

## Schools Forum

### School Funding and SEN Working Group

2<sup>nd</sup> June 2020

#### Minutes

**Present:** Marie Taylor (Chair), (Finance, LA), Grant Davis (Finance, LA), Neil Baker (Christchurch), John Hawkins (Teacher / Governor rep), Catriona Williamson (Mere), Andy Bridewell (Ludgershall Castle), Alison Enever (Children's Commissioning LA), Matt Sambrook (Exeter House / Secondee HT to the LA), Lisa Percy (Hardenhuish), Sam Churchill (Hilmarton), Helean Hughes (Director LA), Rebecca Carson (Woodford Valley) and Lisa Pullin (Dem Services LA)

**Apologies:** Gary Binstead (Children's Commissioning LA), Phil Cook (Larkrise) and Matt Look (Children's Commissioning LA)

1	<p><b>Welcome &amp; Introductions</b></p> <p>MT welcomed Alison Enever to her first meeting since joining the Council as Head of Special Schools Transformation</p> <p>LP (Dem Services) took the group through the way that the virtual Schools Forum meeting would work on 11/06/2020 and invited members to attend the trial run on 08/06/2020.</p>	MT update / correct 3 <sup>rd</sup> para
2	<p><b>Minutes from previous meeting</b></p> <p>The minutes of the two previous meetings were reviewed:</p> <p><b>January</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Bud Mon 7.314m o/s. Deficit Res 9.580m</li><li>2. Budget setting suite of reports</li></ol> <p><b>March</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Budget update from January. 0.7% transfer. Not approved SOS 0.6m - Growth fund.</li><li>2. Bud Mon 8.150m O/S. Def res 10.416m</li><li>3. Legislative changes to A/C for DSG</li><li>4. Admissions appeals – charging</li></ol>	
3.	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p>There were no matters arising</p>	
4.	<p><b>Admissions Appeals – Charging</b></p> <p>GD took the group through the paper – the group discussed the implications for some schools' budgets which would have material impact in the 21-22 financial year. NB asked that the report and letter be updated to include reference that although the local authority were keen to support schools and continue to co-ordinate, the increased cost could be significant, and that alternatives and other providers were available.</p> <p>NB to include in his letter from PHF to primary heads</p>	NB

5.	<p><b>Budget Monitoring Report – Provisional Outturn 2019-20</b></p> <p>MT shared her report with the group. The overspend for 19/20 is £9.071m.</p> <p>Highlights: This comprises £1.082m early years – based on higher than budgeted FTE of 2, 3&amp;4-year olds, higher take up of the EY ISF and the DfE’s negative in year adjustment of £0.359m.</p> <p>The HNB forecast overspend is £8.470m – again, based on higher numbers of EHCPs and levels of support requested. This forecast will continue to increase if requests continue to be received at the current rates. (12% growth in a rolling year.) The pressures on the HNB continue and the HNB working group will be prioritising demand management, savings projects, commissioning and spend controls.</p> <p>Schools block and CSSB are showing forecast underspends of £0.218 million and £0.263 million respectively. The Virtual HT has taken recovery actions to maximise external grant and underspend DSG.</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 now forecast to be £11.376m.</p> <p>This overspend needs to be considered moving forward in conjunction with the DfE change in legislation to carry forward DSG overspends to Schools Budgets in future years.</p>	
6	<p><b>High Needs Block Recovery Update</b></p> <p>HH and MS updated the group and led an open discussion on progress and issues, particularly the delays to project work during the Summer term (pandemic arrangements for certain groups of children being in school)</p> <p>Cllr PC has opened discussions with Danny Kruger, MP – meeting 5/6/20 and John Glen. MP to highlight the HNB funding issues and future situation for Wiltshire schools</p> <p>HH has been having 121 meetings with DfE regional leads and has been highlighting the issues around HNB funding.</p> <p>LP investment in return to school needs to be reintegrated carefully and properly, some heads still do not fully understand the issues.</p> <p><b>Matt Sambrook</b> – 3,928 EHCPs currently, significant difference between the pot of money and relative need, pushback is hard. An example of increased ISS fees, 12m ago annual fee for a pupil £211k, now £311k. A Special school evolution project is required to shift the system. Ideas to have a collective strategic plan, push back challenge EHCP – Buffer panel. More local decisions moderated EHCP, pre EHCP application - moderate prior to submission, quick time frame, meaningful plans. Peers = validity. Moderation – admission RB Control system much better and be responsive. Reliance on people ethically buying in has been too slow. It’s actually Covid 19 relevant – Covid team around child working well.</p> <p>Early Intervention – model, lever Joint approach regionalised access for schools. Schools working together, Implementation idea</p>	

