

School Organisation Stakeholder Group Meeting

Tuesday 26 June 2018
Ground Floor Meeting Room 3, County Hall, Oxford
10.00 am – 12 noon

Notes

Attendees:

Barbara Chillman, OCC School Organisation and Planning (BC)
Neil Darlington, OCC School Organisation and Planning (ND)
Allyson Milward, OCC School Organisation and Planning (AM)
Justine Miniken, OCC School Organisation and Planning (JM)
Janet Johnson, OCC, Children with SEN (JJ)
Cllr Hilary Hibbert -Biles, Cabinet Member for Education & Public Health
Cllr Michael Waine, (Chair) OCC (Conservative, Bicester Town)
Cllr Anda Fitzgerald O'Connor, OCC (Conservative, Kingston and Cumnor)
Cllr Jeannette Matelot, OCC (Conservative, Thame and Chinnor) & South Oxfordshire District Council
Cllr John Howson, OCC (Liberal Democrat, St Margaret's)
Cllr Liz Brighthouse, OCC (Labour, Churchill & Lye Valley)
Cllr Neil Owen, WODC (Conservative, Burford & Carterton North)
Jonathan Hopkins, Oxfordshire Governors Association
Brenda Williams, Oxfordshire Governors Association
Carole Thomson, Oxfordshire Governors Association
Malcolm Wright, Oxfordshire Governors Association
Toni Guest, Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham

1. Election of chair

Action

BC asked the group for nominations for Chair. The only nomination was for Cllr Michael Waine to continue. Cllr Waine was voted in by the group unanimously as Chair.
Cllr Waine thanked members of the group and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies:

David Clarke, OCC Deputy Director for Education (DC)
Marie Tidball, Oxford City Council, Labour, Hinksey Park
Sarah Brinkley, Oxfordshire Secondary School Head Teachers Association
Kevin Griffin, OCC School Organisation and Planning (KG)
Christine Jones, Diocese of Oxford
Cllr Elizabeth Gillespie, SODC, (Conservative, Garsington)
Cllr Jenny Hannaby, OCC, Liberal Democrat, Grove and Wantage
Peter Cansell, Oxfordshire Primary Head Teacher Association
Stephen Passey, Oxfordshire Association of Special School Head Teachers
Pat Kennedy, Oxford City Council

3. Notes of the last meeting

Brenda Williams asked to clarify her comment recorded in the notes of

the last meeting as, *'there are primary schools in the (Dominic Barberi) trust who are also struggling.'* She clarified her point that the primary schools in the trust are suffering financially.

Toni Guest commented that the point of the MAC is to come together to support weaker schools.

The rest of the notes were agreed to be an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising, including:

- **Boarding places at Burford School.**

Janet Johnson confirmed that the Virtual School is aware of the provision at Burford and this is considered on an individual pupil basis. She also advised that the Virtual School has a new HT.

- **Pupil Census data for the studio schools and UTC**

BC tabled the pupil census data for Oxfordshire's UTC and Studio Schools. Individual cohorts have been coloured accordingly as a visual aid. The overall picture shows that there is turnover when the schools first open as students see if the setting is right for them. The schools were designed to start at age 14 and go through to 19, however many students leave at year 11. The Banbury Space Studio has now stabilised. Cllr Howson asked, 'how viable are these schools? And noted that several Studio Schools & UTCs are closing around the country. Cllr Waine suggested that the Education Scrutiny Committee might like to pick up on this point and look at the quality of the education in these schools. Cllr Liz Brighouse asked, 'where are the students going after post 16 as this would help to see what is happening?' Cllr Howson commented that this is not only an issue for Oxfordshire. Brenda Williams asked if the DfE are considering this wider issue? Cllr Waine noted that in Bicester the Technical College was originally introduced as an alternative for students who would not have normally stayed in full time education until age 19. ND was asked if he has data on where these students have gone after leaving UTC. ND to circulate data before Scrutiny Committee tomorrow (27th June).

