

## Schools Forum SEN Working Group

13<sup>th</sup> October 2015, 9:30am, Avebury Room, County Hall

### Minutes

**Present:** Catriona Williamson, Debbie Bennett, Susan Tanner, Grant Davis, John Hawkins

**Apologies:** Chris Whitfield

1	<p><b>Minutes from Previous Meeting</b></p> <p>As it was a few months since the last meeting of the group no specific minutes from previous meetings were considered as all issues previously raised would already have been considered by Schools Forum.</p>	
2	<p><b>High Needs Budgets 2015-16</b></p> <p>GD presented an update on the progress of the RAG Rated sheet of all the savings proposals, which were agreed by Schools Forum earlier this year.</p> <p>ST outlined some of the progress made towards achieving a number of the cost savings and this was being monitored.</p> <p>Recouping of unfilled ELP / Resource Base places had caused significant debate amongst schools with High Needs units and was being reviewed by the Schools Funding Working Group. In addition, the EFA's guidance had been sought in order to ensure that any actions would be fully compliant with their funding regulations.</p> <p>Some of the areas on the RAG sheet were discussed in further detail;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The Manor – recovery of unfilled places monies</li><li>- Independent Providers – reduction in rates payable</li></ul> <p>JH thanked ST for her work in trying to generate savings with Independent Providers, despite this proving less fruitful than anticipated.</p> <p>The overall saving was projected at £1.2 million, but will be reviewed on an on-going basis.</p>	
3	<p><b>High Needs Strategy</b></p> <p>ST led a discussion relating to the SEN strategy. There is a need to change behaviours at both the LA and schools with regard to SEN. The possible introduction of a band zero was discussed along with the need for schools to provide the first £6k of high needs funding support.</p> <p>ST raised that the first meeting of the new SEN Implementation Group with the first meeting scheduled to take place on the 16<sup>th</sup> October. The purpose of the group is propose working groups to lead on the implementation of the SEN strategy.</p>	
4	<p><b>Review of High Needs Places for 2016-17</b></p> <p>GD presented a paper to the Group titled “High needs: place change request process – technical note 2016 to 2017”</p> <p>The Education Funding Agency (EFA) has issued guidance to enable LA's to make changes to the number of pre-16 place numbers for both maintained schools and academies. The LA has discretion to make the changes to maintained schools, but must agree amendments to place numbers directly with Academies.</p> <p>Given the current position in Wiltshire with planned places, this is an opportune</p>	

	<p>time for Wiltshire to revise its number of planned places for the 2016-17 year. Schools Forum have long supported the view of the 'money following the child'. Therefore the Group can consider alternative options for the future funding of High needs places across the county.</p> <p>The proposed methodology for High Needs places was outlined with the group and it was confirmed that it was in accordance with the principle of 'the money following the child'. Both the SFWG and the SENWG support this principle and the need for the LA not to fund unfilled places in the future.</p> <p>The purpose of the Review was not simply to save money but to ensure that the principle of the money following the child was put in place.</p> <p>ST confirmed that some of the smaller Resource Bases were being reviewed for both need and viability.</p>	
5	<b>AOB</b>	
6	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>To be confirmed, following the next Schools Forum on the 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015.</p>	