



# Minutes

Name of meeting	<b>SCHOOLS FORUM</b>
Date and time	<b>8.30AM – THURSDAY 22 MARCH 2018</b>
Venue	<b>COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE, WESTRIDGE, BRADING ROAD, RYDE PO33 1QS</b>
Present	Beverley Gilbert (Chair) – Brading CE Primary David Thornton – Federation of Carisbrooke and Newport CEPs Caroline Sice – Lanesend Primary Academy Kay Wood – Summerfields Primary Eric Hemming – St Blasius CE Primary Academy and St Francis Catholic and CE Primary Academy Matthew Parr-Burman – Island Innovation Federation ( <i>Substitute</i> ) Fidelma Washington – Isle of Wight College Julie Stewart – Medina House School Jackie Boxx – Island Learning Centre Robert Dare – Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth
Elected Member	Cllr Paul Brading – Cabinet Member for Children’s Services
Officers	Kim James – School Improvement Manager Brendan Hodson – Senior Accountant Diane Hiscock – Clerk
Apologies	Mike Hayward – Island Innovation Federation Amanda Bitchenor – Chatterbox Day Nursery

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

BG welcomed all to the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED :

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [16 January 2018](#) be confirmed

4. ACTION POINTS FROM LAST MEETING

- 4.1 (Item 4.1) BG informed forum members that she had written to the Island Free School seeking contribution towards Trade Union Facilities Time, but had received no response. It was suggested that the letter be forwarded to the Education Financial Authority (EFA) but, as the school decides on how to use

its budget, it was felt that it may be more productive to write to the governing board with the offer of a meeting to discuss.

**Action – BG to send the letter to the Chair of Governors at the Island Free School**

**BG will also meet with Judy Mason, Senior Lawyer re Trade Union Facilities Time**

- 4.2 (Item 4.2) BG had also composed a letter to the Secretary of State, raising concerns re High Needs Funding, to be sent this week.

**Action – Letter to be copied to the IOW MP - Bob Seeley, Kim James, Brian Pope, Steve Crocker and the Headteacher Forums**

- 4.3 (Item 6.2) A formal response to the questions raised at the last meeting was given in [Paper B](#) . The questioner stated that no direct response had been received and members agreed to follow up. Further discussion took place regarding the development of a model of outreach support and arrangements for consultation with schools. It is important to clarify the difference between Specialist Teacher Advisory support and SEN Outreach provision.

Cllr Brading had met with Cllr Seeley, re SEN provision and High Needs Funding. Cllr Seeley will take forward the IOW case for further discussion within the national issue. The IOW has 3.5% children in need of SEN provision against 2.9% nationally.

It was also noted that High Needs funding received per pupil on the IOW is lower than the national average and considerably lower than in Hackney.

Members agreed that it would be useful to have feedback on progress re the proposed model for outreach support and on the recent schools SEN audit.

**5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The following requests were made for -

- A further explanation on the consultation on changes to High Needs funding.
- Clarification on the criteria for allocation of places at The Cove and The Einstein Centre.

**Action – To invite Chris Jones - SEN Education Officer and Brian Pope - Deputy Director, Education and Inclusion to the next meeting on 10 May 2018 to cover the items highlighted above and at 7.2 below.**

**Response to public question to be followed up.**

**6. SCHOOLS BUDGET MONITORING 2017/18 [Paper C](#)**

- 6.1 BH reported the budget position at 28 February 2018 as showing a forecast overspend of £520,000. A deficit of £336,000 was brought forward from 2016/17, but £288,000 in reserves can be offset against this as a one-off contribution, resulting in an overall forecast overspend of £568,000 which Schools Forum were asked to approve as a carry forward to 2018/19.

Appendix A of the report shows a breakdown of the budget, with variances of more than £10,000.

**6.2 SCHOOLS BLOCK**

The Schools Block position includes predicted underspends as follows

- Growth Fund - £46,000

- Non-SEN education placements - £80,000
- Secondary School Contingency - £14,000

Reasons for allocation of Growth Fund were questioned and confirmed -

- Greenmount Primary have increased their Published Admission Number (PAN) to allow for a 2-form structure for the current Year 6.
- Queensgate Primary had to accept a bulge class for April – August 2017 for the current Year 2 due to infant class size regulations.

There is currently no expectation that any schools will require Growth Funding in 2018/19.

