

CAMBRIDGESHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM: MINUTES

Date: 16th October 2015

Time: 10.00am – 11.40am

Place: Kreis Viersen Room, Shire Hall, Cambridge

Present: P Hodgson (Chairman), S Blyth, S Connell, J Culpin, T Davies, A Day, K Evans, T Jefford, L Murphy, D Parfitt, A Reeder, A Rodger (Vice-Chairman), B Smethurst, R Waldau and M Woods

Observers

Councillor P Downes	Cambridgeshire County Council
Councillor D Harty	Cambridgeshire County Council
G Fewtrell	Teachers' Unions
S Livesey	Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia

Officers

J Davies, K Grimwade, M Moore, S Surtees, M Teasdale, M Wade and K John

Apologies: N Jones, A Kent, K Taylor and Councillor J Whitehead.

ACTION

103. MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

The Chairman exercised his authority to vary the order of business and to take the item on membership changes as the first item of business.

The following changes to membership of the Cambridgeshire Schools Forum were noted:

- Deborah Parfitt had replaced Kerensa Rains as the Early Year's Reference Group representative;
- Joe McCrossan had resigned as a representative of Cambridgeshire Primary Heads owing to new work commitments.

The Chairman welcomed Deborah Parfitt to her first meeting of the Cambridgeshire Schools Forum.

In noting the resignation of Joe McCrossan, the Chairman commented that Joe had served on the Schools Forum for many years and had been a strong advocate of the campaign for fairer funding in Cambridgeshire. It was agreed that the Chairman should write to Joe McCrossan, on behalf of the Cambridgeshire Schools Forum, to thank him for his hard work and commitment during his time as a member of the Forum.

104. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd May 2015 were confirmed as a

correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The following matters arising were discussed:

(a) Minute 92(a): Schools funding reform:

The Chairman provided an update on the meeting that he and the Vice-Chairman had attended in July with Heidi Allen, MP for South Cambridgeshire, when seeking to gain support for the campaign to secure better funding for Cambridgeshire's schools. Limited progress appeared to have been made since then. It was hoped that the MP might be able to draw attention to the education funding concerns in Cambridgeshire and bring pressure to bear on Ministers with a view to securing fairer funding for Cambridgeshire's schools. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman were due to meet with Lucy Frazer, MP for South East Cambridgeshire, on 27th November 2015 and would report back on the outcome of that meeting to the Schools Forum.

(b) Minute 92(c): Schools Budget 2015/16 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

The Service Director: Strategy and Commissioning, reported that the action referred to in the minute had been completed.

(c) Minute 94: Maintained Schools and Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Financial Health

Barry Smethurst confirmed that he would take forward the action to discuss with the Governor Advisory Group issues around access by the Local Authority to the database of governors' contact details so that appropriate financial information could be sent directly to governors, in addition to the school management.

(d) Minute 96: Consultation on Proposals for the Professional Finance Service

The Chairman reported that he, together with the Vice-Chairman, had met with the Head of Finance to discuss the consultation proposals for the professional finance service. They had emphasised the importance of the Forum continuing to receive the same level of high quality professional financial advice as it presently enjoyed. The Chairman was pleased to report that following the review, the Forum would continue to be supported by the same officer who had previously provided it with professional finance advice.

The Strategic Finance Manager (Children's and Schools) updated the Forum on the outcome of the review and noted that his role now covered an expanded remit. He explained that the remit of Sarah Heywood, Strategic Finance Manager, no longer covered the Schools Forum. However, Matthew Moore, Accountant (Schools Funding), had joined the Schools Funding team and

would assist in supporting the Forum. It was hoped that the same level of support would be available to the Forum, within the constraints of the capacity now available. The proposal to operate a converged Schools Finance team operating across Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire was currently in abeyance.

(e) Minute 99: Special Educational Needs (SEND) Workshop Feedback

Noting that consideration of the SEND workshop feedback had previously been deferred and was not included on this agenda, the Service Director: Strategy and Commissioning, gave a high level overview of the feedback and indicated that copies of the slides could be circulated to Forum members. She further commented that an item on SEND provision was included later on the agenda for this meeting.

