

**THE CUMBRIAN SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON**  
**29 JUNE 2005**

**PRESENT**

**Mr A Abernethy (Carlisle Secondary)**  
**Mr R T Alston (Foundation Secondary)**  
**Mrs N Bates (Advisory Group on Governance – Observer)**  
**Mrs J Blacklock (Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools)**  
**Mr S Bowditch (Special Schools)**  
**Mr A Brant (Cumbria Governors Council – Observer)**  
**Mr R Coy (Allerdale Primary – representing Mr C Rafferty)**  
**Mr P G Chappellhow (CCC – Conservative Group)**  
**Mr A Dickenson (Barrow Secondary)**  
**Mr J Douglas (VA Cof E)**  
**Mrs T Eyre (Copeland Primary)**  
**Ms S Gaston-Parry (Copeland Secondary)**  
**Canon D Jenkins (Diocesan Authorities)**  
**Mr K Little (CCC – Labour Group)**  
**Mr R Long (Advisory Group on Governance – Observer)**  
**Mr K Osbourne (Advisory Group on Governance – Observer)**  
**Mr R Rogers (Eden Primary)**  
**Mr A Rutter (Teachers’ Professional Associations)**

**Officers in attendance:**

**Mr A Hodge (Education Finance)**  
**Mrs N Shiels (Education)**  
**Ms J Collins (Education)**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Mr C Brooksbank  
Mr C Clarke  
Mrs J Farebrother  
Mr S Halfpenny  
Mr D Johnston  
Mrs M Pickthall  
Mr C Rafferty  
Mr B Thomas  
Mr M Woodburn  
Mr M Yearsley

## **2. WELCOMES**

There were a number of new members, attending their first Forum meeting. Mrs N Bates, Mr R Long and Mr K Osbourne were attending as observer representatives of the Advisory Group on Governance and Mrs J Blacklock (Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools), Mr A Dickenson (Barrow Secondary) and Mr K Little (Labour Group) were introduced to the Forum. Ms J Collins, Education Support Officer also attended as part of her induction programme.

Mr R Coy attended on behalf of Mr C Rafferty.

## **3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 APRIL 2005**

The minutes of the meeting of the Schools' Forum held on 20 April 2005 were agreed as an accurate record.

## **4. MATTERS ARISING**

Communications – It was reported that due to a failure in the CCC e-mailing system, it had not been possible to send out the agenda and papers for the meeting three weeks in advance as had been agreed previously. It should be possible to achieve this in future.

Consultation Exercise – The Schools' Budget Working Group had met to formulate the Forum response to the consultation exercise. A copy of the response had been sent via e-mail to all members of the Forum.

There were no further matters arising other than those that would be considered as separate items later on the agenda.

## **5. WORKING GROUP MINUTES**

The Contracts Monitoring Group, the Schools' Budgets Working Group, and the SEN, Social Deprivation, Access and Inclusion Working Group had met since the last meeting of the Schools Forum on 20 April 2005.

Contract Monitoring Group – The Contract Monitoring Group had met on 4 May 2005 and had agreed that it would look at every CCC contract, Capita or other, with schools once per year. The group would meet once per term and would invite comments to be submitted before the meeting. The first meeting of the group had been arranged for 11 July and would look at Capita services. Comments on processes should be submitted prior to the meeting.

The Schools' Forum then noted the minutes of the meeting of the Contract Monitoring Group held on 4 May 2005.

