

THE FORUM OF SUTTON GOVERNORS

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 6th October 2016 at Civic Offices

PART A

There were 15 schools represented.

1. Apologies

Angela Baughan (Spencer Nursery), Neena Mehratra (Rushy Meadow), Pablo Mayorga (Stanley Park Juniors), Alan McIntosh (Amy Johnson), Carole Cook (Hackbridge) for lateness

2. Presentation – Recruiting governors in the brave new educational world!

Andrew reported that there had been the suggestion to invite SGOSS (School Governors One Stop Shop) to speak about governor recruitment but they had lost the government contract though he has been told that they have secured other funding to continue. Consequently he had contacted the NGA and Mark Gardner, who is involved with Publicity and Governor Recruitment was able to come to speak.

Mark started by saying that he is himself a governor at a Primary school in Coventry. Recruitment of governors is an important issue with 60% of schools in London are carrying vacancies of 1 or more. The role has changed and the NGA believes there needs to be 'the right people round the table' and consequently how to get them.

Evaluating current practice

- Are we using people in the best possible way?
- There needs to be a range of skills – carry out a skills audit.
- Look at recruiting and training needs.

Recruitment

- Perhaps a task and finish group.
- Role description?
- Advertise locally to local businesses
- Use of agencies e.g. the organisation that won the new contract –Inspiring Governance – inspiringgovernance.org

Induction and Training

- Welcome to Governance – NGA publication
- In-house induction?

Preparing

- Need to manage the process - discuss within the GB
- Acknowledging the pressures
- Everyone should feel they are partners and making a difference.

Mark also said that the NGA's view was that a governor should serve only 2 terms of office (8 years). He also mentioned that the NGA has a Young Governors' Network and has awards for GBs and Clerks.

Q - So much is expected is it not more likely to put people off becoming governors?

A – This agenda is coming from the DfE and yes we are at the sharp end but we should be up for a challenge.

Q – Retention is as much of an issue as recruitment, the culture is important but sometimes there is also internal politics and governors can find it hard to know what's going on.

A – GBs need to keep people interested. It's up to the chair to protect governors if there is a problem. For new governors there should be induction and maybe them having a mentor.

Q – You mention terms of office, this is often not realistic. There can also be a 3 stage process – I'd like to do / maybe a school governor / yes I could do that and during this people need information

A – That would be part of the interview

Q – What about before the interview?

A – People need to know what the job entails.

Q – Sutton is a high performing authority. It has always had good governance support and training and a number of larger companies who wanted to take social responsibility but all this is gone now. Is it part of the NGA remit to run any national advertising campaign or publicity?

A – A good point, yes. We will have Regional Managers who will be going into businesses to encourage getting governors.

Q – Have you got a vision how governors may be affected in the new OFSTED framework?

A – There are increasing MAT boards and Academy committees where governors may be sitting with other responsibilities.

Q – Does the NGA feed into OFSTED and if so, how does it?

A – We have an OFSTED speaker who feeds back. Governors are there to improve the outcomes for children and young people – don't let OFSTED drive what you do.

Q – But we are told that OFSTED will look at documentation, minutes showing challenge etc and all should know what's happening.

A – The minutes should reflect challenge. The GB should decide who will meet with the inspectors.

Q – What, in the NGAs experience, is the situation in organisations like us? Earlier we had nearly all schools affiliated and 40-50 people at meetings. There are major changes in the LA plus Secondary academies and the Primaries changing status. Is this happening in other parts of the country or just here?

A – No, it is a mixed picture across the country. Organisations are looking at what they can offer to schools, advertising and organising events.

Andrew thanked Mark for the presentation. Mark then left the meeting.

NB The power point will be emailed and put on the FSG web-site.

3. Up-date on provision of new Secondary and Special Needs Pupil Places

Andrew introduced Kieran Holliday from the Borough.

Kieran started by saying that since 2008 there have been 4,300 extra Primary places provided (by school expansion and bulge classes) in the Borough due to an increase in the birth rate and incoming families. He presented various charts showing the demographics. Continual increase in demand is expected until at least 2019 / 2020. Currently there will be an expansion at Westbourne Primary and the new school extension at Hackbridge. The LA also expected the bid from the Greenshaw Learning Trust for a new Free Primary School to come through.