An item on the SEND action plan could be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Forum.

**M Teasdale/
Democratic
Services**

105. COMPOSITION OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

The report of the Clerk was submitted which reviewed the composition of the Cambridgeshire Schools Forum having regard to the requirements of the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012 and the Schools Forum and Operational Good Practice Guide, March 2015.

The Forum was advised that amendments were required to achieve compliance with the Regulations including:

- Increasing in the number of academies representatives to include at least one member each of special academies and alternative provision academies; and
- Reviewing the current arrangements for electing academies members, including governor representatives, in view of the requirement for academies representatives to be elected by the academy proprietors.

The report also invited the Forum to consider harmonising the end date for terms of office at 31 August and to confirm arrangements for dealing with casual vacancies.

During discussion:-

- In noting that officers were not aware of any group that collectively represented the interests of the academies in the county, Forum members referred to a group being co-ordinated by Dr Tim Coulson, Regional Schools Commissioner for East of England. Attention was also drawn to the establishment of an academy primary heads' group.

- Attention was drawn to a correction needed to the designation given to Mark Woods in the table setting out membership of the Forum at Appendix C.
- It was noted that a further report on proposals for electing academies members would be presented to a future meeting of the Forum.

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It was resolved:

- 1. To note the amendments required to membership of the Cambridgeshire Schools Forum to achieve compliance with the provisions of The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012.**
- 2. To approve the increase in the number of academies members on the Cambridgeshire Schools Forum by 2 to provide for:**
 - 1 Academy Special School representative; and
 - 1 Academy Alternative Provision representative.
- 3. To approve the consequential revised membership of the Forum, pending further review of governor representation as indicated in (5) below, as follows:-**

<i>Schools Members:</i>	<i>Proposed representation</i>
Maintained Nursery	1
Maintained Primary	6
Maintained Secondary	1
Maintained Special	1
Maintained PRU	1

<i>Academies Members:</i>	<i>Proposed representation</i>
Academies (cross phase)	5
Academy Special	1
Academy Alternative Provision	1

<i>Governors:</i>	<i>Proposed representation</i>
Governors representatives (broadly representative of the various phases)	4

Sub-Total	21
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<i>Non-Schools Members:</i>	
<i>Group represented</i>	<i>Proposed representation</i>
Early Years Reference Group	1
Post 16 Further Education providers	1

Total	23
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4. To note that there is no requirement for academies members to be split in phases but to recommend to the academy proprietors that, in order to reflect pupil proportions, 1 representative of the academy primary schools and 4 representatives of the academy secondary schools should be elected to serve on the Forum on the expiry of the terms of office of the present incumbents.
5. To note the need to review the current arrangements for election of governor representatives and to authorise the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Forum, to consult with representatives of the academies and the Governor Advisory Group, on how this is best achieved for the Cambridgeshire Schools Forum, including the possibility of governor elections being conducted by the School Governance Team, on behalf of the academies.
6. To note the requirement for academies members to be elected by the academy proprietors and to authorise the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Forum, to consult with representatives of academies on how this process might best be achieved when future vacancies arise, including the possibility of the academy proprietors authorising the Cambridgeshire Primary and Secondary Heads groups continuing to conduct the elections on their behalf.
7. To note and endorse the revised composition and terms of office of members of the Cambridgeshire Schools Forum as set out in Appendix C to the report.
8. To confirm that terms of office should conclude on a common date, namely 31st August.
9. To confirm that the term of office of a person elected to fill a casual vacancy on the Schools Forum should run for the remainder of the term of office of the previous incumbent.
10. To instruct the Clerk to review the Constitution to reflect the decisions of the Forum and to submit the revised Constitution to a future meeting of the Forum.

