

Peterborough Schools Forum

Thursday 21st January 2021

10 – 11 am

Present

Jonathan Lewis	Service Director: Education	Peterborough & Cambridgeshire
Mark Woods	CEO Cambridge Meridian Academy Trust	Chair & Primary/ Secondary Academy Representative
Simon Eardley		On behalf of Stuart Mansell
Alan Sadler	Cross Sector	Governor Reference Group
Jo Cook	Paston Riding Primary School	Primary Maintained Representative
Margaret Courtman	Senior Accountant	Peterborough City Council
Martin Wade	Strategic Finance Business Partner	Cambridgeshire County Council
Rosaria Mercuri		Secondary Bursar Representative
Rachel Davies	Senior Accountant	Peterborough City Council
Susannah Connell	CEO The Diamond Learning Partnership	Vice Chair & Primary Academy Representative
Amanda Daoud	Chief Operations Officer, Lime Trust	Primary Academy Representative
Adam Brewster	Heltwate Special School	Special School Representative
Mark Cooper	Sacred Heart Primary School	Primary Academy Representative
Scott Hudson	Queen Katherine Academy	Secondary Academy Representative
Cllr Lynne Ayres	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Skills and the University	
Sarah Burling	PA to Service Director: Education	Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

Apologies

Stuart Mansell	Nene Valley Primary School	Primary Academy Representative
Debbie Hayes	Caverstede Early Years Centre	Nursery Representative

1.0 Apologies, declarations of interest and housekeeping Action

- 1.1 Apologies noted as above.
- 1.2 There were no declarations of interest.

2.0 Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

- 2.1 Jon apologised for the delay in getting the budget to Forum. Have been challenged by staff sickness and getting the data.

Jon held a budget briefing for Peterborough schools yesterday which was well received.

Minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

3.0 Schools Forum Constitution

- 3.1 Jon presented a paper to Forum that detailed the Terms of Reference, Membership and the Operating Convention of Peterborough Schools Forum.

Membership of those individuals whose Term of Office had expired has been extended to the end of the academic year. Their Term of Office will now expire on 31st August 2021.

The Forum comprises of 16 voting members. Some members represent more than one sector. Jon suggested that the current constitution is held for the time being. Jon will consult directly with maintained schools and academy trusts about their membership and bring back a revised constitution to the next meeting. If any members would like to work with Jon to revise the constitution, please contact him.

JL

Jon to add timescale for communication out from Forum following each meeting, to the constitution.

JL

4.0 Schools Financial Health and Balance Control Mechanism

- 4.1 Margaret presented a paper on Schools Financial Health & Balance Control Mechanism.

Two schools exceeded the 8% allowance in 2019-20.

Schools Forum agreed that Caverstede Nursery could hold their balance for the year ending March 2020.

All Saints Primary submitted a letter of appeal requesting to retain some of their balance. As a result, 50% of their balance was clawed back. They have had a challenging year due to the exceptional costs relating to Covid-19 and that was the context for this decision.

Balance Control Mechanisms will not be implemented across maintained schools this year due to Covid-19. To clarify 3.4 the mechanism is still there but we will not be clawing anything back in the 2020-21 financial year.

5.0 Growth Funding Policy

- 5.1 Jon presented a paper on the Growth Fund.

The Growth Fund is an allocation that is held separately to the main Schools budget.

Peterborough has seen a significant increase in pupil numbers in the last ten years. This year the official school census statistics show a reduction in primary numbers.

No new schools opening during the period covered by these proposals. There are two new schools opening in the following year – one primary, one secondary.

Alan Sadler declared an interest linked to Hampton Gardens, but the question raised could relate to any of the schools – the reduction in funding to 75% of the total causes difficulties. Does the local authority have other funding to ensure that the community gets resources where it most needs it? Every scenario is different, and a formula does not always fit every one. The paper gives good parameters to make decisions within. Feedback on decisions needs to be formal – by letter rather than email.

Cambridgeshire has a different methodology to Peterborough – is there a reason for that? Would a model across both local authorities be the way forward? Peterborough is about the transient population and in Cambridgeshire it is about the Schools. Cambridgeshire is based on lump sum rather than per pupil.

Forum is asked to consider the criteria and methodology for the allocation of Growth Funding detailed in section 3 of the accompanying paper and agree the allocations as they currently are, with the caveat that there may be some changes when pupil numbers are finalised.

Forum agreed to move forward with the allocations and set up a sub-group to look at the exceptions and feedback to Forum.

6.0 Schools Funding Proposals

6.1 Martin presented a paper on Peterborough Schools Funding Proposal for 2021-22.

Schools Block Funding for 2021-22 is £185.367 million

The biggest changes nationally are around the IDACI deprivation figures. There are significantly less pupils falling into the higher band in Peterborough. Jon to ask Business Intelligence Team for more detailed IDACI information so schools can see the changes by postcode.

JL

Minimum funding levels pupil have been increased and one school now meets the qualifying criteria for sparsity funding.

Forum is asked to note the content of the paper and endorse. Forum endorses.

7.0 Central Schools Block and De-delegations

7.1 Jon presented a paper on the Central Schools Services Block.

The list of services that the local authority seeks to de-delegate funding from maintained schools budgets are listed in section 3.1.

Forum is asked to consider and approve the proposed de-delegation.

Jon advised that working with the Unions has been exceptionally productive this year during Covid-19. Has been incredibly positive experience.

Are there any changes from last year? Slight uplift in rates for Union Reps from £200 a day to £205 a day as they have not had an uplift for 6 years. Everything else is in line with previous rates.

The maintained school representatives present approved the proposed de-delegation.

8.0 AOB

8.1 There were no requests for any other business