

# Public Document Pack

## MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING - TUESDAY, 11 OCTOBER 2016

### **Present:**

#### **Primary School Head Teachers/Representatives**

Ms J Hirst, Bispham Endowed (Chairman)  
Ms S Diver, Mereside

#### **Special School Head Teacher/Head Teacher Representative**

Mr C Andrew, Woodlands

#### **Academy School Representatives**

Mr S Brennand, Unity  
Ms J Carroll, Roseacre  
Mr M Gray, Waterloo  
Ms T Harrison, Thames  
Mr D Medcalf, St Georges  
Ms W Casson, Pupil Referral Unit

#### **Non-Schools Members**

Ms A Baines, Staff/Teacher Associations  
Mr D Dickinson, Staff/Teacher Associations  
Mr R Rendell, Early Years Strategic Group

### **In Attendance:**

Councillor Cain, Cabinet Secretary (Resilient Communities)  
Ms L Donkin, Public Health Specialist  
Mr M Golden, Finance Manager  
Mr P Sharples, Schools Funding and PFI Manager  
Mr P Turner, Schools Safeguarding Advisor (ITEM 6)  
Mr C Williams, Democratic Governance Adviser (Minutes)  
Mrs H Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources.

### **1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Ms Delyth Curtis, Director of People, Mr Graeme Dow, Anchorsholme Academy and Ms Cathy Butterworth, Primary School Governor.

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interests on this occasion.

### **3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 21 JUNE 2016**

The minutes of the Schools Forum held on 21 June 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to a change on page 8 to the title of the group known as the Early Years Strategic Group.

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### 4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minute 8: It was noted that the second stage of the consultation on the future of school funding had been delayed. The authority had also not yet received any feedback from the Department for Education regarding the case put forward for the historic commitment to the contribution to Blackpool Children's Centres, and once the outcome was known, Mrs Wood would update the Forum.

Minute 12: Ms L Donkin, Public Health Specialist was in attendance in response to a request from the previous meeting for a Public Health Department representative to attend future Forum meetings.

Ms Donkin advised that she was grateful to be a part of the Forum and added that she felt there were a number of school specific Public Health issues which could be discussed at future meetings such as childhood obesity and milk fluoridation. Ms Donkin also welcomed feedback from schools on the school breakfast scheme.

#### **Resolved:**

1. That a standing item entitled 'Public Health Update' be added to future Forum agendas.
2. Ms L Donkin to circulate a link to the Public Health Annual Report to all Forum members.

### 5 FORMAL REVIEW OF MEMBERSHIP AND CONSTITUTION

Mrs Wood described the context of the report. The Forum was advised that the Constitution required a review of membership at the first meeting of each academic year and that this should take into account the proportion of primary, secondary and academy representatives in order to ensure that the proportions remained representative of pupil numbers in each phase. Given changes to the distribution of the 11 mainstream primary, secondary and academy places there was a need to re-calculate the balance.

It was noted that the changes would mean there was no longer a Maintained Secondary School Headteacher representative position on the Forum. As a result, there would be an extra position added to the Academy School Headteacher element of the membership.

In response to a request from Councillor Cain, Mrs Wood agreed to change the wording of a small section within the Constitution to better reflect the attendance of relevant Councillors at future Forum meetings.

#### **Resolved:**

1. To agree to the proposed changes to the balance of representatives between primary, secondary and academy mainstream schools.
2. To agree to the continuation of arrangements in relation to the Constitution in respect of numbers of representatives from any federation, multi-academy trust or academy sponsor.
3. Mrs Wood to write to academy Headteachers to seek additional members to join the Forum from January 2017.

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4. To supplement the words 'Lead Member for Children's Services or Resources' on page 3 of the Constitution with appropriate wording to allow delegation of Councillor attendance to a relevant Cabinet Member at future Forum meetings.

### 6 SCHOOLS SAFEGUARDING ADVISOR

Mr P Turner provided an overview of his role as Schools Safeguarding Adviser and described some of the work he had been involved with over the last 12 months.