Ten of the Secondary schools have already expanded and we have the highest recorded number of pupils within Y7. The Primary expansion naturally drives the need for extra Secondary places and it was known that 2 new secondary schools would be needed. The Greenshaw Learning Trust had had their bid for a free school agreed but currently there is no site for their proposed 8FE school. The LA had purchased the Sutton Hospital site which could have a 6FE school. There were 3 potential sponsors and just recently it was announced that the Harris chain had been successful. Due to time pressures the LA has worked proposals to the planning stage and have proposed to manage the project.

The school would have a science specialism as it will be in proximity to the Royal Marsden Cancer Hub. There was some confusion with the other secondary schools as they thought that it meant that they did not teach science well but this was a misunderstanding. The materials will be sustainably sourced and the school will have a low energy footprint. It will need to have off-site playing fields.

The school is expected to have 90% pupils with a Sutton address with others from North Surrey and Banstead. However, Kieran stated that there are some challenges going forward, especially in the residential context.

Special School Places – Orchard Hill had submitted a bid for a Free Special School. The background to this is that Orchard Hill had previously taken over Carew Manor which currently is housed in a totally inappropriate building. The bid was to re-provide on a new site with an increase from 177 to approximately 240 places. This has been agreed by the DfE and the EFA (Education Funding Agency). Currently no site has been agreed however, within the Local Plan, there was a potential site identified in the Wallington area.

Q – After the referendum there may now be problems with the funding for the Cancer Hub as most of the monies would be from the EU. Will that be a problem?

A – No, it shouldn't be an issue. The school will still be delivered.

Q- Long term secondary school provision – how will that be done?

A – Sutton is a net importer of secondary pupils. Some of this may change if more grammar schools are created the impact may be that the local grammars will draw from more Sutton pupils.

Andrew thanked Kieran for the presentation. Kieran then left the meeting.

NB The power point will be emailed and put on the FSG web-site.

Andrew said that, if the policy of extra grammar school did happen, there could potentially be considerable impact on Sutton's Comprehensive schools. He had wanted the new Secretary of State for Education – Justine Greening – to come to speak. He had requested this via Paul Scully's office but to date there has been no response.

PART B

1. Minutes of the last AGM

The minutes of the AGM on the 30th September 2015 were agreed.

2. Matters arising

There were no matters arising that had not been covered at previous meetings.

3. Chair's Report

Andrew gave a verbal review of the past year.

At the last AGM we had had the presentation on the People Plan. Only 1 school had, he believed, signed up but no others.

In the Spring there was a presentation from the Co-operative Network and currently a number of Primary schools are signing up to work together, initially as a Federated Group. The government's strategy of forcing schools to become academies seems to be halted at least for the time being.

The LA 'Spin Out' is still on-going with a proposed start date of November 1st. The official rationale is that the services should be preserved though Andrew said that his personal opinion was that it was as much to do with the LA having less money and the need to save. It has also just been announced that Colin Stewart, who was leading on this with William Clapp, will be leaving Sutton.

At the Summer meeting the Regional Schools' Commissioner came to speak. It seems that the commissioners' roles will effectively replace that of LAs.

Andrew also mentioned the future of organisations such as the FSG. Governor roles are changing with GBs having to be more skills based rather than stakeholder representation and with focus on outcomes rather than participation.

Andrew also recorded his thanks to Graham Jarvis, who had been an FSG committee member. Graham's wife had recently given birth to twins and the family has moved to Maidstone.

4. Acting Treasurer's Report

Andrew was still covering the Treasurer's role. He had circulated a Statement of Account and Treasurer's Report.

These were accepted unanimously.

5. Elections to FSG Committee

There had been no other nominations for committee membership. The existing members were willing to stand again.

