

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING HELD ON 22 MARCH 2018 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Lisa Percy (Vice-Chair), Neil Baker (Chairman), Aileen Bates, John Hawkins, Nigel Roper, Catriona Williamson, Phil Cook and Andy Bridewell

Also Present:

David Clarke (Head of School Effectiveness), Grant Davis (Strategic Financial Support Manager), Lisa Pullin (Democratic Services Officer), Alan Stubbersfield (Interim Director – Education and Skills), Susan Tanner (Head of Commissioning and Joint Planning), Councillor Phil Whalley (Observer - Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills) and Liz Williams (Head of Finance)

12 **Apologies and Changes of Membership**

Apologies were received from Mark Cawley, Michelle Chilcott, Tracy Cornelius, George Croxford, Jon Hamp, Sue Jiggins, John Proctor, and Jen Jones (Ellen Plowman attending in her place). The Clerk had requested a new representative from the Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education, but a name had not yet been provided.

13 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 January 2018 were approved as a correct record.

Resolved:

That the Chairman sign the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2018.

14 **Chair's Announcements**

Liz Williams

The Chairman wished to inform the Panel that this would be Liz's last meeting of School's Forum as she was leaving Wiltshire Council in May to take up a position in another local authority. He presented her with some flowers and all present wished to thank Liz for her strong support of the Forum and all the work she had done to benefit the schools and children in Wiltshire.

Trade Union Facilities Time Budgets 2018-19

The Chairman wished to confirm to the Forum the discussion and the decision that was made at the Forum meeting on 5 October 2017 in relation to the Trades Union Facilities Budgets for 2018/19.

This had recently been raised at the Joint Consultative Committee and the Chairman reiterated that no new decision could be made as the budget for 2018/19 had been fully allocated.

The resolution (detailed below) was read out at the meeting.

Resolved:

To continue to support the concept of county-wide representation by the teacher and support staff unions and professional association, ensure the appropriate level of funding of a central Facility time budget to meet legal obligations under Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, The Employment Act 2002 and the ACAS Code of Practice on Time Off for Trade Union Duties and Activities.

To increase the funding to the Trade Union Facilities Time budget from £50,000 to £60,000.

Jon Hawkins expressed the view that this budget should only fund the teaching unions as it was not sufficient enough to also cover support staff.

The Chairman reiterated that the budget for 2018/19 had already been allocated and should also cover the trades union costs of support staff in line with the resolution agreed on 5 October 2017.

15 **Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations made.

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

Susan Tanner (Head of Commissioning and Joint Planning) reported that the Children and Young People's Trust Board had not met since the last meeting of the Forum.

Susan reported that Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission had inspected the provision of Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) in Wiltshire between 29 January and 2 February.

The inspection involved visits to special schools and settings and gained feedback from children and young people, parents and carers through webinars and meetings.

The report:

- Praised the effective partnerships and the ambition to deliver the very best outcomes for Wiltshire's children and young people with SEND;
- Endorsed the good work that is ongoing and our commitment to ensure Wiltshire's children are given the right support to thrive and achieve their potential; and
- Acknowledged the concerns by parent carers that the ASD provision in the South of the County needs to be addressed – The Council were able to show plans that were in place to address concern.

A link to the Ofsted website to read the report is [here](#).

Resolved:

That the Forum note the update.

17 **Reports from Working Groups**

The meeting received updates from the following working groups:

Note: Early Years Reference Group had not met since the last meeting.

School Funding Working Group and SEN Working Group

It was noted that the working group discussed the impact of the Army rebasing programme. The DSG income figures for Wiltshire for 2019/20 will be based on the census information taken in October 2018. This will result in schools not receiving sufficient funding for the increase in pupils from Army rebasing starting school in September 2019. It was confirmed that the issue had been raised with the DfE as a matter of urgency and a response was awaited.

Resolved:

That Schools Forum note the minutes of the joint meeting of the School Funding Working Group and SEN Working Group held on 7 March 2018.

18 **Budget Monitoring**

The Forum considered the report which provided budget monitoring information against the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the financial year 2017-18 as at 31 January 2018.