He explained that his role centred on providing help and advice to Blackpool school staff to enable them to more effectively safeguard the children who attend their schools. Mr Turner added that the position had allowed a degree of cross-agency working and a link into Blackpool Council's School Improvement Service. Members expressed concerns about the line management provision for the Schools Safeguarding Adviser and agreed that a discussion should be had about future arrangements.

The Forum noted that Mr Turner had helped to establish a potential revenue stream back into Schools Forum on an irregular basis through links that had been made with other Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) who paid for the services of the School Safeguarding Advisor in a consultancy capacity.

Mr Turner informed the Forum that a total of 30 Blackpool Schools and Colleges had engaged in an "audit" style activity that had allowed the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/ or the Headteacher to be guided through a self-assessment tool that looked at all the elements of safeguarding at their school.

It was reported that the Schools Safeguarding Advisor had represented Blackpool schools at Blackpool Safeguarding Strategic Board meetings and on the subgroups of the Board, in addition to representing schools in a more general capacity at The Blackpool Challenge Board.

The Schools Safeguarding Advisor had also gained accreditation as a Home Office WRAP3 trainer and had delivered training to 21 schools as twilight sessions. In addition, Mr Turner had supported a number of Blackpool Schools with their preparations for Ofsted inspections and audited and commented upon a number of documents and policies that had been provided by those settings. The Forum was advised that all Blackpool Schools who had been inspected in the 2015/ 2016 academic year, with the exception of one Academy, had had positive comments made about their Safeguarding and Child Protection work.

Mr Turner also reported that he had responded to and subsequently resolved a number of complaints in relation to safeguarding at certain Blackpool Schools received by Ofsted. In particular he had worked closely with Highfield Leadership Academy to improve safeguarding practice within that setting.

The Forum noted that Mr Turner had conducted various training courses and worked with a number of colleagues within the Authority and from partner agencies. As a result, stronger working relationships had led to links being developed within other

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organisations and other Safeguarding Boards including those in Trafford, Blackburn and Wigan.

Mr Turner thanked the Forum for funding the position of Schools Safeguarding Adviser and advised that in the next year of his tenure he would strive to promote the good practice in relation to safeguarding that was taking place across Blackpool.

The Chairman thanked Mr Turner for his hard work in the role and expressed personal thanks for the work he had done in support of her individual school setting. Members of the Forum echoed those sentiments and agreed that an item on the future of the School Safeguarding Advisor role should be brought to the January 2017 meeting.

### **Resolved:**

1. To note the update.
2. To receive a report on the future of the Schools Safeguarding Adviser role at the January 2017 Forum meeting.
3. Mrs Wood to discuss future line management options for the Schools Safeguarding Adviser with Ms Delyth Curtis, Director of People.

## **7 EVALUATION OF SCHOOLS AND EARLY YEARS ALLOCATIONS FROM RESERVES**

Mrs Wood presented the report and advised that in relation to Early Years Forum Bonus Money, in 2015/ 2016 and 2016/ 2017, allocations were made to nursery providers from DSG reserves accumulated through an underspend of two year old grant funding.

The Forum noted that during the financial year 2015/2016, a total funding amount of £846,000 was allocated. Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) settings each received £13,000, School nurseries each received £11,000 and Childminders each received £1,300. In addition, there were four blocks within which each provider could spend their allocation, namely: resources, renewals, repairs and additionality (human resource).

It was reported that information detailing the above amounts was sent from the Early Years and Childcare Team in March 2015 and they requested completion of a number of appendices to be returned by a specified date. Of those settings, all 33 Childminders completed and returned both Appendix A and Appendix B, all 16 School Nurseries returned Appendix A and 14 had returned Appendix B. Mrs Wood added that in relation to the two that had not returned paperwork, the Headteachers were aware. Two PVI chains and a further five settings also had not sent in returns. In response to a question about what was being done about those settings who had yet to return the completed appendices, Mrs Wood advised that the Primary School Improvement Officer was in the process of following this up.

