

MILTON KEYNES' SCHOOLS FORUM

STANTONBURY CAMPUS MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 7 JULY 2011 AT 3.00 PM

PRESENT: **Primary School Representatives**
Louise Aird – Cold Harbour Combined School
Lizzie Bancroft – Loughton Manor First School
Lesley Barnard – Heelands School
Huw Humphreys – Christ the Sower Ecumenical Primary School

Special School Representative
Nick Jackman – The Walnuts School

Primary School Governors
Derek Cullen – Greenleys Junior School
Paul Hussey – Bradwell Village Primary School (**CHAIR**)
Francis Grant – Great Linford Primary School
Lynne Smith – Emerson Valley Junior School

Secondary School Governor
John Howe – Denbigh School

Nursery School Representative
Louise McRae – Knowles Nursery School }
Debbie Wells – Moorlands Nursery } Shared vote

Church of England Diocese
Jane Bellamy – Bow Brickhill Church of England School

Catholic Diocese Authority
Kate Harper – Northampton Diocesan

14-19 Partnership
Sarah Parker – Denbigh School

OFFICERS: Maggie Bovair (Head of Inclusion Services) – until 3.50 pm
Michael Bracey (Assistant Director – Partnerships, Commissioning
and Performance)
Penni Powers (Finance Manager, CYPS and Training)
Will Spurgeon (Assistant Director – Targeted Services)
Andrew Whitaker (Divisional Accountant, CYPS)

CLERK: Wendy Burrage, PA to the Assistant Director Partnerships,
Commissioning and Performance

ALSO PRESENT: David Owen, Interim Headteacher, The Gatehouse School – until 3.35 pm
Sandra Clark, Chair of Governors, The Gatehouse School – until 3.35 pm

SF 282 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed members to the Schools Forum and advised of a request to change the order of the agenda to enable the additional

confidential document at Item 4 'The Gatehouse School Submission' to be heard first followed by Item 6 'Alternative Education'. Apologies were noted as follows.

Jim Armstrong – Professional Association Representative
Ken Behrens – Loughton School
Sue Carbert – Ousedale School
Sue Cox – Priory Rise Primary School
Lynne Johnson – Pre-School Learning Alliance
Maxine Low – Brooklands Farm Primary School
Michael Manley – St Paul's Catholic School (VICE CHAIR)
Glen Martin – Shenley Brook End School
Gail Tolley (Director of Children and Young People's Services)

SF 283 MINUTES

That the minutes of the Schools Forum held on 19 May 2011 be approved as a correct record with the following amendments.

Amendments:

SF 275, page 2, John Howe requested that the minutes be amended
3rd Bullet Point to show his concern that the procedure for nominating primary members to the Forum was undemocratic.

The process for filling vacancies on the Forum were discussed and the majority of primary representatives were content that the current arrangements were appropriate.

Members discussed the process for making governors aware of vacancies on the Forum, which includes information being circulated at the annual Governor's conference.

SF 275, page 3, The 14-19 Partnership representative advised the
Resolution 3 Forum that she had not yet been contacted regarding representation on the Schools Forum.

SF 284 SCHOOLS LICENSED DEFICIT BUDGETS (Penni Powers)

The Forum were informed of the school budget plans for 2011/12 and were asked to consider a submission from The Gatehouse School requesting permission to set a deficit budget of £37,750 .

The Gatehouse School Submission

David Owen, Interim Headteacher and Sandra Clark, Chair of Governors of The Gatehouse School attended to present a case to the Schools Forum requesting that consideration be given for the school to receive a payment from the Schools in Financial Difficulty Fund. The Interim Headteacher and the Chair of Governors put forward the school's case

(Item 4 refers) and left the room while the Schools Forum deliberated on its decision.

Discussion followed and questions were raised on the issues and concerns of members:

- Does the local authority have a contingency fund to deal with circumstances such as these? The Finance Manager responded that the authority did not have a separate fund from the Schools in Financial Difficulty Fund.
- If the viability of a school's proposed budget plan is questioned, what can the local authority do regarding the school in deficit? The Finance Manager replied that the authority continue to challenge schools in such circumstances by holding regular monitoring meetings, and could ultimately withdraw delegation.
- The school's proposal to convert to an academy and the possibility of the sponsor helping the school with its finances was discussed.
- It was felt it may be better for the school to operate with a deficit budget to give the school time to build funds to enable it to repay any borrowing.

RESOLVED: 1. That, following a vote, the Schools Forum agreed they would not support The Gatehouse School request. The vote was carried unanimously and there were no abstentions.
2. That an update report comes back to the Forum on 29 September 2011.

SF 285 ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION (Maggie Bovair)

The Head of Inclusion Services referred the Schools Forum to the progress that has taken place with the Milton Keynes' Secondary Behaviour Partnership to progressively reshape the nature of provision supporting pupil behaviour management; the outturn position of the Partnership for 2010/11 and 2011/12; the specialist provision for pupils with similar needs in the primary phase; and to the development of The Bridge (Item 6 refers).