Chair – Andrew Theobald – Proposed Sue Smith, Seconded Jenny Sims

Vice Chair – Carole Cook – Proposed Sue Smith, Seconded Andrew Theobald

Treasurer – Andrew asked whether anyone would be willing to take on the role? Dick Smith volunteered – **Agreed with thanks.**

Secretary – Sue Smith – Proposed Carole Cook, Seconded Andrew Theobald

Committee members – Angela Baughan, John Hickey, Jenny Sims
Agreed unanimously.

There are only 2 LA bodies with governor representation, the Children's Trust Board (technically the Chair of FSG or a substitute) and the Schools' Forum. The FSG arrange the election for governors to the Forum with a term of office of 4 years. There was a suggestion that Forum members have a shorter term of possibly 2 years. Andrew felt that we should stay with the 4 years and asked for agreement from the meeting.

***Agreed**

The FSG Constitution had been circulated but no comments had been received.

6. Report back from the Schools' Forum

Andrew reported the main issues:

- 'Spin Out' company. This will be initially funded by the LA which consequently has a knock-on effect on other monies.
- Funding expansion of school places
- SEN school places
- Targeted Youth Service
- Inclusion Review – proposed merger of STARS, The Limes and Drapers.

Andrew voiced his concern that the papers for the next Forum meeting had only been emailed out that day for the meeting on Monday (10th). With the reduction of central staff there are not enough officers to assist with this. The Schools' Forum's main function is the allocation of monies within education. Although the final decision rests with elected members they must take into account the recommendations of the Forum.

7. Report back from the Children's Trust Board

Carole reported the main reports and issues:

- Strategies for Early Intervention
- Disability Partnerships
- Transition Board
- Issue of officers leaving Sutton and not being replaced
- CAMHS – The previous lead has been promoted. Her replacement, Sam Green, is known on Sutton and is beginning to make some headway towards the service targets
- Post 14 and Post 16 provision. There are concerns about the consistency of information.
- Traveller community – their numbers and attainment
- Directory of Services including the Youth Provision – concern there is no one to continue and maintain this.
- Advocacy – concern re the provision especially for young carers.

8. AOB

Sue mentioned that at the last Children, Family and Education Committee there had been a presentation from the local Youth MP who mentioned a pledge to publicise youth support 'services' This seemed poignant given the members decision to cut all but the statutory requirements. Jenny said that the whole meeting lacked any debate or members real engagement with education. Andrew said that in the past every Councillor would have been a school governor, now he believed that it was only 1 or

2 Councillors and the 2 diocesan representatives. With the cuts, the 54 Councillors could soon equal 10% of Borough personnel and the Council will have moved from a provider of services to a purely commissioning one.

'Spin Out' – Andrew reported from a meeting last week attended by schools that had expressed an interest in becoming 'shareholders'. The new company will have a Board of Directors, 75% (4) appointed by the LA and 25% (2) by the schools and an MD to be recruited and employed. There was a question whether the MD should have an educational or commercial background? It was felt that it should be commercial as there was educational expertise from the Headteachers. It would be up to schools via those Secondaries interested, the SPHG and FSG to decide their directors though how this will be done has yet to be decided.

The Future of the FSG – Andrew voiced his concern about the fewer number of schools affiliated and also the diminishing attendance at the meetings. We do try to get interesting speakers but the committee would like some feedback and/or guidance. Are we getting things wrong? What should we be doing? How relevant are we or perceived to be? We are not part of the LA and have never received any monies from it. Given the changes and the cuts in the Council the FSG now has a larger group reach than the LA. It would be a shame if the FSG cease to exist. Perhaps we need a questionnaire on the future and what governors would like us to be doing?

Carole asked whether people understand the role of FSG? What can we offer? She suggested that maybe we should send out some information with the questionnaire. With all the changes in education and governors' roles, governors need to get together and we are the only group.

Andrew sends the papers to the FSG reps, Headteachers and the secondary Chairs of Governors. He asked whether these get reported to other governors? On the suggested draft agendas there is an FSG item though whether this is then on all GB agendas is not known.

The meeting finished at 9.30pm

Andrew thanked all those attending.

9. Date of next meeting - Monday February 6th 2017