

Bristol Schools' Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 28th March 2017
at 18.15 hrs at City Hall

Present:

Jamie Barry	Headteacher, Parson Street Primary
Ebrima Bojang	Governor, Summerhill Academy
Victoria Boomer	Headteacher, Oasis Academy John Williams
Karen Brown	Governor, St Mary Redcliffe & Temple
Yvonne Craggs	Governor, Elmlea Infants School
Graham Diles	Deputy Headteacher, St Mary Redcliffe & Temple
Alan Gould	Governor, Fairfield High
Mary-Jane Hinchliffe	Headteacher, St Annes Infants
Tracy Jones	Headteacher, Bannerman Road Primary
Aileen Morrison	Headteacher, St Matthias Park
Cllr Ruth Pickersgill	Governor, Rosemary Nursery
Carew Reynell (Chair)	Governor, Henbury Secondary
Cedric Sanguignol	Governor Representative, Bishop Road Primary
Christine Townsend	Governor, Whitehall Primary
David Yorath	Governor, Cotham School
Wendy Weston	Support Staff Representative, GMB
Michelle Wills	Representative, Teaching Professionals

In attendance:

Billy Forsythe	Clerk to Schools Forum
Paul Jacobs	Service Director, Education & Skills
Annette Jones	Head of Specialist Education & Access
Wendy Welsh	Corporate Finance
Travis Young	Corporate Finance

Observers:

Maeve Hedge, Lorna Stephenson

Item	Action
1. Welcome and introductions The Chair opened the meeting at 18:15	
2. Forum standing business Apologies Received from Claire Banks, Tim Browse, Jo Butler, Colin Butterworth, Marion Curran, Lindsey Fuller, Sam Packer, Alastair Perry, Dan Reed, Anne Rutherford, Paul Smith, Jane Carter, Clare Pring & Chris Pring Clerk confirmed meeting was quorate. New member – Jane Carter has joined as a Unison delegate.	

Vacancies: Sarah Rupprecht has stepped down as Primary Academy representative. Request for a new governor has been issued to Academies. There is still a vacancy for the Clifton Diocese. Sarah was thanked for her valued contribution to the Forum.	
No declarations of interest were expressed.	
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 10th January Minutes of the meeting were accepted as accurate.	
Matters arising: Item 6 – Inclusion membership has been circulated. PJ advised that de-delegation of BIS funding is with the Inclusion service and the focus has been on Primary behaviour. The service is working closely with school leaders to develop a sustainable model for supporting behaviour. PJ confirmed that there is an anomaly with rates and this is a national issue. Special schools are exempt from rates but PRUs and Nurseries have to pay. Item 5 - WWeston asked if LA has challenged the DfE on their response. PJ advised that the DfE has declined to provide the funding we think we are owed. Another LA with a similar issue has been funded. BCC is still pursuing. DY asked what the timescale was for the admissions inquiry. PJ confirmed it would go to Scrutiny in May.	
4. Correspondence None.	
5. Strategic Overview PJ gave an overview covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education Policy – waiting to hear from government re clarification of role of LA & also role of Regional Schools Commissioner. PJ & Cllr Hiscott met with Education Minister Nick Gibb re funding formula and the minister made it clear that strongest lobby is for core city funding to be cut.• Sufficiency of places – PJ gave data on % of secondary first choices met. S Bristol schools have places and there is a need to help schools show parents that they have improved to overcome historical misconceptions. Specialist provision is being mapped to look at where the places are and where the pupils live to try to ensure local provision where possible.• Education Services – The Education Services Grant has been cut this year and Council has agreed to subsidise for one year to allow the services to be remodelled for 2018/19. A Strategic Briefing is planned for May to provide more details for schools.	

MJH asked which services would be reduced in 2018/19. PJ advised that the core service will reduce and work is in train to create a clear offer. TwS will continue to offer a traded service. More information will be shared at the Strategic Briefings in May Issue of grammar schools was raised but government intentions are unclear. JB asked about secondary admissions and if the LA was funding the growth of schools outside Bristol through the growth fund policy. PJ confirmed that the fund is only for Bristol children and this is a lever the LA has as will only provide growth funding for Bristol children.	
6. Growth Fund Update WW introduced the report. DY queried the costings as Primary figures do not seem to apply to Secondary and the cost could be higher than reported. In 4.3 it refers to KS4 – is this correct? Also the offer for Y2 needs to be clearer. WW will provide examples of how it will work over a number of yrs. AM asked how the growth fund differentiated between basic need and popularity when schools are over-subscribed. PJ advised that the LA has to juggle parental preference and basic need. We have to meet an element of parental choice while trying to support schools with places. Current policy is limited to schools who agree to increase their pan numbers at the request of the LA. CT added that for basic need expansion a school can claim growth fund and the opening para of 3 is clear but this sentence should be moved to the front of policy to make it clearer. Also in para 5 it suggests that PJ & CR could agree an expansion. It needs to add that they should report back to Forum to ensure transparency. In Section 4 it refers to “The main circumstances..” – the word “main” should be removed. The Forum agreed to endorse the policy with the suggested changes.	WW
7. Scheme for Financing Schools Update WW reported that the Scheme was brought to the Forum each year to endorse. WW outlined the amendments mostly relating to in year deficits: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4.4.2 - may not plan for a deficit;• 4.4.3 – schools with in-year deficits have to apply for approval;• 4.5.1 – deficit balance at end of year – has to be carried forward as a charge. Cannot have a cumulative deficit without approval;• 4.8.1 – balances of closing schools;• 4.9.3 – schools forecasting a deficit budget have to apply and work with LA ;• Annex updated with list of schools. DY referred to anomaly: 4.4.1 – may not write off a deficit but 4.81 – cannot write off a deficit. For schools under an academy order the LA keeps deficit but if the school applies	

