

THE FORUM OF SUTTON GOVERNORS

www.forumsuttongovernors.co.uk

Chair: Andrew Theobald. 9 Connaught Road, Sutton SM1 3PJ. Tel: 020 8715 2337
Mob: 07850 528467. Email: chair@forumsuttongovernors.co.uk

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 30th September 2015 at Civic Offices

PART A

There were 13 schools represented.

1. Apologies

Angela Baughan (Spencer Nursery), Jonathan Pritchard (The Avenue) for lateness, Jane Pascoe (Stanley Park HS) for lateness

2. Presentation – The People Plan

Andrew introduced Kate Enver (Head of HR covering schools) and Steve James (LBS Project Manager for the People Plan Council wide) to speak about the People Plan and its potential impact on the salaries and terms and conditions of all support staff.

Kate led the presentation and started by saying that this meeting was at a good time as the discussions with the unions had concluded at the end of August having reached a collective agreement. The draft agreement had been shared with Primary Heads the previous week and approved by committee on Monday.

The idea behind the Plan was to simplify the structures and to set Terms and Conditions to be fit for the future in the light of the changing times. The main changes are:

- 27-30 Job profiles (as opposed to the current 400 Job Descriptions across the Council)
- a streamlined, clearer grading structure
- benchmarks of performance related pay
- policies and procedures that are more easily understood
- flexible benefits

The unions – UNISON, GMB, UNITE and the Employees Side will ballot members whether to accept the proposals in October.

For Maintained Schools the proposed implementation is September 2016. Officers will be talking to schools on the specific cost implications for each one. There had been a modelling exercise which suggested that, in general, there would be the equivalent of a 1% up-lift. The first group will be the maintained schools who do not buy into the LBS payroll. It is expected that all schools will have been visited by mid November.

Schools can then decide whether or not to accept and take on the changes by February 2016.

For Academies and Non- Maintained Schools Governing Bodies should consider whether to mirror the LBS changes. If change was likely they should contact HR to discuss the matter in greater detail. There would be a cost implication for this. Final decisions should also be back by February 2016.

If a school is considering becoming an academy before 31st August 2016 they can still discuss the implications with HR as any change would happen from 1st September 2016.

Q – What are the budget implications?

A – There would be the normal pay progression this coming April then from September there would be the assimilation onto the new structure. This would not mean a flat 1%, each jobs would be individually calculated

Q – What is the benefit to accept?

A – There is the relationship of performance to pay progression and there is more scope in the pay scales.

Q – Is there a critical mass for the numbers engaging?

A – No, we will engage with the schools that wish to accept irrespective of the number.

Q – What about if a school is part-way to academisation?

A – If the conversion date is November 2016 say, it may not be useful for the assimilation date to be September 2016.

Q- If it is not possible in September, can schools join in later?

A- Not sure, we would need to look at individual circumstances. We hope that many or most schools will want to commit to the change.

Q – Is this just in Sutton or also Merton and others?

A - No, just Sutton. Merton is looking at their own systems.

Q – Will there be any further funding for this?

A – No.

Q – You have done some modelling moving from the old system to the new looking at the normal progression. What would it look like in year 2?

A – We have not done this with schools only across the Council. We have no specific school data.

Q – You say you are coming round to schools, when will they be contacted?

A – The maintained school that have not bought back pay roll should be seen and assessed within 2-3 weeks.

Q – When would the reports come back to schools?

A – As quickly as possible.

Q – Will you be proactive or reactive contacting schools?

A – We hope to get round as many as possible. There was a workshop at the end of the last academic year and we will also be talking to Primary Heads again.

Q – Will there be losers?

A – Possibly only for 8 roles out of the whole Council.

Q – You mention flexible benefits, will that help recruitment?

A- Research shows that it should, with potentially retail discounts, healthcare, basic leave entitlement etc.

Q – There may be a risk for the Council, will schools also have a risk if they do not buy into the package?

A – There might be a risk of equal pay claims which could involve unions and lawyers. Non-maintained schools would have slightly less risk.

Q – Why the union ballot?

A – The members have to be formally consulted. We have an agreement in principle It will be recommended by the unions to be accepted as the best achievable through negotiation.

Q – Are the AP&T scales not being used?

A – It is the NJC terms and conditions.

Q – If academies ask for job evaluations, do you have the capacity?

A – For assimilation there is a chart to match current and new role profiles. This should make the process easier and also to train other colleagues to do the exercise.

Q – If a school does agree the changes to whom can an employee appeal?

A - The school through its own procedures.

Q – If a school does not join but the staff are interested, what can they do?

A – Again, through the usual channels within the school.

Andrew thanked Kate and Steve for the presentation. They then left the meeting.

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

PART B

1. Minutes of the last AGM

The minutes of the AGM on the 30th September 2014 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.

He started by saying that there had been several Borough changes since the last AGM. Particularly that, a year ago we were considering the 'Middle Tier' possibilities which all looked relatively positive at the time.

In February we had a special pre-election Hustings meeting focussing on education issues. There were representatives of all the parties present. Also in February at the Spring term meeting, we had Philip Wood from the National Governors' Association (NGA) talking about the re-constitution of Governing Bodies and Kieran Holliday from the LA with an up-date on Pupil Place Planning in both the Primary and Secondary sector.

