

## **Minutes of the Schools Forum**

**14 January 2019 at 2.30pm  
at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

**Members Present: P Jones (Chair), P Shone (Vice Chair),  
M Arnall, K Bickley, R Fisher, D Irish,  
G Linford, B Patel, J Smallman, and  
N Toplass.**

**Officers Present: C Ward, R Kerr, A Timmins, S Lilley,  
P Patel.**

**Apologies: D Barton, L Gillam, L Howard, R Kentish,  
A Sahota, C Walsh.**

**1/19 Agenda Item 1 – Apologies**

As above

**2/19 Agenda Item 2 – Declaration of Interest**

R Fisher for item No. 5 - Pupil Number Growth Funding.  
J Smallman item No. 6 - Schools closedown 2018/19 timetable.

**3/19 Agenda Item 3 – Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**Resolved** that the minutes for the forum held on the 17<sup>th</sup>  
December 2018 be confirmed as agreed.

The Chair confirmed with P Shone that he was arranging a  
replacement Governor representative for the Schools Forum.

**4/19 Agenda Item 4 – Dedicated schools grant allocations and  
draft school budgets 2019/20**

The Schools Forum received a report in respect of the funding  
allocations for the Dedicated Schools Grant and the draft school  
budget 2019/20, as voted for at the last schools forum. The  
report was due to be presented at Cabinet on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019  
for decision.

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It was stated that the allocations were as recommended by Schools Forum and were therefore draft and could be subject to change based on the decision of Cabinet.

Schools Forum was informed that the authority had held a conference call with the DfE to discuss the business case seeking equal treatment/recognition to receive annual inflationary indexation within the National funding formula for its BSF Schools facilities management contribution, similar to the of PFI Schools.

The DfE position remained unchanged, due to the cost and the possible challenge from other councils, however they felt that they had a better understanding of Sandwell's issues and they would discuss the issue further internally and feedback to the authority.

The final funding model would be submitted to the Department for Education by 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019 and confirmation of the budget would be received shortly thereafter.

The Schools forum were asked to note the report.

5/19

### **Agenda item 5 - Pupil Number Growth Funding**

A report in respect of the pupil number growth funding was tabled and the Schools Forum was asked to consider the schools meeting the criteria for Pupil number growth funding and the additional funding and approve the total funding for each school.

P Shone questioned whether the school carry forward balances would be considered as part of the approval process.

R Kerr clarified that the criteria had been updated during 2017/18 so when considering mid-year admission of pupils, the authority would consider the current and previous year October census and where the pupil increase was a minimum of 30 pupils, the authority would automatically calculate the funding for all schools meeting the criteria.

Members were then asked to consider the schools included in the report.

(R Fisher left the meeting at this point).

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A vote was held on each of the applications and the outcomes were as follows:

### **Pheonix Collegiate School - Additional funding £165,858**

9 in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

### **Ormiston Forge Academy - Additional funding £121,880.**

9 in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

(R Fisher re-joined the meeting)

6/19

### **Agenda item 6 – Schools Closedown 2018/19 Timetable**

Members received the report outlining the timetable for the Schools Closedown 2018/19.

A summary of the critical deadline was set out below:

- Leasing returns – Friday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2019 before 1pm;
- Provisional Capital returns – Friday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2019 before 1 pm;
- Final Capital return – Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019 before 1pm;
- Revenue return/closedown template completed – Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2019 before the end of day.  
(The final capital return must match the return submitted on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019).

J Smallman asked who dictates the deadlines as there were only 10 days to undertake school closedown and the Local Authority have longer.

It was pointed out that the Local Authority also work on budgets from other bodies and schools' ledger is only part of a bigger piece of work.

John Smallman stated that he would appreciate it if the deadline could be revised to take in to account the workload this would lead to

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R Kerr pointed out that if there were any issues with returns, these could not be resolved if the deadline was put back, as the following week was school holidays.

R Kerr further stated where Budget Officers completed multiple returns, it would greatly assist the process if they could return them on completion rather than submit all the returns together when they were completed.

S Lilley stated that he would have a discussion with the Executive Director - Resources and finance heads in respect of the timeline and check if there was any flexibility.

(Meeting ended at 3.10pm)

Contact Officer: Shane Parkes Democratic Services Unit 0121 569 3190
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