

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUNDERLAND SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON THURSDAY 22ND MAY 2008 AT SUNDERLAND CIVIC CENTRE

The following members of the Forum were present: -

Mrs Y Gray (Headteacher Rep. – Church of England Primary) – Chair of Forum
 Mr D Ambrose (Governor Rep. - Secondary)
 Mr H Brown (Governor Rep. - Secondary)
 Mrs D Butler (Governor Rep. - Secondary)
 Mrs S Carter (Headteacher Rep. - Nursery)
 Mrs S Collingwood (Headteacher Rep. – Infant)
 Mrs D Elliott (Governor Rep. - Special)
 Mr J Hallworth (Headteacher Rep. – Community Secondary)
 Mr M Hartnack (Governor Rep. - Primary)
 Mrs J McLagan (Governor Rep. - Primary)
 Ms A O’Donaghue (Non-schools Group – 14-19 Partnership)
 Mr C Short (Governor Rep. – Primary)
 Ms N Vokes – Non-schools rep for Early Years PVI settings
 Mrs K Wilkinson (Governor Rep. – Nursery)

Together with: -

Mrs K Atkins – Principal Finance Officer, Schools
 Mr D May – Finance Manager
 Mrs S Mitchell - Partnership & Planning (SEN & Behaviour) Manager
 Dr H Paterson – Director of Children’s Services
 Mr J G Robinson – Governor Support Manager (Clerk to the Forum)
 Cllr Mrs P Smith – Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services

Nikki Vokes (representative for Early Years PVI settings) and Angela O’Donaghue (14-19 Partnership) were welcomed to their first meeting of the Forum since being appointed.

Mrs L Williams (representative of Early Years & Childcare Partnership) was no longer a member of the EYCCP and therefore was no longer a member of the Forum.

08/25 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from: -

Mrs T Bevan (Headteacher Rep. – Junior)
 Mr P Campbell – Head of Resources
 Mr J Clarke (Governor Rep. Secondary)
 Mr M Foster (Headteacher Rep. – Community Secondary)
 Mrs T Hambleton (Headteacher Rep. – Primary Hetton/Houghton)
 Mrs A Hodgson (Headteacher Rep. – Community Primary Sunderland South)
 Mrs S. Hyland (Headteacher Rep. – Secondary (Foundation))
 Mr D Litchfield (Headteacher Rep. – Community Secondary)
 Mrs A Mackay (Headteacher Rep. – Roman Catholic Primary)
 Mr A McCourt (Headteacher Rep. – Secondary (Roman Catholic))
 Ms G McDonough (Non-schools Group – Voluntary sector)
 Mr J McKnight (Headteacher – Special)
 Mrs T Stoker (Headteacher Rep. (Community Primary Sunderland North))

Action Points

Mr S White (Headteacher Rep. – Secondary (Post 16))
 Mr R Wilkinson (Headteacher Rep. – Community Secondary)
 Mrs S Wright (Headteacher Rep. – Community Primary Washington)
 Dr E. Yeates (Headteacher Rep. – Secondary (Church of England))

08/26 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

08/27 Day 6 Provision

Sandra Mitchell had been asked to attend to give an overview of the Authority's arrangements for the provision of full-time educational provision for excluded pupils from day 6.

Sandra confirmed that the statutory change had happened from September 2007. Responsibilities applied from Day 6 rather than day 16 which had previously been the case. Sandra made it clear that Day 1-5 was the responsibility of the parent (with work set by school), Day 6+ was the responsibility of schools for fixed term exclusions and Day 6+ was the responsibility of the LA for permanent exclusions.

Analysis of data in respect of fixed term exclusions from September 2006 was as follows: -

Primary schools

- 154 fixed term exclusions
- 20 were for in excess of 5 days
- 3 were for in excess of 15 days

Secondary schools

- 717 fixed term exclusions
- 153 were for in excess of 5 days
- 23 were for in excess of 15 days

Consultation had taken place with schools. Questions had been as follows: -

- Is this pattern of exclusions likely to continue or are schools likely to change their practice in light of new statutory duty?
- Is it appropriate/necessary to split primary/secondary?
- Do we need to preserve split by faith?
- Would cluster provision offer a solution?
- What impact might cessation of BIP support have?

Feedback had been that the statutory change was likely to change the pattern of exclusions. It was felt that mixed secondary/primary provision was not appropriate but it was not considered necessary to have separate provision for faith schools. There was not a definitive response to the question about cluster provision. The Authority was still trying to assess the impact of the cessation of BIP.

