



Minutes

Name of meeting

Schools' Forum

Date and time

Friday 9 March 2012 – 9am

Venue

Medina College

Present

Janet Giles **JG**
Cllr Dawn Cousins **DC**
David Whistance **DW**
Jonathan Russell (Chair) **JR**
Katherine Marshall **KM**
Nathan Thomas (Vice Chair) **NT**
Sue Holman **SH**
Penny Codd **PC**
Gill Andrew **GA**
Beverly Gilbert **BG**
Iain Vickers **IV**
Phillipa Read **PR**
Issi Lambert (Minute Taker) **IL**

Observers

Ray Mundell
Cllr M Webster
Donna Ratcliff

1.

Apologies:

Urszula Topp
Janet Newton
Ingrid Ramsdale-Capper

Brenda Dyer
Sara Sheath
Roland White

2.

Declarations of Interest

None

3.

Minutes of the last meeting – 20th January 2012

Agreed as a true record

4.

Matters Arising (For Discussion)

A discussion around appointing specialist post for procurement, a detailed job description had been finalised to go out to advert. Once appointed the post will be kept separate from procurement so there is no conflict. A question was asked regarding the provision of technical expertise for schools to put into their contracts and the Forum was informed that the LA do have a specialist in the Client Monitoring Officer who is available to give advice. Concern was expressed that schools do not have a sense of true cost of current contract and how it works, so they felt they were working in the dark. JG explained that a spreadsheet which showed the total cost of providing school meals on the island and delegated funds had been circulated to all business managers and bursars. The Forum was informed that the LA makes no contribution it is all covered by buy back and includes money for FSM and lump sum for smaller Primaries that bring in less than 30k

which would ensure they were not tied to LA contract. There is also an element for maintenance and kitchen tools and equipment and for the Client Monitoring officer. JG offered to re-circulate the spreadsheet if required. The Chair suggested that schools contact the Procurement team, the Client Monitoring officer or JG to raise individual questions/ concerns.

5.

Updates – Janet Giles

Protocol for Forum Meetings/Agenda (For Approval)

DFE Schools' Forums Operational and Good Practice Guidance paper tabled.

- A meeting is only quorate if 40% of total voting membership is present (this excludes any observers, and it is 40% of the current membership excluding any vacancies).
- Substitutes can vote on your behalf.
- Members who express an interest cannot vote, point checked with our Corporate Governance Manager Chris Matthews
- JG welcomed Observers but would ask that prior notice is given if you are attending as it helps us to prepare and be aware of who is coming, welcome them and make provision for them. Please inform either the chair or clerk
- We would like you to let us know a week before the meeting AOB, what questions you want to ask to allow us to research and answer the questions fully.

There is an obligation to think about the bigger picture and fairness and equality, this is not the right place to champion your school, a very good point was made at last meeting about having a bigger picture of funding and where money is coming from and if money was used then what would suffer. A balanced budget will be produced for next meeting. Total indicative DSG needs to be verified by DFE and if pupils have not been counted correctly you will see an adjustment. This variation came out of central budget last time and if there is a variation in our favour it is put in. We will lose an amount for academies which DFE will remove from our budget around 11/12 million however if during the course of the year a school becomes an academy we will need to proportion that money and give back to DFE. Question around if a school decides to become an academy we negotiate with DFE and funding is based on pupils so if you get above and beyond does that come out of schools funding. What happens is academies are funded on academic year, DFE look at how last year was calculated and replicate formula and calculate for our academies. Law has changed so academies can claim back vat and rates and insurances but very little additional funding goes in. There is no financial benefit to schools becoming an academy. Pension liability government have picked up on that and have instructed academies to be able to pool with LA and be charged the same rate of 22%. We still calculated the pension deficit, the LA bears the risk.

Pupil Premium Grant (For information)

JG tabled the paper. Additional information to Conditions of grant, if a

school permanently excludes a child we will take away the remaining pupil premium grant as it follows the child. LAC - Gary Booth, Virtual Headteacher, will be responsible for the allocation of this grant.

A question was raised about what happens if they move to home education, the funding stays with the school. It is quite a tough one to manage. Academies also get PPG, and they are allowed to attract FSM. No say with academies but for LAC we do.