ND

- **The impact of the national funding formula on smaller schools**

There appears to be no clear pattern as to which schools gain most/least from the new formula. All schools receive more per pupil in cash terms from the funding formula this year, because this is protected, however if pupil numbers are down, total funding will have fallen. In addition, costs will have increased faster than the budget in many cases, so the real terms funding may have fallen. Malcolm Wright noted that several schools in Didcot are struggling. Currently there is protection with the minimum funding and floor funding, but a plan needs to be put in place if the funding formula is rolled out in 2020 because of the disproportionate number of small schools in Oxfordshire.

Cllr Howson agreed that there is a need for a strategic plan for the next five years, which should cover financial implication planning as well as pupil place planning. Cllr Brighouse noted that nursery school numbers have dipped which has an impact on the number of pupils coming

through the system, which in turn leads to a big drop in funding. Cllr Waine commented that this is an issue for all Oxfordshire schools and not just the small schools. He also advised that as governor of a MAT in Bicester this issue has been raised with the Secretary of State, Nick Gibb MP and will be followed up with a point by point letter. Cllr Hibbert - Biles has written to Robert Courts MP to stress that it will affect all pupils in all schools. Cllr Hibbert-Biles will also be meeting with the MP and members of the group expressed a desire to also attend.

- **CoE report – Embracing Change: Rural and Small Schools**

The link to the CoE report 'Embracing Change: Rural and Small Schools' was circulated prior to the meeting as it was suggested that there might be a discussion about the report. As Christine Jones was not able to attend the meeting, members of the group were asked to keep questions for the next meeting.

Toni Guest commented that the Archbishop has made it clear that all Catholic schools are to become academies as part of a Multi-Academy Company (MAC) but there is no end date specified.

Cllr Brighouse raised the issue of St Gregory the Great Catholic School and asked, where is the accountability to the MAC? The community still see the LA as accountable rather than the MAC and their Councillor as the link. However, she feels that there isn't a democratic link and that a relationship between academy trusts and Councillors is missing. Cllr Hibbert-Biles mentioned the new structure and that officers are now in place to go into schools and offer support. Toni Guest responded that there is a lot of intensive work in place with the archdiocese and the LA and that St Gregory's has had a very difficult recent past. Carole Thomson commented that she would like to know how the proposals in the CoE report are being rolled out in schools. It was agreed to add this item to the agenda for the next meeting in November and for members to send questions to Christine Jones.

BC

5. Update on OCC staffing and responsibilities – Allyson Milward (AM)

AM provided a brief update on changes to staffing and responsibilities. The new Deputy Director for Education, David Clarke is now in post as of 1st June. There will be four heads of service under David Clarke as opposed to three in the old structure. Kim James – Head of Learning and School Improvement started in post on 1st June. Interviews are currently taking place for Head of Service for SEND, Head of Service for Access for Learning and Head of Service for Learner Engagement. In the interim, AM is Interim Head of School Organisation and Sufficiency, formally Roy Leach. Neil Darlington is Interim head of service for SEND, formally Janet Johnson and Jo Goodey is Interim Inclusion and Attendance Manager, formally Rachel Etheridge. Backfill arrangements are taking place. Cllr Hibbert-Biles requested an updated structure chart to be sent to the members of the group and all Councillors.

JM

6. Report 1: School capital funding update – Kevin Griffin (KG)

- **Basic Need funding 2020/21**

BC presented a brief report provided by KG, updating on three capital funding announcements for Oxfordshire schools. 1. Basic Need 2020/21, 2. Additional Special Provision Fund 2018/19 – 2020/21 and Healthy Pupil Capital Fund 2018/19 for C and VC schools. A comparison with previous basic need allocations is included in the report. Oxfordshire receives about £9m per year on average in Basic Need funding, but the annual allocations (for other LAs as well as Oxfordshire) are very erratic.

