

## SCHOOLS FORUM

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### **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2016 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.**

#### **Present:**

Mr N Baker (Chairman), Mr M Watson (Vice-Chair), Mrs A Bates, Mr A Bridewell, Ms A Burnside, Chapman, Ms M Chilcott, Mrs J Finney, Mrs R Collard, Miss Tracy Cornelius, Ms J Hatherell, Mr J Hawkins, Mrs S Jiggins, Mr J Proctor, Mrs D Rock, Mr N Roper, Ms I Sidmouth, Mr D Whewell and Mrs C Williamson

#### **Also Present:**

Michael Hudson (Associate Director of Finance), Grant Davis (Strategic Financial Support Manager) and Natalie Heritage (Democratic Services Officer)

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#### **1 Apologies and Changes of Membership**

Simon White, Headteacher of Shaw Primary School (Academy School) has joined the Schools Forum.

Jon Hamp would be replacing Richard Chapman as the Special Schools Academy Representative.

Apologies were received from Sue Jiggins, Debbie Rock, Richard Gamble and David Whewell.

Cathy Sharokni was also in attendance as the Wiltshire College representative.

#### **2 Minutes of the previous Meeting**

**It was resolved:**

**To agree and sign the minutes as a true and correct record of the meeting held on 12 November 2015 subject to the following amendments:**

- **Paragraph 50 – ‘the work of the f40 group was noted as already having secured additional funding for the authorities through the ‘fairer funding’ allocations which provided Wiltshire with extra funding of £5.7m in 2015-16’.**
- **Paragraph 50 – ‘Wiltshire was noted as not currently being a member of the f40 group, but was however eligible to be one due to its position as the 7<sup>th</sup> least funded local authority, in England, out of 151 authorities’.**

- Paragraph 51 – ‘Wiltshire Council operates a growth fund and Schools Forum agreed to a number of criteria for the allocation of funding for pupil growth in the 2015-16 financial year. The Growth Fund is compliant with the EFA guidance and is confirmed annually. A revision to the scheme factored for in-year infant pupil growth. This was explained as because funding could only be provided for either growth due to basic need, or to meet infant class size regulations’.
- Paragraph 51 – ‘The revised wording proposed a single-pronged approach. This involved dividing school pupils by 30, and awarding additional funding where the additional pupil numbers required an extra class. The above change in wording was explained as having been made due to its original non-compliance. It was confirmed that the Education Funding Agency (EFA) would not declare that this change could not be done’.
- Paragraph 52 – ‘The report aimed to set out the situation where if a school had more than the planned number of pupils, what needed to be done to fund those extra pupils. Two scenarios were given.
  - The first was when a pupil moves from a mainstream school setting to a High Needs School setting,
  - and the second was when a pupil moves from one High Needs School to a new High Needs School’.
- Paragraph 52 – ‘Within the first scenario a problem was highlighted where the paying of £10,000 per additional place resulted in schools being over funded for the additional High Needs place. If the school is already in receipt of an AWPU for the child, then to receive additional place funding of £10,000 would result in double funding’.
- Paragraph 52 – ‘It was noted that care would also be required to ensure that funding was in place for new year 7’s starting with ELP’.
- ‘Resolved:
  1. To note the content of the report.
  2. To revise the methodology and include within the first scenario that it does not include new Y7 ELPs.
  3. To include that when school is already in receipt of AWPU it will receive a reduced top up (£10,000 – AWPU), when it is not in receipt of AWPU then it will receive the full £10,000’.
- Paragraph 53 – ‘Some members from the Schools Funding Working Group had been contacted to help deal with queries from schools once they had received their invoices’.
- Paragraph 53 – ‘The top-ups considered for recoupment were used for specific resource base places and ELP’s. Named Pupil Allowances were also noted as an area that could be recouped’.
- Paragraph – 53 ‘The Forum discussed the recoupment situation and it was noted as partly being a result of the financial crisis, which had resulted in looking into funding areas which had previously not been looked at’.
- ‘Resolved:
  1. To note the contents of the report.
  2. To continue to recoup through top-ups as near to what has been overpaid for the rest of the 2015/16 financial year.