<p>for an academy the school keeps the deficit. This needs to be clearer and WW will amend.</p> <p>Subject to the changes the Forum approved the scheme.</p>	WW
<p>8. High Needs Update</p>	
<p>PJ introduced the report and stressed that some tough decisions need to be taken as Top up is still on a trajectory to overspend and government policy on post 16 is increasing the pressure on overspend.</p>	
<p>4.1m overspend is projected by end of the year. The government has listened and the funding allocation is higher for 2017/18 which is welcome. However the LA needs to demonstrate to the EFA that they are attempting to pay back the deficit and to contain expenditure within budget available.</p>	
<p>AJ outlined the progress so far and sought views on the recommendations to reduce spending.</p>	
<p>Progress so far:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion Ref Group is gathering pace and 3 working groups have been set up; • Inclusion audit is underway – self evaluation for schools by schools; • Process re Top Up and finance is being clarified; • Access Strategy – need for a strategy linked to Equalities Act; • Continue to reduce Permanent Exclusions (PEX) at Secondary. Still a high number of young people moving into Alternative Learning Provision (ALP); • Have also implemented Primary early intervention based pilots and a base in each area operating with a focus on needs of local area. South has had 15 Primary PEX this year. This is an added pressure to high needs budget. 	
<p>Need to find, at least, £1.3m of savings and this is achievable if we look at a range of measures with smaller gains.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce cost of Primary spot places and Secondary places in ALP. • Reduce post 16 places in ALP by 50% • Reduce overspend in General Further Education • No further cuts to mainstream schools at this time. • Not reducing top up or number of panels. • Working with GFE to see what LA would contribute to top up and have a consistent model. • Review special school funding. • Reduce Independent Non Maintained placements. • 5.6 – draw attention to recommissioning a new framework. • Looking to reductions in other budget lines and in core staffing. 	
<p>The recommendations in 2.3.1 – 2.3.7 have been agreed with the Inclusion Group and if achieved would save £1.3m but leave a cumulative deficit of £4.1m.</p>	
<p>RP asked about the further education post 16 funding. Did SFA transfer over post 19 with no money and did the LA query this? PJ advised that there was no additional funding for post 19 to reflect additional places.</p>	
<p>VB added that the decision not to reduce Top Up in primary is fantastic and asked if we should look to reduce the pre 16 places at independent placements. PJ advised that</p>	

many pre 16 placements are generated by social care There were no further comments on the recommendations.	
9. Early Years Consultation Feedback SJ has sent her apologies and PJ presented her report. The Government requested consultation with the sector re 30 hrs and local funding formula. BCC issued a questionnaire and the report gives a summary of feedback – which is generally a positive response from providers. The challenge for private providers is that they make more money on private places rather than funded places. The sector is positive so will proceed with the base rate amounts set out and will work with sector on who is offering 30 hrs. Not clear how budgets will work out. RP asked for clarity re 50% of providers have capacity. PJ advised that we have to persuade re the capacity but cannot enforce. Parents will be the strongest persuaders as settings could lose customers for those settings who don't offer. There are challenges as business model will be impacted. Parents will be able to check their eligibility on the DfE website when it is up and running.	
JB asked if the decision to remove split site funding from Nurseries was a schools forum decision. PJ advised that this was an LA decision for Nurseries but a Forum decision re Primaries and Secondaries. Under the Early Years Single Funding Formula the LA does not have the funding or discretion to pay split site supplements.	PJ
MJH raised a concern that Nursery schools are being consulted and could potentially have to change their admissions policy mid year. PJ will check as there is an 18 month lead in for mainstream but for EY it is different.	PJ
A concern was raised that there is a moral aspect where places could be filled by middle class children at the expense of deprived children. PJ confirmed that this is a concern with the policy and LA would seek to influence the outcome.	
10. National Funding Formula Consultation PJ confirmed that this item had been covered by the Strategic Overview.	
11. AOB None	

The meeting closed at 19:50hrs