



Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP
Telephone 01572 722577 Facsimile 01572 75307 DX28340 Oakham

Minutes of the **MEETING of the SCHOOLS' FORUM** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP on Thursday, 30th March, 2017 at 4.00 pm

PRESENT:

Mrs J Turner (Chair)
Mr C Smith
Mr R Shore
Mr S Williams
Mr A Menzies (deputy for Mr J Woodhead)
Mr A Scott (deputy for Mr S Cox)

Mr R Gooding
Mrs S Milner
Ms S Hearth

APOLOGIES:

Mr B Gale
Mr G Morphus (deputy for Mr Gale)
Mr J Woodhead
Mr S Cox
Mrs M Darlington

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Ms G Curtis
Dr T O'Neill
Mr S Della Rocca
Ms D Greaves
Mrs H Fardell (Clerk)

Head of Service, Learning & Skills
Director for People
Assistant Director, Finance
Finance Manager
Corporate Support

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr D Wilby
Portfolio Holder for Lifelong Learning

1 MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Schools' Forum held on 12 January 2017, copies of which had been previously circulated, were confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting, subject to the following addition to Item 5 - DSG Overspend on the High Needs Block & Early Years Funding Update

5.2 Clarity was sought regarding the DSP funding for 2017/18. It was noted that the current DSP arrangements will be honoured for the forthcoming financial year and this will be reflected in the budget being submitted on 20th January 2017. It is recognised that this funding will put additional financial pressure on the High Needs Budget which could be up to £300K overspent by the end of the coming financial year if significant adjustments are not made to the rate of spending, particularly on out of county placements where there are vacancies within Rutland provision. This SEND provision is currently being reviewed and the Local Authority will be working with schools to address this issue over the coming year. It is acknowledged that if this overspend cannot be

accommodated through reduction in costs, this will be recovered from the School's Budget.

Matters arising:

Mr Smith advised that the Secondary School Headteachers had sent a joint letter to Sir Alan Duncan, MP for Rutland and Melton setting out their concerns regarding the proposed funding formula, receipt of which had been acknowledged.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

3 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No petitions, deputations or questions were received from members of the public.

4 2016/17 FUNDING UPDATE

Ms Greaves introduced the paper Schools Budget 2016/17 Update and invited questions. Schools' Forum **NOTED** the contents. During discussion the following points were made:

- 4.1 The High Needs forecast overspend had reduced significantly to that forecasted in Q3. Ms Curtis advised that predicting the funding required was always difficult as student numbers were unknown and changed throughout the year, and the types of placement required and their location was difficult to determine. It is anticipated that, moving forward through the Inclusion Strategy, closer working between the Local Authority and schools will enable more accuracy in establishing and predicting needs.
- 4.2 Schools' Forum has previously agreed that any overspend at year end will be recouped from next year's budget. Mr Williams asked when would schools know how much they would be required to pay back. It was **AGREED** that Ms Greaves would prepare an update based on the current forecasted overspend of £41.4k, and circulate this to schools as a guide.
- 4.3 Mr Williams commented inaccurate forecasting did have an impact on schools' decision making for budgets, as they were setting aside funds to cover potentially higher overspend that did not then materialise. Mr Della Rocca acknowledged inaccurate forecasting was not satisfactory, and advised that proposed changes to forecasting methods should improve the situation. Dr O'Neill suggested and it was **AGREED** that a briefing paper explaining new forecasting methods should be presented at the next meeting.

5 FUNDING FORMULA UPDATE

Mrs Turner invited comments from members, but it was noted that there had not been any recent significant announcement from the Government about the funding formula proposals, and the consultation period had only just ended.

6 ELECTION OF NEW CHAIR

A communication had been previously circulated to members inviting nominations for the position of Chair of Schools' Forum, to be received by Wednesday 29 March 2017, 5pm. Two nominations for Chair had been received for Mr Carl Smith, who accepted and will take up the position of Chair from the date of the next meeting. Schools' Forum acknowledged that Headteachers would hold both Chair and Vice Chair positions.

7 CHARGING MECHANISMS FOR SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES

Ms Curtis introduced the paper RCC Education Improvement Service – Services for Schools 2017-18, and advised that this had been presented for comments at the recent Headteachers, partnership briefing. Schools' Forum **NOTED** the contents.

8 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

Mrs Turner raised an issue from the recent Headteachers briefing relating to the Rutland banking system. Some primary schools believed they had not received in full their balances when they converted to academies. Ms Greaves advised it was her understanding that all schools received in full the balances they were due including interest earned during the year up to the point of converting to an academy. Ms Greaves **AGREED** to check and clarify the situation at the next meeting.

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, 8 June 2017 at 4.00 pm at RCC, in the Council Chamber.

Proposed agenda items:

For information, the following additional meeting date has been previously agreed for 2017:

Thursday 21 September 2017

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 4.40 pm.

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