



Minutes of the meeting of the SCHOOLS FORUM held on Thursday 7 DECEMBER 2006 at 5.00PM

Present:

Primary Schools Representatives

T Winter - Monkston Primary School
N Holt - Two Mile Ash Middle School
R Morgan - Giffard Park Primary School

Secondary Schools Representatives

M Wasserberg - Stantonbury Campus

Special School Representatives

S Bell - Gatehouse School

School Governors

C Rogers (Chair) - Secondary School Sector
P Kendrew - Secondary School Sector

Non-Schools Representatives

J Armstrong - Teachers' Association

Also Present: Councillor Sandra Clark

Officers: D Gamble (Group Director [School Improvement and Planning]), R Schmidt (Head of Technical Accounting), D Symons (Divisional Accountant), P Powers (Technical Accountant) and J Sloan (Committee Manager).

Apologies: R Davy (Oxford C of E Diocese), S Hopkinson (Wyvern First School), N Jackman (Special School Governor), K Leaver (Ousedale School), M Manley (St Paul's R.C. School), Rev. P Smith (Primary School Governor), S Tucker (Primary Sector Governor)

SF19

MINUTES

RECOMMENDED –

That the Minutes of the previous meeting of the Schools Forum held on 28 September 2006 be agreed as a correct record.

SF20 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

The Forum did not receive any nominations for the election of the vice chair.

SF21 CONSULTATION RESPONSES ON THE SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA

The Forum received a report on the consultation responses on proposed changes to the Schools Funding Formula which had been received from 21 schools (8 of the 12 secondary schools) in Milton Keynes.

RECOMMENDED –

That in the absence of a quorum, the following recommendation be made to the next meeting of the Schools Forum:

‘That the following amendments to the Funding Formula Review be agreed:

- (i) The KS4 Average Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) be set at 20% above the level of the KS3 AWPU value.
- (ii) The Y7 AWPU be brought into line with the Y8 and Y9 AWPU values by redistributing the total AWPU allocation at Y7 to Y11.
- (iii) A split site allowance be created within the secondary formula, as set out in the consultation document.
- (iv) Increased deprivation funding in the primary sector be a call on any headroom in 2007/08.
- (v) Increased deprivation funding in the secondary sector be a call on any headroom in 2007/08.’

SF22 DIRECTED REVISIONS TO THE SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS

The Forum received a report on the directed revisions that the Secretary of State required to be included in the local schemes.

The Forum noted that the Local Authority would conduct external assessments on schools finances and that these assessments would comply with the best value requirements.

The Forum also discussed:

- a) The clarity of the guidance issued;
- b) The deadline for schools to produce budget plans;
- c) The effect of small changes in pupil number on multi-year budget plans; and
- d) The inclusion of a £10,000 minimum threshold, in the mechanism that controls surplus school balances..

RESOLVED –

That in the absence of a quorum, the following recommendation be made to the next meeting of the Schools Forum:

‘That the wording for the proposed changes to the Scheme for Financing Schools as detailed in Annex A of the report be agreed with the additional wording about the £10,000 minimum threshold.’

SF23

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION BUDGET

The Forum received a report on the progress to date on the work taking place to shape the nature of provision in support of pupil behaviour management.

The Forum was informed that the changes in behaviour management policies would encourage the following:

- a) A climate which created fewer exclusions;
- b) more alternative placement options;
- c) discussion between schools regarding methods to manage exclusions; and
- d) financial accountability for exclusions.

The Forum also received an update on an exclusion workshop from the Special Schools Representative. It was noted that Milton Keynes schools have already had some success in reducing the number of permanent exclusions.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

SF24

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT STANDARD IN SCHOOLS

The Forum received a report on the new financial management standard introduced by the DfES.

The Forum was informed that external assessments of school financial management would take place in three year phases. The Forum requested that efforts be made to ensure that the assessments would not coincide with other audits.

The Forum noted that assessment training that had been provided by the DfES so far had been free. The proposed cost of the assessment by Internal Audit was lower than other external providers..

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Head of Technical Accounting write to Audit requesting that assessments did not coincide with other Audits.

SF25 FEEDBACK FROM DFES FUNDING CONFERENCE

The Forum received an oral report on the DfES Funding Conference.

The Forum noted a number of issues raised by the Funding Conference:

- a) Difficulty in communication between school forums and school governors;
- b) the Every Child Matter agenda investigated possible funding streams which could be sourced from deprivation funding; and
- c) the reluctance of some schools to spend Every Child Matters funding.

The Forum also noted that the Milton Keynes Schools Forum compared favourably to many other school forums nationally. However, there were some lessons to be learnt and improvements to be made, such as induction for new members and communication with constituent groups.

RESOLVED –

That the oral report be noted.

SF26 PACKAGE FOR CHARGING SCHOOLS 2007/08

The Forum received a report on the range of services for schools to be provided by Milton Keynes Council and HBS during 2007/08.

The Forum was informed that services provided to schools by Milton Keynes Council and HBS would be aligned centrally in the interest of best value and consistency. Charges would be levied for optional services but not statutorily required services.

The Forum noted that final decisions had not been made regarding funding charges for special education needs support and early years support.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

SF27 COUNCIL BUDGET 2007/08

The Forum received a report on the Council budget 2007/08. The Forum was informed that based upon the latest DfES announcement on the Dedicated Schools Grant and reconsideration of central budgets it appeared that headroom in the Schools Budget could be in the regions of £1.3m. The Forum also noted that this could vary, up or down following the January pupil count.

The Forum requested that disadvantage funding be discussed outside the meeting and any recommendations be brought to the Forum.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

SF28 BUDGET MONITORING

The Forum received a budget monitoring report.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

SF29 CLAWBACK OF EXCESSIVE SURPLUS BALANCES

The Forum received a report on the clawback of excessive surplus balances.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

SF30 FORWARD PLANNING

The Budget Plan deadline would be considered at a future meeting.

SF31 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Forum considered dates for future meetings.

RESOLVED –

That future meetings of the Schools Forum be agreed as follows:

1. 22 February 2007
2. 19 April 2007
3. 12 July 2007
4. 4 October 2007
5. 6 December 2007

All meetings to be held at 5pm at Stantonbury Campus

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7.10 PM.