In 2016/17, there was a further allocation to settings of half the amount distributed in the previous year. This year, settings have been able to use the funding for resources, renewals and repairs, and also to cover increased staffing costs resulting from rises in National Insurance contributions, National Living Wage, and pension costs. The use of allocations was being monitored through visits.

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With respect of funding for schools, the Forum was reminded that they had chosen to release £1.25 million in 2015/16 from the DSG reserves, with notional allocations within this for each school on a per pupil basis. Primary and special schools were required to submit plans for the proposed use of the funding and intended outcomes. All but two schools submitted the required information, and the impact was monitored through Schools Improvement Partner visits. It had been agreed that the Secondary element would be allocated to the Blackpool Challenge Partnership. Secondary Schools were asked to put together an action plan as part of their bid for funding allocation and the Blackpool Challenge Board had managed to attract additional funding through philanthropic partners to further support the work identified in those plans.

### **Resolved:**

1. Mrs Jean Martin, School Improvement Officer to follow up the points raised at section 3.5 and 5.3 of the report in relation to completion of outstanding paperwork related to a breakdown of monies spent.
2. Further evaluation of the impact of the Secondary School Action Plans and additional funding received from philanthropic partners to be brought to a future meeting.

## **8 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET MONITORING 2016/2017**

Mr Mark Golden presented the DSG Budget Monitoring report and advised that in terms of pressures, there were none within the Schools Block at the time of writing.

In response to a question about the figure related to staffing pressures on the Specialist Advisory and Referral Service (SARS), he added that he would look into the issue and report back at the next meeting.

A forecast underspend on the Illuminate budget was noted. Ms Harrison queried whether allocations were being made automatically when new to area pupils met the criteria, rather than schools having to apply for the funding, in accordance with a previous decision by Forum.

The Forum was advised that in terms of the Early Years Block, the speech and language budget had previously been overstated and that the revised figure represented a variance of £49,000. Ms Casson suggested that it would be beneficial to look more closely at Year 5 to Year 8 interventions for speech and language therapy. Mrs Wood informed the group that a commissioning review of speech and language therapy had been undertaken, and Forum would be informed of the outcome in due course.

Mr Golden advised that the total underspend to August 2016 was £11,000.

### **Resolved:**

1. Mr Golden to investigate the Specialist Advisory and Referral Service (SARS) staffing costs overspend.
2. Mrs Wood to look into the query regarding Illuminate funding.

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### 9 EARLY YEARS NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA

The Forum noted the contents of the Government's proposals on Early Years funding and the concerns raised by Blackpool Council in its response.

Mrs Wood provided background information relevant to the Early Years National Funding Formula. She reported that on 11 August 2016, the Department for Education launched a consultation entitled "An early years national funding formula – and changes to the way the three- and four-year-old entitlements to childcare are funded". The consultation ran for six weeks and closed on 22 September 2016.

A summary of the proposals and their impact on Blackpool was presented and the Forum noted that funding would be allocated to local authorities based on a national formula, with a base rate, additional needs factor (using Free School Meals, English as an Additional Language, and Disability Living Allowance), and Area Cost Reduction. Mrs Wood added that this would be introduced from April 2017 for the existing 15 hours and from September 2017 for the additional 15 hours. In addition, despite the injection of additional funding at national level, the proposals would see an overall reduction in Blackpool funding for three- and four-year-olds from £4.48 to £4.36 (a total reduction from £5,317,000 to £5,180,000). Given that there would be a limit on the amount the local authority could hold for central expenditure at seven per cent in 2017/ 2018 and five per cent thereafter, Blackpool currently retained approximately 17 per cent of the total three and four-year-old funding and the Forum was advised that this would necessitate a drastic reduction.

