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| People & Communities Department | | **2** | |
|  | Civic Centre, Keynsham, Bristol  Tel: 01225 394195 | |

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| **Meeting title** | ***DRAFT* SCHOOLS FORUM** |  |
| **Date** | Tuesday 17th March 2015 – W1.1 Civic Centre, Keynsham. | |
| **Forum Members Present** | Mark Mallett (Chair), Annie Smart, , Anne Hewett, Susan Robbins, Kevin Burnett, Suzanne McDonald, Julie Dyer, | |
| **Forum Members Not Present** | Lianne McCarthy, Tim Withers, Andrea Arlidge, Ed Harker (Vice Chair), Jim Crouch, Ruth Haines, Mark Everett, Roz Lambert, | |
| **Officers Present** | Ashley Ayre, Richard Morgan, Margaret Simmons-Bird. Cllr Dine Romero, Mike Bowden, Sara Willis, | |
| **Officers Not Present** | Caroline Howarth, Richard Baldwin, Sally Churchyard, Philip Frankland , Richard Vanstone, | |
| **Distribution** | As above; Theresa Gale; Colleen Collett; Cllr Bellotti; Cllr Sally Davis; Cllr Paul Crossley; Tim Richens; Jeff Wring; Wendy Jefferies, All Headteachers | |
| **Next meeting** | **Tuesday 12th May 2015,  3-5pm , 1st Floor Conference Room West 1:1, Civic Centre, Keynsham** | |