Data Analysis for September 2007 to April 2008 showed the following: -

Primary Schools

- 7 fixed term exclusions of 6+ days from 3 schools

Secondary Schools

- 82 fixed term exclusions of 6+ days from 11 schools
- 45 of 82 were from ex BIP schools

Sandra drew members' attention to provision for the Secondary sector. This included Pitstop Provision (SAFC) which had been extended to 12 places, citywide with no preference given to ex BIP schools from April 2008. The aim was for day 2 provision for longer term fixed term

exclusions, a tailored curriculum (not GCSE) and it was proposed to extend to 18 places from September 2008. The PRU supported longer term exclusions particularly where pupils were following primarily GCSE curriculum.

Sandra then described provision for the Primary sector. There was no Citywide provision in place. Primary Pitstop (BIP) was "on demand" and had now ceased.

Future considerations were as follows: -

- Extend SAFC Secondary Pitstop to 18 places from September 2008
- Introduce SAFC Primary Pitstop of 6 places from September 2008
- Schools working within clusters
- Locality Based Behaviour provision

Funding was £35,000 (2007/08 - part year) and £90,000 (2008/09 - full year). This funding was currently retained centrally and funded Pitstop provision (cost around £40,000). There was potential to delegate to schools (linked to data this would be apportioned 10% primary, 3% special, 87% secondary) if this was what was wanted but, as this money did not amount to a great deal, the amount received by each school would be minimal. It had therefore been decided hitherto that delegation was not appropriate. Monies retained centrally could be used to support Locality Based Provisions. Members of the Forum supported the view that delegation was not appropriate.

Howard Brown asked why BIP had ended. Sandra explained that this was because national funding for this initiative had ceased.

It was noted that an alternative curriculum was being discussed nationally. Helen Paterson indicated that there was a government white paper on PRU provision due to be released soon. Helen had been involved in the discussion with DCSF on this white paper, as she had a particular interest in the matter. Among the proposals was the possibility of other providers making PRU provision and the Authority commissioning services. Other challenges would be the extension of education to the age of 18 and this was already shaping the discussions around PRUs.

Dr Paterson was clear that in most cases nationally pupils in PRU settings did not achieve highly. The government wanted to ensure that all pupils achieved to their best potential.

Sandra Mitchell was asked whether the PRU had a Governing Body. Sandra responded that there had been a management group which had recently been reconstituted to be more like a Governing Body with a range of different representation.

Colin Short noted that the PRU was intended to be temporary but most pupils who entered the PRU at key stage 3 did not return to mainstream. Sandra confirmed that at primary level there was reintegration and this also sometimes happened at KS3. However, Sandra accepted that in many cases at KS4 there was more of a degree of permanence in PRU provision. She commented that this was often the best option for these pupils who were difficult to engage.

Sandra Mitchell withdrew from the meeting at this point.

08/28 Minutes of previous meeting held on 27th March 2008

The minutes were approved as a true record subject to the following amendment:

08/21 – 2008/08 should read 2008/09

08/29 Matters arising from the minutes

08/16 (EAL funding) – Karen Atkins had received confirmation that the data included all pupils in a school including under-5's. Sally Collingwood asked Karen to produce these figures. Karen responded that she did not currently have the evidence but it would be possible to supply this information to individual schools. Members of the Forum asked Karen to pursue this within the department with a view to obtaining figures for under-5's in all schools.

Karen Atkins asked to seek evidence of under-5's being included in EAL funding

08/16 (Infant School funding) – It had now been clarified that the additional 0.5 TA funding had been given to all Infant and Nursery Schools, together with all schools which had nursery classes. Officers confirmed that this was what had been discussed and agreed at the LMS Review Group. Sally Collingwood questioned whether this had been the intention of the re-distributed formula, which was intended to address the cost of SEN provision for pupils awaiting statementing. The reason for this being reviewed in the first instance was because children had often moved on from Infant schools before the statement was produced. David May recalled that Sally had raised the issue and there had been five options given to the LMS Review Group. When the financial modelling was done the group had felt that nursery schools and nursery classes should also receive this additional element. The Chair then drew attention to the reports and minutes of the LMS Review Group which confirmed that this was how it had been agreed. It was noted that junior schools were disadvantaged because of this decision. David May informed members that the consultation had been clear. However, he confirmed that it was possible that this could be re-visited by the LMS Review Group for next year.

