

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING HELD ON 9 MARCH 2017 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Mr N Baker (Chairman), Mrs A Bates, Ms M Chilcott, Miss Tracy Cornelius, Mr J Hamp, Mr J Hawkins, Mrs S Jiggins, Mr J Proctor, Mr N Roper, Mr S White, Mrs C Williamson, Mr P Cook, Mr M Cawley and Miss Cathy Shahrokni

Also Present:

Cllr Richard Gamble

19 Apologies and Changes of Membership

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the change in Membership as outlined in the Agenda.

20 Minutes of the previous Meeting

RESOLVED:

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

21 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations.

22 Chairman's Announcements

There were no announcements.

23 Children and Young People's Trust Board Update

Head of Commissioning and Joint Planning Susan Tanner gave an update for the Board, stating that an Early Year Board has been established, to ensure that children had the right help in Early Years and were school ready.

The Chairman also gave an update from the Education Transformation Board, stating that at the last conference, it was agreed that a Design Task Group would be established to represent all schools in Wiltshire. The Group would look at key issues such as leadership, viability, concerns and safeguarding.

24 **Budget Monitoring**

The budget monitoring information against the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the financial year 2016-17 was presented by Head of Finance Elizabeth Williams.

The Committee was referred to Appendix 1 which contained the relevant data. Notably, it was highlighted that the current projected overspend is just within the level of DSG reserve rolled forward in to 2016-17, and that any increase in the level of overspend between now and the end of the year would result in an overspend being carried forward in to 2017-18.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the report.

25 **Reports from Working Groups**

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the reports and minutes of the Working Groups.

26 **School Budgets 2017-18 - Update Report**

Strategic Financial Support Manager Grant Davis introduced the report which sought to outline the key changes resulting from the schools funding formula for 2017-18. It was explained that the schools block was set at £260.78 million which is an increase of £4.68m on the 2016-17 funding level.

Attention was drawn to the tables in the report, showing changes in pupil numbers, "Per Pupil Funding" and other Elements. Changes to the Minimum Funding Guarantee and data surrounding the capped funding of schools were highlighted. It was explained that The Minimum Funding Guarantee ensures that schools are protected from a drop in their overall per pupil funding of greater than -1.5% but that schools seeing a gain in their level of per pupil funding are capped at 0.90%.

Appendix A of the report was referred to, showing the breakdown of top-up funding and the impact of increase agreed for 2017-18. Questions were asked surrounding the application of the Minimum Funding Guarantee to Special Schools and it was confirmed that there are different top up rates of Special Schools as a result of the minimum funding guarantee calculator.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the report.

27 **Analysis of Independent Provision Spend**

Head of Commissioning and Joint Planning Susan Tanner introduced the report, going through the Spend in detail. It was explained that the figures used on this report were based on full year costs not actual spend.

Notably, it was highlighted that there has been a significant reduction in independent specialist post 16 placement spend, alongside a significant increase in the number of post 16 learners, with a 57% increase in the number of post 16 SEN learners whilst spend is projected to decrease by 47%. It was explained that on average this meant a decrease of £56,000 to £24,000 per pupil. Consequently, the need to stop the flow of learners to independent provision was emphasised and that more need to be done to accommodate these learners internally.

The Officer also outlined the main reasons for placements in independent provision and the categories of spend for which the council may have been able to meet needs.

Questions were asked by Members as to the success rates at Tribunals. It was confirmed that a number of Tribunals have ruled against the Council and they have had to continue paying for the Independent Provider. The Officer said that the priority had to be stopping these places being taken up in the first place.

RESOLVED

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

28 **Allocation of Funding from Schools Block 2017-18**

Head of Commissioning and Joint Planning Susan Tanner introduced the report which explained 5 proposals for the allocation of £800,000, as identified at the January Schools Forum meeting. It was agreed that the Head of Commissioning and Joint Planning be tasked with identifying proposals for the use of this one-off money to support the delivery of the SEN Supporting Schools Strategy

The 5 proposals were discussed and debated in detail. Namely:

Proposal 1 – Creation of specialist resource base provision (in-reach and out-reach) for SEMH KS1 &KS2 - £600k

The proposed specialist resource centre was described as a Therapeutic Intervention. It was highlighted that these costs would be set up costs, making an investment, which aimed to reduce the reliance on Independent Provider Spend. The investment would develop initial places, with a view for the centres to be expanded and extended in the future.

The Committee asked a number of technical questions surrounding the provision of the centres. It was confirmed that Schools would be asked if they

were interested in providing these centres and that the Schools would then work directly with the Council to set up the centres.

