

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING HELD ON 1 MARCH 2012 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, BRADLEY ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 0RD.

Present:

Mr N Baker, Dr Peter Biggs, Mrs Julia Bird, Mr Andy Bridewell, Mr David Cowley, Mrs J Finney, Mrs Jane Franchi, Mr Tim Gilson, Mr J Hawkins, Mr M Keeling, Rev. A Kemp, Ms I Lancaster-Gaye, Mr N Owen, Dr Tina Pagett, Mr J Proctor, Mr M Watson, Elizabeth Williams and Mrs C Williamson

15 Apologies and changes to membership

Apologies were received from:

Mrs Sue Jiggins, WGA, Primary Governor Representative
Mrs Ann Ferris, WGA, Primary Governor Representative
Mr Ted Hatala, substitute Early Years Representative
Mrs Rosheen Ryan, Parent Governor Representative
Mrs Carol Grant, WASSH, Pewsey Vale

And also

Cllr Lionel Grundy, Cabinet member for Children's Services
Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director
Julia Cramp, Service Director, Commissioning and Performance

Changes to membership:

Andy Bidewell would replace Judith Finney as PHF representative.

16 Minutes of the previous Meeting

Resolved:

To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2012.

17 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

18 Chairman's Announcements

It was acknowledged that November would be too early for the SEN info to be available and it was therefore agreed to change the date of the meeting to 6 December 2012.

It was also agreed that every effort would be made to circulate paper copies of the agenda and reports to members of Schools Forum prior to any meetings.

The Chairman explained that a number of officers would be unable to attend this meeting due to an Ofsted inspection.

19 Children and Young People's Trust Board Update

Liz Williams, Head of Finance, DCE gave a brief update as Julia Cramp, Service Director Commissioning and Performance, DCE was unable to attend the meeting.

The updated Children and Young People's Plan had been distributed in early April and it was anticipated that a Children and Young People version would also be available.

The Workforce Development Strategy and the Strategy for Involvement of Children and Young People were under consultation.

An Ofsted inspection of Safeguarding within the Local Authority would start the following Monday for two weeks.

20 Budget Monitoring

Liz Williams, Head of Finance, DCE introduced the report for Period 10 and highlighted the key movements from the previous forecast.

She also explained that as there was still some work to be done with regards to schools contingency budget it was not reported yet. It was anticipated that once included it would improve figures overall.

Resolved:

To note the budget monitoring position at the end of January 2012.

21 Reports from Working Groups

Liz Williams, Head of Finance, DCE introduced the reports and minutes from the School Funding and SEN working groups and invited the forum to note the recommendations and findings for later consideration with the relevant agenda items.

22 Teacher's Union Facility Time Costs

Liz Williams, Head of Finance, DCE introduced the report as Lorraine Nowlan, HR Operations Manager – Schools was unable to attend the meeting.

She explained that the forum needed to focus on the budget and pointed out that it was likely the budget would be reduced from £73,000 to £48,000 in the next financial year as it was subject to Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant (LACSEG).

In response to questions asked she clarified the following:

- There was funding cover for union representatives involved in meetings;
- Work was being undertaken with the Unions to establish whether a Wiltshire-wide agreement could be reached;
- The consultation process had already begun and discussion were underway with the Unions, however details would still need to be addressed;
- Other Local Authorities, BANES for example, had successfully applied for a DfE “dispensation”;
- The unspent money would contribute to the Dedicated Schools Grant budget (see monitoring report under “other services” in commissioning)

Resolved:

1. To agree in principle:

- a. To ensure the appropriate level of funding of a central Facility time budget to meet legal obligations under Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, The Employment Act 2002 and the ACAS Code of Practice on Time Off for Trade Union Duties and Activities; and that £50,000 is considered the appropriate value for that budget;**
- b. That if a county wide agreement is in place, that the most appropriate funding arrangement would be that the LA submit a request to the DfE to allow Wiltshire to retain that aspect of LACSEG in the central budget for facility time held for that purpose;**
- c. If there is no county wide agreement and / or if DfE does not agree the request to allow Wiltshire to retain that aspect of LACSEG in the central budget for facility time held for that purpose Schools Forum will need to consider the funding agreement again;**
- d. That Schools HR Advisory continue to discuss and develop a new county-wide Facility Time agreement on behalf of the schools, academies and the LA with the teachers unions and associations and to bring that to Schools Forum at a later date.**

2. That any unspent money will be identified in a separate line in the budget monitoring report.

23 Schools Budget Proposals 2012/13

Liz Williams, Head of Finance, DCE introduced the report and explained that the budget had been agreed at full Council on 28 February 2012.

She informed the forum of developments since the report had been published and highlighted points including the following:

- All the roadshows had been held;
- Work had been undertaken on a budget allocation;
- The outstanding census data from two schools had been received;
- The £1.5M projected in November had been reduced to a projected underspend of £1.077M and had been further reduced by decisions made at this meeting.

She also confirmed that DfE would pay £1M in full in final settlement of outstanding 2010-11 standards funds in June, therefore the balance of overspend for 2010-11 did not need to be held against risk unknown. The underspend rolled forward from 2010-11 could now be used.

Comments were made that schools could use more devolved budget for preventative measures to avoid permanent exclusions. It was explained that Key Stage 3 students would be reintegrated to mainstream schools or given a Special School Place.