At that time we also lost Philip Lines our Treasurer who moved to Norfolk.

Unfortunately we have been unable to replace him and Andrew has taken on the role in the interim. He asked again if anyone would be willing to volunteer to contact him.

The Summer meeting in May had Philip Wood from the NGA again and Adrian Shardlow from Browne Jacobson talking about Academisation. There are various models but the common theme was that schools should do this on their own terms, whichever one is the best fit for their own school.

Andrew gave an up-date on the Improvement Partnership. This group was no longer meeting as the scope of the Council cuts at £40 M was far greater than first thought and the LA is having to make radical changes to their structures. They are now considering outsourcing most or all of their services. Officers have been looking at various options and will at some point be recommending a preferred option to elected members, however to date there has been no paper going to committee. Sue mentioned that at Chairs' Briefing Colin Stewart had said that they were employing a consultancy firm for an outsourcing feasibility study.

The LA lost two senior officers – Nigel Laing (Head of School Improvement) and Cerys Edwards (Principal Educational Psychologist), both will be much missed.

In May there had also been the General Election and as a result it is clear that this government wants all schools to become academies with schools being overseen by Regional Schools Commissioners.

Andrew highlighted some particular issues facing Sutton:

- Pupil Places – This is still a pressure. There is a need for 2 new Secondary schools. The Greenshaw sponsored Free school was to be built on the Rosehill site. However, the planning application had been turned down. A new site will have to be found but places will be needed from September 2016.
- Changes to Children's Centres - The initial proposal to close all but one with 3 'spokes'. This was universally unpopular. Officers were asked to come up with alternatives. A paper will be going to the Children, Family and Education Committee (CF&EC) on the 1st October with new proposals – 4 options the preferred option 3 keeping 6 Hubs plus 4 Access Points. This is dependent on getting £1/4M from Health, though he cannot remember getting any money from Health in the past.
- The Youth Service – There is a paper going to the CF&EC proposing a preferred option of cutting all but the statutory services.
- As more schools become academies the FSG is the only Borough-wide group where governors can meet and discuss common issues. We also have a good relationship with the LA

Andrew thanked those who had come and asked whether they felt they would like further speakers on academisation? He suggested the Schools' Co-operative Society. They have about 800 affiliated schools, 160 of which are academies. They are also an agreed academy sponsor and can help schools wishing to become academies by setting up their articles and finding suitable partners if necessary. He also suggested a speaker from an academy chain, perhaps Harris? Carole thought this was a good idea especially regarding the Co-operative Society. Alan McIntosh suggested perhaps having a speaker from a school that is part of a chain to mention any effects this might have. Carole agreed and added that it need not be someone from a Sutton school, Croydon, for example, has a number of academy groups.

***Agreed**

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4. Acting Treasurer's Report

Andrew, 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 other than the existing members who were willing to stand again.

Chair – Andrew Theobald – Proposed Carole Cook, Seconded Alan McIntosh

Vice Chair – Carole Cook – Proposed Sue Smith, Seconded Jeremy Dearmer

Treasurer – Vacancy – reps to ask for any volunteers in their GBs

Secretary – Sue Smith – Proposed Jane Pascoe, Seconded Carole Cook

Committee members – Angela Baughan, John Hickey, Graham Jarvis

Agreed unanimously.

Jenny Sims also attends the committee meetings as a maintained Primary governor rep on the Schools' Forum.

6. Report back from the Schools' Forum

Jenny said that the last meeting had been the first she had attended. She had been struck by the openness and frankness of the meeting and how all opinions and views were able to be discussed.

Andrew highlighted 3 issues from the last meeting:

- Children's Centres – Mentioned in his Chair's Report
- A review of the Formula Review Group (FRG). The FRG is a sub-group of the Forum which looks in greater detail at the Funding Formula etc and makes recommendations to the Forum. Over time the group has grown and now consists of all the Head on the Forum and a number of governors. With this number meetings have been difficult to arrange with some members frequently having to miss meetings due to short notice or timings of the meetings. The proposal was to significantly reduce the numbers, initially 1 Primary Head, 1 Secondary head and 1 Governor, but amended to 2 Primary and 2 Secondary Heads with 1 Primary and 1 Secondary Governor. The new group will also be properly serviced and minuted.
- The Inclusion Review – The previous consultation suggested the integration of STARS and The Limes on the same site. This had been universally challenged and further proposals have gone to schools who have been asked to respond by 16 October. Andrew said that this would be of particular interest to schools' Inclusion / Safeguarding governor.

Sue mentioned a paper going to the CF&EC with a draft of the Funding Formula and with a recommendation that initial decisions be delegated to the Strategic Director. She expressed the concern that the draft formula had not even been mentioned at the Forum meeting that had only been less than 2 weeks ago. Brenda, as Chair of the Forum confirmed that she had not been notified of this. Carole queried whether this might be contrary to DfE regulations?

7. AOB

None

Andrew thanked all those attending.

8. Date of next meeting - Tuesday February 2nd 2016