3. To note that the definition of top-ups includes Resource Bases/ELP's/NPA's/and any other top-up as a part of SEN.
  4. To recoup using the NPA allowances as well as the top ups'.
- Paragraph 54 – ‘It was noted that with academies the agreement must be more formalised, but with maintained schools they could be by LA agreement. Any changes to the place numbers for academies needed to be agreed between the local authority and the academy and would form the basis of the EFA funding’.
  - Paragraph 54 – ‘Option 5: Revise the number of ‘places’ agreed to mirror a certain point in time in the 2015-16 year to maximise the number of filled places to be funded, but retain the mechanism to recoup from top ups’.
  - Paragraph 54 – ‘It was noted that if the zero figure is returned to the EFA, would take that as a sign that there were no high needs places at the schools. As a result the future funding from the EFA could be zero if this option were to be taken. Option four was noted as being high risk due to the EFA not confirming what their approach would be’.
  - Paragraph 54 – ‘If there were to be any fluctuation in numbers, as a result of army rebasing for example, it was confirmed that these would be funded. A consultation was expected in spring 2016 on the future of High Needs Funding’.
  - Paragraph 54 – ‘Resolved
1. To note the content of the report.
  2. To accept option five in the report “Revise the number of ‘places’ agreed to mirror a certain point in time in the 2015-16 year to maximise the number of places funded, but retain the mechanism to recoup from top ups” with the following amendment:
    - a. That recoupment of places continues up until the introduction of the revised place numbers
    - b. To continue recoupment from maintained schools and academies from April 2016

| <b>DfE Heading</b>  | <b>Wiltshire Budget</b>                           | <b>Maintained Primary Schools</b> | <b>Maintained Secondary Schools</b>       |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Contingencies</b>  | <b>Schools Contingency</b>                        | <b>De-delegate</b>                | <b>De-delegate</b>                        |
| <b>Free school meals eligibility</b>                                | <b>Free School Meals Eligibility Service</b>      | <b>De-delegate</b>                | <b>De-delegate</b>                        |
| <b>Licences/subscriptions</b>                                       | <b>Licences (SIMS&amp;HCSS)</b>                   | <b>De-Delegate</b>                | <b>De-Delegate</b>                        |
| <b>Staff costs – supply cover</b>                                   | <b>Trade Union Duties</b>                         | <b>De-Delegate</b>                | <b>De-Delegate</b>                        |
|   | <b>Maternity Costs</b>                            | <b>De-Delegate</b>                | <b>De-Delegate</b>                        |
| <b>Support for minority ethnic pupils and underachieving groups</b> | <b>Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS)</b> | <b>De-Delegate</b>                | <b>Delegate</b>                           |
|   | <b>Traveller Education Service</b>                | <b>De-Delegate</b>                | <b>Delegate</b>                           |
| <b>Behaviour support services</b>                                   | <b>Primary Behaviour Support Service</b>          | <b>De-Delegate</b>                | <b>Not delivered to secondary schools</b> |

c. To fund ELP's based on the number from the table in appendix 1, subject to any Local Authority intelligence regarding actual numbers. If numbers drop below that within the table then recoupment will take place. If it increases then the change will be funded'.

- Paragraph 57 – 'Delegation of Central Expenditure 2016-17

Grant Davis presented Schools Forum with the results from the recent consultation with schools regarding the delegation or de-delegation of central services. A consultation document was sent out to all maintained schools in the middle of September to seek views on the delegation of central budgets.

The results have been analysed and were presented to Schools Forum. The budgets/services which had been consulted on are as follows:

- Schools contingency
- Free School Meal Eligibility Service
- Licences and Subscriptions (including SIMS, HCSS)
- Trade Union Facilities costs
- Maternity costs
- Ethnic Minority Achievement Service
- Travellers Education Service
- Behaviour Support Service

**The responses received from schools had proposed that the services were delegated and de-delegated as per the current situation for 2015-16.**

**Resolved**

**To agree that the Delegation of Central Expenditure 2016-17 as per 2015-16 and the responses received'.**

**3 Declaration of Interests**

The Chairman of the meeting, Mr Neil Baker, declared that he had an interest in item 10. Mr Neil Baker stated that he would not Chair this item, but would hand over to the Vice-Chairman, Mr Martin Watson, to Chair item 10.

**4 Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman announced that the latest minutes from the f40 meeting were not deemed as being a true and accurate representation and he passed a copy of a new set of minutes to the Schools Forum.

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

Susan Tanner on behalf of Julia Cramp, the Service Director for Commissioning and Performance, Department for Children and Education was in attendance to give a verbal update.

