

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL SCHOOLS' FORUM

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday 27 June 2023 commencing at 10.00am and finishing at 1.00pm

Present:

Members:

Carole Thomson (Academy Secondary School Governor Rep) – in the Chair

Sam Bartholomew (Maintained Primary School Headteacher Rep)

Row Martin (Council of Oxfordshire Teacher Organisations (COTO))

Chris Hart (Maintained Secondary Headteacher Rep)

Tom James (Maintained Primary School Governor Rep)

Jacqui West (Alternative Provision / PRU Headteacher Rep)

Brenda Williams (Maintained Primary School Governor)

Natalie Wilson (Maintained Nursery Headteacher School Rep)

Victoria Woods (Academy Primary School Headteacher Rep)

Nathan Thomas (Academy Secondary School Headteacher Rep)

In attendance:

Cllr Liz Brighthouse OBE (Cabinet Member – Oxfordshire County Council)

Lynda Poole (Interim Deputy Director, Oxfordshire County Council)

Anne Coyle (Interim Deputy Director of Children's Social Care)

Sarah Fogden (Finance Business Partner, Oxfordshire County Council)

Margaret Whitaker (Senior Financial Adviser, Oxfordshire County Council)

Kate Bradley (Head of SEND, Oxfordshire County Council)

Barbara Chillman (Service Manager, Pupil Place Planning)

Rachel Lambert (Zero Carbon Council, Project Lead) (For Agenda Item 3)

Kunal Prasad (Zero Carbon Council, Manager) (For Agenda item 3)

Sharon Keenlyside (Committee Officer)

These notes indicate the outcomes of this meeting and those responsible for taking the agreed action.

If you have a query please contact Sharon Keenlyside, Committee Officer (committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordsire.uk)

1.1 Apologies and welcome	ACTION
<p>The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Catherine Darnton, (Vice-Chair); Jo Clarke, (Observer on behalf of School Business Managers); Maureen Thompson, (Academy Primary School Rep); Martin Goff (Head of Access to Learning).</p>	
<p>1.2 Declarations of interest</p> <p>There were none.</p>	
<p>1.3 Update on Membership</p> <p>The Chair welcomed new member Row Martin from the Council of Oxfordshire Teachers Organisations (COTO).</p> <p>The Chair reported that several terms of office, for Special and Nursery, had come to an end and was delighted that Natalie Wilson had re-joined the Forum.</p> <p>Emma Bryson had moved out of Oxfordshire, thus creating an Academy Representative vacancy. There were several people interested in the post and it was hoped that the election will have taken place before the September meeting.</p> <p>The Chair reported that Emma Coles had resigned from the Forum and the position had been filled by Louise Izzo.</p> <p>A question was raised regarding the responsibility of Democratic Services in the election of new members. The Chair had been in discussion with Martin Goff, Children’s Services, OCC, who had delegated advertising of the Governor and Academy Primary Headteacher vacancies to Tim Brock. This should be in place by September 2023.</p>	<p>Catherine Darnton</p> <p>Martin Goff / Tim Brock</p>
<p>1.4 Notice of Urgent Business</p> <p>There had been a request for an additional agenda item regarding a forthcoming conference. The item was not suitable for this meeting, but the Chair had agreed to share information</p>	

<p>and had printed out copies for anyone who was interested.</p>	
<p>2.0 Minutes</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2023 were amended as follows: -</p> <p>Council of Oxfordshire Teacher Association to Council of Oxfordshire Teacher Organisations</p> <p>and agreed as a correct record.</p> <p>2.1 Matters Arising from the Meeting of 8 February 2023</p> <p>Anne Coyle informed the Chair that the new staffing structure had been circulated today and posted on School News.</p> <p>Early Years Funding Formula 2023-2024 – After comments from the Schools’ Forum meeting on 8 February 2023, it had been agreed to use the contingency budget to support the Deprivation funding and SEN Inclusion Fund.</p> <p>Delivering Better Value Project Update – Kate Bradley confirmed that as of 26 June 2023, there were 6034 children with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).</p> <p>Education Commission – This would be going to Cabinet on 18 July 2023.</p> <p>Annual Update on Traded Services – Cllr Brighthouse informed the meeting that problems with IBC were being reviewed and should be resolved quickly.</p> <p>Cllr Brighthouse would ask Cllr Glynis Phillips if she could put something in writing for the next meeting.</p> <p>Sam Bartholomew had attended a meeting to facilitate the views of Business Managers of maintained schools and a working party had been formed to ensure fair representation of views.</p>	<p>Cllr.Liz Brighthouse</p>
<p>3. School Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme</p> <p>Rachel Lambert gave a presentation on the scheme which would enable OCC maintained schools to receive an interest free loan of up to £70,000, for two energy efficiency measures – LED lighting and solar PV. Schools could choose their loan repayment timescale within the maximum loan repayment timescale of 11 years for LED lighting and 12 years for solar PV.</p>	