LMS Review Group to consider whether to review the allocation of 0.5 TA funding to Infant Schools and nursery settings

08/17 (Extended Schools Sustainability) – There had been a question about whether the Extended Schools Sustainability funding proposals related to the academic or to the financial year. David May confirmed that it would normally need to be over the financial year and he was having a discussion with Raj Singh about this.

08/17 (Primary Strategy) – Sally Collingwood had been supplied with a copy of Sue Morgan's report on PNS finding which had been considered by the SFMG. Sally had subsequently spoken to Sue Morgan but there were some unanswered questions and more clarification needed on the criteria for determining allocations. Yvonne suggested that queries should be directed to the SFMG and David May would speak to Sue Morgan.

D May to speak to Sue Morgan about questions on PNS to be discussed at SFMG

08/18 (Children's Trust) – Members of the Forum had questioned how the CT fitted together with other committees and forums. It was pointed out to members that a flowchart was included in the Children & Young People's Plan. Norma Hardy would also be asked to attend the July meeting of the Schools Forum to provide an explanation.

Norma Hardy to attend July meeting to explain Children's Trust

08/24 (Daycare Sustainability Plan) – It had been suggested that the Daycare Sustainability Plan be placed as an item of business on the Schools Forum agenda. This would be discussed at the July meeting.

Daycare Sustainability to be on July agenda

08/23 (Early Years Pathfinder) – Sally Collingwood asked whether there had been any progress on clarifying the position of pathfinder monies. David May replied that the position remained unclear. DCSF had notified Local Authorities of their allocation in January/February and these monies had been distributed in the settlement. Subsequently DCSF had written to say that they thought the funding was secure but could not be certain until DSG figures were notified (probably in July). DCSF had already acknowledged that there had been communication problems with this. The Forum asked that an update be provided at the next meeting of the Forum and that David May communicate the current position to schools.

Action points

EY Pathfinder monies to be updated at July meeting.

D May to communicate current position to schools

08/30 Feedback from Standards Fund Monitoring Group

The SFMG had not met since the last meeting of the Forum. The next SFMG meeting was planned for Thursday 19th June.

08/31 Minutes of Children's Trust

The draft minutes of the last Children's Trust meeting held on 8th April 2008 had been circulated to members of the Forum.

There were no questions or comments.

08/32 Feedback from 14-19 Partnership

Feedback would be provided at the next meeting of the Forum.

08/33 Unallocated School Resources 2007/2008

A report had been circulated which asked members of the Forum to consider proposals for the use of unallocated school resources arising in 2007/2008 from the unallocated ISB contingency and rates surpluses.

The ISB contingency sum held for 2007/2008 financial year was £591,146. This was made up of two parts;

- Stated Pupil Support £290,000; and
- Curriculum Access Provision £301,146.

The Stated Pupil Support funding was utilised to:

- support pupils whose statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) were finalised after the beginning of the financial year;
- support pupils whose statements of SEN required re-banding;
- support September transfers of pupils with statements;
- support stated pupils transferring into the Authority.

It was expected that the review of Curriculum Access Provision (CAP) provision would be completed in 2007/2008 to provide savings to develop the SEN provision, however this had been rescheduled to the end of August 2008.

In a report to the Schools Forum in November it was anticipated that the contingency would be fully utilised, but at the year end there remained an unallocated sum of £132,909. It was therefore proposed to distribute the 2007/2008 balance to schools within this financial year, based on pupil numbers.

Members noted that rates charges in relation to schools were funded centrally via a claw back of budget from all schools. This was achieved by setting a control total for total ISB and top-slicing an element for projected rates charges, before running the formula or providing for the MFG. The rates budget was an area of volatility as new schools become operational and existing schools were re-valued. An estimated provision had been made for Easington Lane Primary and there remained a surplus on the rates pool of £88,821 at the end of 2007/2008. It was proposed to utilise this sum to fund school-based redundancies.

Current and previous years had seen significant redundancies at schools due to school amalgamations, school closures or budget pressures due to falling roles. Under the revised regulations, redundancy costs could be scored against schools block other budget and hence against the DSG, with the Schools Forum agreement.

In 2007/2008 premature retirement compensation and redundancy costs were estimated to be £2,304,243 and these had been incurred against a budget of £2,057,934, leaving a shortfall of £246,309.

Usworth School closed in August 2007 and in accordance with the regulations any surplus or deficit balance was returned to the local authority. Usworth School had returned a surplus balance of £95,000 and it was agreed at the meeting of the November 2007 Schools Forum that this sum could be utilised to part fund the redundancies arising from the closure that will eventually realise fixed cost savings within the Individual Schools Budget (ISB).