Liz Williams highlighted the following:

- There had been significant movement on the projected overspend (increase of £1.140m) since the previous report to Schools Forum. The biggest movements were in the high needs spend expenditure;
- There had been a data quality issue in the recording of data for the post-16 top up forecast. Although this had now been corrected, it had had a significant impact on the budgeted expenditure;
- The spend on education personal budgets had increased during the year causing a projected overspend of £0.445m against the specialist provision budget;

Liz explained that there was no ceiling on the education personal budgets and these were based on a banding. The family educating the child receives the top up payment rather than the school. The Forum asked about monitoring of the budgets to ensure that the money was being spent properly. Susan Tanner reported that this had been identified as work that needed to be done.

- The big unknown was in the early years budgets and more should be known about the likely adjustment to the Early Years Block after the results of the January 2018 census are made available;
- We would still need to look at reducing the spend in the high needs budgets next year and beyond;
- As we are likely to overspend against the overall DSG budget for 2017/18 this will need to be offset initially against the DSG reserve. The current projected overspend would exceed the level of reserves and this would lead to a deficit being rolled forward into 2018/19; and
- Other Local Authorities were reporting the same level of overspends and the team were working on recovery plans to reduce the overspend where possible.

Resolved:

That Schools Forum note the budget monitoring position at the end of January 2018 and the potential impact on the DSG reserve and 2018/19 budget if the overspend cannot be reduced.

19 High Needs Place Funding and Recoupment of Empty High Needs Places

Grant Davis (Schools Strategic Financial Support Manager) referred to the report which outlined the current process for funding additional High Needs places in Resource Bases (RB) and Enhanced Learning Provision (ELP) settings in mainstream schools. It proposed these changes in light of the new National Funding Formula (NFF) for High Needs.

Grant explained the current position for the funding of High Needs Places and additional High Needs Places and recoupment. He reiterated that Schools Forum had worked to the principle of “the money following the child” and a pro rata amount was funded for Additional High Needs places on a month by month basis. A system of recoupment was introduced in 2015/16 which enabled the local authority to withhold top up funding from those schools with consistently empty High Needs Places to the value of the empty places.

Grant explained that following the proposals of the NFF, funding for High Needs Places was changing and places would be funded at the level of £6,000 per planned place. As a local authority we could not continue to fund at £10,000 per additional place but were proposing to fund at the £6,000.

This proposal would not affect any special schools and if agreed would be put in place from April 2018 for maintained schools and from September 2018 for Academies.

Resolved:

Schools Forum note the contents of the report and confirm its support for the funding of additional High Needs places, and adjustment of top ups for empty places, in mainstream settings to move to £6,000 per place, in line with the changes implemented by the National Funding Formula.

20 **Schools' Costs 2018-19**

Grant Davis (Schools Strategic Financial Support Manager) referred to the report which set out the major issues highlighted in the document that had been released by the DfE “School’s Costs 2018-19 to 2019/20”.

The DfE’s document that was circulated at the end of February 2018, was designed to help the School Teachers’ Review Body (STRB), school leaders, governors, academy trusts and others understand costs for schools over the next two years.

Grant talked the Forum through the analysis and the key assumptions made by the DfE with their potential impact.

Grant intended to give the local MP feedback on this document, but confirmed it was a one-way document and not a document for consultation.

Resolved:

That Schools Forum note the report on Schools Costs.

21 **National Funding Formula and Growth Funding Update**

A verbal report and update was presented to the meeting by Grant Davis (Schools Strategic Financial Support Manager). It was confirmed that Wiltshire

had implemented the National Funding Formula (NFF) as closely as possible. The FSM Ever6 funding was paid at a slightly lower rate than the NFF, due to affordability, as previously agreed with Schools Forum.

The meeting was also updated with the proposed number of pupils due to be arriving in Wiltshire schools as part of the Army Rebasing. The majority of these pupils will be centred around the Salisbury Plain area and the LA is working with the MOD and Department for Education to seek clarity over the exact number of pupils and the funding to support the schools impacted as part of the Rebasing.

Resolved:

That Schools Forum note the update.

22 Confirmation of Dates for Future Meetings

The meeting noted that the future meetings would be held on:

28 June 2018
11 October 2018
6 December 2018.

23 Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 1.30pm - 2.40pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Lisa Pullin of Democratic Services,
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