<p>The scheme would be launched at the beginning of July with a two-stage loan application and award process.</p> <p>Following the 2023/24 loan scheme, the process would be reviewed before future rounds of the loan scheme were launched.</p> <p>The Action on Carbon and Energy in School (ACES) would be available throughout the process to support schools.</p> <p>Rachel Lambert and Kunal Prasad answered points raised which included, what would happen if a school academises during the process. Rachel responded that schools applying to be academies would not be eligible until the process was finalised. The new head of the academy school could then decide whether to repay the loan in full or take on the loan repayments. Information on this process had been put in the application pack.</p> <p>The Chair asked at what stage the energy and structural surveys were at. Officers explained that they were near completion as far as they were aware. Along with the condition surveys, detailed energy audits were also in progress for 50 schools this year and another 50 schools would receive an energy audit next year.</p> <p>Members discussed the cost of the scheme and although aware of the requirement to save energy, felt that many primary maintained schools would not be able to afford the initial structural survey or ongoing cost and as this was a very busy time for schools, they would find it difficult to find time to review the scheme.</p> <p>Members asked what had been taken into consideration in terms of liaising with the diocese and church owners when dealing with church schools. Officers explained that the schools would need to obtain permission from the property owners. Officers had not spoken directly to the diocese but would take that away as an action.</p> <p>AGREED to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) thank officers for an informative presentation. b) note the presentation. 	<p>Rachel Lambert/Kunal Prasad</p>
<p>4. National Funding Formula (NFF) Government Consultation</p>	

<p>Margaret Whitaker presented the report which had been circulated.</p> <p>The report provided a summary of key points from the Government consultation response on implementing a direct National Funding Formula (NFF) and potential Local Authority (LA) implications.</p> <p>Members asked about the definition of exceptional circumstances. Officers explained that the exceptional factor would exceed 1% of a school's budget and apply to less than 5% of schools. It tended to be things such as exceptional rents and joint use.</p> <p>Officers agreed to update members in September.</p> <p>Members thanked officers for the informative report.</p> <p>AGREED to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) note that changes to Split Sites, the allocation of Growth funding to LA, and how growth fund and falling roles funds will operate, are to be implemented from 2024-2025. b) note that restrictions are expected with regard to exceptional circumstances. c) note that transfers to High Needs will be allowable under a direct NFF, but that there will be changes to the process. d) Note that there will be further consultation on the design and operation of the Indicative SEN budget planned to replace local Notional SEN budgets. It is possible that guidance for 2024-25 may be strengthened to promote consistency. 	<p>Margaret Whitaker</p>
<p>5. Deficit Management Plan – Update</p> <p>Sarah Fogden presented the report which had been circulated and answered points raised.</p> <p>Members discussed concerns around the funding of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and the large increase in numbers of children presenting with SEND.</p> <p>Members also discussed what consideration had been given to recruitment of staff for the new special schools, one in</p>	

<p>Banbury and the other in Farringdon and for mainstream schools providing provision for children with special educational needs.</p> <p>Officers informed members that both new special schools were part of the Gallery Trust who were managing recruitment. Early intervention work was very focused on teacher skills, confidence, and ability.</p> <p>Members discussed what impact the opening of the schools would have on schools in the local area. Officers explained that Gallery Trust had monitored children travelling long distances which included children from Banbury who were travelling into the city as there were not enough placements for them. Some of the children were moving back to their local schools which would free up places in the city schools. Kate Bradley would obtain exact numbers for the Forum and tally the families that were moving. The new school in Banbury would be opening for years 7, 8 and 9 and it was hoped that the new schools would help with provision but there were the large numbers of requests coming through with limited places. The special schools would support children with the most complex needs.</p> <p>Members enquired about the SENCo Support Line and were told that it had been running for a term and although numbers were increasing, there did not appear to be the reach as people were not aware of it. Officers were looking into that and thanked members for their feedback.</p> <p>Members commented that there had been a lot of positive partnership work with OCC and part of the role of the Forum was to highlight the good work going on.</p> <p>AGREED to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) note the savings opportunities included in the deficit management plan. b) note the impact of Delivering Better Value (DBV) exercise on the plan. 	<p>Kate Bradley</p>
<p>6. Dates of Future Meetings</p> <p>The Chair had previously requested that a meeting date needed to be arranged for June 2024. Tuesday 25 June 2024 was proposed. The chair asked for this to be checked against the OCC calendar to ensure officer and member availability.</p> <p>The Chair commented that presently, there was not a Services</p>	<p>Committee Officer (asap)</p>

