

Schools Funding Working Group

6th January 2016, Hardenhuish School, Chippenham –

Minutes

Present: Neil Baker, Martin Watson, Jan Hatherell, John Hawkins, Grant Davis, Susan Tanner, Tracey Cornelius, Roz Way (Item 2 only)

Apologies: Phil Cook, Andy Bridewell, Catriona Williamson

1	Minutes from Previous Meeting <p>The minutes from the previous meeting were discussed and agreed. SFWG raised a challenge to the LA as a result of the under-achievement of the RAG savings. It was requested that all of the placements to Independent Special Schools be reviewed to ensure that an in-house provision would not be appropriate. The savings within the High Needs Block were still a significant cause for concern and therefore a review of all the ISS placements was requested. In addition, a review of the outcomes from the tribunals was requested.</p>	
2	Letter received from Rowdeford regarding Special School Funding <p>GD introduced a letter which had been received from the Headteacher at Rowdeford School. RW also added further details and the issues currently being experienced by the Special Schools.</p> <p>SFWG discussed the issues raised in the letter and it was felt that simply passporting additional funds to Special Schools would present a short-term partial fix but would not address the real situation facing the High Needs sector.</p> <p>The award of the additional £5.7m 'fairer funding' monies has been baselined into the authorities SBUF (Schools Block Unit of Funding) and therefore was to address the issue of Wiltshire being one of the poorest funded authorities in the Country. The funding had been built into the AWPU's awarded to schools and distributed according to the different AWPU ratio's for KS1&2, KS3 and KS4.</p> <p>It was felt by the SFWG that there was some confusion that the 'fairer funding' had been awarded to help offset increased staffing costs in schools, whereas it had been awarded to address the under-funded position of Wiltshire schools, compared to the national position.</p> <p>SFWG noted that there had been some national recognition of the cost pressures within the high needs sector nationally and had made an extra £92.5million available nationally for the DSG funding. Wiltshire's share of this being £0.823million.</p> <p>The group all agreed that the new National Funding Formula, set for 2017-18 should help to address the picture of schools funding but that the impacts of any future decisions on Special Schools would receive greater consideration.</p>	
3	Budget Update – DSG Schools Block <p>GD presented a paper to outline the proposals for funding of the DSG Schools Block for 2016-17. Due to the proposal for a new National Funding Formula for 2017-18, there are no real changes to the schools block funding for 2016-17.</p> <p>The 'fairer funding' monies have now been baselined into Wiltshire's school funding and the Schools Block Unit of Funding for 2016-17 will be £4,302.45,</p>	

	<p>up by £0.04 per pupil from 2015-16.</p> <p>Wiltshire has a pupil population for funding of 60,467 which means that the DSG Schools Block total funding is £260.156million for 2016-17.</p>	
4	<p>Schools Funding Settlement for 2016-17</p> <p>GD presented a paper to the group detailing the funding settlement for 2016-17. The key points from the paper were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil premium rates unchanged form 2015-16 - Total pupil premium grant to Wiltshire expected to be in excess of £14million - Fairer funding monies of £5.7million (before deduction for CRC) have been baselined into the Wiltshire SBUF for funding. - DSG funding rolled forward from last year (protected) - Additional £92.5million awarded nationally for High Needs, Wiltshire's share being £0.823million. - Pupil growth in the Schools block of 841 pupils. - Early Years funding provisionally based upon the 2015-16 allocation but subject to amendment for January census data. - Group titled "High needs: place change request process – technical note 2016 to 2017" <p>The total DSG awarded to Wiltshire for 2016-17 is £311.246 million (For comparator purposes, £317.275 if we include the post 16 places in mainstream schools special school and also the places in special academies.)</p>	
5	<p>High Needs Place Funding 2016-17</p> <p>GD presented a paper which set out the final agreed number of planned high needs places to be submitted to the EFA as part of the schools budgeting process for funding in 2016-17.</p> <p>Additionally it was explained that as the revised number of places was agreed to be implemented from September 2016, for the maintained schools, working to a financial year, that their number of planned places would recognise that that; the school would receive funding as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5/12ths of the year with at current planned places - 7/12ths of the year at the revised number of planned places <p>As academies are funded on the basis of an academic year, their planned number of places will accord with the date for the revision of the planned places.</p> <p>The implications of the change in place numbers was presented showing the change over the next two financial years.</p>	
6	<p>Pupil Growth Fund 2016-17</p> <p>The current Growth Fund operated by the LA is compliant with the EFA guidance and it was therefore proposed that no changes to the criteria be introduced for 2016-17.</p> <p>The budget for 2015-16 had been set at £1m and the out-turn is expected to be below this level. Given the increase in pupil numbers in Wiltshire from 15-16 to</p>	

	16-17, it was agreed that this budget should be retained at its current level. The LA has submitted a bid to the MOD's Education Support Fund which would help towards funding	
7	AOB Removal of Advance Use of Formula Capital – discussed and agreed Proposal of 1/12 th budgets for schools funding	
8	Date of Next Meeting 7 th March 2016, 8.30am at Hardenhuish School	

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