

School Funding Working Group and SEN working Group

19th November 2018

Minutes

Present: Marie Taylor, Grant Davis, Judith Westcott, Neil Baker, Catriona Williamson, Sam Churchill, John Hawkins, Phil Cook, Helean Hughes

Apologies: Lisa Percy, Nick Breakwell

1	<p><i>Minutes from previous meeting</i></p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed. There were no matters arising that had not already been considered by Schools Forum at the October 2018 meeting.</p>	
2	<p><i>Press Attendance Statement & Press Release</i></p> <p>Democratic Services have prepared a statement for the Chair of Schools Forum and colleagues from Communications will draft a press release for Schools Forum in December.</p>	
3	<p><i>Verbal Updates from Grant Davis</i></p> <p>Grant updated the group on the new national changes to the APT&C Pay scales effective April 2019.</p> <p>Whilst the new pay spines were still being presented to the JCC (Joint Consultative Committee), it was important the schools were aware of the proposed changes to the pay spines. The new spines would not mirror the existing spines and therefore 'local' decisions would need to be taken by schools about re-aligning staff to the new spines.</p> <p>The LA's HR team are working through the implications and an update, if available, will be provided at Schools Forum.</p>	
4	<p><i>Virtual School Report</i></p> <p>Chris Whitfield (CW) attended for this item. Chris explained that the budget allocated to the Virtual School for alternative provision for Children in Care was fully deployed and provided a full analysis of the costs and type of secondary age provision being commissioned.</p> <p>The group thanked Chris for the clarity of the report. Helean Hughes commented that the level of expenditure was low in comparison to her experiences in other local authorities.</p>	

5	<p>Budget Monitoring – Period 10</p> <p>MT circulated a budget monitoring report giving the projected outturn as at period 10 (31 October 2018). The report showed a projected overspend for high needs budgets of £4.125 million, offset somewhat by underspends in central schools and early years block expenditure.</p> <p>The impact of the overspend would be exceeding the level of the DSG reserve resulting in a deficit to be rolled forward in to 2019-20.</p> <p>The group were shocked that the overspend was so significant. Marie described the general increase in EHCPs both nationally and locally and the impact of the September placements.</p> <p>More cost drivers are identified alongside proposed mitigating actions and are considered in the next paper although the forecast variance should be noted alongside the national position.</p>	
6	<p>High Needs Block Working Group Update Paper</p> <p>The new High Needs Block Working Group created in September with a view to identifying contributing factors and to make proposals to reduce the pressure on the high needs block, has provided an update report.</p> <p>At the time of the meeting Directors had not had an opportunity to sign off the recommendation and so the draft and confidential report was only shared on screen at the meeting.</p> <p>Comments from the SF & SEN working groups reinforced and made new comments which had not previously been picked up by the HNGWG including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication of the overall financial position for SEN has reduced since the Head of Commissioning's departure – for example attendance at PHF. - Early / mis-diagnoses of autism (at 4 years of age) later found to be around delay, can put pressure on services from an early age - Health colleagues signposting parents and schools to an EHCP as a way of getting support. It was agreed the local authority need to raise this with the CCG in their regular conversations. - Mental health diagnoses are increasing - Need to Challenge health at complex needs panel - Threshold is more transparent and schools are learning how to complete the forms in order to achieve the level of support they perceive they require. - Schools can only get financial support through an EHCP even if the need is medical – limited access to mental health and other health services including occupational health. - Annual Reviews should look at quality of provision, measure against outcomes for pupils. - Data sets – School Standard Board <p>Grant Davis shared a PowerPoint slide from the DfE showing national increases in numbers of children & young people with EHCPs which are in line with the increases in Wiltshire.</p>	<p>JW</p> <p>JW</p>

	<p>A question was raised around a named social worker for a cluster of schools – whether this is being rolled out across Wiltshire – MT will make enquiries.</p> <p>A question was raised whether Early years block funding could be topsliced. The DfE guidance only makes provision for transfer between schools and high needs blocks.</p>	MT
7	<p>School Survey 2018 Feedback</p> <p>The responses in so far have been limited and so further consultation is recommended. Grant and Marie to be invited to discuss the survey and seek views at Primary Heads Forum next week. Secondary heads do not meet until February 2019.</p>	
7	<p>AOB</p>	
8	<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>Next meeting to be held on Tuesday 8th January 2019, Avebury Room (3rd Floor) at County Hall, Trowbridge – <i>guests to be collected from reception</i></p>	MT