**6 Reports from Working Groups**

The minutes of the 6 January 2016 Schools Funding Working Group (SFWG) were presented to the Schools Forum.

The point was raised that there had not been enough time for attendees to view the Reports for 14 January Schools Forum meeting, because the Reports had not been posted out to the Schools Forum in time. Members stated that they would always like the agenda and any Reports to be published together and to only receive one e-mail notification of this publishing.

It was explained that as the SFWG had met on the day that the agenda for the Schools Forum 14 January meeting was published, it had unfortunately not been possible to publish all the documents together.

The next Schools Forum meeting had been organised for 15 March 2016, where there would be sufficient time for the Reports to be published at the same time as the agenda.

As a result of the delay, the Chairman allowed time for the Schools Forum to read through and familiarise themselves with the Reports, ahead of each item.

Grant Davis was in attendance to present a Report from the SFWG. He explained that school budgets would be paid in twelfths; due to the fact that academies operate on a financial year and maintained schools operate on an academic year. He commented that it is important that schools do not lose out financially, if figures were changed to twelfths. It was noted that in the past

when schools had converted to academies, the Local Authority had overfunded these schools and it had been difficult to recover the surplus funding.

Grant Davis also noted that the "advance of" formula capital was being removed; a school may ask for up to 3 years in advance, however, under formula capital there is no guarantee that this would be funded. Mr Davis also commented that these changes would become a part of the school's management.

John Proctor was concerned over the fact that no minutes had been found for the Early Years Reference Group that met in Melksham on 15 December 2015; Mr Proctor commented that the meeting discussed had a range of issues that Early Years had been facing and that the minutes for the previous meeting were vital. Grant Davis stated that he would follow up with the locating of the Early Years Reference Group minutes of the previous meeting.

Having been put to the meeting it was

**Resolved:**

**That Schools Forum noted the content of the Report.**

## **7 Budget Update - DSG Schools Block**

It was noted that the Reports were arranged in the incorrect order, in correlation to the agenda items. Page 21 of the Agenda Supplement, 'Budget Update 2016-17 – Schools Block' listed under agenda item 8, corresponded to agenda item 7 – 'Budget Update – DSG Schools Block'. The listed agenda item 7 – 'Review of High Needs Places for 2016-17' was noted as being correctly placed.

Members were given time to note the contents of the Report (listed agenda item 7 and 8).

Grant Davis was in attendance to provide an update on 2016-17 Schools Block. Mr Davis noted that in 2015-16 Wiltshire had received a portion of the national share of funding, which was £5.7 million, he explained that this had moved Wiltshire from being the 6<sup>th</sup> worst funded County to 7<sup>th</sup> worst funded County. Mr Davis commented that the EFA funding for 2016-17 represented a roll-forward from 2015-16.

Mr Davis stated that SBUF (Schools Block Unit of Funding) had seen an increase of 4p for 2016-17, which totalled £4,302.45. The EFA were basing funding on 60,467 pupils and this figure had been compiled from the October census. He noted that the October 2015 census was the driving force of funding allocation.

Mr Davis commented that there had been a small movement in the number of maintained schools across to the academy sector and that there had been an additional 841 pupils into the primary sector and thus, that there had been a growth in primary school numbers, but not in secondary school numbers.

It was proposed that an amendment be made to paragraph 9, on page 22 of the Agenda Supplement to: 'That the Schools Forum note the final proposed value of the SBUF for 2016-17'.

Having been put to the meeting, it was

**Resolved:**

- i. That the Schools Forum note the final value of the SBUF.**
- ii. That the Schools Forum note the final settlement and the revised pupil numbers for 2016-17.**

The Chairman then drew attention to listed agenda item 7 - 'Review of High Needs Places for 2016-17' and Grant Davis presented a report on the item.

Mr Davis explained to the Schools Forum that the EFA had asked for the revision of High Needs Places (HNP), in order to ensure that the correct number of HNP were available in both the primary and secondary school areas. The Schools Forum had agreed to implement this change and to carefully review HNP in all primary and secondary schools at its previous meeting in November 2015.

Mr Davis reminded the Schools Forum that appropriate pupils need to be married up with the appropriate places and that the Local Authority had to agree the number of places with the academy. Mr Davis asked the Schools Forum to note the table in paragraph 7 on page 8 of the Agenda Supplement, he explained that this table noted the numbers that the Schools Forum was looking to move to for 2016-17 represented an overall reduction in the number of places.