RESOLVED: That the Schools Forum noted the report.

SF 286 BUDGET POSITION AND THE FINAL DSG SETTLEMENT FOR 2011/12 (Andrew Whitaker)

The Schools Forum received a tabled update to the Final DSG Settlement and Budget Position 2011/12 (Addendum to Item 3 refers) and the Divisional Accountant reviewed the document advising that the DfE had still not notified local authorities of their final DSG for 2011/12.

Members discussed the tabled document and the £1,145m carry forward forecasted at 31 March 2012.

RESOLVED: 1. That the Schools Forum noted the final level of DSG

- in 2011/12;
2. That, at this early stage, there were no variances forecast on the central budgets for monitoring period 3, 2011/12;
 3. That the impact of the review of 2010/12 Standards Fund were noted; and
 4. That the Schools Forum confirms its position in respect of the utilisation of the final DSG allocation.

SF 287 FORMULA REVIEW (Penni Powers)

The Schools Forum were informed of a request to conduct a formula review which had been received from the Nursery Headteachers' group, they were asked to consider this request and support the actions recommended at 2.1, Item 5.

Schools Forum members were advised that this may not be the most appropriate time to review the formula. The Finance Manager referred members to Annex 2 to Item 5 and requested members to note how favourably Milton Keynes was funded compared to that of our statistical neighbours.

- RESOLVED:
1. That a report be provided for the next Nursery Headteachers' Group on 12 July 2011;
 2. That the balance of funding between the sectors is continued to be monitored when setting the overall schools budget; and
 3. That, following a vote, the Schools Forum agreed that any review is postponed until after the results of the current DfE proposals on a national funding formula are known. The vote was carried unanimously and there were no abstentions.

SF 288 SCHOOL BALANCES AND EXCESS SURPLUS BALANCES (Penni Powers)

The purpose of this report was to inform the Schools Forum of the level of balances held by schools at the end of 2010/11 and the results of the claw back process (Item 7 refers).

The Forum were advised that there were 32 schools which ended the year with excess revenue balances (Annex 3 refers) and that work continues to reduce these to below the permitted 8% for primary schools and 5% for secondary. Three schools were in a possible claw back situation and the appeals panel met on 4 July 2011, two of the three schools appealed – Water Hall was not upheld and Summerfield was upheld. White Spire did not appeal. Clawing back funds from White Spire and Summerfield will mean £20k returning to the DSG, members to consider at a later date how this should be reinvested.

Previous allocations to schools were discussed and whether or not circumstances had changed for them and, if so, should the Forum

consider taking this back. The Finance Manager to prepare a progress report.

- RESOLVED:
1. That the Schools Forum noted the detail behind the £8.561m of revenue balances at the 2010/11 year be noted;
 2. That the results of the claw back process be noted;
 3. That suggestions for claw back be discussed at the September meeting of the Schools Forum; and
 4. That a budget monitoring report on claw back allocations be discussed at the September meeting of the Forum.

SF 289 FINANCIAL CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY IN THE SCHOOLS COMMUNITY (Penni Powers)

The Schools Forum were informed that the purpose of this report was to ensure that members were made aware of a briefing document recently issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) and to enable them to consider how this initiative can contribute to raising the financial capability and capacity within the Milton Keynes schools community.

The Finance Manager informed members that the briefing implied that local authorities should be more involved in the financial management in schools.

RESOLVED: That the Schools Forum noted the report issued by the National Audit Office and recommends any action as appropriate.

SF 290 SECTION 251 BUDGET STATEMENT 2011/12 (Andrew Whitaker)

The Schools Forum received a report on the Budget Statement provided to the Department for Education (DfE) under Section 251 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (Item 9 refers).

The Divisional Accountant informed the Forum that the DfE had changed the way they collect data this year and that this would be made available on the website when it was complete. There were no comments or questions.

RESOLVED: That the Section 251 Budget Statements for 2011/12 be noted.

SF 291 FORWARD PLANNING

The Schools Forum considered the forward issues that require its deliberations for the coming year:

September 2011

- Consultation on formula and scheme changes
- Review constitution (subject to Government funding announcement)

- Spending priorities and allocation of £1.145m
- The Gatehouse School

December 2011

- Consultation responses
- Proposed central expenditure
- Spending priorities and use of any headroom
- Charging for Services to Schools
- Impact of Academies

February/March 2012

- Budget 2012/13

May

- Provisional Outturn

SF 292 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business to report.

SF 293 PROPOSED DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Venues to be advised.

3.00 to 5.00 pm Thursday, 29 September 2011

3.00 to 5.00 pm Thursday, 8 December 2011

The proposed dates for 2012 were agreed:

3.00 to 5.00 pm Thursday, 1 March 2012

3.00 to 5.00 pm Thursday, 17 May 2012

3.00 to 5.00 pm Thursday, 5 July 2012

3.00 to 5.00 pm Thursday, 27 September 2012

The Chair wished Schools Forum members an enjoyable summer.

The meeting was closed at 4.25 pm