106. SCHOOLS BUDGET SETTING 2016/17: UPDATE

The report of the Strategic Finance Manager (Children's and Schools) was received which provided an update on the revised Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) in 2015/16 and the schools budget setting issues for consideration in 2016/17, including:

- Department for Education Announcements (DfE) of Funding Allocations for 2016/17;
- Local Formula and distribution options;
- Early Years Funding (including 2 year olds and Early Years Pupil

- Premium);
- High Needs Block;
- Centrally Retained Budgets and De-Delegations;
- Other Funding; and
- Key Decisions and Timetable.

The Strategic Finance Manager introduced the report drawing attention to the following key points:

- It had been confirmed that the extra £390m given to some of the worst funded authorities to boost school budgets in 2015/16 would be baselined in the budget in future years.
- Other than a slight adjustment in respect of non-recoupment academies, the Schools Block per pupil for 2016/17 would be the same as the amount received in the current year.
- No inflationary increase would be received meaning that schools would be required to absorb any associated increases in costs.
- There was no expectation of any additional funding to support the increasing number of places required within the High Needs Block.
- It was proposed to make minimal changes to the funding formula for 2016/17, however it would be necessary to consider the possible transfer of funds from the Schools Block to support various pressures and functions as listed in the report. Every £0.5m moved from the Schools Block equated to an approximate reduction in the Basic Entitlement of £5.40 per primary pupil, £7.60 per KS3 pupil and £9.90 per KS4 pupil.
- The available local funding formula factors, alongside the proposed approach and unit values for 2016/17 were set out in Appendix A, whilst the actual allocation of funding in 2015/16 across the available formula factors was set out in Appendix B.
- No further announcements had been made in respect of the Early Year's Block so the working assumption was that funding would continue at current rates. As for schools there would be no inflationary uplift meaning that nursery providers would need to absorb any additional costs.
- With reference to the proposal to increase free childcare to 30 hours per week for working parents of three and four year olds, it should be noted that the Childcare Bill had been defeated in the House of Lords on 14th October 2015 which might result in delayed implementation.
- No changes were proposed to centrally retained budgets except for the growth fund, referred to elsewhere on the agenda and the submission of a disapplication to the Education Funding Agency

(EFA) in respect of the costs associated with servicing the Schools Forum.

- Cambridgeshire Primary Heads (CPH) would be asked to consider de-delegations methodology and the proposed approach for 2016/17. Options for the Cambridgeshire Race Equality and Advisory Service (CREDS) were also being discussed with CPH. De-delegations would be subject to approval by the primary representatives at the December meeting.
- A report in respect of the Behaviour and Attendance Improvement Partnership (BAIP) devolved funding formula, included elsewhere on the agenda, had been withdrawn due to errors in the pupil data. Work was on-going to establish a revised formula for the allocation of funding to individual schools and BAIPs and it had proved difficult to achieve an agreement on the methodology to be applied, due to the resulting shifts in funding across the county. It was anticipated that a report would be submitted to the Forum's meeting in December.

During discussion:

- In response to a question, it was explained that a non-recoupment academy was one where the funding was not given to the Local Authority in its DSG and therefore the EFA did not need to recoup funding. This had applied in the case of Cambourne Village College and the Cambridge University Technical College which had opened as free schools and therefore had no impact on the DSG, but whose funding would in future form part of the DSG.
- Reference was made to a national debate around funding for children in poverty and the effectiveness of the pupil premium in raising attainment of children from deprived backgrounds. Following a question, it was confirmed that Cambridgeshire's funding formula was flexible and that there was local discretion to determine whether to adjust the deprivation factor in the formula.
- It was noted that there had been a 38% increase in applications for free school meals/pupil premium as a result of the "Count me in!" campaign. However it was acknowledged that there had only been a slight increase in pupil premium funding during the year. Concern was expressed that many eligible families were not applying for the pupil premium/free school meals. It was suggested that a more generic form should be created to be completed by all parents which contained both the information required for a pupil premium/free school meal application, together with other information routinely required by schools. The form would need to contain the parent's surname, national insurance number and dates of birth in order to enable the pupil premium and free schools meal application to be processed. The necessary consents would need to be obtained on the form to

satisfy data protection requirements. **The Strategic Policy and Early Years Operations Manager agreed to work with schools to develop such an all-encompassing form.**