It was also agreed at the November meeting of the Schools Forum to utilise the rates surplus from 2006/2007 of £78,566 to part fund redundancies. It was proposed that the 2007/2008 rates surplus be utilised to fund the redundancy shortfall with the balance being carried forward to fund redundancy costs arising in 2008/2009. The final charges for early retirement payments had yet to be processed and this figure could change before the accounts were closed.

Members of the Forum agreed to the recommendations. There were no comments or questions.

Agreed to distribution of contingency underspends on the basis of pupil numbers.

Agreed to utilise the rates underspend from 2007/2008 to fund school redundancy costs.

08/34 Review of LMS Group representation

Members received a report regarding the development of a Funding Formula for Early Year Provision during the next three-years and the membership of the LMS/LMSS Group in order to support this work.

The Authority and the LMS/LMSS Review Groups had undertaken and completed a review of the funding formula to set individual schools budgets for the period 2008-11.

As part of the funding settlement for the current funding period, Local Authorities were required to develop a single local formula for funding early years' provision in the maintained and PVI sectors, which had to be implemented by April 2010.

By April 2009, the local authority was required to introduce consistent pupil counting between the maintained and PVI sectors in preparation for the changing funding arrangements from April 2010. The transition from place-led to participation-led funding in the maintained sector would require careful management and therefore appropriate transition

and protection arrangements could be required to support the implementation of the new funding arrangements.

From 2010-11 under fives would be counted for DSG distribution through a provision based count only in order to align it with the changes in early years funding from April 2010.

The process for reviewing schools funding arrangements would be continued through the Schools Forum with a new focus on the key priorities related to schools finance for the coming year, which were:

- Review of the Scheme of Delegation to schools in line with statutory changes and discretionary powers
- The introduction of a Single Local Formula for funding early years provision
- The annual review of the Schools Funding Formula in preparation for budget setting for April 2009 and 2010.

The LMS Review Group would continue to be officer led and a review of the make up of the group had been undertaken with the following proposals recommended for school forum approval: -

Nursery Schools	1
Infant Schools	1
Junior Schools	1
Primary Schools	4 (1 from each area)
Secondary Schools	2
Special Schools	1
Governors	2
Chair of School Forum	1
Total	13 + two officers in attendance

The proposals included specific representation from all school sectors, including Infant and Junior schools (hitherto not the case). This would ensure that all sectors were represented and issues unique to specific types of schools could be considered by the LMS review group prior to proposals being developed.

It was likely that the work commitment for the LMS/LMSS Group in 2008 and 2009 would be two days maximum. A detailed review of the formula would take place in 2010 in preparation for the next funding period and it was anticipated that a maximum of six days would be required. Throughout the process the Schools Forum would receive regular update reports and minutes of the meetings would be circulated to Headteachers and Chairs of Governing Bodies.

A sub-group would need to be established to for the review of funding for early years provision and membership would include representatives from the PVI sector. Officers of the Early Years Service would be in attendance. The suggested membership for the group was as follows:

Nursery Schools	1
Infant Schools	1
Primary Schools with Nursery Classes	4 (1 from each area)
Private representative	1
Voluntary representative	1
Independent representative	1
Governors	1
Chair of School Forum	1
Total	14 + 3 officers in attendance

Due to the complexity and wider impact of the work that needed to be undertaken by the Early Years Funding Group, progress on the Early Years Funding Review would be reported directly to the Schools Forum to enable where appropriate key decisions and recommendations to be made to progress the review forward.

Dorothy Butler expressed her dissatisfaction at the reduction in the number of governors who would be represented on the LMS Review Groups. She explained that this meant that not all sectors of governors could be represented. Karen Atkins responded that the group needed to be a manageable size and the proposed numbers reflected the level of governor attendance at previous meetings of the LMS Review Group.

The Chair highlighted the importance of ensuring continuity in those attending. The proposal was that no substitutes would be allowed under the revised arrangements. Members felt that, in order to assist this, the dates should be set out well in advance to enable representatives to plan. David May accepted this and would set out a timetable for the LMS Review Group activities.

Officers were asked whether there was a special school sub-group. Dorothy Butler noted that there had not been any governor representation on this in the past. David May confirmed that this had been just a working group and the Schools Forum would ultimately agree changes.

Nikki Vokes asked whether any additional PVI representatives would be needed. David May responded that these were already in place and no further action was needed.