The Forum noted that the proposal was for the local formula to have a universal base rate for all providers from 2019/ 2020 at the latest and would involve the inclusion of a mandatory deprivation supplement. Mrs Wood advised that Blackpool's formula currently had three separate base rates for school nursery classes, PVI settings and childminders. Optional supplements would also be allowed for flexibility, efficiency, rurality, and delivery of the 30-hours entitlement and the total of supplements would not be able to exceed 10 per cent of the total rate. In addition, the proposals would see the removal of the quality supplement, which Blackpool uses to allocate funding to settings with an overall Ofsted judgement of outstanding, despite the fact that settings had reported that this had acted as an incentive for them to make improvements.

Mrs Wood then summarised Blackpool Council's response to the consultation. The Forum noted the main points which were:

- A request for a higher proportion of funding to be allocated through the deprivation factor, and for the use of the IDACI measure rather than free school meals data.
- An argument that the Area Cost Adjustment was having too great a redistributive effect, and was cancelling out or even reversing the impact of deprivation in the formula.
- A request for flexibility to allow central retention of higher proportions of funding, subject to local agreement.
- An argument to retain different base rates for different types of setting, in order to allow Ofsted requirements for qualifications and ratios to be reflected in the funding levels.

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- A request for retention of an optional quality supplement, and disagreement with the proposal for an efficiency supplement.
- Disagreement with the mandatory requirement to establish an Inclusion Fund, where other solutions for supporting children with SEND were working effectively.

Mrs Wood proposed that a working group be established to inform the proposals for Blackpool's formula, once the final details and funding levels had been made available by the Department for Education. It was also suggested that the working group be made up of members from the Early Years Strategic Group, supported by Council officers as necessary.

It was reported that the Council was still reviewing its options and it was hoped that further details on a possible Council service offer would be available at the same time as a local consultation, in order for providers to have detailed information about the impact the changes might have for them.

The Forum praised the report author and the response to the consultation that had been prepared. In addition, it was agreed that a progress report be brought to the next meeting of the Schools Forum in January 2017, with final details of the proposed local formula to be considered at the March 2017 meeting, in time for implementation from April 2017.

### **Resolved:**

1. To note the contents of the Government's proposals on Early Years funding and the concerns raised by Blackpool Council in its response.
2. To agree to the establishment of a working group consisting of members of the Early Years Strategic Group and relevant Council officers to inform the development of Blackpool's Early Years funding formula for 2017/ 2018, once the final details had been released by the Department for Education.
3. A progress report to be brought to the January 2017 Forum meeting.

## **10 SCHOOLS AND HIGH NEEDS FUNDING FORMULA CONSULTATION**

It was noted that following a delay in the second stage of the Schools and High Needs Block consultation, there was currently nothing further to report.

The Forum noted the update.

## **11 ACADEMY UPDATE**

Mrs Wood advised that Mereside School was planning to convert to academy status as part of the Fylde Coast Academy Trust (FCAT), and Ms Diver confirmed that the anticipated conversion date was 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016. In relation to the free school development on the former Arnold School site, a request from FCAT for an increase in provision from 700 to 800 pupils in the secondary phase had been approved by the Department for Education. Forum members questioned the need for additional primary school places in the south of the town. Ms Wood informed the group that the local authority's information identified that there was a future requirement for additional school places but that the shortfall in primary places was not predicted for another few

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years. The report also identified that the need for places was probably greater in the central and north areas of Blackpool rather than in the south of the town. This information had been shared with the Department for Education as part of the consultation process for the new school.

It was reported that a public forum was in the process of being arranged by union officials to discuss opposition to the proposed free school in South Shore.

### **Resolved:**

Ms Tracey Harrison to circulate information regarding a public forum meeting to discuss opposition to the proposed free school on the former Arnold School site, once details had been finalised.

## **12 LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE**

Mrs Wood reported that a proposal to begin demolition on the site of the former Bispham High School had been approved by the Council's Executive. It was noted that vandalism and trespassing had occurred at the site following the schools closure.

The Forum was informed that Blackpool had been awarded Opportunity Area Status and as a result would be eligible for a share in a total amount of £60m in funding with a number of other towns and cities.

The Forum noted the update.

## **13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members noted that the date of the next meeting would be Tuesday 10 January 2017.

### **Chairman**

(The meeting ended at 11:10am)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:

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