Proposal 2 – Transition Funding £130k

The proposed funding was explained as looking to make funding available for all transition periods, including pre-school to primary and primary to secondary.

Proposal 3 – Funding to support development of peripatetic Hearing Impairment Service £20k

This fund was described as being a floating fund, to make equipment available to schools.

Proposal 4 – Allocate £10k to support minor developments in AP

To provide funding of £10k which, together with the LA £20k, can be used to provide support for developments in each of the three secondary cluster groups.

Proposal 5- Balance to support any further identified developments in Proposals 1-3

RESOLVED:

The Committee approved all 5 Proposals, on the condition that Schools Forum will receive regular updates, including the transition process.

29 **National Funding Formula for Schools - Draft Consultation Response**

The Chairman introduced the Draft Consultation Response and explained that the details had already been looked at in detail by the relevant working groups but that the proposed response needed approval by the Committee.

Head of Finance Care Elizabeth Williams took the Committee through the questions and responses of the Consultation, in Appendix V2 of the report. Additional comments on the responses were discussed and agreed. Namely:

- Question 8- Sparsity funding- Should be allocated a lower amount.
- Question 9- Growth Factor- That Wiltshire Council Core Strategy should be referred to in the response.
- Question 12- Funding Floor for Growing Schools- That the response must make clear that Wiltshire Council agrees with this Funding Floor as an exception, otherwise it may be seen to contradict the response to Question 10- Do you agree with the principle of a Funding Floor?
Answer- No.

RESOLVED:

The Committee approved the response to the Consultation, with the above comments.

30 **High Needs National Funding Formula - Draft Consultation Response**

Head of Finance Elizabeth Williams introduced the Draft Consultation Response. It was explained that the response had already been considered by the relevant Working Group. It was noted that there were concerns of the for overall level of high needs funding and the use of proxy data for SEN that does not support the needs of pupils in a rural authority such as Wiltshire. It was also stated that Wiltshire disagreed with the use of historical spend.

The Chairman took the Committee through the proposals in Appendix V1 and all were approved with an additional comment on Question 8- Further Considerations- That the Formula does not recognise Special School Cost Pressures.

RESOLVED:

The Committee approved the response to the Consultation, with the above comments.

31 **Confirmation of dates for future meetings**

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Thursday 22 June 2017.

32 **Urgent Items**

There were no Urgent Items.

(Duration of meeting: 1.30 - 4.05 pm)

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SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING HELD ON 12 JANUARY 2017 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Mr N Baker (Chairman), Mr M Watson (Vice Chairman), Mrs A Bates, Ms M Chilcott, Miss Tracy Cornelius, Mr J Hawkins, Mrs S Jiggins, Mr J Proctor, Mr N Roper, Ms I Sidmouth, Mr S White, Mrs C Williamson and Mr D Wragg

Also Present:

Cllr Richard Gamble

1 Apologies and Changes of Membership

Apologies were received from Rosemary Collard, John Hamp and Amanda Burnside, who sent David Wragg as substitute.

2 Minutes of the previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 6th October 2016 were considered.

RESOLVED:

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true and accurate record by the Chairman.

3 Declaration of Interests

Nigel Roper stated that if Growth Funds were to be discussed, his school would benefit from the scheme, although he said that he would approach discussions with an open mind.

Neil Baker also stated that his school would benefit from Growth Funds but said that he would approach discussions with an open mind.

4 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman thanked the officers for the quick turnaround in the reports following legislative changes at the start of the year.

He also explained that the agenda was extraordinary, in that the reports would be considered and the decisions would be made at the end, under the decisions report, agenda item 12.

5 **Children and Young People's Trust Board Update**

There was no relevant update for the Trust Board.

6 **Budget Monitoring**

Head of Finance Liz Williams gave an update regarding the Budget Monitoring Report.

Specific attention was drawn towards the £0.585 million projected overspend to the overall Schools Budget. A £1.2 million move in spending within the High Needs budget including top up payments was also highlighted, as an increase from the last Budget Monitoring Report in October 2016.

Members were asked to note the contents of the report

RESOLVED:

Members noted the Budget Monitoring Report.

7 **National Funding Formula for Schools 2018-19: Phase II Consultation and High Needs funding formula consultation**

School Strategic Finance Support Manager Grant Davis introduced the report explaining the consultation period and the two- stage process involved, lasting for 14 weeks and ending on 22 March 2017.

The new funding blocks were outlined and attention was drawn towards the new structure of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to include; Schools Block, High Needs Block, Early Years Block and a new Central Services Block for 2017-18.

The 'soft' formula was explained as the approach to be adopted in 2018-19, with a move to the 'hard' formula of National Funding for 2019-20.