Sam Surtees

- Concerns were expressed at the likely financial impact for schools of various changes outlined in the report and it was suggested that the schools should be alerted to the potential implications for their budgets and the need to absorb additional costs, in order to facilitate future planning. **The Strategic Finance Manager accordingly agreed to write to schools explaining the anticipated outlook for school budgets in 2016/17.**

Martin Wade

It was resolved to note and comment on the contents of the report.

107. GROWTH IN NEED FOR SPECIAL SEND PROVISION

The Head of Service: Commissioning Enhanced Services, submitted a report which provided an update on the growth in demand for specialist special educational needs and disability (SEND) provision. The report detailed the extent of growth in demand for specialist provision in Cambridgeshire, together with other growth areas in specialist provision, and highlighted the expectation that as the impact of SEND reforms on the 16 – 25 year age group became embedded, demand would increase further. Work was underway to quantify the budget implications for 2016/17 of the increase in places in special schools and in Post 16 settings.

During discussion:

- It was explained that there was no increase in the High Needs Block to take account of the growth identified and no apparent funding mechanism for new special schools. The Education Funding Agency (EFA) had not accepted evidence previously presented by the Local Authority and had indicated that any growth in SEND provision needed to be met from the existing funding allocations.
- In response to a question, it was explained that in order to secure Section 106 funding from developers, it was necessary to show sufficient demand from the new communities for a special school.
- The Forum noted that Section 106 funding only contributed to capital costs, there was still a requirement to fund the additional revenue costs. It was also not guaranteed that capital monies would be forthcoming and the Local Authority had to provide evidence to demonstrate the level of need.
- It was confirmed that, wherever possible, the Local Authority would seek to co-locate a special school with other school phases.

- Following a question, it was reported that work was under way to quantify the additional cost pressures upon the High Needs Block.
- Some concern was expressed at the potential implications of moving funding from the Schools Block into the High Needs Block, recognising that many schools sought to manage pupils with special education needs in the mainstream.
- The Forum debated what action could be taken in order to draw attention to the demand for SEND provision and to influence the EFA. It was concluded that the campaign for fairer funding should remain the focus for debate with MPs and that there should be engagement with all MPs in Cambridgeshire. At the same time discussions should take place with the appropriate contact at the EFA on the pressures on SEND provision, with a view to then raising the awareness of the MPs in relation to this issue.
- It was suggested that the MPs in the county were already engaged, cross party, with the issue of schools funding; were members of the F40 campaign group and used the Twitter community to raise the issue. A Schools Stakeholder meeting had taken place on 21st August 2015 in Comberton Village College to discuss the way forward.
- It was acknowledged that the consequence of insufficient places in special schools was expensive out of county placements.

It was resolved to note the growth in demand for specialist special educational needs and disability (SEND) provision, as outlined in the submitted report.

108. BEHAVIOUR AND ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP (BAIP) DEVOLVED FUNDING FORMULA

As reported at minute 106, this item was withdrawn **but would be included on the agenda for the meeting of the Schools Forum to be held on 16th December 2015.**

**Martin Wade/
Tom Jefford/
Democratic
Services**

109. GROWTH FUND AND FALLING ROLLS CRITERIA 2016/17

The report of the Strategic Finance Manager was submitted which:-

- Reminded the Schools Forum that the Local Authority could centrally retain funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant in order to create a Growth Fund to support schools required to provide extra places in order to meet basic need within the authority, including pre-opening and reorganisation costs.