It was explained that this revised number of places would be introduced in the academic year from September 2016, despite the fact that the Local Authority works off the financial year.

It was discussed that recoupment would continue from April to September 2016 and that the revised number of places would be made known in April, which would ensure that there is time to make up recoupment.

Mr Davis stated that the EFA were required to work off an academic year and that recoupment would take place.

The point was raised that the words 'financial saving' could be misinterpreted and that being in a position to save is not the sole reason for revising the number of high needs places. Discussion was had about the fact that a 'financial saving' is an inaccurate phrase, as this process is trying to ensure that the money given will follow the child throughout their educational career and that emphasis needed to be put on the fact that money would be intended to follow the child.

Mr Davis commented that the tables listed in paragraph 12 of page 9 of the Agenda Supplement showed the projection of expenditure and not actual expenditure and that these figures would be met by the recoupment process.

It was discussed that a different sentence about recoupment to paragraph 12, on page 9 of the Agenda Supplement be noted and that the words 'a significant saving' in paragraph 12 of page 9 be corrected to 'whilst there will be a place correction in the 2016-17 financial year, the full financial correction would not be

achieved until 2017-2018 when all schools should be funded according to their revised number of planned places'; in order to reflect a more accurate reality of money following the child throughout their educational career.

Having been put to the meeting, with the amendments of:

- 'financial saving' being re-worded and emphasis to be placed on the fact that money would follow that child;
- A sentence on recoupment being added into paragraph 10 on page 8 of the agenda supplement;
- That the words 'a significant saving' in paragraph 12 of page 9 of the agenda supplement be corrected to 'whilst there will be a place correction in the 2016-17 financial year, the full financial correction would not be achieved until 2017-2018 when all schools should be funded according to their revised number of planned places'.

**It was resolved:**

- To note the content of the Report.**
- To continue to recoup for High Needs Places for the 2106-17 year**
- To note that the words 'a significant saving' in paragraph 12 of page 9 of the agenda supplement should be read as 'whilst there will be a place correction in the 2016-17 financial year, the full financial correction would not be achieved until 2017-2018 when all schools should be funded according to their revised number of planned places'.**

## **8 Schools Funding Settlement and Budget 2016-17**

Grant Davis presented the Schools Funding Settlement and Budget 2016-2017.

Mr Davis informed the meeting that in December the EFA had announced that colleagues in early years and the high needs sector would be included in the Settlement and Budget too.

Mr Davis continued that there had been no additional details given about the devolved formula capital and that Pupil Premium would continue at its current level; he drew the meeting's attention to page 13 of the agenda supplement here and commented that in the County of Wiltshire there was over £14 million awarded in 2015-16 in pupil premium.

There were no movements in the rates for pupil premium for 2016-17 year and therefore, the 2015-16 rates would continue to apply for the 2016-17 year,

It was also explained that Service Pupil data was not correctly aligned with census data, as Service Pupil data had been compiled from January data, as opposed to October data and thus, Mr Davis advised those present that this data could be used to note any discrepancies.

Mr Davis then directed the meeting's attention to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and noted the allocation that had been received for 2016-17. He commented that the EFA had agreed that a new national formula for funding would be provided and that, if so, this formula would be made public in the spring, however, this date remained ambiguous. Mr Davis then reassured that if

a new formula was to be provided, the SFWG would convene to discuss this change.

In terms of the DSG settlement, it was explained that fairer funding money was being continued for 2016-2017 and a ministerial statement had confirmed that this money would form a part of baseline funding.

It was noted that the total DSG Funding for 2016-17 was £311.246 million.

### **High Needs:**

Mr Davis outlined that there had been a significant decrease in the high needs block; however, this was due to how the EFA defined high needs and that, in cash terms, there had only been a slight decrease. Mr Davis highlighted that the High Needs Block was indicative and that comparative work needed to be done between 2015-16 and 2016-17.

Attention was drawn to the fact that the 2015-16 allocation of funding for the High Needs Block (HNB) prior to deductions was £37.308 and Mr Davis stressed that this figure was provisional and indicative, as it had been based upon 2015-16 data. He assured members that funding appeared to have decreased, however, in real terms there appeared to be no legitimate decrease and thus, the EFA's manner of reporting the data could be used to explain why funding appeared to have decreased.