**ACTION**

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| **1.** | **Apologies Received** |  |
|  | Ed Harker (Vice Chair), Richard Baldwin, Tim Withers, Andrea Arlidge, Jim Crouch, Mark Everett, Roz Lambert, |  |
| **2.** | **Minutes of Last Meeting – 20th January 2015** |  |
|  | Agreed. |  |
| **3.** | **Matters Arising** |  |
|  | KB requested clarification of a comment in the minutes –page 2 item 4 – ‘RM also noted that in the long term it was possible that the DSG budget might not be ring-fenced’. RM explained that a relaxation of ring-fencing of DSG is a possibility rather than a probability but that if it did happen the LA could use DSG for other purposes. AA commented that historically BANES LA had spent more than the schools budget and that a number of services funded from DSG in other LA’s were funded separately from DSG in BANES. |  |
| **4.** | **Early years SEND update** |  |
|  | Sara Willis introduced the paper updating SF on what has happened so far following the £99k SF awarded in April 2014 and the additional £128k allocated by SF for 2015/16. SW informed SF of continuing pressure on the service – on average, the increase of cases year on year is 23.4%. There is a robust review process in place.  SF discussed the increase in special school places – there are approx. 90 additional places across BANES than originally planned. It was noted that S106 does not cover SEN provision. BANES seems to attract families and has higher numbers that adjoining LA’s (i.e. North Somerset) and was a net ‘importer’ of EY children. SF wondered how many of these children went on to school in BANES – RM to see if figures can be obtained. The increase in numbers is a trend that seems likely to continue. MM asked on behalf of EH whether SF should be looking at providing more services at a younger age to avoid costs later? SW answered that this was not necessarily the case.  SW will provide a further update report next year, this will include a record of the individual needs for each child to give SF a further detailed breakdown of the types of needs children are presenting with. | ***RM*** |
| **5.** | **Behaviour Panel Budgets** |  |
|  | RM introduced the paper asking the SF to consider whether it wishes to set a policy of carry forwards being automatically allocated back to the Panel that generated them. Traditionally under/overspends have been carried forward. SF discussed whether a percentage of funding could be automatically carried forward – 8% (in line with the schools excessive balances process) was suggested with any further excess going back to SF for release or approval. It was agreed that RM will bring a report to May meeting suggesting a policy for adoption. | ***RM*** |
| **6.** | **Community Play Service** |  |
|  | MB introduced paper. SF currently funds two Community Play Services (BAPP and WPA), both services are subject to a contract and contract managed by the council. SF has committed to continue to fund these services for 2015/16. A third Community Play Service contract with the council (Specialist Family Support Service with Southside Family Project) is also coming to an end in early 2016. The LA is looking at commissioning services for 2016 and is proposing to replace the 3 services with one jointly funded by the LA and SF. MB requested that some individuals from schools join the consultation process to help shape and specify the new service and to consider the length of contract that could be offered.  SF expressed a general anxiety in schools about school budgets going forward – particularly in secondary schools - and therefore SF had concerns about making longer term commitments. SF asked if data was available from schools on projected budgets for the next 2-3years. RM will collate available information, and will request information from academies to gain a complete a picture as possible  SF discussed the possible effect of cuts in one area on other areas. e.g. if SF were to take out early years/early help services this could have an effect on ‘children starting school’ and therefore schools may have to work harder to bring children up to school starting level.  MM commented that SF would be making many difficult decisions over the next few years and should SF be prioritising ‘statutory’ duties and therefore extra services should be cut first?  KB commented that SF should be looking at ‘joining’ more services and that early help approaches had a positive long term impact on schools.  A more detailed report about the proposed service will be brought to SF in May with a request to agree funding for a 3 year contract. | ***RM*** |
| **7.** | **Secondary School Counselling Service** |  |
|  | MB updated the SF on progress. The proposal had been worked up in more detail – headteachers were asked to join this process but had declined. The final specification was sent to potential providers on 12th February and the panel to select a provider from the bids received is scheduled to meet on March 20th with the service to commence on 1st April 2015.  MM noted that SF funding had been agreed for a 1 year pilot but the expectation was that if the scheme was successful individual schools would fund the service themselves after that.  MM added that it was good that this had been progressed so quickly. |  |
| **8.** | **New Schools – Diseconomy support** |  |
|  | RM briefed the SF and clarified the funding policy proposed by the working group set out in the paper and appendix A. The proposed method of funding had been developed by analysing existing fixed costs of other schools. SF discussed when the resources would be paid to schools – payments would follow academic year process. RM added that other LA’s had similar systems in place. Also there are existing schools in BANES under 75% who may feel some entitlement to these payments but RM pointed out that they are set up as ‘small schools’ and are not growing.  SF agreed proposed policy as set out in Appendix A.  SMC asked when LA would be inviting bids for the running of the new primary school on Keynsham due to open in September 2017. RM expected this to be May/June 2015.  MM thanked the working group. |  |
| **9.** | **Living Wage** |  |
|  | RM summarised the paper. The Council has implemented the ‘living wage’ policy w.e.f 1st April 2015. This effectively removes the five lowest pay points from the current scheme moving all affected employees to pay point 11. The council has allocated £175k for 2015/16 to cover the costs of this change for maintained schools but this cost will need to be incorporated into SF inflationary pressures for 2016/17.  HR are still working on costs to individual schools and AA said that there would be meetings held to work through complexities with schools. Individual school costs would be given out once the first payroll information was run.  SF discussed concerns regarding ‘pay differentials’ and potential loss of staff because of the impact of the pay increase on staff receiving benefits. AA added that employees can choose to decline or defer a pay rise and work was already done on equalities roles.  Maintained and VA schools have to implement this change but academies can make their own decision. |  |
| **10.** | **AOB** |  |
|  | 1. **i.** KB raised issue of costs of school meals. RM advised that the intention was to have moved catering services to a more commercial footing w.e.f. 1/4/15 but this had now been delayed until 2016/17. There was a method in place to allow schools to keep meal costs the same for 2015/16 but once catering services move to a commercial position in 2016/17 schools would be on individual contracts with them and therefore schools will be making their own decisions about costs of meals. AH said that concern had been expressed at the Network Heads meeting that as the price of schools meals had been kept low there may be a ’jump’ in costs. AA said that there was an issue around the LA ‘smoothing’ costs across all schools acting as a collective vs. individual schools. 2. **ii.** RM asked all to note and pass on that a new Finance and Admin Manual was now available on the web 3. **iii.** AA reminded SF that student art work was on display in the Library building.   **iv.** Schedule of SF meetings 2015/16 was issued |  |
| **11.** | **Date of next meeting** |  |
|  | 12th May 2015, Civic Centre West 1.1 |  |