

CITY OF SUNDERLAND

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUNDERLAND SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON MONDAY 15TH JULY 2005 AT SUNDERLAND CIVIC CENTRE

The following members of the Forum were present: -

Mrs Y Gray (Headteacher Rep. – Primary Sunderland South) – Chair of Forum
Mr M. Foster (Headteacher Rep. – Secondary)
Mrs A Mackay (Headteacher Rep. – Primary Sunderland North)
Mrs J Hobbs (Headteacher Rep. – Primary Hetton/Houghton)
Mrs S Carter (Headteacher Rep. – Nursery)
Mr C Short (Governor Rep. – Primary)
Mr J Lishman (Governor Rep. – Primary)
Mr H Brown (Governor Rep. – Primary)
Mrs D Elliott (Governor Rep. – Special)
Mrs V Ingleton (Governor Rep. – Nursery)
Mrs P Gibson (Governor Rep. – Secondary)
Mr J E Clarke (Governor Rep. – Secondary)

Together with: -

Mr S Scrafton – Deputy Team Leader Governor Support Team, Sunderland LEA
Mrs G. Wall – Head of Strategy & Performance
Mrs S. Mitchell – Project Development Manager, LEA
Mrs J Chart – Headteacher, Portland School (substitute for Mr J. McKnight)
Cllr P Smith – Portfolio Holder for Education

Action Points

05/29 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

Mr D Ambrose (Governor Rep. – Secondary)
Dr P Collins (Governor Rep. – Secondary)
Mr A Falconer (Governor Rep. – Primary)
Mr K McDermid (Headteacher Rep. – Secondary)
Mr J. McKnight (Headteacher Rep. – Special)
Dr E Yeates (Headteacher Rep. – Secondary)

05/30 Minutes of LMS/LMSS Review Group

The minutes of the initial two-day meeting had been circulated with the agenda papers and a verbal update had been given at the June meeting.

Since then there had been a further meeting of Special Heads and two further meetings of the main group.

Special Heads – There had been some agreement on roles and funding to support inclusion with work on partnership agreements to support that role. Amended band descriptors and reviewed against their own pupils by the end of term.

Main Group – Modelled all but workforce remodelling changes with some proposals to amend following initial results. There was input the review of band descriptors and an agreed process for the review of pupils in mainstream. A concept paper had been received re SEN and CAP units with an agreement for the Inclusion and Achievement Service to complete the audit of need and identify gaps in provision by September.

A full day meeting had been agreed for 2nd November with shorter meetings starting again in September.

John Lishman emphasised the need for a strict timetable with the three-year budget being introduced next year. Susan Carter did feel that some progress was being made on SEN. Colin Short reported that the Behaviour Partnership Strategic Committee were reviewing the PRU.

Howard Brown felt that it would be beneficial to members of the forum to be provided with a glossary of terms used in the notes of the LMS Minutes. Sandra Mitchell would provide this.

SM to provide glossary of terms

05/31 Minutes of the Standards Fund Monitoring Group

It was noted that the Governor Support Team would be supporting this group in the future.

At the last meeting it had been noted that there was funding, which had not been spent. A paper had been produced which outlined what had been spent and what had been committed. Funding largely remained due to delays in staff recruitment, however funding was committed.

LEA Officers would be invited back to the Standards Fund Monitoring Group to account for this committed expenditure and underspend.

It was hoped that fuller information would be included on minutes.

Gov. Support Team to clerk meetings of SF Monitoring Group henceforth

05/32 Constitution of Sub Groups – further discussion

There was some discussion regarding an enquiry from Dr Collins regarding attendance at the LMS sub group and this had been clarified with him and he was subsequently receiving invitations.

Some discussion took place on Forum representation on the Standards Fund Monitoring Group. Members agreed that the Chair should be invited to attend all sub-group meetings in an ex-officio capacity.

Sandra Mitchell reported that with the role of the Forum being under review it was possible that this would have to change in future.

Some discussion took place regarding vacancies. It was highlighted that there was a need to fill vacancies urgently and if groups did not fill them the Forum would consider alternatives.

Members were happy with current representation.

05/33 Consideration of licensed surplus applications

Nursery Sandra Mitchell pointed out that this was the first year of full delegation to all Nursery Schools and it was clearly demonstrated that all schools were going through a very steep learning curve in respect of managing budgets. Mrs Carter confirmed that this was the case and Headteachers had been very tentative in terms of budget allocation. Sandra Mitchell also noted that the remit of nursery schools was wider than other schools in terms of expenditure and allowed for spend on community activities. Members agreed to approve all nursery applications in this their first year of financial management, however it was stressed that budget surpluses at this level were not expected to continue and would be scrutinised closely in future years.

Primary Barnes Junior – There was some concern that this project had not already started. It was noted that this was a long term surplus and members were unhappy with this. It was noted that the project met the terms of the criteria and members approved this with reservations and asked that the project was monitored and a report was received at the next scheduled meeting.