2012/2013 School Budgets

JG tabled the paper. Any negative variation from the minimum funding guarantee needs to be recorded in the minutes when discussed and a dated copy sent to the DFE. Unsure how the NFF will impact on schools on the Island, big winners and big losers, they are keen to help deprived areas. They will operate a floors and ceilings over the 3 years. A spreadsheet was circulated to all bursars and business managers. **JG** asked for approval

Questions:

- Numbers we have coming in, when is the cut off for that - January census. If your yr11 going out is significantly lower we can look at that in September.
- Is there a reverse of that - there is no provision in regulations to allow for taking money away.
- The contingencies set up from re-organisation will there be anything left - will confirm once budget completed, everyone should run on formula budget which will be looked at

DW Proposed **PC** Seconded, 10 for.

6.

AOB

CIPFA conference attended by JG where an update was given on DFE plans for National Funding Formula. A paper will be written on this but they are looking at a simple formula based on lump sum for pupil, deprivation, area costs and sparsity and that is all, IOW has not done well in past on area costs or sparsity. They were clear on balance is critical. A comment was made that this is very surprising given troubled families and deprivation on the island, this is an issue for the MP. **JG** LA and Forum work together on agreeing and simplifying NFF, we calculate the same for academies, they want earlier notification of budgets but the timetable goes against that. Must make most funding pupil led, any variation from pupil led should be unavoidable, we will be required to pull together a draft proposal for our simplified local FF within their constraints, then fill in proforma and send to education funding agency, they will decide if it is compliant with their rules, arrangement for high needs will be published in summer term and we will have to tweak our formula, come back and agree it and send back to education funding agency. They are planning on using October census and by December they will send verified data to schools to allow us to calculate our local funding formula. Details of timetable for review were passed around. We only have 3.6 staff to manage this. As soon as I have further detail I will share it with you. Comments made, this will have a significant impact on our budgets. Are we going to be able to demonstrate the impact on schools across the island on a

spreadsheet based on the indicators. Within the parameters try to minimise winners and losers. DFE are expecting smaller schools to work as federations which is why they introduced the one budget for LA to approve for federations. Even amalgamated across two sites you are not seeing any benefit. Some schools looked at it last year but there was too little time. Back office function amalgamation was the best saving but not enough to make a difference. Look at funding this year and apply a negative funding formula. We cannot move on this until the DFE publishes. Equivalence between specialist and mainstream. **SH** context for special schools there was funding talked about in green paper. **JG** they were not mentioned, very uneasy that this information is not being given to us. When we first talked about NFF the forum decided that we would have a small working group that JG would work with, is that still how you want to go ahead and if so please contact **IL** if you are interested in being on that group. **DC** You understand the context of wider budgets, there are strange things happening to money coming down i.e. 100k for English Heritage to teach history to schools, etc. LA is being squeezed and I think it is important for you to have a deep understanding of what is happening in the wider context as these things have an impact on what we are all doing, this is one presentation we have not had through the strategic board, it may be helpful for you to have this information. **DW** funding streams are so fragmented. **DC** one could argue why was the money not given to schools, the way money is being passported down is very fragmented but we still have great responsibility for poverty, etc. A question was raised about what was happening with the Music Service and if it comes under Schools Forum remit. There is a white paper out and there is a significant funding cut from government. The LA no longer provide a subsidy to music service. Because funding is reducing significantly and money from parents is not reaching a level necessary to meet the funding we did a review independently. The cabinet recommends consultation so please read the report as we value the service but what do we do about it. It is not the case that we are just scrapping it. White paper recently said what an amazing link there is to achievement. The structure has not moved i.e. prices have not moved. New guidance around the music hubs are being looked at. One of the problems is that schools are saying can we really afford this, does it fit our budget and if they are given the opportunity to opt out then they will and the children will be big losers as a result. Increase in some of SLA charges is a concern and is making it too expensive for schools to support the LA. LA services were instructed to move to full cost recovery. Some confusion at Primary Heads i.e. WFD spoke to us and some of the money has moved. Sarah Teague's team will provide all training. SLA's all published at schools market day and there have been no changes.

Term of office on Schools' Forum for both Early Years sectors is due to end for Brenda Dyer and Phillippa Read in April 2012. . **ACTION IL** to e-mail Gill Pink to send out a message to all PVI's that we need two more volunteers.

Meeting closed at 10.55am

7.

Future Meeting dates & Venues:

- **Friday 4th May 2012 Cowes Enterprise College**
- **Friday 6th July 2012 Medina College, Newport**

Future Planning meeting dates @ Cowes Enterprise College:

- **Friday 20th April 2012**
- **Friday 22nd June 2012**