

## School Funding Working Group and SEN working Group

1 October 2019

### Minutes

**Present:** Marie Taylor (Chair), Grant Davis, Judith Westcott, Neil Baker, Lisa Percy, John Hawkins, Phil Cook, Helean Hughes, Catriona Williamson, Nick Breakwell, Sam Churchill, Matt Sambrook

**Apologies:** None

1	<p><b>Minutes from previous meeting</b> The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed.</p>	
2	<p><b>Matters Arising</b> None</p>	
3	<p><b>Revenue Balances</b> GD shared his report on school balances – the report has been tailored since last year to make it more succinct and easier to read. Some suggestions were made to the appendices suite which were taken on board. Wiltshire is the 7<sup>th</sup> lowest funded local authority in the Country and nationally other local authorities are in similar positions. GD was able to report some positives and verbally report progress made by some schools since the 18/19-year end position. Accounting &amp; Budget Support has an increased resource to support schools both in and facing potential deficit and are working closely with RIAs in Helean's new structure in School Effectiveness through LASER meetings. MT agreed to ask CD to bring a report on birth rates &amp; school NOR projections as in previous years.  The group supported the report.</p>	<p>GD</p> <p>MT</p>
4	<p><b>P6 Budget Monitoring &amp; Journey So Far slide</b> MT shared her report which included a redesign into block funding of appendix 1 (the budget) and a new appendix 2 showing the activity. The group liked the format of the new report showing clearly the link between spend and volume. The group were shown a further management report appendix (3) which splits volume from price variances. MT explained this report was of a more limited use as we were not able to set adequate budgets due to the HNB ringfenced grant budget being a limiting factor. The group agreed to exclude from this and future Schools Forum reports.  The pressures on the HNB continue during the planning and transformation around the SEN service and working with schools. Some action planning has begun and is noted on the Journey So Far slide which will be shared with Schools Forum. The forecast overspend for 18/19 is £4.864m. This comprises £0.978m early years – based on higher than budgeted FTE of 3&amp;4-year olds. The DfE allocations are updated following the January census but the forecast is included on the accounting principle of prudence. The HNB forecast overspend is</p>	

	<p>£3.958m – again, based on higher numbers of EHCPs and levels of support requested. This forecast will increase if requests continue to be received at the current rates.</p> <p>Of major concern is the impact of this on the DSG deficit reserve balance which is held in the local authority’s balance sheet. The reserve balance is forecast to be £7.130m. The additional monies pledged by the Prime Minister will assist but not resolve this issue.</p> <p>The <b>Journey So Far</b> slide highlights the actions to date and will be shown immediately prior to the ISOS presentation with Helean outlining Next Steps directly afterwards.</p> <p>JW and HH outlined the <b>Next Steps</b> and proposals which will be shared with Schools Forum and co-produced up in collaboration with Schools, WPCC and Parents, Carers &amp; Children &amp; Young People as appropriate.</p>	
5	<p><b>DfE Consultation</b> Implementing Mandatory Min per Pupil funding levels. GD shared the consultation and his report which was supported by the group.</p>	
6	<p><b>Update on Schools Revenue Funding 20/21</b> GD shared his informative report which was supported by the group. It was thought on this occasion sharing local authority response would not be beneficial to schools although schools would be encouraged to respond. The deadline is 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2019.</p>	
7	<p><b>Local Consultation Schools Budget (Annual)</b> MT shared the proposed questions around de-delegation and funding of HNB overspend through the transfer of schools block or alternative proposals. Re: <b>de-delegation</b> – another “soft” year extends the ability to de-delegate. The local authority needs to consider its offer in readiness for the “hard formula” however, it is not known when the DfE intend to bring this in due to various extensions deployed to date.  Re: <b>HNB</b> – responses must be collected prior to final confirmation of 20/21 DSG allocations which in this year more than most – with the pledges to schools, high needs and early years blocks,  No changes were mooted by the group.</p>	HH
9	<p><b>AOB - Appeals Charging</b> GD updated the group with progress – this is on going</p>	GD
8	<p><b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>  Next meeting – TBC by email as some Members had to depart the meeting early</p>	MT