

School Funding Working Group Meeting

20th September 2016, 8:30am

Longleat Room – County Hall

MINUTES

Present: Liz Williams, Grant Davis, Jane Ralph (for item 2), Martin Watson, Catriona Williamson, Neil Baker, John Hawkins

Apologies: Phil Cook

1	<p>Minutes from Previous Meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting of 5th July were reviewed.</p> <p>Split Site Allowance, Greentrees Primary School. It was confirmed that the recommendation to Schools Forum was that the formula for split site allowances should not be changed.</p> <p><i>Action</i> GD to review whether pupil growth would necessitate use of estimated numbers in the budget calculation for the school in 2017-18</p> <p>De-delegation of budgets – it was noted that since the meeting on 5th July the government had announced that it would not be implementing the national funding formula for schools in 2017-18. It was agreed that the requirement to delegate 100% of the Schools Block is still likely to be the direction of travel and so the recommendations from the last meeting should still be presented to Schools Forum in October. It was further noted that the DSG operational guidance for 2017-18 does require a decision to be made on de-delegation for the next financial year.</p> <p><i>Action:</i> It was agreed that indicative costs of maternity pay would be provided to support the Schools Forum discussion</p>	<p>GD</p> <p>EW</p>
2	<p>Schools Revenue Balances 2015-16</p> <p>JR presented a report summarising revenue surpluses and deficits for the financial year 2015-16 for maintained schools.</p> <p>It was noted that the proportion of Wiltshire schools with surpluses over 15% of budget would not trigger further investigation under the DfE criteria. The group also noted the trend of increasing revenue balances year on year and the increased numbers of schools with surpluses continuing for more than 5 years. It was further discussed that whilst there is an increase in the numbers and levels of surpluses at primary level, the picture for secondary schools is very different with increasing levels of deficit in some maintained secondary schools. GD confirmed that he was leading a piece of work to look at curriculum models in a number of smaller secondary schools, both in deficit and not in deficit, and that he was also looking to share that work with colleagues in Hampshire who are experiencing a similar position with secondary schools in financial deficit.</p> <p>NB asked about the returns from schools indicating that governing bodies had discussed the year end balances. JR confirmed that there</p>	

	<p>had been a limited number of returns from schools at the end of 2015-16. It was agreed that returns should be required from all schools where levels of balances were highlighted as “red” or “amber” (with voluntary returns from schools highlighted as “green”) and that this should be monitored as part of the compliance monitoring each year.</p>	
3	<p>Early Years Block 2017-18</p> <p>EW presented a report on the proposed changes to the funding for the Early Years Block in 2017-18 and the implementation of the extension of the entitlement to free childcare to 30 hours for children of working parents.</p> <p>The DfE proposals include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A national formula to distribute funding for 3 & 4 year olds (including the extended entitlement) to local authorities • Changes to the way in which LAs should allocated funding to providers • Changes to the way in which children with SEN and Disabilities are funded. <p>A response to the consultation had been agreed by the Early Years Reference Group and this would be circulated with the Schools Forum papers.</p> <p>It was noted that Wiltshire has already implemented some of the required changes but that it would still be necessary to review the local Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF). EW stated that it was proposed to bring options to Schools Forum in December so that the formula for 2017-18 could be agreed.</p> <p>The group discussed the various supplements that would now be allowable in the EYSFF and confirmed Wiltshire’s general approach which has been to maximise per pupil funding and keep any local formula as simple as possible.</p> <p>The group also discussed the additional costs associated with the extended entitlement including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration - the LA would be responsible for identifying and confirming the eligibility of children • Inclusion funding – the affordability of any increase in the Inclusion Fund would need to be reviewed 	EW
4	<p>High Needs Block</p>	
4a	<p>The Group considered a report on activity and expenditure on post-16 students with high needs. The report demonstrated how numbers of students had increased whilst expenditure had decreased as more students are accessing local college provision rather than out of county placements in Independent Specialist Providers.</p>	
4b	<p>EW presented a report from Susan Tanner proposing a review of the Enhanced Learning Provision guidance to ensure that it;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to the need for financial efficiency 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is aligned with the reforms set out in the Children and families Act 2014 • Is in accord with the new Wiltshire SEN Banding arrangements • Facilitates the best transitions for Wiltshire's young people <p>It was agreed that the recommendation of the group was that the review should be actioned.</p>	
5	<p>Schools Block 2017-18</p> <p>GD presented a report outlining the DSG baselines for 2017-18 funding and the main changes arising from the recently published DSG Operational Guidance for 2017-18.</p> <p>GD explained that there were some changes to the High Needs Block for 2017-18 but that the additional funding for places in FE colleges was simply money that had previously been paid directly to colleges by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and therefore was not new money.</p> <p>GD outlined the calculation of the 2017-18 DSG baseline. The group requested that the 16-17 allocation be included in the table when presented to Schools Forum so that any movement from year to year could be identified.</p> <p>A discussion followed about the proposed changes to the funding for services previously supported by Education Services Grant (ESG) with the funding for the Retained Duties element of ESG being transferred in to central DSG and the funding for the General Funding element being removed from September 2017. GD explained that further guidance is awaited from the DfE on the services included in the general funding element.</p>	GD
	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>22nd November 2016, 8:30am, County Hall, Trowbridge</p>	