Mr Davis added that an additional £97.5 million for High Needs funding had been allocated by the EFA and that Wiltshire's share in this was £823,000.

It was stated that the EFA paid into recoupment for SEND academies and that the UTC in Salisbury represented a free school. For maintained special schools the EFA paid 6.116 million directly, hence, why the figure for the HNB had been reduced.

### **Early Years:**

Mr Davis reminded those present that at the Schools Forum meeting in March 2015, members had agreed the rates for 3 and 4 year olds as a single, private and voluntary rate. Mr Davis then drew the meeting's attention to the table on page 16 of the agenda supplement and noted that no discussion about this had taken place at the last reference group. He also reminded the meeting that the given rates of £3.81 would apply from 1 April 2016.

It was explained that 2 year old funding was originally at £5.43 and that the Department of Education had published figures at £4.97 an hour and that this figure had been implemented. Mr Davis highlighted that in June 2016 additional funding would be allocated based on data compiled from the January census, in order to ensure that the Schools Forum would be funded accurately.

### **Schools Block:**

Mr Davis informed the meeting that £260.15 million was an increase and had been based on the fact that there had been an increase in pupil numbers.

Mr Davis noted that the Schools Forum budget deadline was the following week and that AWPU rates would be continued with, subject to any discussions that were had by the Schools Forum members present. Mr Davis informed the meeting that total funding quantum's for EAL Prior Attainment and Deprivation had remained unchanged and that MFG costs would be met through formulaic 'capping' and therefore, the Schools Forum appeared to be sustainable for the current year. In other words, the School Funding would be affordable.

Mr Davis noted that a Falling Rolls Fund was not proposed for the 2105-16 year.

It was explained that the HNB had seen an increase in £92.5 million and this was, in part, due to a national increase, however, Wiltshire had fared considerably well in this area – receiving £823,000 of this new national increase. Mr Davis proposed that extra funding allocated remain in the HNB and thus, that £823,000 be proportioned to the HNB.

Mr Davis highlighted that in terms of the High Needs provision cost savings had been presented last March and that members of the SFWG had been looking at these savings and that most of these savings had been achieved and were in line with the budget, apart from with the independent specialist schools. Mr Davis informed the meeting that Susan Tanner could answer any questions on this matter.

The £311.624 million was the provisional allocation from the EFA and the allocation that the Forum would be working towards for the current year. Mr Davis also commented that there was a DSG reserve of £1.4 million.

Mr Davis also reminded those present that the Schools Forum had previously decided to fund term-time only payments through the DSG and some indicative payments not exceeding £100,000 were left to be paid to individuals that had retired or moved abroad.

It was noted that cost savings had been made, yet, cost pressures themselves had increased.

Having been put to the meeting it was

**Resolved:**

- i. That any increase in DSG (from Jan early years census) be allocated to the EYSFF budget, to support the increase in population and thus, take up of places**
- ii. That there should be no change to the hourly rate for 2 year old places**
- iii. That the agreed hourly rate for 3 & 4 year olds be implemented from April 2016**
- iv. That the agreement needs to be reached for the assumptions, used in calculating the delegated budget (which is detailed in paragraph 31 of this Report)**
- v. That the extra £0.823m allocated for the High Needs Block, to stay within the High Needs Block**
- vi. That the overall Schools Budget be set at: £311.246 million, as allocated by the EFA**

The Chairman then invited Mrs Susan Tanner to present a report on SEN Block.

Mrs Tanner explained that savings had been made and that all savings targets had or would be achieved, which would equate to £1.48 million worth of savings. However, she noted that the problem the Forum faced was that it did not appear as though any savings had been made, because the equivalent amount had been spent in other areas; including independent school places and Named Pupil Allowances (NPAs).

The meeting was made aware of how there had been a significant increase in NPAs and that measures to address this were being considered, including:

- Issuing a new banding structure for SENs
- By introducing the band 0 – this was explained as what the Forum would expect the school to have in place and to have provided for the pupil, before any application for funding could be applied for

Mrs Tanner advised that, hopefully, these new implementations would help to address the current overspend.

The meeting was informed that the SFWG had vigorously investigated this overspend and had thus, requested that all placements to independent special schools be reviewed. Mrs Tanner advised the meeting that the current system may not have been working at its optimum for some pupils, hence why an additional increase in pupils had been placed in independent special schools.