<p>and Contracts Committee. If any issues arose, it may be possible to arrange an ad-hoc working group.</p> <p>Dates of future meetings were AGREED as follows:</p> <p><u>Schools Forum:</u></p> <p>13 September 2023</p> <p>9 November 2023</p> <p>16 January 2023</p> <p>7 February 2024</p> <p><u>Schools & High Needs Sub-Committee:</u></p> <p>3 October 2023</p>	
<p>7. Early Years National Changes</p> <p>Margaret Whitaker presented the report which had been circulated and answered points raised.</p> <p>The report provided a summary of the key childcare announcements made by the Chancellor in the Spring Budget 2023.</p> <p>Officers had received a recent update and the increased funding rate for 2023/24 would not form part of DSG but would be a standalone for Early Years Supplementary Grant. More information on the amount, was expected ahead of the Summer Break.</p> <p>Officers had no further information on the capping of the 3–4 year rate for 2023-24 but expected more information shortly.</p> <p>Early Years officers had received a request for information which would be completed by 14 July 2023 deadline.</p> <p>AGREED to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) note the changes proposed for the 2023-24 financial year. b) note the future changes and that further information will be brought back to Forum at a future date as more detail became available. 	<p>Margaret Whitaker</p>

<p>8. Alternative Provision</p> <p>Members received a pre-recorded presentation compiled by Martin Goff, on the Alternative Provision Strategy.</p> <p>Barbara Chillman answered points raised.</p> <p>The Chair asked if it were possible to circulate the slides. Barbara Chillman suggested removing the commentary to enable the presentation to be uploaded on to Governor Hub.</p> <p>Members felt that this was a real milestone and welcomed the shared strategic vision.</p> <p>The Chair commented on the expectation of secondary schools to fund the hospital school and the lack of clarity around the unfunded offer. The Chair would find some historic paperwork to circulate. Members would like an update in the Autumn which should include some financial planning detail clearly stated.</p> <p>Members enquired about the timeline for communications with schools. Officers explained that they were working with the Oxfordshire Comms Team to create a visual presentation and that they had been regularly circulating Early Years information. They wanted to be clear on the breadth of the offer and hoped to circulate information before the end of term, if not it would be in September.</p> <p>Members commented that to enable them to manage their budgets, it would be helpful to receive funding information earlier, in February.</p> <p>AGREED to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) thank officers for an informative presentation. b) note the presentation. c) receive an update in the Autumn. 	<p>Barbara Chillman/Committee Officer</p> <p>The Chair</p> <p>Barbara Chillman</p> <p>Kate Bradley</p>
<p>9. SEND Sufficiency Strategy</p> <p>The report was to advise Forum that the County Council's SEND Sufficiency Strategy had been updated and published onto the OCC website.</p> <p>Barbara Chillman presented the report which had been circulated and answered points raised.</p>	

<p>Members discussed issues around Early Years provision and enquired whether Early Years would be included in the strategy. Officers explained that Early Years provision was more complex and the strategy was deliberately limited in scope to make it more manageable.</p> <p>Members thanked officers for an informative report.</p> <p>AGREED to note the updated strategy and its approach to providing additional specialist places in Oxfordshire.</p>	
<p>10. Update on current and future arrangements in LA Education.</p> <p>Officers stated that they were a new team and looked forward to listening to the Forum's views and opinions. They were committed to working in partnership.</p>	
<p>11. F40 Subscription Update</p> <p>Sarah Fogden informed members that F40 had an annual subscription and the School's Forum had re-joined for a year. The fee was taken out of the School's Forum budget.</p> <p>Officers were currently working with F40 to look at funding requirements for SEND.</p> <p>The Chair informed members that on 15 July 2024, F40 was lobbying the House of Commons. F40 was non-party political and has three MP vice chairs. They had produced a lot of work on the cost of running a school and had good engagement with DfE.</p> <p>The Chair received weekly news items and would forward to anyone interested.</p>	
<p>12. Date of next meeting</p> <p>13 September 2023: 10.00-15.00</p>	

..... in the Chair

Date of signing