

SCHOOLS FORUM

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2012 AT THE USHER SUITE - CIVIC CENTRE, ST STEPHENS PLACE, TROWBRIDGE. BA14 8AH.

Present:

Mr N Baker (Chairman), Dr Peter Biggs, Mrs Julia Bird, Mr Andy Bridewell, Mr Steve Clark, Mr Tim Gilson, Jan Hatherell, Mr J Hawkins, Rev. A Kemp, Mr J Proctor, Ms I Sidmouth, Mr Martin Watson (Vice-Chair) and Mrs C Williamson

Also Present:

Mark Brotherton, Simon Burke, Cllr Lionel Grundy OBE, Cllr Bill Moss, Ms Beverley Pennekett and Elizabeth Williams

47 Apologies and Changes of Membership

Apologies were received from:

Julia Cramp
Stephanie Denovan
Ann Ferries
Sarah Findlay-Cobb
Jane Franchi
Michael Hudson
Sue Jiggins
Cllr Laura Mayes
Rosheen Ryan

The Chairman welcomed Beverley Pennekett from the Education Funding Agency.

48 Minutes of the previous Meeting

The Chairman drew attention to the minutes found on pages 1 to 5 of the agenda.

In matters arising from the minutes, the Forum's attention was drawn to minute no. 41 and Liz Williams provided an update on resolution no. 3, explaining that the Education Funding Agency (EFA) had refused the appeal on the recommendations regarding special staff costs and service school safety net

within the Minimum Funding Guarantee Exceptions 2012/13. A further submission will be made to the EFA on this matter.

Resolved:

To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes from the meeting held on 18 October 2012.

49 **Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

50 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

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

An update will be brought to the next Schools Forum meeting.

52 **Budget Monitoring**

Liz Williams, Head of Finance introduced the report and highlighted the main movement being in premature retirement costs and maternity costs. She explained that any underspend would be available to add to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for allocation in 2013-14.

Resolved:

The Board noted the report.

53 **Reports from Working Groups**

Schools Forum Working Group

Liz Williams introduced the report and minutes from the Schools Forum Working Group (SFWG). She highlighted the recommendations in the report which included inviting Steve Clark to the meeting being held to finalise the funding values within the mainstream funding formula, the deadline for submission to EFA being prior to the next meeting of the Schools Forum.

Resolved:

The Forum noted the report and recommendations outlined within.

High Needs Formula Review Group

Liz Williams introduced the report and explained that the group was in place to develop proposals for the implementation of school funding reform for high needs provision. The recommendations would normally have been considered by the SEN Working Group, however on this occasion the SEN Group meeting had not taken place and therefore the recommendations were being reported direct to Schools Forum.

She explained that the group's starting point had been to try and develop a top up rate for each band. On the issue of specialism funding previously allocated to schools the group recommended that funding for 3 specialisms be incorporated in to the overall budget for top up values; that for 2013-14 Springfields Academy continues to be allocated funding for the activity associated with the second specialism and that from 2014-15 funding for all specialisms be included within the funding for top up values.

The group had also considered turbulence / in year pupil movement and recommended this should be mitigated through agreed payment dates for pupils who start or leave during the year. Pupils who leave because they reach the end of their school career, i.e., end of year 11 or year 6 (in a resource base) would be funded until the end of the academic year. In year leavers were identified as having different impact depending on the types of provision, with prior modelling showing significant movement in BESD schools and the impact of a few moving being severe. The possibility of funding a pupil in two establishments for a brief period was highlighted however it was felt the benefit of stability outweighed this risk.

It was recommended that a turbulence factor be incorporated in to the calculation of the top up value for special schools but not for top up values in resource bases or ELP.

Banding moderation has taken place for each type of provision and there are differences in place numbers for next year, with special school numbers increasing and some resource centre numbers decreasing. It was agreed that the financial detail would be brought to the Forum's January meeting. The Forum noted that there is no Minimum Funding Guarantee applied to the overall level of budgets for high needs provision although there is an MFG applied to individual top up values.