It was discussed that, occasionally, special needs are unusual and that in these instances children would need additional specialised provision; which would mean that children would have to be placed in independent special schools out of County. It was noted that such packages are very expensive and thus, for those pupils at the lower end of this spectrum, reviews should take place.

A case was highlighted as where there were a number of pupils in a special school that were not being provided with a service better than they would have received in a mainstream school and thus, it was argued that there was a clear need to review the SEN school places.

Further discussion was had over the fact that there are, usually, tribunal losses and that the Forum could learn from past tribunal cases, in order to learn how to decrease the number of cases brought. It was stressed that once a pupil had gone to an independent special school, the chance of returning the pupil back into the mainstream sector had been known to be virtually impossible. It was advised that between the year groups of year 6 to year 7, a pupil could be changed from the independent to the mainstream sector and the same could be said with pupils entering into the sixth form.

The meeting was informed that savings were not able to be made in the specialist sector, but that this was an area that was being looked into such as; by special school's buyers looking into decreasing the costs. It was then made clear that the results of the analysis would be given at the next Schools Forum meeting.

Mrs Tanner confirmed that at the next meeting a basket of proposals would be offered to the Schools Forum over how to ensure savings in the HNB. Mrs

Tanner explained that she could pinpoint a list of areas of concern and then the Schools Forum would be able to evaluate how areas could be changed.

It was noted that the SFWG and the SEN working group would meet again, as soon as reasonably possible; in order to discuss the fact that the HNB was overspending.

The meeting was informed that, although the HNB had been given additional funding, the HNB had overspent and thus, savings had been wiped out and replaced with a deficit.

Mrs Tanner stated that she would work on the analysis for the budget. Grant Davis commented that he would arrange a SFWG and SENWG joint meeting date, at the close of the Schools Forum meeting.

## 9 **Special Trading Services (previously: Special Schools Funding)**

Michael Hudson, Associate Director of Finance at Wiltshire Council, was in attendance to make a short presentation and to notify the Schools Forum of that fact that there would be an increase in process charged to schools.

Mr Hudson noted that the fees for Wiltshire schools had been deemed to be much lower than that of their competitors and he advised that Liz Williams would lead on the issue of Schools Traded Services and would be present at the next Schools Forum meeting.

### **Special School Funding:**

A letter had been received by the Chairman of Schools Forum from the Headteacher at Rowdeford Special School which was discussed during the Forum meeting.

Attention was drawn to the fact that Michelle Donovan and Claire Perry had had a discussion with MPs about SEN funding and that MPs misunderstood why the Schools Forum wished to campaign, since they had received an additional £5.7 million in funding in 2015-16.

It was noted that the additional £5.7 million was used to uplift the AWPU rate. The meeting was informed that all special schools had completed a significant amount of work to address deficits and rollovers and that from this work, progress had been made. It was stressed, however, that the financial outlook was not looking prosperous and that there were financial pressures on everyone.

The meeting was made aware of how a further reduction in the budget for special schools could lead to extremely high class sizes; indeed, it was stressed that special school class sizes were already at very high levels and thus, if further increases in size occurred then these classes would be on the threshold of unsafe. It was then added that if class sizes were deemed as being unsafe, there could be an increase in tribunal cases, which could lead to further special

school's pupils being transferred to maintained or academy schools, or even to out of County placements.

Concern was raised that the budget cuts had meant that children with SEN were not being provided with the services that they needed and that these children's needs should be met and thus, the Forum should utilise all expertise and help that it had at hand to be able to provide for such children, whilst in a position of financial reduction. It was noted that outreach work for SEN was being decreased and that there was a desire for this to be increased, however, despite the fact that special schools felt that they were in a very challenging situation, discussions were being had with local governors to help to find a solution.

Those present were made aware that the SFWG had come to the agreement that whenever discussions were had over funding, that special schools would always remain on the agenda. However, it was outlined that, in terms of finance for special schools, the forthcoming 2 years did not appear affluent.

It was explained that special schools were paid on a month-by-month basis and that all money had come from the HNB and thus, a problem had been created as the Schools Forum was unable to be strategic with this money.

It was noted that the f40 campaign was analysing the Schools Block and had been pressuring the fairer funding formula for the HNB.

Having been put to the meeting, it was:

**Resolved:**

**That the Schools Forum note and discuss the contents of the letter and to respond to the concerns raised.**

**10 Growth Fund**

The Chairman left the meeting and delegated the responsibility of Chairman over to the Vice-Chairman, Mr Martin Watson.