- **SEN provision funding**

A further update to the SEN provision funding was provided in the report which was looked at in detail at the last meeting. There was a general discussion among the group on SEN provision. Basic need funding can be used to fund a lack of SEN places, even though SEN schools are not included in the Basic Needs calculations. Cllr Brighthouse commented that there is a big gap in our provision for SEN and for children on the lower autistic spectrum, in particular. JJ responded that most of our SEN schools include this in their provision.

There was some discussion regarding capacity in the city. The new Bloxham Grove special school will divert pupils who would otherwise have attended the Iffley Academy, and thus provide additional capacity to serve the whole city. Cllr Howson commented that presumably the free school bid for Didcot will run alongside this? BC answered, not in wave 13 but they are yet to announce the special school bid.

Cllr Waine would like it noted that Officers have been excellent in providing places in our special schools where funding wasn't there.

- **Healthy Pupils Capital Fund**

Allocations to all LA's are based on the spring census. Every school will receive a minimum of £2000 and up to £4,938 depending on pupil numbers. Health Pupil Capital Fund 2018/19 – Individual School Allocations was appended to the report, but was not able to be accessed as the papers are circulated as a PDF. This appendix will therefore be circulated with the notes of this meeting. There was some discussion in the group regarding how this funding is used by schools.

JM

7. Report 2: School Admissions update – Neil Darlington (ND)

- **Primary allocations after 2nd round**

Overall, the national offer day on 16th April is a success story. It is unusual for a parent not to be offered their first-place choice. In rural areas, some schools are struggling in terms of their numbers due to the fall in birth rate, while there has been an expansion of the population in areas with housing growth such as Didcot, Banbury and Bicester. The second allocation day was 12th June, which improved the position further. Only 71 children out of over 7000 do not have a place that is their parent's preference. There will be further movement through the summer with people moving etc, so that number is expected to come

down. This number is scattered across the county and not in any one area. Cllr Hibbert-Biles commented that it seems unfair that people who do not get their first preference, can miss out getting this at a later stage if someone new moves into the county. There was a brief discussion about whether any places are obtained fraudulently. ND advised that if a place is obtained fraudulently, the LA can take it back. Everyone receives an offer of a place; non-responders are then picked up.

- **Secondary allocations after 2nd round**

The number of second preferences that have been offered are higher than for primary and is dependent on area. The situation in the city highlights the need for the Swan School. For example, children in Marston are not getting in to the Cherwell School which would be considered their local school. Oxford Spires is now oversubscribed. St Gregory the Great is being offered as it has available places. However, county wide the picture is very good and the number of those not getting their first preference has dropped with most people in Oxfordshire being offered what they request. This is not the case in other parts of England. Cllr Howson commented that if the Swan School was not a 'free school', it would be opening next year and asked the question, how will admissions be handled if the project is signed off in September? ND agreed that next year will be challenging as the ESFA have said that they do not want the Swan School to be included in the admissions process.

Cllr Waine acknowledged the work that is involved in the admissions process and thanked ND and the Admissions Team, as overall this is a success story.

8. Report 3: Mainstream school capacity planning – Barbara Chillman (BC)

- **Update on secondary capacity sufficiency**

BC presented the Secondary School capacity planning report. 2019 will be a peak year for secondary places and will be the focus in the coming months. Areas have been shaded to show where it looks like a school will be over subscribed. Yellow meaning oversubscribed but plans are already in place and red meaning oversubscribed with no solution yet confirmed. In particular:

Banbury: bulge classes are likely to be needed in 2022 and these will need to be negotiated. The expansion of BGN is required by 2022.

Oxford: Once the Swan School opens it is expected that there will be volatility of preference in the Oxford area.

Faringdon: The Community College can only expand so far. There are a high number of MOD children in this area and therefore there is a level of turnover that impacts on primary but doesn't carry through to secondary.

Bicester: Fewer children are going from Bicester to Gosford Hill as The Bicester School has improved and so provides a more attractive local option.