### 6.3 EARLY YEARS BLOCK

There is an expected overspend of £95,000 in funding for 2-year olds and an expected underspend of £167,000 in funding for 3 – 4 year olds, as a result of the expected adjustment in funding following the January 2018 census.

BH gave an overview of the comments received on the proposed funding rates, which Forum Members would be asked to agree. It was noted that allocations for 2 year olds and 3 & 4 years olds are separately allocated at different rates, and the council does not propose to use one to offset the other.

#### RESOLVED :

1. THAT the February position on the 2017/18 schools budget be noted.
2. THAT the proposed funding rates for early years providers of £5.17 for 2 year olds and £4.08 for 3 – 4 year olds be agreed.

### 7. HIGH NEEDS BLOCK

Questions and comments regarding the High Needs Block were invited.

- 7.1 It was noted that pupil numbers at Medina House are planned to increase to 83 following public consultation.
- 7.2 Forum members questioned the level of ongoing monitoring that takes place of SEN student study programmes at post-16 providers funded through the high needs budget, and the outcomes achieved.

**Action – Chris Jones to be asked for further information at the next meeting.**

**Invite Philip Walker - Head of Island Futures or Andrew Briggs – Post 16 Funding & Commissioning Manager to the next meeting on 10 May 2018**

- 7.3 The estimated overspend of £315,000 on top up funding for pupils with EHCPs in maintained schools and academies could increase if more EHCPs are issued.
- 7.4 The overall £568,000 expected overspend in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) as noted in item 6.1 requires approval of the Schools Forum to carry forward to the next financial year. Considerable work has been undertaken when setting the 2018/19 budget to reduce the pattern of overspending in the High Needs Block and the current budgeted position includes a contingency budget of £51,000 which, if savings are achieved as planned, will be used to reduce the deficit carried forward.

The DSG outturn is reported to DfE annually, who are currently reviewing the criteria for intervention in DSG balances. Previously the DfE would only intervene if the deficit was more than 2% of the overall DSG (i.e. -£1.8m for the 2017/18 Isle of Wight).

- If forum members do not agree carry forward of the deficit, the LA would have the right to appeal to the DfE to change the decision, and would do so.
- 7.5 Members were concerned that the deficit has been increasing in recent years and may continue. If the deficit were not agreed, some members argued it would send a message to the DfE and present a stronger case for action on the level of high needs block funding, as they would have to review the LA's case to overrule the forum.
- 7.6 If agreement is not given for the deficit to be carried forward, the deficit will revert to the LA's children's services budget, and savings would have to be made from social care and LA education services in order to balance the budget. Whilst the Schools Forum may wish to take a moral stand, it would lead to more pressure on individual school budgets and in turn affect school results. These additional savings would likely reduce the services available for children in care, and/or the support for schools through school improvement, education welfare and other LA education services, impacting on school budgets and potentially children's outcomes.
- 7.7 The LA budget for Children's Services is on track to come in around budget, but this has been achieved through making considerable savings and cuts. Further reductions would have a negative impact on schools and children. If members were to reject the carry forward, it would erode confidence of the LA to manage the position across several years and would incentivise responding to any future overspend with in-year management action, which would be likely to impact on school budgets without advance warning and the ability to plan.
- 7.9 If only part of the deficit were carried forward and the remainder met by the LA, there would still be an impact on the children's services budget.
- 7.10 Scrutiny of the High Needs budget and the work that has been carried out to identify savings for 2018/19 were aimed at reducing the pattern of increasing deficit. Although this has affected schools, there is no control over the number of children who meet the criteria and must be given EHCPs. Statutory needs have to be met.
- 7.11 It was noted that the IOW has 3.5% children with EHCPs against a national average of 2.9%. However, through substantial effort the LA expects to meet the deadline of 31 March 2018 for completion of converting all previous statements to EHCPs.
- 7.12 Members agreed that it is an untenable situation. Schools are required to set 3-year budget plans and are responsible for the provision for all children, including those with SEN. There is no immediate fix. Members were informed of proposals for a national review of alternative provision.
- 7.13 It was explained that the agreed savings should help to reduce the deficit by £51,000. The deficit will sit on the balance sheet and enable an in-year balanced budget which is sustainable in future years. Balances are monitored by DfE and the Isle of Wight will be shown as 'In Deficit' along with many other LAs. If the carry forward is not agreed, the LA will show as having a balanced schools budget in monitoring by the DfE and others.
- 7.14 The actions taken to achieve savings and reduce the deficit show confidence in working with headteachers and maintaining services as far as possible, while managing and gradually eroding the deficit over some years.
- 7.15 The focus has been on the High Needs Block which has the greatest effect on the Schools Budget and the most flexibility. The Early Years Block has little

effect, as 95% of the funding received has to be distributed to providers through the funding formula, and 99.5% of the Schools Block is ring-fenced to growth and individual school budgets.