- Advised that it was proposed to increase the Growth Fund from £1.75m to £2m in 2016/17 in view of the continuing forecast rise in numbers.
- Reminded the Forum that Local Authorities could create a falling rolls fund (there was a mandatory requirement that only schools judged Good or Outstanding in their last Ofsted inspection could be supported from such a fund) but that the Forum had previously taken the view that it was not appropriate to apply such a factor.
- Presented, at paragraph 3, the proposed Cambridgeshire criteria for accessing growth funding for 2016/17.
- Explained that amendments to the criteria could be made during the year, where necessary, subject to submission of the revised criteria to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) for compliance checking and approval by the Schools Forum.

During discussion upon the report:-

- With reference to the suggested criteria, it was noted that rather than funding on a per pupil basis, it was now proposed that funding would be allocated based on the requirement for additional support/classes/forms of entry.
- The Nursery School representative drew attention to the fact that there was not a one year intake in early years and numbers grew throughout the year. In response, the Strategic Finance Manager explained that the funding formula for Early Years was updated on a termly basis to reflect changes in pupil numbers, but did not recognise the limitations of the process. **As such he agreed to look further into the point raised.**
- Attention was drawn to the serious implications for some schools with falling rolls in terms of future viability. The Strategic Finance Manager reported that the Falling Rolls Fund could only be used to support schools where planning data showed that the surplus places would be needed within the next 2 or 3 years. There was no mechanism to support other schools with falling rolls within the current funding methodology.
- In response to a question as to whether growth funding would be available to a secondary school needing an additional class year 7, it was explained that to meet the criteria, there would need to be planned growth to meet basic need and a requirement to provide a further form of entry.

Martin Wade

It was resolved:

- 1. To increase the Growth Fund from £1.75m to £2m.**
- 2. To approve the criteria in section 3 of the submitted report to apply from April 2016, subject to Education Funding Agency approval.**

110. NEW SCHOOL REVENUE FUNDING – 2016/17

The report of the Strategic Finance Manager (Children's and Schools) was submitted regarding proposals for new school revenue funding for 2016/17 and in year changes for the current financial year. The approach for revenue funding for new schools followed guidance provided by the EFA and required approval by Cambridgeshire Schools Forum due to the elements funded directly from the Growth Fund. The methodology was subject to annual amendments to reflect both national and local policy changes. The proposals presented reflected both in year changes for 2015/16 and the approach to be applied for the 2016/17 financial/academic year.

The Forum noted that with effect from 7th May 2015 all new schools established through the 2011 Education Act presumption process would be classified as free schools. There was no change in the funding of the schools and the Local Authority would continue to be responsible for providing pre-opening costs and for providing the sites for the schools. The EFA would provide £25k to the successful sponsor in respect of their legal costs and would then fund the school, as with other academies and free schools, upon opening. The report also outlined the position with funding for new special schools.

The proposed approach for new schools for funding pre-opening was set out in Appendix A and for proposed post-opening diseconomies funding was set out Appendix B to the report.

It was resolved to approve the proposed approach for new schools for funding pre-opening, as set out in Appendix A to the report, and post-opening diseconomies funding, as set out in Appendix B, to be applied for the remainder of 2015/16 and 2016/17.

111. FORWARD PLAN

The forward plan was noted.

112. ASSESSMENT FROM SUB-GROUP MEETINGS AND FEEDBACK FROM HEAD TEACHERS' STEERING GROUPS

It was reported that CPH were looking in detail at Cambridgeshire Race Equality and Advisory Services (CREDS) de-delegations. In response, the Strategic Finance Manager confirmed that this issue would form part of the budget paper to be submitted to the Schools Forum at its meeting on 16th December 2015.

113. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday, 16th December 2015.

(Note: Subsequent to the meeting, at the request of Primary Headteachers and with the consent of the Chairman, **the start time for the meeting on 16th December 2015 has been brought forward to 9.30am.**)

The dates for future meetings of the Forum beyond December were confirmed as follows:

- 10 a.m. Friday 15th January 2016
- 10 a.m. Wednesday 16th March 2016
- 10 a.m. Friday 24th June 2016.

Chairman
16th December 2015