- **Forward planning of new schools**

BC provided an update on forward planning of new schools. There are no updates on academy sponsor projects. Three academy trusts will be

submitting detailed bids for West Witney over the summer. Expressions of interest have begun for future projects. Graven Hill is a self-build development which means it is difficult to model population growth. The houses are not being built as quickly as first thought.

The School will be built by the developer which is an arm of Cherwell District Council but construction will be contracted out.

We are still waiting on the Swan School planning permission in September. The ESFA will not commit funding for a 2019 opening in temporary accommodation if permission is not given. The cost to the LA of providing places at alternative schools, possibly out of the city is still being discussed.

9. Report 4: Academies update – Allyson Milward (AM)

AM gave a summary of the Academies update. All three schools that have a directive Academy Order (dAO) are on track to convert.

As of this week a further school will be issued with a dAO but this is still confidential until the Ofsted report is published.

The conversion of Fitzharrys School is delayed at the request of the trust until the 1st October.

St John's Catholic Primary School, Banbury is also delayed and there is no further date. We are currently starting to see SEN schools consider academisation.

Two new schools that will open in September. Gagle Brook Primary School, Bicester and Aureus Primary School, Didcot.

Whitelands Academy (SW Bicester) has been delayed until 2020 and parents will be advised this week.

The Blackbird Academy trust will join United Learning Trust (ULT) in October.

Manor School, Didcot will be changing trust and moving from Oxfordshire Primary Education Network (OPEN) to join GLF Schools. Options of how to support maintained schools will be taken back to the Heads and Chairs of Governors briefings in the Autumn following the consultation and sessions held earlier in the year.

10. Report 5: SEND Provision – Barbara Chillman (BC)

• Capacity sufficiency planning

BC advised that work on updating the strategy for sufficiency of SEN places is ongoing. Currently looking afresh at enhancing provision and increasing resource base places. We will always look at a new school and ask the question – does it need a resource base?

The new school in Didcot is being developed but there is no timescale yet. This will be informed by the work that is currently being undertaken. There is an identified need for pupils with ASD (Autism) and SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health), so as well as new schools we will be looking to create more places in LA schools.

The model that has been developed in Didcot is being rolled out in Banbury and Bicester. Cllr Waine asked to what extent is that keeping pace with SEN and can we focus on looking at moving those pupils that

have been placed in independent schools being bought back in to LA schools? It was agreed that the wider strategy is bringing children back in county. BC advised that there is a lot of data which is being considered by phase as well as by need.

- **Consultation on the future of Northfield School**

Cabinet discussed Northfield School on 4th June and a decision was made to hold a consultation into the school's future. This has yet to start because we are now in a period of purdah. The immediate issue is the partial closure of the school due to the condition of the main school buildings. Longer term we need to look at sufficiency of places. Brenda Williams commented that the school has been on the agenda for many years. Cllr Hibbert-Biles has pushed for the children not to go back into the school's existing buildings and there is a meeting planned for tomorrow. There was some discussion among the group about the need for the Council to have an emergency plan in place for such a scenario as it is harder to place children from a special school in alternative provision. Cllr Howson raised the issue of funding and Carole Thomson commented that there is a shortage of places in SEN schools and it is not a satisfactory solution to move children to other schools. Cllr Hibbert-Biles assured members of the group that she is very aware of the situation.

11. Schools Forum questions/discussion points – (Members to send issues in advance to Cllr Waine)

Carole Thomson provided feedback from the school and high needs committee meeting where there was a lot of concern about school's budgets. There was also a concern that in the Bicester partnership there are many available places.

Schools forum has suggested that it would be helpful to have a two-way process and discussion between school's forum and this committee.

There was also some discussion about schools PANs and that there is a legal consultation process and a specified period that must elapse before we can change a PAN. Carole Thomson commented that schools don't understand the system. ND suggested that he write to schools to advise in September.

ND

12. Report 6: Member for Public Health & Education items/decisions – Lucy Mills (LM)

As detailed in report.

13. Date of next meeting

Monday 26th November.2018 10am – 12noon