

## Meeting of Schools Funding Working Group and SEN Working Group

4<sup>th</sup> January 2017, 8:00am, County Hall

### MINUTES

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

**Apologies:** Tracy Cornelius, Debbie Bennett, Carol Grant

	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
1	<p><b><i>Budget Monitoring 2016-17</i></b></p> <p>The group considered the latest budget monitoring position.</p>	
2	<p><b><i>National Funding Formula for Schools – Phase II Consultation and High Needs funding formula consultation</i></b></p> <p>GD presented a report summarising the key headlines from the recent government consultations on a proposed national funding formula (NFF) for schools and a proposed national funding formula for the high needs block.</p> <p>The consultation on the NFF confirmed the arrangements for a “soft” formula in 2018-19 and a “hard” formula in 2019-20</p> <p>GD confirmed that Wiltshire did not fare well under the proposals. Whilst there was a small overall gain for Wiltshire under the full NFF for schools (2.4%) there were individual winners and losers within the proposals at school level. It was agreed that as soon as the detail of the individual formula factors was available GD would share with members of the working group.</p> <p>EW outlined the key features of the proposed formula for high needs and that Wiltshire would be on the funding floor under the proposals.</p> <p>It was further agreed that at the March meeting the group would consider the consultation in detail and draft a response for schools forum.</p>	GD
3	<p><b><i>School’s Revenue Funding Settlement 2017-18 and Budget Setting Process</i></b></p> <p>EW presented a report detailing the DSG funding settlement for 2017-18 and other funding announcements from the government. The paper also detailed the budget setting process for 2017-18 and confirmed the decision making roles and responsibilities for the local authority and schools forum.</p> <p>EW outlined the changes to the DSG settlement including pupil growth, funding for new responsibilities and funding to support the implementation of the new early years funding formula. The report also detailed changes to Education Services Grant (ESG) funding and the introduction of a new School Improvement Grant for 2017-18.</p>	

	<p>The group discussed the requirements for approval of centrally held DSG budgets and requested that further information on some of the expenditure lines be provided to the schools forum meeting to support decisions, in particular a breakdown of expenditure on personal education plans for looked after children was requested.</p>	EW
4	<p><b>DEDICATED SCHOOLS BUDGET – SCHOOLS BLOCK UPDATE 2017-18 (Central Schools Block Budget)</b></p> <p>EW introduced a report on the central schools block for 2017-18. In relation to the different elements of the central budget, the following was discussed:</p> <p><i>Section A</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GD confirmed the value of copyright licenses for 2017-18 to be £0.345m. EW to incorporate within the final report</li> </ul> <p><i>Section B</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infant Class Size funding. It was noted that schools forum has previously agreed a total growth fund for 2017-18 to be capped at £1m. In order to meet the decision making requirements this will be split in the final report between amounts estimated for infant class size (to be included in section B) and amounts for basic need (section D). It was agreed that this would be based on estimated costs and that it may be necessary to vire between the headings during the year.</li> <li>Places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils. EW to check any expenditure</li> <li>Services previously funded by the retained rate of the ESG – an appendix was included with the report detailing the statutory functions and associated costs</li> </ul> <p><i>Section C</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was agreed that a table detailing the available evidence for historic commitments would be included in the schools forum report and that the full pack of evidence would be available to schools forum members at the meeting</li> </ul> <p><i>Section D</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was agreed that the report would highlight schools forum’s previous decision not to implement a falling rolls fund. The recommendation of the group was that circumstances had not changed significantly and therefore the decision should be confirmed.</li> </ul>	EW  GD  EW  EW  EW
5	<p><b>DEDICATED SCHOOLS BUDGET – SCHOOLS BLOCK UPDATE 2017-18 (Delegated Budget)</b></p> <p>GD presented a report considering the pupil led factors for the funding formula in 2017-18 – Deprivation, English as an Additional Language (EAL) and prior attainment. The paper set out the current rates for each factor and proposed a number of options for 2017-18. The recommendation of the working group was to retain the 2016-17 quantum for 2017-18 which would have a small impact on the rates for individual factors.</p>	
6	<p><b>High Needs Update Report 2017-18</b></p>	

	<p>EW presented a report outlining the funding settlement for the high needs block in 2017-18 and the estimated pressures for the financial year. Pressures were based on continued growth in activity and in Independent Special School placements.</p> <p>It was noted that the pressures on the high needs block were even more of a concern given that Wiltshire is not expected to gain funding from the national funding high needs formula in future years. The group discussed that current increases in activity were not sustainable and considered how additional resources could be used, in conjunction with the new SEN Strategic Planning Fund, to provide capacity for change and to support schools in managing pupils with additional needs. It was agreed that schools forum should review the possible impact of utilising an element of any historic commitment funding that was not eligible as central schools block spend to support an increase in top up payments (to start to reinstate the 2016-17 reductions) and to pump prime projects to support reductions in out of county placements. EW/GD to model for schools forum meeting</p>	EW/GD
7	<p><b><i>Early Years Update Report 2017-18</i></b></p> <p>EW presented a report on the early years block for 2017-18. The report outlined proposals for the early years single funding formula (EYSFF) for Wiltshire and central early years spend. The report contained a proposal for an amount of the early years block to be retained centrally to support the council's costs in managing the free entitlement and 2 year old offer.</p> <p>JP expressed concern that despite an increase in funding Wiltshire was still on the lowest funding rate nationally. JP also outlined key cost pressures faced by early years providers including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Business rates</li> <li>○ Graduate salaries</li> <li>○ Auto enrolment</li> <li>○ National living wage</li> </ul> <p>After discussion the recommendations of the group were that there was support for proposal in relation to the administration costs related to the testing of eligibility for the 2 year old offer, pupil premium and additional 15 hours, and for the funding of the inclusion support fund from the early years block. Further information was requested in relation to the additional central costs.</p>	EW
8	<p><b><i>Date and Time of next meeting</i></b></p> <p>It was agreed that as the main agenda item for the March meeting will be the response to the funding consultation, a joint meeting of the school funding working group and SEN working group should be held.</p> <p>Date confirmed: Friday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2017, 8:30am (venue to be confirmed)</p>	