	<p>Moderation teams – 4 areas in every area. Senior E.P/ EO relevant representation – consistency. Rolling cycling of heads. Some schools taking more strain/responsibility. LP – but others still applying for funding – needs process.</p> <p><b>Helean Hughes</b> updated the group of progress – work with Anton Florek – group of school leaders together. AP work with Ben. Working together challenge not barrier. Collective Wiltshire approach, solution focus. Criteria based questions to evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-? Graduated support</li> <li>-? Pre- EHCP funding</li> <li>-? Transition funding</li> </ul> <p><b>NB</b> – an opportune time to launch on the back of the momentum of Covid Working. Some multi academy trusts – won't engage with other schools. EHCP recognition of need not £££. Funding to go to local area.</p> <p><b>MS</b> – doesn't quite apply with current COP need local buy in to do it</p> <p>Wiltshire Council have responsibility for all Y.O with SEND</p> <p><b>CW</b> – HT Apply for an EHCP to get £££. COP is written in that way</p> <p><b>MS</b> – Needs based support</p> <p>Capacity building / Need a lever</p> <p><b>SC</b> – pockets of specialism. Joined up thinking/ linking/oversight. Signposting Trust/local understanding/ working together.</p> <p><b>HH</b> – System change/ school to school support – Anton, possibility – push ahead.</p> <p>The group agreed system change necessary Lisa Fry ISSF – leading EY helm and transition.</p> <p><b>NB</b> – support, radical, notable change/ Something noticeably different/People will respond.</p> <p><b>SC</b> – COVID19 – busy but pause and take breath – momentum to next challenge.</p>	
7	<p><b>Legislative change to accounting for DSG</b>  <b>Clarifying the Specific Grant and Ring-fenced Status of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) from the DfE</b></p> <p>GD took the group through the report which included examples of the potential top slice to example schools. The impact of top slicing the whole of the DSG deficit in 21-22 is likely to have significant impact on schools finances, schools who are struggling with finances currently and the inclusion agenda. This will also mean peaks and troughs in school funding as some years will have a larger top slice than others which is difficult for strategic financial planning in schools.</p> <p>£11.3m DSG deficit could be reduced by an early years adjustment in the Autumn – previously estimated at £10.5m which would all be removed in 21-22 FY due to the lateness of the legislation being issued.</p> <p>GD explained that the two separate pieces of legislation conflict with each other and for 21-22, Wiltshire will not be able to both top-slice and ensure minimum per pupil funding levels assuming the current guidance still applies.</p> <p>LP asked could some transfer come from EY. MT to explore this further in the Autumn when the hourly rate is to be reviewed. MT would be reluctant to reduce the current hourly rate but the level of spend in EY and the variance will be factors in decision making.</p> <p>Is there a chance of more funding for HNB? We are promised a SEN review and it is possible additional funding will be made available but not likely. NB – SEN stat guidance has been relaxed in the short term, but long-term outcomes</p>	<p>MT</p> <p>MT</p>

	will need to be met. NB requested an age analysis across 0-4, 5-16 & 16+ years for the MP meeting with Danny Kruger on 05/06/20	MT para 11 update
8	<p><b>DSG Budget Monitoring Report for P1 2020-21</b></p> <p>MT explained that it was unusual to report for period 1 but this was being collected as part of the increased COVID19 budget monitoring for the Council, so it was available to share. The assumptions made are that spend would be aligned with previous years - therefore demand driven activity budgets would spend at 19-20 levels plus 12% demand which is the current rolling increase in demand for EHCPS.</p> <p>April 2020 EHCP + 12% increase = estimated 4,321 EHCPS as at 31/03/2021. If funding or, behaviours do not change, this is a likely forecast overspend of £8.329 million for Wiltshire at 31/03/2021.</p>	
9	<p><b>COVID 19 Update</b></p> <p>HH briefed the group. No additional funding for EY Next phase – EY 58% open more vulnerable children ratios PPE/Cleaning costs – different model 1<sup>st</sup> /June</p> <p>Schools additional pressures – some funding available for direct spend Falling rolls – restructure summer term on hold – HR guidance Autumn Term – Challenging budgets.</p> <p>Part of the council's legal obligation and response to the pandemic is to strategically lead Education + EY settings – this is done through a specialist Covid 'cell.' Risk referred up to senior level 'Gold' School funding and now features in recovery plan, moving forward.</p>	
10	<p><b>Special Schools Transformation (Alison Enever)</b></p> <p>AE took us through a PowerPoint of progress and the latest news update which is that we have received approval to proceed with the new arrangements in the north from the OSA. WEF 01/09/2020, there will be one single school with three sites at Rowdeford, St Nicholas and Larkrise. Expectation will be that the offer will be to more complex needs children but relies on mainstream schools supporting inclusion. Next steps of the radical change which is not just a physical build project and updates on the Free School.</p>	
11	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>NB to draft a letter from PHF and share with PHF exec prior to sending to primary heads and to include admissions appeals info.</p>	NB
12	<p><b>Date and Time of Next Meetings</b></p> <p>8.30am 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020 – Schools Forum 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020 8.30am 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 – Schools Forum 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020</p> <p><i>Teams meetings will continue to be made available for SFWG to save on travel time and mileage.</i></p>	