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Rutland County Council

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Minutes of the **MEETING of the SCHOOLS' FORUM** held in the Meeting Room, Oakham Enterprise Park on Thursday, 29th June, 2017 at 4.00 pm

PRESENT:

Mr C Smith (Chair)

Mrs S Milner

Mr R Shore

Mr J Woodhead

Mr S Cox

Mr R Gooding

Mrs J Turner

Ms J Macdonald (deputy for

Mr S Williams)

APOLOGIES:

Mrs M Darlington

Mr B Gale

Ms S Hearth

Mr S Williams

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Ms G Curtis

Dr T O'Neill

Mr K Quinn

Ms D Greaves

Mrs H Fardell (Clerk)

Head of Service, Learning & Skills

Director for People

Service Manager – Early

Help & Inclusion

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 30 March 2017, copies of which had been previously circulated, were confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting, subject to the following amendment:

Item 4, correction of typographical error, final point should be numbered 4.3 and not 4.2.

Matters arising:

4.2 Mrs Greaves confirmed that an update of the current forecasted overspend had been sent to schools to give an indication of the amount that might be recouped from 2017/18 budgets.

4.3 The paper 'High Needs Forecasting Update' was to be considered at the meeting.

8. Further to the query regarding payment of bank balances to schools at conversion to academy status, members were referred to the paper 'School Balances & Interest Earned' in the agenda pack. RCC Finance have undertaken a review and confirmed that all schools received their full entitlement to interest earned on their balances up to the point of conversion to academy. An issue has been identified relating to additional funds received by 4 schools, and the Council is working with the schools affected.

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.

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Mr R Gooding joined the meeting at 4.05pm

Dr T O'Neill joined the meeting at 4.08pm

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4 RUTLAND SCHOOLS' FORUM CONSTITUTION AND RULES OF CONDUCT

- 4.1 Mr C Smith, having taken up the position of Chair of Schools' Forum, proposed that it was an opportune time to review the constitution and rules of conduct, and how the Forum is working. The following documents had been circulated to members prior to the meeting for their consideration and to prompt discussion:

EFA Schools forum – operational and good practice guide
Rutland Schools' Forum and Rules of Conduct
EFA Schools forum powers and responsibilities
EFA Schools forum self-assessment toolkit

- 4.2 Members were asked to complete the self assessment toolkit and return to the Clerk as hard copy, or via corporatesupport@rutland.gov.uk.

- 4.3 Ms Curtis advised that she and Mr Smith had undertaken a review of agendas and minutes of other Schools' Forums and identified the following areas of good practice. It was suggested that these be incorporated into the working practices of the Rutland Schools' Forum:

- Clarity on types of membership and which sector members are representing
- Members' terms of office specified, to aid preparation for future elections
- Agenda items to have allocated amount of time
- Expected outcome of agenda items, whether it is for consideration, noting only, or for a decision to be made.
- Each report to have a simple front sheet that states the key points within the report, and the expectations of the report; for consideration, noting, and decision. Where a decision is required, clarification of which members are entitled to vote is helpful.
- An induction pack for new members, and a buddy system where new forum members can refer to more experienced members for advice if required.

- Setting up an annual calendar of events of what will happen over the course of the year. This could include reporting dates for Working Parties of the forum.
 - Introduction of name cards at meetings
- 4.4 Schools' Forum discussed the proposals made and the following was noted:
- Mr Woodhead pointed out that the current constitution under non-school members allowed for a Youth Council representative, but that Schools' Forum had previously agreed to include a non-school based teacher representative instead. Also, under non-school members' voting rights in Appendix 3 of the constitution, the Diocese representative is not included.
 - It was felt the Local Authority would be best placed to produce an induction pack. Ms Curtis asked newer members to consider and suggest what they might have found helpful, and to email any comments or suggestions to her within the next week (gcurtis@rutland.gov.uk).
 - It was suggested that given the changing nature of education within the county, the constitution and operational working of the forum should be reviewed and discussed at the end of each academic year, with a view to making changes as required to membership etc, in time for the start of the next academic year.
- 4.5 Schools' Forum **AGREED** that the proposals suggested be implemented.

5 FUNDING UPDATE

- 5.1 Schools' Form **NOTED** the contents of the Schools Budget 2016/17 Outturn paper. During the discussion the following comments were made:
- It is no longer possible to cover any overspend on the Early Years block by transferring funds from the other two blocks.
 - Ms Curtis advised that the Early Years team undertake a childcare sufficiency assessment each year. This will provide information about the basic capacity within the county, but it is not known how many spaces providers will make available for the 30 hours 'free' childcare for 3&4 year olds to be introduced by the Government in the autumn.
 - Ms Curtis also advised the Early Years team review the number of applications being received from parents on a weekly basis, and the number has been steadily increasing. With the recent General Election, the Government withheld releasing promotional material about this free child care, and once published it may create a further rush of interest from parents.
- 5.2 Schools' Forum **AGREED** to establish a Working Group to consider and assess how best to resolve the issues being experienced. After seeking expressions of interest Carl Smith, Sharon Milner and Gill Curtis will form part of the Working Party. It was proposed that Mary Darlington as EY PVI representative, be invited to take part, and to also seek representation from outside the Forum. It was further **AGREED** that Ms Curtis would write to childcare providers and schools looking for two further members. The Working Party will meet in the autumn.
- 5.3 Ms Curtis and Mr Quinn introduced the paper 'High Needs Forecasting Update'. The paper set out the pressures on the High Needs budget locally and nationally, a review of how forecasting has been done in the past and the

reasons why it has been difficult to achieve a high level of accuracy in forecasting budgets. The paper also detailed new proposals for future forecasting , options available for dealing with pressures, work currently underway or planned by the Council and how overspends might be dealt with in future.

- 5.4 Following discussion, Schools' Forum **NOTED** the contents of the paper, and remarked that the paper was well written and informative. It is hoped that the ongoing work and developments now required, will proceed without further delays.

6 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

Mrs Turner will be leaving Uppingham Community College in August, and Councillor Wilby, on behalf of Schools' Forum, presented cards and gifts to her and thanked her for all she has done at UCC, and as Chair of the Schools' Forum, a post she held for a number of years, together with best wishes for the future.

7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, 21 September 2017, at 4.00 pm at RCC, in the Council Chamber.

Proposed agenda items:

- Outcomes of review of constitution and working practices.

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 4.55 pm.

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