Resolved:

- 1. To use one off funding to:**
 - a. Allocate £400,000 to enable the Local Authority (LA) to commission provision for the pupils for which the LA retains responsibility after the “power to innovate” has come into effect;**
 - b. Allocate £0.520M to remove the 0.19% reduction applied across the 2012-13 delegated budget and Early Years Single Funding Formula but note in the budget;**
 - c. Hold the remainder as contingency.**
- 2. That all those concerned be informed of the decision taken and the present situation as well as expected implications for the following financial year.**
- 3. That the financial planning software should be updated to include a 0.5% reduction from all formula factors in 2013-14 to enable schools to begin to plan for reductions in future years.**

24 Proposals to vary the Minimum Funding Guarantee

Phil Cooch, Principal Accountant Schools, introduced the report and pointed out that this was a once a year activity, he also recognised the difficulties in the changes to the Regulations which did not appear to permit disapplications to remove Parent Support Advisers funding paid to individual schools from the 2011-12 baseline.

Resolved:

- 1. To agree to:**
 - a. The disapplications to:**
 - i. New school and new year group allowances;**
 - ii. Small schools curriculum protection;**

- iii. Service school safety net;
 - iv. Resource base funding;
 - v. Diploma Funding Grant paid to individual schools;
 - vi. Advances Skills Teachers (AST) funding paid to individual schools;
 - vii. In-year pupil growth funding;
 - viii. Transitional protection paid to Downlands special school;
 - ix. Any site or school specific factor which is based upon circumstances at the school which have changed e.g. a school no longer classified as being a split site school or salary safeguarding ceasing.
- b. Subject to the Secretary of State's approval the disapplications to:
 - i. remove Parent Support Advisers funding paid to individual schools from the 2011-12 baseline;
 - ii. remove the second and third secondary school specialisms funding paid to individual schools from the 2011-12 baseline.
 - c. Subject to the Secretary of State's approval the disapplication to, with the agreed change to the allocation basis in 2012-13 for the broadband funding factor from a formulaic to an actual cost basis, the amounts included in school budgets in 2011-12 should be removed from the baseline and replaced with the revised allocations for 2012-13.

25 **Free School Meal Pool**

Phil Cooch, Principal Accountant Schools, introduced the report and explained that due to the changes to the Pupil Premium Grant it was likely that the cost of school meals would rise.

He invited the Schools Forum to decide whether or not a redistribution of the balance should be made and if so how much.

Resolved:

To make a redistribution of 100% of the balance meaning £74,306 Cashback and leaving £82,973.

26 **Accounting for the Pupil Premium Grant at year end and the subsequent impact on the Controls on Surplus Balances Scheme**

Phil Cooch, Principal Accountant Schools, introduced the report and drew the forum's attention to the main issue as described in paragraph 5 and to the Funding Working Group's recommendations in agenda item 7.

Resolved:

Schools Forum agree that:

1. **The Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) should be excluded from the calculation of a school's permitted revenue balance threshold.**
2. **Any unspent PPG at the year end should be reported on the Intended Use of Revenue Balances return under Section 2 of the Scheme as a permitted ringfenced grant;**
3. **Schools should not be required to provide any explanation in support of any unspent PPG.**

27 Updated School Funding Scheme Guidance 2012

Phil Cooch, Principal Accountant Schools, introduced the report regarding the proposals by the DfE to amend their guidance on local authority Funding Schemes, effective from 1 April 2012.

Resolved:

To note the report.

28 Council Business Plan

Liz Williams, Head of Finance, DCE introduced the report and pointed out that the Business Plan had been agreed with no amendments at full Council on 28 February 2012 and would now be implemented.

She explained that the Aspire Centre in paragraph 10 was likely to be based in Melksham and that community budget pilot for vulnerable families would aim to provide earlier intervention to avoid crossing the social care threshold (paragraph 13 refers).

Resolved:

1. **To note the impact of the Council's financial plan on services for children and young people.**
2. **To receive the full Children's Services budget for information at the June meeting.**
3. **To receive information on the Southwark Judgement and its implications at the June meeting.**

29 SEN Recoupment

Karina Kulawik, Manager for Inclusion, introduced the report regarding an anomaly in the funding of Named Pupil Allowance (NPA) for out of county pupils in Wiltshire mainstream schools. She explained that it had been discussed at the SEN Working Group and that options a and b contained within paragraph 5 of the report had been felt as potentially risky.

Resolved:

1. That funding for all pupils with special educational needs should be in accordance with the Wiltshire formula and therefore out of county pupils should be funded on a consistent basis with Wiltshire pupils.
2. To implement the change in funding as follows: to continue with the current arrangement for this cohort of pupils whilst in their current schools but to fund all future out of county pupils consistently with the arrangements for Wiltshire pupils.

30 **SEN Support Services**

Karina Kulawik, Manager for Inclusion, introduced the report updating Schools Forum on the results of the consultation on the activity analysis for SEN Support Services. She explained that the consultation had been extended from November to February, yet the number of responses received had been quite low.

The Chairman commended the work undertaken by Karina Kulawic and her team and expressed his disappointment at the poor take up of the consultation.

Members of the Schools Forum felt that there had been some confusion over the proposals and that the local authority needed to clarify what it wished to delegate or devolve, the statutory responsibilities with Academies should also be clarified.

Resolved:

To receive a report at the June meeting detailing the review of the provision and structure of SEN Support Services and further proposals including:

- the options for delegation of specific services;
- the associated impact for implementation in April 2013;
- greater clarity on statutory responsibilities; and
- “what is left at the end”.

31 **Confirmation of dates for future meetings**

The dates of future meetings were confirmed as follows:

Thursday 21 June 2012	Council Chamber, Bradley Road, Trowbridge, BA14 0RD
Thursday 4 October 2012	Venue to be confirmed
Thursday 6 December 2012	Venue to be confirmed.

32 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 1.30 - 3.30 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Marie Gondlach, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 713597, e-mail marie.gondlach@wiltshire.gov.uk

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