Martin Watson informed to those present that the growth fund in Wiltshire had been consistent for the past 3-4 years and that each year the Forum was required to submit growth fund figures to the EFA. It was noted that there had been no proposal for a great difference in the growth fund figures for the forthcoming year.

For the year 2014-15 it was confirmed that the Schools Forum had agreed a budget for the Growth Fund of £848,000 and that for the year 2015-16, an increase to a budget of £1 million had been decided as being sufficient.

Mr Watson highlighted that a growth fund was attempting to be created for Forces children, in terms of the MoD rebasing; which would involve schools in areas such as the Salisbury Plain. It was stressed that if this fund could be created, then it would impact on the general growth fund given for Wiltshire.

Those present were informed that the new schools funding would be continued with for 2015-16.

It was confirmed that there had been no proposals to alter anything, apart from the infant class size. There had been an increase in the class size of infant classes, which had led to a new class of 13 infants being established. It was noted that this number of 13 had been agreed at the previous Schools Forum meeting.

Those present were informed that the new schools funding would be continued with for 2015-16, including funding Castle Mead Primary Academy and Wellington Primary Academy on estimated pupil numbers as they are still growing schools. It was confirmed that the EFA would adjust these schools funding based upon the actual numbers of pupils, taking account of the January 2016 census data.

It was agreed that Grant Davis would include in the report that 2 academies, Pembroke Park and Longmeadow, would have funding arranged on 12/12ths and that, for academy schools, their funding be for 12/12ths of the year, to accord with their funding year.

Having been put to the meeting, it was:

**Resolved:**

- i. **That the Schools Forum approves the criteria for allocating pupil Growth Fund in 2016-17.**
- ii. **That the Schools Forum agrees the budget for the Growth Fund remain at a maximum of £1m for 2016-2017**

## 11 **Confirmation of dates for future meetings**

The next meeting was recorded and agreed as being on 15 March 2016 at County Hall, Trowbridge.

## 12 **Urgent Items**

The Chairman agreed to consider 'National Copyright Licences' as an urgent item and a copy of the report was distributed to those present at the meeting. Grant Davis was welcomed to introduce the report and to provide an overview to those present.

A short time was allowed for members to read through and familiarise themselves with the report.

It was explained that national copyright licenses had been paid for all schools – both maintained and academies – by the Local Authority, Wiltshire Council. This was part of a national agreement between the EFA and the Copyright Agencies. It had been felt to be a more sustainable and cost-effective process; as it would also help to ensure that no school could fall foul of copyright regulations. However, it was stated that the Local Authority total cost for the licenses amounted to: £339,500.72, which needed to be recovered through the DSG.

Schools Forum members raised several opinions, including:

- For special schools, rates had not been factored in;

- The rate given had been calculated as a uniform rate and the Early Years and the voluntary and private sectors would have to pay for their licenses on top on the set fee, however, the Local Authority would be unable to charge for this and thus, such an issue would be a point for discussion among private and independent schools, including nurseries;
- It was raised that a nursery had had to pay over £1000 for a license and thus, it was disputed over how much a nursery would need such a copyright license;
- It was confirmed that if a maintained school was attached to a nursery, then the nursery would be covered by the school license too.

It was further explained that this charge would be a recurring cost and that the amount had been taken from the numbers of funding provided by the AWPU.

It was discussed that a flat rate for special schools could be applied, as AWPU for special schools was not funded, since special schools had planned place numbers and thus, the remaining quantum could be split among the remaining schools. Mr Davis highlighted that if the sliding school AWPU was used, an amount would have to be put aside for special schools and thus, this would decrease the rate for the other schools.

It was agreed among those present that further research was needed into what the EFA would allow for a license and Grant Davis confirmed that he would investigate with the EFA how the rate was supposed to be calculated with AWPU and sixth formers. It was also added that there was ambiguity over where free schools stood in calculating this rate and Grant Davis signalled that he would review this matter with the EFA too.

Having been put to the vote, it was

**Resolved:**

- i. To note the content of the report**
- ii. To ask Grant Davis to report back to members, following discussions with the EFA**

(Duration of meeting: 1.30 - 4.22 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Natalie Heritage, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718062, e-mail [natalie.heritage@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:natalie.heritage@wiltshire.gov.uk)

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