Joint Meeting of School Funding Working Group and SEN Working Group

22nd November 2016, 8:30am

Bradford on Avon Fire Station

MINUTES

Present: Liz Williams, Grant Davis, Susan Tanner, Martin Watson, Catriona Williamson, Neil Baker, John Hawkins, Phil Cook

Apologies: Tracey Cornelius, Simon White, Carol Grant, Debbie Bennett

1	Minutes from Previous Meeting	
	The minutes of the meeting of 20 th September 2016 were reviewed, there were no outstanding actions not covered on the agenda	
2	High Needs Places Review 2017-18	
	GD outlined the process for reviewing and submitting requests for changes to high needs places for 2017-18. GD had carried out a review with Judith Westcott of high needs places in schools.	
	Pre-16 – some reductions in place numbers for Enhanced Learning Provision (ELP) in secondary schools. These have been discussed and agreed with each school. There are some increases to be requested in primary schools to reflect growth in resource base places for Greentrees and Castlemead Primary Schools. Overall pre-16 place numbers to remain broadly the same as 2016-17	
	Post-16 – it was agreed that post-16 places should be removed from schools as they do not reflect where pupils are actually in attendance. The places should be added to the numbers for Wiltshire College. It was confirmed that if a school did have a high needs student in post-16 provision they would be funded appropriately.	
	It was also proposed to apply for the number of places at Wiltshire College to be increased to 304 to reflect demand from Wiltshire and neighbouring authorities.	
	The submission was to be made by 25 th November 2016.	GD
3	Formula for Exceptional Numbers of Statements	
	This issue had been referred back to this meeting following discussion at the October meeting of Schools Forum.	
	GD presented a paper outlining the EFA guidance for targeting funding to schools with exceptional numbers of high needs pupils, including the criteria that should be met through any agreed formula. The paper also included examples of formulae from other local authorities, these were taken from the EFA guidance document and therefore were known to be compliant with the funding rules.	

	The exemplifications were discussed with particular attention on the Cheshire West & Chester formula which was based on the difference between the notional SEN funding and the numbers of pupils with EHCPs/Statements x £6,000.	
	After considerable discussion it was agreed that the limited amount of funding allocated for this purpose could be more effectively invested in "up front" funding, such as funding to support pupils at key transitional points, rather than retrospectively via a formula. It was therefore agreed that the current mechanism should remain unchanged for the financial year 2016-17 but that Schools Forum should consider options for transitional funding for high needs pupils for 2017-18. Proposals are to be brought to the January 2017 meeting.	EW/GD
	It was noted that the Group did discuss the option of adding the budget of £100,000 to the Named Pupil Allowance budget but considered it would not make sufficient difference to the value of the top-up.	
4	Early Years Single Funding Formula	
	EW presented a paper that had been considered by the Early Years Reference Group on 18 th November. The paper summarised the outcome of the review of the Wiltshire Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) and presented options for the hourly rates from April 2017. EW noted that the EYRG had recommended a single flat rate with no enhancement for the additional 15 hours for children of working parents. The proposed option would give a basic hourly rate of £3.85 per hour for each type of setting.	
5	Schools Block 2017-18	
	EW gave a verbal update on the following issues:	
	Changes to Education Services Grant (ESG) – it was expected that the £600m (national total) savings from ESG would still be implemented from September 2017. Detailed options to be brought to Schools Forum in January.	EW
	Central DSG Historic Commitments – the DfE has published supplementary guidance relating to items of expenditure identified as historic commitments within Central DSG, including definitions of eligible expenditure and the evidence that Schools Forum would require in order that items could be approved in 2017-18. EW noted that there were a number of areas of spend that may not be eligible going forward and that further work was required to identify the evidence required and confirm eligibility of spend. It was agreed that further detail would be brought to the January meeting, including identification of the consequences for schools of any item that was no longer considered to be eligible spend. National Funding Formula – no update on this had yet been received but there was an indication from the DfE that further detail on the second consultation would be published in December 2016.	EW
	Date of Next Meeting	
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Joint Meeting of the SEN Working Group and School Funding Working Group to be held on **4**th **January 2017, 8:00am, County Hall**, (North Wilts room booked from 08:00 – 13:30)