

## Schools Funding Working Group

26<sup>th</sup> February 2016, Bradford-on-Avon Fire Station

### Minutes

**Present:** Neil Baker, Martin Watson, Ingrid Sidmouth, Phil Cook, Debbie Bennett, Catriona Williamson, Liz Williams, Grant Davis, Susan Tanner,

**Apologies:** Jan Hatherell, John Hawkins, Andy Bridewell, Tracey Cornelius

1	<b>Minutes from Previous Meeting</b> The minutes from the previous meeting were not discussed as they had been presented and agreed at the previous Schools Forum meeting in January 2016.	
2	<b>High Needs Budgets 2016-17</b> LW introduced a paper which set out the key pressures on the High Needs budget for 2016-17, the projected schools budget out-turn position for 2015-16 and an analysis of the current High Needs placements and associated expenditure.  <b>Budget Monitoring 2015-16</b> LW described the savings proposals which were agreed by Schools Forum in March 2015 towards achieving a savings target of £1.465m. There was always a risk associated with achieving some of the savings proposals however savings in excess of £1.061m will be achieved by the end of the year. Based upon the financial position at the end of January 2016, the projected overspend against the Schools Budget was £1.693m. An appendix to the report demonstrated the breakdown of each area of the budget. The SEND service is currently projecting an overspend of £1.972m. LW explained that the current DSG Reserve currently stood at £1.490m and therefore there was a high probability that the DSG Reserve would be unable to fund the deficit fully. A discussion with the LA's Associate Director, Finance had confirmed that the LA would not be in a position to fund the deficit and therefore the deficit would become the 'first call' on the DSG for 2016-17. Therefore we would be starting the 2016-17 financial year with a negative starting point. LW then talked the group through the analysis which had been prepared with colleagues in the SEND team. This included an analysis of the Numbers of Statements / EHCP's which showed a significant increase in the numbers of 5-10 year olds and 16-19 year olds with a plan, as well as movements in other age groups. A discussion regarding the increase in Independent Special Schools (ISS) placements ensued. A process review for the making of placements was suggested, for consideration by the SEND team. The age profile of placements in ISS was discussed and comparator data for February 2015 and February 2016 was presented. The group then discussed the increasing demand across the piste for SEND and the impact that this would have for future years. A recent calculation of the 'Exceptional Number of Statements' had shown a significant increase in the number of schools entitled to the additional funding, consistent with current	

	<p>trends.</p> <p>It was recognised that funding the growth would present particular challenges in 2016-17 and beyond. The introduction of a National Funding Formula was raised and whilst it is widely anticipated that this could bring positive news for Wiltshire, there have been no detailed published plans or consultation documents issued to date.</p> <p><b>Budget Position 2016-17</b></p> <p>Based upon the current position in 2015-16, without any further actions, the SEND budget would overspend again by £1.9m. In addition to this there was additional demand / growth, projected at £1.3m, plus the need to repay the DSG overspend, £0.2m. The projected overspend is therefore anticipated at £3.4m, however additional High Needs funding of £0.823m has been confirmed by the EFA for 2016-17 and therefore the total cost pressure is anticipated at £2.6m.</p> <p>The group requested that as a matter of urgency, the re-banding work which had been started by Judith Westcott and the SEND team, be completed. This work to re-band pupils, based upon the proposed new banding scheme, with descriptors ensuring consistency across the bandings in all settings, had already been started. The group were keen to see the results of this work, prior to any discussions over future top-up rates being considered. A timeline for this work was agreed.</p> <p>The group discussed the potential to revoke the 5% rate cut which had been introduced in 2015-16, however it was felt that this could not be sustained and would await the results of the SEND re-banding work. Given the cost pressures for 2016-17, it was agreed re-instating the rates would not be affordable.</p> <p>ST confirmed that any movement in banding values for the Special Schools would be subject to the Minimum Funding Guarantee and that this would need to be considered in any discussions,</p> <p>In order to progress discussions regarding savings for 2016-17, the group confirmed that no savings would be considered until the results of the re-banding have been presented which will then impact upon the saving quantum to be achieved.</p> <p>The group confirmed its support for the introduction of the new banding model as soon as possible.</p>	
3	<p><b>Apprentices – Rates of Pay</b></p> <p>GD introduced a paper prepared by HR colleagues outlining proposals for amendments to the rates of pay for apprentices.</p> <p>After some initial discussion, Phil Cook explained that the Trowbridge Collaborative had already spent some considerable work on this area and that HR should be signposted to speak to the Trowbridge Collaborative who could respond on behalf of the group. It was agreed that this approach be adopted.</p>	
4	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>To be confirmed</p>	