It was unanimously agreed to accept the proposed changes and officers were given authorisation to seek nominations from groups and areas for membership of the review groups.

D May to formulate timetable of LMS Review Group meetings

Approved changes to structure of LMS Review Groups and officers to seek representation

08/35 Monitoring Report – Licensed Surplus Columbia Grange

Discussion under this item is recorded in a separate annex to these minutes which is restricted only to members of the Schools Forum.

At this point Mr H Brown and Mr M Hartnack withdrew from the meeting and the meeting became inquorate. It was agreed to proceed on an informal basis.

08/36 Academy DSG Recoupment

A report provided members of the Forum with details of the Academy Recoupment process and the implications on Sunderland's 2008-2009 DSG funding.

The DSG recoupment in respect of Academy 360 (formerly Pennywell School and Quarry View School) in the 2008-2009 financial year was as follows:

Delegated Budget Share £2,865,415

Central Spend Element £21,268.53 (to be confirmed)

Total DSG Deduction £2,886,683.53

This deduction represented 7/12ths (Sept 08 – Mar 09) of the Pennywell and Quarry View School's Delegated budgets plus 7/12ths of the calculated Central Spend per pupil Element. The full year impact of recoupment in respect of Academy 360 is £4,948,600.

The workings of the "Sunderland model" for academies would be the subject to discussions between the Local Authority and DCSF. It was commented that Sunderland's practice was seen as good practice and David May confirmed that the academies were happy to follow Sunderland practice.

Colin Short understood that academies would pick up redundancy costs (funded by DCSF). David May confirmed that re-structuring by the academy once it opened would not be funded from the Local Authority's budget but if this happened before the academy opened the Authority would be liable for the costs.

In response to a question, David May confirmed that any surplus from a maintained school that was becoming an academy would be returned to the Local Authority and not to the DCSF.

Yvonne Gray noted that there was an Academy steering group and she asked how this fitted with Schools Forum business. Officers confirmed that Academies would have one observer place on the Schools Forum and this was where the inter-action would take place.

08/37 Extending Vocational Opportunities

A report had been circulated to update members on progress made since the 'Extending Vocational Opportunities' report they received in April 2006 and September 2007 and to discuss allocation of the 2008/09 funding.

The Forum had supported the allocation of the £241,000 additional funding received in 2006/07 and the £658,000 received in 2007/2008, specifically aimed at extending vocational opportunities for pupils aged 14-16. The funding was split between the two skills centres located at Harraton and Pallion and accessed by pupils from all schools.

The impact of Diplomas was outlined in the report. The Sunderland Partnership had been successful in obtaining funding in 2006 and 2007. The Sunderland Partnership was one of only five Local Authorities successful in securing all of the available Diploma lines. The success of the bids was due to the excellent collaboration between schools, the Local Authority and other partners that enabled the creation of the two skills centres. The process of pooling the vocational fund was also regarded as a model of good practice and all Partnerships are now being encouraged to do so.

The funding available was via the ISB and could be delegated to individual secondary schools by formula. Secondary Headteachers had agreed to the pooling of the £672,000 vocational funding available for 2008/09 be used to support the development of the Harraton and Pallion Centres, some joint vocational provision at Castlegreen and Springwell Dene Schools, and some joint funding for the Creative and Media Diploma. The report detailed the allocation of the £672,000.

There were currently over 300 Y11 students taking BTEC courses in the skills centres and had enrolled 640 Y10 students from September 2008. These students would be taking a mixture of BTEC and Diploma courses. The Headteachers had agreed the cost of sending a student for one day per week over the academic year at £600. This was a heavily subsidised cost as a result of the pooling of funds. Without the commitment from all 17 Secondary schools it would have been difficult to establish the skills centres as quickly or effectively.

The Government had estimated the cost of off-site delivery at £1,200 per day over an academic year and this was the level of funding that would be received for level 2 Diploma students.

John Hallworth remarked that Sunderland was probably now the leading Authority on this provision. Angela O'Donaghue reported that, because the College was currently looking at its capital development, the LSC had confirmed that they were willing to fund 14-19 development. The College was also looking at how special education could benefit from this.

The report was noted.

08/38 Schools Block Budget Position 2008/09

A report had been circulated to update members of the updated Schools Block position following completion of the Section 52 Statement for 2008/2009.

The receipt of PLASC and Early Years Census data allowed the Authority to forecast the final figure of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) utilising a DCSF template designed for this purpose. In doing so the estimate of final DSG available for Sunderland was £161,748,000.