Schools' Budgets Working Group – The Schools' Budgets Working Group had met on 10 June 2005 with to consider in detail work relating to the review of the allocation formula. Harry Slater had attended the meeting with David Johnston and presented the background to the formula from its introduction. A number of factors had resulted in the Schools' Forum agreeing that it was now appropriate to undertake a complete review of the formula for funding schools. These factors included:

- PPA – national issue – certain size of primary school would be unable to deliver PPA
- Requests had been received from schools asking officers to look at the formula
- A similar exercise was already underway relating to Special Schools
- 3 year budgets were about to be introduced and the formula in place on 1 April 2006 would be the formula for the next three years
- Cabinet had requested that a review be undertaken

The work was in the initial stages and would be ongoing to build up the model spend. The Labour Group representative expressed some concern that the Schools' Forum was undertaking this review, however, there was a general agreement that this was a necessary and important area of work and perhaps the most important yet for the Forum. The Schools' Forum then noted the minutes of the meeting of the Schools' Budgets Working Group held on 10 June 2005.

SEN, School Deprivation, Access and Inclusion Working Group – The SEN, Social Deprivation, Access and Inclusion Working Group had met on 24 June 2005. The notes of the meeting were not yet available. They would be brought to the next meeting of the Forum on 13 September.

## **6. RESULTS OF FORUM SURVEY**

A survey of schools regarding the Schools' Forum was carried out during April and June 2005. A summary of the results was presented, for information.

There had been a relatively high response to the consultation exercise. The main message from schools was that they didn't know enough about the Schools' Forum. The Cumbria Governors' Council representative was concerned that the majority of the responses had been made by headteachers. He felt that as a result the results were not representative and wondered if this indicated that the information was not being passed to Chairs and governing bodies. There was some discussion regarding communications being passed to Chairs and governing bodies. The Special Schools representative suggested that the summary of agreed actions that was now produced immediately following meetings of the Schools Forum should also be forwarded to Chairs of Governors. It was confirmed that information was sent via the portal to every school and was posted on the website but that colleagues were looking to secure a more direct link.

The Forum also discussed which other groups received the minutes of Schools' Forum, eg Cabinet, Scrutiny. At present they were not presented to these groups although they were sent to the political members of the Schools' Forum. The Chair explained that the Forum was a stand-alone committee that had been established by statute but it was not political and was not an arm on the County Council. The Forum felt that, in general, information and minutes were widely available to anyone who had an interest.

## **7. FORUM MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

A small group of Forum members had met on 10 June to consider possible changes to membership and Terms of Reference. Since the establishment of the Schools' Forum in January 2003 experience had been gained and legislation had changed so it had been felt appropriate to review the current arrangements in advance of elections for a new Schools' Forum. A paper was presented that proposed revised terms of reference and membership of the Forum and sought their views.

Some of the issues discussed included:

- **Membership** – There would be 21 school members and 5 non-school members of the Forum. The school members would consist of 7 primary head teachers (based on the six districts in Cumbria plus one small school) and 3 primary governors (representing school types); 6 secondary headteachers (based on the six districts in Cumbria) and 3 secondary governors (representing school types); 1 special school representative (head or governor) and 1 nursery school representative (head or governor). Non-school members would represent the Labour and Conservative Groups on the County Council, the Teachers' Professional Associations, Joint Diocesan representation plus 2 from either the Lancaster Diocese, Carlisle Diocese, Non-teaching staff Associations and the Early Years Partnership. There continued to be some issues regarding non school membership that needed to be resolved, in particular, the Diocese representation. Similarly, the political groups would need to agree the elected member representation. The Forum would also have some observer members, one of which would be from the local LSC.
- **Elections** – The possibility of introducing rolling elections was suggested although it was felt that further work on the operation of such a process was required before the Forum could take a decision.
- **Functions of the Forum** – These had been produced using guidance and legislation and had been agreed by the Forum at the first meeting in January 2003. Legislation had now changed and in future Schools' Forums would have some decision-making powers. The functions would therefore need to be updated.
- **Copeland Secondary Constituency** – Millom School were currently part of the Copeland Secondary constituency. In terms of feedback and communications it was suggested that it would be more appropriate for Millom School to become part of the Barrow Secondary constituency.
- **Private or Public Meetings** – There was some discussion relating to whether meetings of the Schools' Forum should be private or public. There was a general feeling of unease about the possibility of the meetings becoming public.
- **Governor Representation** – There was a lengthy debate about how to improve governor representation. Attending the meeting, as observers, were a number of representatives of the Advisory Group on Governance. Proposals to encourage more governor involvement were generally welcomed although there were concerns relating to communication issues. It was recognised that governor representatives would need some assistance to enable them to communicate with their constituents. There was also

