

## Schools Forum Meeting Minutes - DRAFT - held on the 14 July 2016 at The Avenue

### PRESENT

Charles Clare (Chair)	Headteacher, Geoffrey Fields Junior
Lisa Bedlow	Headteacher, Caversham and Newbridge nurseries
Cathy Doberska	Headteacher, New Christchurch
Isabelle Sandy	School Business Manager, Kendrick
Justine McMinn	Headteacher, EP Collier
Sue Bourne	Headteacher, The Avenue
Joan Boyd	NUT
Rachel Cave	Highdown
Dorothy Company	Highdown
Mandy Wilton	Cranbury College
John Cosgrove	Headteacher, Christ the King (RC) School
Yvonne Jackson	Headteacher, Wilson School

### RBC

Russell Dyer	Corporate Finance Business Partner
Steven Davies	Finance
John Wood	RBC
Sheila Reynolds	SEN
Dan Neal	RBC

### APOLOGIES

Peter Kayes	Governor, Redlands
Eileen McElligott	Governor, English Martyrs
Julie Kempster	Riverside Day Nursery
John Casey	Blessed Hugh Faringdon
Viv Angus	Reading Girls School
Nicola Maytum	JMA
Cllr Tony Jones	Lead Councillor

---

### 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- Welcome
- Apologies noted

### 2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12<sup>th</sup> MAY 2016

- On page 3 a proposed future forum meeting date is actually the 6<sup>th</sup> not the 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016
- Vacancies as noted still outstanding; SD advises that in October the groupings of School's Forum will be reviewed/looked at

### 3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES/ SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP ISSUES (STANDING ITEM)

- No matters arising

### 4. 2015/16 DSG PROVISIONAL OUTTURN & BUDGET MONITORING 2016/17/ REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Presented by RD

- DSG 14/16 - RBC external auditor Auditors currently doing an audit but outturn position is unchanged from that reported at last meeting

- Up to section 6 in the provided document nothing has changed from last meeting
- Section 7 of the report is budget the monitoring side for DSG; pressure of £3.6m from the high cost block
- £1.2 m deficit from 2015/16 which unable to fund therefore carried forward into 2016/17
- Nothing specific to report on Schools Block and Early Years Block
- Funding from Early Years bought forward is already allocated
- There is a risk of schools converting to Academies leaving deficits. It is unlikely that this will transfer unless in a formal loan
- Section 10 - Growth Fund Working Party, suggestion to have a lump sum to top up the Growth Fund (either revenue or capital) and formalising the contingency scheme for less than full classes; agreed to some modelling work and meet prior to the next schools forum
- Growth Fund is not related to capital and more to revenue costs

### Schools to apply to the Growth Fund

#### St Martins

- St Martins requesting transitional funding
- Appendix attached outlines sum of £15k; class have not filled to expected size
- St Martins the expansion is increasing their class sizes from 24 to 30. The school had a brand new class room built however are not able to meet the 30 students per class quota but still need the staff member (further discussions will be held around schools that have had expansions that are not meeting the required numbers)
- Part of the issue with St Martins moved from 20 intake to a school intake of 30; Children will need to come in at different ages; present year 6 is 26 but the year 5 has only 20; they need 30 in each year group; 5 years ago 5 classes and now they have 7
- **Action** - Request Headteacher to bring this back agenda for the next schools forum

#### Highdown School

- Application for falling rolls fund. LA had some issues about PAN and financial evidence which could be addressed.
- Primaries to Secondary's- change to plan earlier as an academy
- EFA pushing Highdown to liaise with Schools Forum; EFA are directing Highdown for 2016 and growth for 2017
- Potentially 80-90k
- If school in same situation if not academy would it be the same? Yes but maintained school would get 7 months
- Schools Forum Growth fund request approved for Highdown September 2016

## **5. SCHOOLS BALANCES 2015/16**

### **Presented by: RD**

- Schools Forum have asked schools why they are holding excess balances
- Associated to Revenue
- Associated to Capital
- Based upon the information that has come back have asked the School Improvement Service and Education Assets to feedback on the excess balances and to comment
- Schools who were on the list on the previous year have been highlighted
- It is the decision of the Schools Forum to claw back excess balances and not the Local Authority
- Excess balances can be used for capital needs

- Potential issue of more conversions to Academy; this would be different if schools were forced to Academy
- A criteria for claw back excess balances should have been in place previously
- 8% primaries and 5% secondary's
- Suggestion to bring the schools in to be held more to account?
- Academies are not subject to this however have to explain this to EFA
- DN and JW are going to circulate some questions that they are going to ask in respect of excess balances - particularly with excess in previous years
- **Action:** Schools Forum to look at schools that have excess and the schools that have excess that have further increased
- **Action:** Asks further question for all schools excess balances; e.g. have the works taken place and can this be evidenced? (have they spent what they said they were going to spend)

## **6. HIGH NEEDS BLOCK UPDATE (VERBAL)**

### **Presented by: JW**

- Report shared from the working group
- £3.6 m overspend
- Whilst opportunities for saving money had been identified the reality is that in the short - medium term little claw-back can happen
- Current level of spend will increase the deficit will reduce
- The reduction will not occur till 2021 - the reason for this is the extension of age range (18 to 25); assessments/statements post +19; budgets have not reflected this
- Next step is to recognise this is a lengthy process and need to deal with some fundamental issues with SEN
- Outside consultant looking at Children Services
- Since April process improvement, service integration and closer working with other local authorities and health sector. Looking at things like the resourcing panels
- There are issues with transitions from children to adults; conflicts around what to do with children when they turn 19 as this has an impact
- Work being done on Data - send out the range of indicators document
- Nationally overall SEN is reducing but those with statements are increasing; the needs are more complex; ASD continues to go up
- The ones requiring statements are needed more support (needs more complex)
- Reading are net exporters out of borough with no SEN and in contrast Wokingham and West Berks are net importers
- Independent sector is where the High Cost is
- Opportunities lends itself at an early intervention stage
- The figure will not change in a short period of time
- SB - this area has 3 specialist school available in Reading which is unusual;
- When the work was done last year to identify opportunities for savings, some targets were realistic and some did not hit the timescales originally outlined
- There isn't enough resources in mainstream schools so parents are opting for more specialist schools; this is also about mainstream provision that is available
- The Avenue - the void is getting wider with the complexity of the children to those that are more able; cost is not only on the education budget but also the schools transport budget too
- Increase complexity of need at the Avenue - mainstream schools in Reading are going to have to manage higher needs
- ASD is going up and the provision of resource does not reflect this
- Value in Care analysis (submitted in September/October and completed in December); the costs were looked at forensically;

- Future - Contracts are not just about Reading; review/report is being produced but is not ready to be circulated
- Local stuff but need to also work with neighbours as cannot work in isolation
- **ACTION:** Feedback required for the Value in Care analysis undertaken

#### **7. PROPOSED DATES/TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

- Thursday 6 October 2016 at 5pm
- Thursday 8 December 2016 at 5pm
- Thursday 12 January 2017 at 5pm
- Thursday 16 March 2017 at 5pm
- Thursday 11 May 2017 at 5pm
- Thursday 13 July 2017 at 5 pm

#### **8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- RD will be leaving RBC for a new post with the London Borough of Southwark; Best wishes to RD