Resolved:

The Forum

- a) **Agreed that for special schools the funding for 3 specialisms be incorporated in to the overall budget for top up values and that for 2013-14 Springfields Academy continues to be allocated funding for the activity associated with the second specialism. From 2014-15 funding for all specialisms be included within the funding for top up values.**
- b) **Endorsed the principle that a turbulence factor is incorporated in to the calculation of the top up value for special schools but not for top up values in resource bases or ELP.**
- c) **Agreed the following payment schedule for in year starters and leavers be adopted for special schools, resource bases and ELP:**
 - i) **Pupils who leave because they reach the end of their school career, i.e., end of year 11 or year 6 (in a resource base) will be funded until the end of the academic year**
 - ii) **In year leavers who leave before the 15th of the month will be funded until the end of the calendar month**

- iii) **In year leavers who leave after the 15th will be funded until the end of the following calendar month**
- iv) **In year starters will be funded from the beginning of the calendar month of admission**

Early Years Reference Group

The Forum noted the minutes from the Early Years Reference Group.

Schools Services Working Group

Simon Burke, Head of Business and Commercial Services, provided a verbal update and explained that it had been agreed to make improvements to the payroll system with e-payslips for all schools staff and direct electronic input by staff in schools. He confirmed that presentations would be brought to both WASSH and PHF and any training plan would require a business case to be drafted.

He explained that the current contract for broadband services ended in June 2013 and following discussions at the Schools Services Board he had invited a representative from the South West Grid for Learning to attend the Board's January meeting to explain options which will be available from July.

54 **Young People's Support Service Update**

Mark Brotherton, Head of Targeted School and Learner Support introduced the report and was pleased to announce that the special measures placed in May 2011 had been removed by Ofsted on the day of the Schools Forum meeting. Staff were thanked and attention was drawn to a possible further visit in the New Year.

The Children's Commissioner, Maggie Atkinson had visited both Springfields Academy and Hardenhuish School when looking at the progress on the Power to Innovate pilot scheme and paid particular attention to over-represented groups in exclusion. Her feedback was positive and she complimented Wiltshire on it's provision.

He drew attention to paragraph 3 of his report, explaining that signs from the DfE showed legislation was in the future.

In response to questions he confirmed that there were currently 34 private providers, with a couple more due to join the list; providers did not have to offer the full curriculum and the criteria used was down to the needs of the child.

A query over how children would be monitored drew attention to the development of a tracker for youngsters which was currently on trial. It was the schools responsibility to ensure value for money.

The cost of provision were a key concern particularly the transport costs to off-school provision and it was confirmed that for maintained schools home to school transport was funded outside of the Dedicated Schools Grant. Additional pressure was caused by young people coming in from outside the county. Transport from home to school was currently the Local Authority's responsibility, however if a child is permanently excluded this was now devolved and it was

agreed to discuss a contingency with Passenger Transport Unit given the inconsistencies with an update to be brought to the January meeting.

The Forum noted the report.

55 The Early Years Single Funding Formula - extension to 2 year olds

Simon Burke, Head of Business and Commercial Services, introduced the report and reminded the Forum that the extension to the Early Years Single Funding Formula did not apply to maintained schools with nurseries as they currently cannot admit 2 year olds.

He explained that since writing the report more information was available and the funding for 2 year olds in 2013-14 had been received. Funding was through two allocations – revenue and capital, based on an assumption of the eligible population reached through looking at the 4 – 6 year old population eligible for free school meals and applying a proportion to 2 year olds. A rate of £5.09 per hour was given as the average (accounting for area costs adjustment) and lower than previously discussed.

Concerns were raised over the setting of the hourly rate and work was needed to address the issues of overall costs, level of demand and sustainability.