Ryhope Infant – There was some concern that not all of the projects met the criteria and members agreed not to approve the application.

Dubmire Primary – It was agreed that the proposals met the criteria and the application was approved.

Richard Avenue – Mrs K Todd (Headteacher) was welcomed to the meeting. Mrs Todd explained the reasons for the application. This was part of bigger capital project of £150,000. It was explained that there would no capital funding to access for the next three years and this would likely cancel out any future surplus. Members agreed that the project met the criteria and approved the application.

East Rainton – Members were satisfied that the projects met the criteria and the application was approved.

New Penshaw Primary – There was some concern that some of the project was being used to extend what could be seen as external facilities, however, it was pointed out that parking facilities at the school were limited. Members agreed the application.

St John Boste RC Voluntary Aided Primary – There was some concern that some of the project funding would be used for ICT equipment. Members agreed the application with some reservation.

Wessington Primary - Some discussion took place regarding funding in respect of Children's Centres. It was noted that there

Action Points

Agreed no changes to current representation on sub-groups

All Nursery applications for surpluses approved but stressed need for closer monitoring of nursery budgets in future

Report on Barnes Junior surplus to be presented at next meeting

Ryhope Infant surplus application rejected

Application for surpluses approved for Dubmire Junior, Richard Avenue, East Rainton, New Penshaw, St. John Boste RC and Wessington Primary Schools

would need to be some work carried out on budget allocations from agencies etc. for extended schools. Members agreed the application

Special Castle Green – There was some concern that the overall surplus was quite high. It was noted that funding for the school was slightly complex and this could have something to do with the problem. Members agreed to the application with reservations.

Secondary St Anthony's Catholic Girls School – Members noted that LSC had overpaid the school £68,856. There was some concern that if the school was not refurbishing Somerleyton Convent for a year 13 area that the school would have a very large surplus. This application was agreed with some reservations and the requirement that the Forum received monitoring reports on the project.

Thornhill – Mr Hallworth (Headteacher) was welcomed to the meeting. Mr Hallworth thanked members for the opportunity to speak to them. It was reported that Thornhill had applied for a licensed surplus for 2004/2005 which was part of a capital programme to improve physical resources as well as teaching areas. This was part of a process of building an adequate sports hall and improve refectory provision. The design was modular. As part of the plan a bidding process to NOF 3 had been granted as phase 2 for £250,000. Phase 1 had gone ahead and had used up all the funding for phase 2. This had delayed the process. Following lengthy consultation with the LEA an agreement had been received that they would fund the £250,000 shortfall. It was anticipated that the contractor would be on site to start work on the sports hall in September with a completion date of April 2006. Progress on the refectory had been subject to a New Deal application. A ten point plan had been agreed, however New Deal had declared a moratorium on funding. The refectory programme was now back on track and building work would begin in the current financial year. Mr Hallworth was asked a number of questions. It was noted that Mr Hallworth had been highly successful in fund raising and the school received additional funding through a highly successful lettings programme and this contributed to the school's surplus budget. Members agreed the application with reservation with the proviso that the project was monitored.

All above decisions would be passed to the Acting Director of Education who would make the final decisions and would inform those schools involved of the final decision.

The Chair read out a letter from John McKnight regarding budget surpluses. The letter suggested that the ceiling of surpluses should be reduced in an effort to get schools to give best value to their pupils. It was agreed that this letter would be discussed at the next meeting.

Action Points

Castle Green surplus application approved with reservations

St Anthony's RC surplus application approved with reservations and subject to Forum receiving monitoring reports

Thornhill surplus application approved with reservations and subject to monitoring of ongoing project.

Acting Director of Education to inform of Forum's decisions.

John McKnight's letter to be considered at next scheduled meeting.

Some discussion took place regarding school's needing to commit their budgets during the financial year for the benefit of pupils. It was agreed that the Chair of the Forum would write to all schools to remind them of their need to reduce surpluses and to emphasise that the Forum would continue to recommend to the Director of Education that surplus balances should be removed from schools in the appropriate circumstances.

05/34 Building Schools for the Future, Academies and related issues.

This item was deferred as Harry O'Neill was not present. The forum would ask for an update from Harry's successor in the Autumn term

05/35 Date, time and venue of next meeting

It was agreed that all meetings would be held in the Civic Centre. The following meetings were agreed:-

**Thursday 20th October 2005 at 9.30 a.m.
Thursday 15th December 2005 at 9.30 a.m.
Thursday 26th January 2006 at 9.30 a.m.
Thursday 23rd February 2006 at 9.30 a.m.**

Action Points

Chair of Forum to write to all schools regarding budget surpluses.

BSF/Academies update to be requested for next meeting of Forum

Signed _____
Mrs Y. Gray
Chair of Schools Forum