

Minutes of Schools Forum Meeting held on 18th May 2017 at The Avenue Centre, Reading

Present: Peter Kayes - Governor of Ridgeway (Chair)
 Charles Clare - Head of Geoffrey Field Juniors (Vice Chair)
 Emma Payne - Head of Blagrove Nursery
 Jean Read - Governor of Caversham Nursery
 Justine McMinn - Head of EP Collier
 Yvonne Jackson - Head of Wilson School
 John Cosgrove - Head of Christ the King
 Tonia Crossman - Head of Emmer Green
 Leo Gilbert - Head of Reading Girls
 Simon Uttley - Head of Blessed Hugh
 Rachel Cave - Head of Highdown
 Dorothy Company - Business Manager of Highdown
 Laura Ellenor - Head of JMA
 Ali McNamara - Trades Unions
 Mandy Wilton - Head of Cranbury

RBC: Chris Kiernan - Head of Education
 Steven Davies - Principal Education and Schools Accountant

Notes: Hayley Broadhurst

Apologies: Jo Budge (Emma Payne substituting)

STANDING ITEMS

1.	Welcome and Apologies	
	PK welcomed everyone to the meeting	
2.	Minutes of the meeting held on 12th Jan & 16th March 2017	
	The revised minutes for the meeting held on the 12 th January were agreed Myles Milner's name updated correctly on minutes from 16 th March and these were agreed	
3.	Matters Arising from the minutes school forum	
	Members raised a query in relation to minute 5.6 from 12 th January concerning whether the school improvement service would be providing all the services for which the £233k de-delegation had been approved. CK agreed to bring a paper to the July meeting to clarify the position. The Schools Forum formula sub-group had not as yet met (Minutes from 16 th March)	
4.	DSG Budget	
	SD took members through the paper and referred to page 2 item 5.1, with an overall deficit of £3.2m. In addition to the £1.2m deficit carried forward from the previous year, the High Needs block was £2.0m overspent, the Schools block £0.2m overspent and Early Years had a £0.2m underspend. The overall position was better than the £3.9m cumulative deficit forecast but was nevertheless not sustainable.	

	<p>SD asked all how members would like the table to be presented going forward, should the figures continue to be shown as separate numbers or all total figures as one. Overall confirmed answer was to be kept as a separate figures showing each area to as table is shown now.</p> <p>Analysis of what is happening within High Needs will be started by CK, CK to report back in July with a update.</p> <p>SD reminded all schools budgets for 17-18 should be sent to him by tomorrow.</p> <p>Schools forum members noted the content of the report.</p>	
5.	Application For Growth Funding	
	<p>An application for growth fund support in 2017-18 from Highdown School had been circulated. Highdown is a growing school. This presents the difficulties of lagged funding with the requirement to staff and accommodate learning for increased numbers for 2017 start.</p> <p>Therefore Highdown is applying to Forum for finance for the 30 new places already discussed last year from growth fund (funding as per option A of Growth fund review October 2016). Highdown meets all criteria set out for growth fund as it is in a planned response to need discussed with the LA. This request is in line with the agreement reached in principle last year. Schools Forum members agreed to this request.</p> <p>The second part of the Highdown submission concerned the impact of the possible closure of Chiltern Edge School and would be brought back to the July Schools Forum.</p>	
6.	Maintained School Balances 2016-2017	
	<p>SD Informed the Schools’ Forum about the provisional school balances at the end of the financial year ended 31st March 2017. To seek guidance from Schools’ Forum regarding schools that held excess surplus balances in the context of the balance control mechanism.</p> <p>Schools Forum members noted the increasing numbers of schools struggling to run balanced budgets and with shrinking surpluses in reserves to carry forward as a consequence of funding not keeping pace with inflation and other increased costs placed on schools.</p> <p>It was noted that the guidance on excess balances used in previous years was 5% of the school budget for secondary schools and 8% for primary schools. It was suggested that the 5% figure was too low and that 8% would be appropriate for all schools.</p> <p>In view of the financial position faced by the majority of schools,</p>	

	<p>Forum members decided not to pursue any clawback of individual school excess balances his year.</p> <p>4.4.1 The total amount of unspent devolved formula capital funds held by schools at the 31st March 2017 was £215k. Of this balance £21k had been carried forward from the 2014-15 allocation and will need to be spent by 31st August 2017. We will notify the schools holding these balances. The remainder of the balance consists of £105k of the 2015-16 allocation and £89k of the 2016-17 allocation. This information is also provided to colleagues across the Council to ensure that this is being factored into the future capital programme.</p> <p>The report was noted.</p>	
7.	PROPOSED MEETING DATES	
	<p>Thursday 19 October 2017 at 5pm Ready for Local formula to be submitted by End of October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Thursday 14 December 2017 at 5pm Update on Formula and Central retentions •Thursday 11 January 2018 at 5pm Formula to be submitted by the 3rd week of January •Thursday 15 March 2018 at 5pm Update on 18-19 Formula and estimated outturn for 17-18 with discussion over deficit •Thursday 24 May 2018 at 5pm Pre-Audit 17-18 outturn and maintained school balances •Thursday 12 July 2018 at 5pm School Formula updates 2019-20 <p>Venue to be confirmed (normally The Avenue Centre)</p>	
8.	Agenda Items For Future Meeting	
	<p>Members were reminded to let the Chair of RBC Officers know if there were any items they wanted included on the agenda for the July meeting.</p>	
9.	Any Other Business	
	<p>A question was raised concerning Equal Pay Claims for Academies. It was confirmed that RBC had a fund for Equal Pay Claims which Schools Forum has set aside over a number of years as a central retention and was therefore available to all schools and academies with historic liabilities as and when claims were settled.</p>	