some discussion regarding the election process for governor representatives but the Forum felt strongly that all representatives should go through the same election process in order to become a member of the Forum. Where constituencies were specified as those represented by a governor, the headteacher governor would not be able to stand as a governor representative. Cumbria Governors' Council welcomed the inclusion of additional governors and reported that they intended to undertake their own 'marketing' exercise in September to raise awareness of the Schools' Forum prior to the elections. Information relating to the Schools' Forum would be made available shortly and a 'job specification' could also be included in any information that was prepared prior to the elections. Once nominations were received, candidates would be asked to prepare supporting information that would assist the voting process.

There would be further work undertaken on the processes that could be followed for rolling elections and an updated report would be presented to the next meeting of the Schools' Forum on 13 September 2005.

The issue of private/public meetings would be revisited within the next year.

## **8. SUPPLY LIST**

When the Schools' Forum had commissioned the supply list from Capita it had also agreed to review the operation/use of the list at the end of the first year. The Forum now considered a report that looked at the current contract with CAPITA who provided a Supply List on behalf of the LEA.

The Forum were asked to give their views as to whether the Supply List should be renewed and asked to comment on the specification which was attached as an appendix to the report. It was reported that School Standards Team had raised some concerns about the quality of some of the individuals that appeared on the list. There had also been initial concerns from schools about the low number of names that appeared on the list. There were, however, now more names on the list and it was **agreed that the supply list should be commissioned for a further year but that it should be investigated further during the year.**

## **9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The following dates of meetings of the Schools Forum and Sub-Groups of the Forum for 2005-06 were noted as follows :-

Friday, 24 June 2005, SEN, Access and Inclusion, Social Deprivation Working Group  
9.30am at The Westmorland Hotel, Tebay

Wednesday, 29 June 2005, Schools' Forum  
9.30am at Morton School, Carlisle

Wednesday, 29 June 2005, Budget Working Group (after Full Forum)  
11.15am at Morton School, Carlisle

Monday, 11 July 2005, Contract Monitoring Group  
10.00am at Kingmoor Park

Tuesday, 13 September 2005, Schools' Forum  
9.30am at Newton Rigg, Penrith

Tuesday, 13 September 2005, Budget Working Group (after Full Forum)  
Newton Rigg, Penrith

Tuesday, 11 October 2005, Schools' Budget Working Group  
9.30am at Newton Rigg, Penrith

Tuesday, 18 October 2005, School Size Working Group  
9:30am at The Broughton Craggs Hotel, Cockermouth

Thursday, 20 October 2005, SEN, Access and Inclusion, Social Deprivation Working  
Group  
9.30am at The Westmorland Hotel, Tebay

Wednesday, 9 November 2005, Schools' Forum  
9.30am at Newton Rigg, Penrith

Wednesday, 11 January 2006, Schools' Forum  
9.30am at Penrith Rugby Club

Tuesday, 7 February 2006, Schools' Forum (PROVISIONAL)  
9.30am at Newton Rigg, Penrith

Tuesday, 28 March 2006, Schools' Forum  
9.30am at Newton Rigg, Penrith

## **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- i) DfES Seminar – 19 September 2005 – LEAs had been invited to send up to seven representatives, a number of which should be members of the Schools' Forum, to attend regional seminars that would be held during the Autumn term. A copy of the letter that had been received was circulated and nominations were invited. Nominations received at the meeting included Alan Rutter, Rod Rogers, Norma Bates and Roger Alston (dependent upon other diary commitments).

PR/NJS  
10 August 2005