Individual School Budgets had now been provided to schools. In providing these budgets a contingency of £545,125 had been set aside. This provided £315,000 for Statemented Pupil Support and £230,125 for Curriculum Access Provision.

Funding for 14-16 personalisation and diploma funding had been retained and would be distributed in consultation with secondary Headteachers and the 14-19 partnership.

The Central Expenditure Limit (CEL) was a calculation that determined the rate at which the Schools Block Other increases in comparison to the ISB. The Schools Forum agreed at the January meeting to the breaking of the CEL for the following reasons:

- £360,000 increased provision for redundancies from within the DSG in line with revised regulations.
- £112,000 for the establishment of full time PRU/KS1 provision.
- £90,000 for Day 6 provision.

The exact calculation of this limit was only possible after population of Section 52 tables. Following completion of the Section 52 tables, the CEL had been breached. This has arisen due to the increased provision for redundancies in schools, the establishment of full time PRU/KS1 provision, the additional provision for the full year implication of Day 6 provision, additional School Based Insurance costs.

The Children's Services Grant had now ceased and was now part of the Revenue Support Grant. Additional budget had been provided to offset the reduction in grant income. Specific Standards Fund grants had transferred into the Area Based Grants (ABG). The regulations for the completion of the Section 52 Statement stated these ABG must be separate from the determination of the CEL. Expenditure in relation to these two points had remained at the same level as 2007/2008. It was the treatment within the Section 52 Statement that had changed.

Members noted the report.

08/39 **Date and time of next meeting**

Meetings of the Forum were arranged as follows: -

Thursday 3rd July 2008 at 9.30 a.m.

Thursday 25th September 2008 at 9.30 a.m.

Thursday 27th November 2008 (full day)

CONFIDENTIAL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUNDERLAND SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON THURSDAY 22ND MAY 2008 AT SUNDERLAND CIVIC CENTRE

08/35 Monitoring Report – Licensed Surplus Columbia Grange

At the last meeting of the Forum, members had considered a report regarding the progress on spending against licensed surpluses. There were concerns expressed regarding the level of anticipated surplus at Columbia Grange School and that expenditure during the year had not been in line with the original plan. It was agreed at the meeting that a visit would be arranged to discuss the issues raised with the Headteacher. There were also comments made generally regarding the process for reporting this information to the Forum.

The school had identified three major projects/activities where expenditure would be undertaken in 2007-08 that would be funded from schools balances. The total expenditure on these projects, based on the estimated costs provided would have utilised 76% of the schools total surplus balances. The total value approved for the licensed surplus was £69,438 as this was the total level of balances in excess of the 8% threshold.

During the financial year a number of issues arose which affected the progress of spending against the plan. The Headteacher had been made aware of the concerns of the Forum, and was keen to demonstrate accountability in terms of the original plan. However, it was her view that of the three projects that had affected the balance, only one was in her direct control, and that where this was the case the school could demonstrate spending in line with the original plan.

As for the other two activities, the Headteacher had reported the position to the Authority when required and made every effort to secure the projects as planned.

To exacerbate matters further, the school had budgeted to fund an Autism Outreach post from their inclusion budget that was historically funded centrally. The school has now been informed that the costs of this post would now not be charged to the school.

A letter had been sent to the Headteacher as agreed at the previous Forum meeting. The issues arising from the meeting with the Headteacher and a review of the process for reviewing and reporting on licensed surpluses had resulted in a need to strengthen the process and clarify the guidance issued to schools. In order to achieve this the Schools Forum was asked to consider and approve the following recommendations for action:

- a) That licensed surpluses were reported as a standard item, to the School Forum in July, November and February of each year.

- b) That the guidance issued to schools be revised to make it clear that any proposed change in the original plan must be submitted to the next meeting of the Schools Forum for their endorsement.
- c) That a timetable be included in the guidance published to schools, which enabled schools to be aware of the reporting timetable, thus ensuring that the termly report could be produced for the Schools Forum's consideration.
- d) That the template schools use to submit their application is updated to reflect the requirement to report changes in planned projects as soon as possible.

Yvonne Gray commented that the situation at Columbia Grange was more complex than had been reported to the Schools Forum at earlier meetings. Members of the Forum supported the Chair's view that lessons could be learned from the Columbia Grange case. **It was agreed to have a discussion about balances and communication with schools affected at the next meeting of the Schools Forum.**