- 7.16 As noted in the [November 2017](#) meeting, Schools Forum agreed to transfer funding into the High Needs Block. This is not ongoing, but a decision that is made year on year.
- 7.17 11 maintained schools expect to be in deficit (approx. 25%) and the situation is escalating. The LA is working with headteachers, school business managers, chairs of governors and dioceses to support these schools in developing a recovery plan. It was agreed that this will be a difficult year for all schools. Individual school budgets that are in deficit do not affect the DSG deficit.
- 7.18 Whilst budgets are in deficit, costs including salaries, resources and equipment continue to rise.

*Matthew Parr-Burman entered the Meeting at 9.55am*

- 7.19 The number of schools in deficit is increasing nationally. Schools should review staffing structures and the balance of management roles. The LA is working with governing boards to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities to monitor the school budget and ask appropriate questions. Conversations have to be more intensive and challenge is important.
- 7.20 Pupil numbers in Year R (Reception) are low for the forthcoming year, though this will have a low impact on the High Needs budget which is based on the wider population. Fewer pupils will mean less money and more schools likely to go into deficit.
- 7.21 Nationally, the number of home-schooled children is increasing and has an effect on the DSG. The current figure on the IOW is 394 and has not increased. Members were informed that the majority of home-schooled children are known to the LA, thanks to good community awareness.
- 7.21 Members asked for an update on plans for joint procurement of off-island education placements. A target of £150,000 has been set and work is underway in setting up the procurement team to review these placements. There is confidence that this team will be able to reduce the overall cost of placements, and the necessity of ongoing placements is already being considered at key review points.

**Action – An update to be brought to the next meeting on 10 May 2018**

- 7.22 It was confirmed that SEN savings/cuts that impact on the IW Council budget are included in the budget paper presented to Full Council.

**RESOLVED :**

THAT the 2017/18 deficit, currently estimated at £568,000 be carried forward into 2018/19.

- 8. **SCHOOL FUNDING POLICIES** [PAPER D](#) and [APPENDIX A](#)

BH explained minor amendments and/or updates to policies. The overall content of most policies remains unchanged, with the exception of the cap on school EHCP spend.

- 8.1 **GROWTH FUND**

Updated in line with latest operational guidance. Changes to the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU). An additional paragraph to clarify the criteria for allocation of the fund.

If a school elects to change its PAN or is under PAN, they do not qualify for growth funding for additional pupils.

## 8.2 FALLING ROLLS

Updated in line with operational guidance and amended figures in the example.

## 8.3 CONTINGENCY

Effectively, this policy is currently obsolete, as maintained schools have chosen not to de-delegate funding for contingency.

## 8.4 SPLIT SITES

No change.

## 8.5 CAP ON SEN SPEND

School spend on pupils with EHCP capped at 5% rather than 3% of the school budget – example updated. Other minor corrections.

## 8.6 OVER OCUPANCY

Updated to show changes in place funding for resourced provision where average pupil numbers are greater than the Agreed Place Number (APN).

## 8.7 SCHEME FOR FINCANCING SCHOOLS

The scheme is currently under review and will be revised in line with DfE guidance. Consultation with schools is expected to take place over approximately 3 – 4 weeks to coincide with a headteachers' forum meeting.

### RESOLVED :

1. THAT the revised Schools Funding Policy Pack be agreed.
2. THAT the pending updated Scheme for Financing Schools be noted.

## 6. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Schools Forum has been arranged to take place **Thursday 10 May 2018 – 8.30am** at Westridge Community learning Centre.

## 7. DATES OF FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Thursday 19 July 2018

Thursday 18 October 2018

Thursday 13 December 2018

Thursday 17 January 2019

Thursday 21 March 2019

**8.30am start, all at**

**Westridge Community Learning Centre, Brading Road, Ryde PO33 1QS**

The meeting closed at 11.00am

CHAIR