided if pupils have declared health issues. JM confirmed that the LA is meeting with GPs to discuss this issue.</p>		
9.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>Schools Forum Budget (for information) It was agreed that the next meeting of Schools & High Needs should discuss and agree action in relation to the underspend.</p>	<p>NB to bring Paper to SHN Committee</p>	<p>SHN Comm Meeting 27.2.18</p>
10.	<p>Confirmation of Date of Next Meeting Thursday 26 April 2018 - 10 am–3 pm (NB: THIS MEETING HAS SINCE BEEN CANCELLED)</p>		
11.	<p>Schools Forum Budget Taken at Item 9 above.</p>		
12.	<p>Annual Section 251 Benchmarking Requirements (for information) No discussion.</p>		

Meeting closed 1225
KH/18.2.18