Resolved:

The Forum

- a) Confirmed it's resolutions made on 4 October 2012 and detailed below:**
 - i) To apply the methodology of the existing Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) to calculate the hours rates for 2 year olds;**
 - ii) To amend the EYSFF to add an element for consumable toiletries in respect of 2 year olds;**
 - iii) To amend the EYSFF staffing model with a ratio of 1:4 in respect of provision for 2 year olds;**
 - iv) To adopt a single hourly rate for all private/voluntary/independent settings providing free entitlement childcare for two year olds;**
 - v) That the hourly rate for childminders be consistent with that for three to four year olds; and**
 - vi) To incorporate a deprivation supplement into the basic hourly rate for two year olds (if allowed by regulations).**
- b) To extend the EYSFF and its associated systems and procedures to cover payments to providers for the provision of free entitlement childcare to eligible two year olds with effect from 1 April 2013**

c) To defer to the meeting on 24 January 2013 the adoption of an hourly rate to allow for further work

56 Controls on Surplus Balances Scheme

Jane Ralph, School Strategic Financial Management Advisor introduced the report and explained that the scheme had been in place since 2006, however there had been a power shift to front line services since the coalition came to power in 2010.

She highlighted that the scheme could only be removed or amended after consultation with all schools as this would require a revision of the Wiltshire scheme for funding schools. This consultation process could be completed in early 2013 with results being reported to Schools Forum in March.

Schools Forum Working group had looked at the options detailed in paragraph 18 of the report and recommended option iii.

Resolved:

The Forum agreed to adopt the following proposal with effect from 2013-14:-

To remove the existing Controls of Surplus Balances Scheme with effect from 2013-14 and to implement a more holistic approach to fulfilling the LA's role, under section 48 of the Schools Standard and Framework Act 1998, to support schools in achieving sound financial control. This could consolidate the existing reporting regime in a yearend report to individual schools on the effectiveness of their monitoring, to be considered and ratified by the governing body. There is potential to incorporate good practice guidance and include the process in the School Financial Returns Compliance Statement.

57 Dedicated Schools Grant 2012-13

Liz Williams, Head of Finance introduced the report which outlined the process for calculating DSG for 2013-14 and highlighted the issues and risks.

She explained that DSG would be allocated in three main blocks:- Schools, Early Years and High needs; and pupil numbers within the Schools block would be based on the October 2012 census. The deadline for the submission of the final delegated budget was noted as the 18 January which was before the next meeting of the Schools Forum, and it was proposed that the Schools Funding Working Group, with the addition of the maintained secondary school representative, would meet prior to this date to review and submit the budget subject to the Schools Forum decision.

Concern was raised over the High Needs block and the potential cost pressures within post-16 funding. The Forum noted the reduction in flexibility in how the DSG reserve could be used.

Resolved:

- i. To consider the issues arising from the changes to the way in which the DSG allocation will be calculated for 2013-14**
- ii. To agree that the Schools Funding Working Group will meet to finalise the funding values within the Schools Block in order that the date for the submission of detail to the EFA can be met**
- iii. To bring the budget back to the Schools Forum January meeting.**

58 Funding for Pupil Growth

Liz Williams, Head of Finance introduced the report and noted the decision of the Schools Forum at the meeting on 13 July 2012 to retain funding for pupil growth centrally and allocate a budget of £450,000 for this purpose.

She explained that further detail would be brought to the Schools Forum meeting in January 2013 on the anticipated spend against each of the criteria set.

Resolved:

The Forum approved the criteria for allocating the pupil growth fund in 2013-14.

59 Section 251 Benchmarking 2012-13

Liz Williams, Head of Finance introduced the report and drew the Forum's attention to the potential difficulty in providing a year on year analysis in the coming year given the changes in the format of the Section 251 Return in 2013-14.

Resolved:

The Forum noted the report.

60 Confirmation of dates for future meetings

The next meeting of the Schools Forum is Thursday 24 January 2013, 1.30 pm at Melksham Town Hall.

The next meeting of the Schools Funding Working Group will be on Friday 11 January 2013.

61 Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 1.38 - 3.30 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Kirsty Butcher, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 713 948, e-mail kirsty.butcher@wiltshire.gov.uk

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