The table at para 15 of the report for National Funding Formula was highlighted as giving an indicative funding oversight as to the overall position for Wiltshire and how it stands to be impacted by the National Funding Formula.

The indicative movements in funding were explained in the paper which showed a small increase in funding under the National Funding Formula for schools and no increase under the proposed High Needs formula. Concerns were expressed at the impact, particularly, with the High Needs due to issues with historical spend and deprivation of the area.

Questions were asked by members regarding the determination of historical spend and criticism was raised over the fact that the data was based on historical spend.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the Funding Formula Report.

8 **Reports from Working Groups**

The Head of Finance Liz Williams introduced the Working Group update reports and asked Members to note the updates.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the update reports from Working Groups.

9 **Exceptional Numbers of Statements (EHCP's) Formula**

Schools Strategic Finance Support Manager Grant Davis explained the report and the targeting of funding towards schools with High Needs.

Attention was drawn to the tables and figures in the report detailing 6 options considered by the Working Groups, for future funding formulas, at para 9 of the report.

The officer explained that it was proposed to keep the current mechanism unchanged with a capped budget at £100,000 for 2016-17 but for options for future years to be brought to a subsequent for members to consider.

RESOLVED:

Members agreed to keep funding formula unchanged for 2016-17 and to cap expenditure at £100,000 with funding for 2017-18 onwards to be determined at later meetings.

10 **School Revenue Funding 2017-18 - Funding Settlement and Budget Setting Process**

The Chairman introduced the Revenue Report, highlighting aspects of significance.

Head of Finance Liz Williams further expanded on the reports, including the clarification of decision making powers, and asked members to note the contents.

A question was asked as to how decisions made by for the High Needs Block would be scrutinised if authority was taken away from Schools Forum. It was clarified that it would be part of the overall budget setting process and would be open to scrutiny via the normal processes, such as, the Overview and Scrutiny teams of the Council.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the content of the Revenue Funding Report.

11 **Update reports on DSG Funding Block**

Head of Finance Liz Williams gave a brief overview of the update reports.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the updates from the DSG Funding Block.

12 **Schools Block- Central Budgets**

Head of Finance Liz Williams explained the report which sought to update Members on issues surrounding the Central Budget and identify the decisions that needed to be made as part of the budget setting process.

Attention was drawn to the decisions table outlining Sections A-D that needed approval.

Technical questions were asked Appendix 4, and specifically regarding the data on monies being spent on looked after children.

Members noted the reports and the identification of eligible and ineligible spend.

RESOLVED:

Determination of this report was deferred until the other reports were heard and for the decisions paper at the end.

13 **Schools Block-Delegated Budget**

Head of Finance Liz Williams introduced the report, highlighting decisions table at para 11. The options for funding pupil led factors in 2017-18 were indicated in Appendix 1 and technical aspects were explained to the Members.

Technical issues were discussed surround de-delegation of maternity costs and funding for additional school improvement funding as outlined in the operational guidance.

Members were advised that the proposal was that the formula would stay the same for 2017-18.

RESOLVED:

Confirmed Lump Sum to remain £85,000 for Primary Schools and £175,000 for secondary schools.

Agreed to retain the quantum for pupil led factors (Deprivation, EAL and Prior Attainment) at 2016-17 levels. Impact will be small change in funding rates per pupil. It was confirmed that the cost of the minimum funding guarantee would continue to be met through the capping of any gains.

Agreed to de-delegate the budget for maternity costs, as in previous years all other de-delegation decisions made at the October meeting confirming delegation of contingency and SIMS licences but all others to remain as in previous years.

14 **High Needs Block**

Head of Finance Liz Williams introduced the report and emphasised the need to reduce the pressure on the High Needs Block.

There was a discussion in relation to the use of any funding released from central schools block in order to support pressures in the high needs block. Questions were asked by Members regarding the allocation of funds and aspects of the report were clarified.

RESOLVED:

Determination of this report was deferred until the other reports were heard and for the decisions paper at the end.

15 **Early Years Block**

Head of Finance Liz Williams introduced the reports and explained the proposed Early Years Single Funding Formula, as a simplified formula.

Questions were asked regarding early years pupil premium. There was a discussion about the proposed 98% pass through of the 3 & 4 year old funding and use of early years block funding to support central Local Authority costs in administering the new entitlement.

RESOLVED:

Determination of this report was deferred until the other reports were heard and for the decisions paper at the end.

16 **Budget 2017- 18: Decision Paper**

As stated by the Chairman in his announcements most of the decisions to be made were deferred until the end of the meeting to be heard in this section.

An updated Decisions Matrix was presented to Members in the meeting. This outlined all the decisions that needed to be deliberated and approved.

