

Schools Forum
School Funding and SEN Working Group
MS TEAMS MEETING
09th January 2023
Minutes

Present: Marie Taylor (Chair), (Finance, local authority ((LA)), Grant Davis (Finance, LA), Cate Mullen (Head of Inclusion & SEND, LA), Lisa Percy (Chair of SF / Hardenhuish), John Hawkins (Teacher / Governor rep), Catriona Williamson (Mere) Graham Nagel-Smith (Morgan's Vale & Woodfalls), Graham Shore (Deputy Chair SF / Holy Trinity), Rebecca Carson (Woodford Valley)

Apologies: Helean Hughes (Director LA), Andy Bridewell (Ludgershall Castle), Simon Thomas (LA), Gary Binstead (LA), Georgina Kiely-Theobald (Downland) John Read (Lyneham)

1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>MT welcomed the group to the virtual meeting.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes</p> <p>There were no outstanding actions.</p>	
3.	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
4.	<p>High Needs Update – (CM)</p> <p>CM provided a verbal update highlighting firstly, bad news; the deficit of £34m hasn't gone away but better news; which was progress across</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the local authority's enrolment in the DfE's "Delivering Better Value" programme of support and funding to assist with recovery plans. Starting with a 6 month diagnostic starting in July 2023 followed by an 18 month implementation – collaborative, supportive approach with oversight from Schools Forum continuing. b. Successful bid to the local authority transformation reserve of £1.6m across three years to facilitate capacity c. Council MTFs – investment in statutory SEN to keep a pace with demand d. DSG Deficit statutory accounting override extended in the Autumn Statement to 31st March 2026 which means the DSG deficit reserve remains ringfenced and does not impact the Councils balance sheet performance. e. Additional HNB £2.9m – funding SS MGF and early help <p>LP reminded the group that good news should include the schools continued commitment to transfer of 0.5% to support the HNB – CM wholeheartedly agreed.</p> <p>CM left the meeting to attend another at 9am.</p>	
5.	<p>Schools Funding (DSG) Budget Monitoring (MT)</p> <p>MT shared her report & appendices – highlights, underspends in EY will be subject to a post financial year adjustment in June/July 2023 by the DfE. Schools block small underspend offsets the HNB pressures. HNB pressures in line with demand for services and previous years demand patterns – no significant changes since the last report was shared in December.</p> <p>Intention to use some of the EY ringfenced reserve to fund some inclusion in turn contributing to school readiness and inclusion agendas.</p>	
6.	<p>Schools Budget 23-24 (GD)</p> <p>GD took the group through his report which included;</p>	

	<p>Schools - the last year of Boris billions, plus the Autumn statement announcements and MSAG mainstream schools additional grant which replaced the supplementary grant now baselined into 2023-24 DSG.</p> <p>Increases of 2.4% on core factors, 4.3% deprivation & 1.9% overall in DSG funding. 23-24 still a soft year so some local flexibility is available. Wiltshire has aligned to the NFF prior to it being mandatory, which provides greater stability for all schools. Significant increases since 2019-20 as shown on the table, primary pupils down but not as much as the birth rate data indicated. Secondary pupils increased gradually from 2018-19.</p> <p>Overall, we are educating and funding an increased number of pupils across Wiltshire year on year.</p> <p>CSSB historic element 20% reduction HNB Oct 22 census + additional grant EY – provisional allocation & uplifted funding rates</p>	
7.	<p>Early Years Budget 23-24 (MT)</p> <p>MT shared her report and appendices. Wiltshire's proposal is to Passport the increase in rates received from the DfE in full Fund pay inflation for 22/23 & 23/24 Increase deprivation & rurality to reflect demand EYRG had supported the proposal when consulted on 6/1/23 The group had no queries or comments and noted the report.</p>	
8.	<p>Central School Services Budget 23-24 (MT)</p> <p>MT shared her report and appendices. The DfE have shared the licences figure and so this is the final budget estimate. Inflation has been added to the former ESG services, historic factors cannot increase, and the 20% reduction is in CERA to protect services The group had no queries or comments and noted the report.</p>	
9.	<p>Schools Block (GD)</p> <p>GD took the group through his report</p> <p>Wiltshire can afford to fully fund the NFF (unlike some neighbouring LA's) despite increases in numbers of FSM and EAL pupils. Calculations around the growth fund confirm that it is affordable at £0.5m. MFG at 0.5% has a low-cost pressure of £165k as Wiltshire is so aligned to the NFF. Sparsity – maximum values of £81.9k in Secondary and £56.3k in Primary (with tapering) offers protection to rural schools but represents only 0.72% of total SB. MPPFL - £2.497m for 23-24 – reduces year on year as more schools are funded at NFF levels. 72 schools in 22-23 reducing to 36 schools in 23-24. The 0.5% transfer to support the HNB is affordable.</p> <p>GD asked the group for comments LP commented good strategic financial planning has got Wiltshire to this position.</p>	
10.	<p>High Needs Block Budget 2023-24 (MT)</p> <p>MT shared her report and appendices which, included the proposed approach for the additional high needs funding of £2.9m. The group noted the gap in funding estimated commitments for 23-24 and the consensus of the group was that investing the £2.9m in capacity and early help was an approach which aligned with the SEN strategy and long term would contribute to the recovery plan in a more impactful way than simply increasing the demand led budgets.</p> <p>GS – speech and language support is vital as children coming into school are struggling. For example, speaking in full and proper sentences. MT took an action to report back to Emma Cooke and query whether there will be a focus in this area with the planned investment</p>	MT

	<p>JH – great difficulty recruiting a replacement SENCO and the previous incumbent did report back she felt isolated, so network, training & support would be welcomed. Additionally, the census data for EAL students in his school was surprisingly high queried whether others were similar?</p>	
11.	<p>Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (GD)</p> <p>GD took the group through his report. This is the grant which replaces the 2022-23 supplementary grant which is now added to and included in the 23-24 base budget.</p> <p>The MSAG is only payable to primaries and secondaries (not Early years or post-16) and comprises a lump sum and PP value for each pupil and an amount for each FSM6 pupil. All schools will receive the funding for the 2023-24 financial year and Academies will receive funding to cover April 2024 to Aug 2024 to ensure equity and parity and mainstream schools will have values built into their base funding for the 2024-25 year.</p>	
12.	<p>Capital 2022-23 Grant (new) (GD)</p> <p>GD took the group through his report. This late to be announced grant is aimed at energy efficiency schemes but is not ringfenced and can be carried forward to 23-24. Payments are £10,000 per school plus a per pupil rate of £20.06 with a weighted pupil allocation. In additional VA schools have an 8% uplift to compensate for unreclaimable VAT and the 90% limit for SOS contributions.</p> <p>The group had no queries or comments and noted the report.</p>	
9.	<p>AOB</p> <p>There was no AOB however following the meeting, CW updated MT that AB would no longer attend the working group but we are not losing him from Schools Forum, CW will ensure AB is updated and of course, papers will still be shared.</p>	
10	<p><i>Date and Time of next Meeting</i></p> <p>The March meeting of Schools Forum is unlikely to proceed – unless the DfE issue any consultations or significant changes/updates are required however, the provisional dates are:</p> <p>March SFWG 8.30 27th February 2023, Schools Forum 1.30pm 16th March 2023</p> <p>The next confirmed Schools Forum meeting after our January meeting will be Thursday 8th June 2023 @ 1.30pm. This is planned as a virtual meeting.</p> <p>The date of the next meeting of this group is scheduled for Monday 22nd May at 8.30am. This is planned as a virtual teams meeting. Please note half term for Wiltshire schools falls between these two meetings.</p>	