The decisions made by Members, based on consideration of the reports and deliberation in the meeting were as follows.

Central Schools Block proposals

1. To approve Line by Line summary, appendix 1 to Central DSG Report. Summarised in Proposed Budget summary.
2. Propose agree eligible expenditure as per table in Appendix 3 Central DSG Report.
3. To be confirmed - SFWG/SEN Group recommendation to consider impact on moving to high needs block to support top up rates and capacity for change.
4. Propose Budget for central copyright licences set at £0.346m.
5. Propose budget for retained ESG duties set at £1.005m as per funding settlement and analysis of costs.
6. No top slice proposed in initial reports.

RESOLVED:

1. **Budgets for Admissions, Schools Forum Support, and Infant Class Size payments agreed as per Appendix 1 to the Central Schools Block Report. Budget for Basic Need Element of Growth fund set at £0.9m and agreed virement between basic need and infant class size elements of growth fund if required during the year. Confirmed previous decision not to implement a Falling Rolls Fund in Wiltshire.**
2. **After considering eligibility and the evidence presented funding was agreed for the following historic commitments: Support for**

Personal Education Plans for Looked After Children (£0.233m). Funding for Child Protection Adviser in Schools (£0.041m). Funding for Prudential Borrowing (£0.3m). Funding for ineligible commitments of £1.7m released for reallocation

3. Agreed to release £1.7m from central schools block for allocation across other funding blocks
4. Noted LA decision to set budget at £0.346m for central copyright licences to reflect cost of licence notified by the Department for Education
5. Agreed budget for centrally retained duties to be set at £1.005m
6. Agreed no funding to be retained centrally from maintained schools to cover former ESG spend

Delegated Schools Block Proposals

1. Propose retain quantum as per 16-17 for pupil led factors
2. No proposal brought to Schools forum to dedelegate funding for additional school improvement.

RESOLVED:

1. **Confirmed Lump Sum to remain £85,000 for Primary Schools and £175,000 for secondary schools. Agreed to retain the quantum for pupil led factors (Deprivation, EAL and Prior Attainment) at 2016-17 levels. Impact will be small change in funding rates per pupil It was confirmed that the cost of the minimum funding guarantee would continue to be met through the capping of any gains. Agreed to de-delegate the budget for maternity costs, as in previous years all other de-delegation decisions made at the October meeting confirming delegation of contingency and licences but all others to remain as in previous years.**
2. **No further de-delegation for additional school improvement costs**

High Needs Block Proposals

1. No change proposed to top up rates however other decisions may change this.
2. Separate paper on exceptional numbers of statements refers. Proposal to leave formula unchanged for 2016-17 but cap at £100k.
3. Recommend High Needs Block to fund cost of speech & language service.
4. Initial proposal no change from 2016-17 values.
5. Propose additional £100k to support addition of University Technical College (UTC) to list of participating schools
6. Proposal for £100k to support development of funding mechanism to support children at key transition points.
7. Propose to move funding of Inclusion Support Fund to Early Years Block.

RESOLVED:

1. **Central spend on high needs provision to be increased with funding reallocated from central schools block. From this: £0.5m to be added to top up budget for mainstream schools. £0.357m to be utilised to continue to fund Inclusion support fund from High Needs**

Block. For remainder proposals to be brought to March meeting based on SEN strategy for consideration and approval.

2. Agreed to leave formula for exceptional number of statements unchanged for 2016-17 and to cap expenditure at £100,000.
3. Agreed Therapies budget to be met from High Needs Block.
4. Agreed that £0.5m be added to the top up budget (from the £1.7m reallocation) to increase top up values for mainstream schools by 11% compared with 2016-17.
5. Agreed £0.100m to be added to the alternative provision budget.
6. Not agreed - proposals to be considered at March meeting.
7. Proposal to fund base budget for Inclusion support fund from Early Years Block not agreed.

Early Years Block Proposals

1. Proposed formula as per EY Block report with supplements for Rurality and Deprivation. Proposed Basic Hourly rate £4.06
2. Proposed ISF £467,300, fully funded from Early Years Block
3. Proposal in Early Years report for 98% pass through to providers.

RESOLVED:

1. Wiltshire Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) agreed. The agreed base rate of funding to providers was set at £4.14 per hour.
2. It was agreed that the increase of £110,000 to the Inclusion Support Fund be funded from the Early Years Block and that the base budget continue to be funded from High Needs Block
3. It was agreed that 98% of 3 & 4 year- old funding would be passed through to providers.
4. It was agreed that the funding rate for two year olds would be set at £5.32 per hour

17 **Confirmation of dates for future meetings**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 9th March 2017.

18 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 11.00 am - 4.00 pm)

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