

SCHOOLS FORUM

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING HELD ON 18 OCTOBER 2012 AT MELKSHAM TOWN HALL, MARKET PLACE, MELKSHAM, WILTS. SN12 6ES.

Present:

Mr N Baker, Dr Peter Biggs, Mrs Julia Bird, Mr Andy Bridewell, Mr Steve Clark, Jan Hatherell, Mr J Hawkins, Mrs Sue Jiggins, Mr M Keeling, Mr J Proctor, Ms I Sidmouth, Mr Martin Watson and Mrs C Williamson

Also Present:

Stephanie Denovan - Service Director Schools and Learning and Cllr Lionel Grundy OBE

40 Apologies and Changes of Membership

Apologies were received from:

Mrs Ann Ferries
Mrs Jane Franchi
Mr Tim Gilson
Rev. Alice Kemp
Cllr Laura Mayes
Dr Tina Pagett

41 Minutes of the previous Meeting

The Chairman introduced the item and drew attention to the amended wording for minute no. 29 circulated at the meeting.

In matters arising from the minutes the Forum's attention was drawn to minute no. 37 on the Minimum Funding Guarantee Exceptions 2012-13. A response had been received from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) in which 4 recommendations had been refused:

- Special staff costs
- Service school safety net
- Rents, where the school no longer qualifies under the revised funding proposals
- Split site funding where a school no longer qualifies

The Forums support was sought to appeal against the refusal of the recommendations for special staff costs and the service school safety net.

Resolved:

- 1. To accept the amended wording for minute no. 29;**
- 2. To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes from the meeting held on 4 October 2012 subject to the amendment above; and**
- 3. To support an appeal to the EFA to reconsider their refusal of the recommendations regarding special staff costs and service school safety net within the Minimum Funding Guarantee Exceptions 2012/13.**

42 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

43 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman drew attention to the letter circulated to Committee members and attached to these minutes from Sarah Healy, Director of the Education Funding Group which stated that a Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) would operate post 2014-15.

It was noted that for special schools, whilst technically there is a MFG for the top up rate for each pupil, there is no protection against any loss of funding for unfilled places.

44 Schools Forum Terms of Reference

Kirsty Butcher, Democratic Services Officer introduced the report and highlighted section 10 of the Terms of Reference which introduced rules around public participation and reflected the requirement to hold all Schools Forum meetings in public.

In response to questions she confirmed that the agenda and minutes were currently circulated to all schools via wisenet, and it was suggested that the circulation be extended to include all early years providers given the change in the Early Years Single Funding Formula.

Resolved:

- 1. To endorse the Terms of Reference;**
- 2. To recommend that the Cabinet Member for Children's Services on behalf of the Cabinet approve the Terms of Reference for the Wiltshire Schools Forum; and**
- 3. To include Early Years Providers on the distribution list for agenda and minutes.**

45 Schools Funding Reform

Liz Williams introduced the item and confirmed the need to agree the formula at this meeting.

Funding for deprivation

She introduced the new information that the Forum had asked for when considering deprivation and explained that the latest data available for Experian was from January 2012 census and the IDACI and FSM Ever 6 data was from October 2011. She explained that the most deprived schools ranked highly whichever data set was used however it was clearer with the rural primary schools that IDACI either picked them up or not and suggested that FSM Ever 6 may be a better fit.

Feedback from the WASSH meeting showed the difficulty in selecting either measure as there were variations within both which made it very tricky.

Despite frustrations around FSM Ever 6 there was a closer ranking between it and Experian with fewer moving significantly and it was confirmed that FSM Ever 6 was a measure that will continue to be used in the future.

Attention was drawn to the changes being introduced through Welfare Reform and the impact they could have in the future on the numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals. It was confirmed that the decision could be reviewed in a year's time.

In answer to questions the proportion of funding allocated to deprivation was confirmed as £4.5 million, or 2% of the total to be allocated on a per pupil basis.

Resolved:

To use Free School Meals data across all schools to determine how funding for deprivation will be distributed to schools.

Lump Sum

The Forum noted that the Education Funding Agency had sent a letter to Somerset stating that they would be working with rural counties to look at the impact of the formula and Wiltshire would be contacting them regarding involvement in this.

It was estimated that 48% of school would be losing using a lump sum of £100,000, combined with FSM Ever6, however this model gave the lowest number of schools losing compared with the other options.

Attention was drawn to the previous agreement that the cost of the MFG would be funded through limiting of gains to approximately 0.7%.

Resolved:

To set the level of lump sum within the formula at £100,000.

Formula Factors

Liz Williams detailed the factors seen in appendix 3 to her report and incorporating the resolutions above and confirmed the formula would go to Cabinet on Tuesday 23 October and be submitted to the EFA by 31 October 2012.

Resolved:

- 1. To recommend to Cabinet that the formula factors shown in appendix 3 using FSM Ever 6 as the indicator for deprivation and a lump sum of £100,000 be approved; and**
- 2. To review the formula factors in 12 months time.**

Delegation of Central Budgets

Liz Williams explained that viability of providing services centrally would continue to be looked at on an annual basis however it was agreed that for next year they could continue to be provided if budgets were de-delegated either for all maintained schools or for maintained primary schools.

She explained that decisions would be made separately for each phase and referred to the final operational guidance issued by DfE

In response to questions she confirmed that funding for Trade Union duties would have to be delegated to Academies next year and it was noted that a separate conversation was needed over how that would be managed with the collective agreement. She explained that funding would be delegated on a per pupil basis and that buy back from academies and special schools could be on the same basis.

Feedback from WASSH was that the understanding from maintained secondary schools had been that the phases could not be separated and this was reflected in the results in responses from secondary schools over the Ethnic Minority Achievement Services and the Traveller Education Service. Since these results had been submitted they now understood this was not the case and that the phases could be split.

As insurance had no central costs it was recommended that this was delegated.

The Forum noted that voting on the delegation of central budgets would be taken separately for each phase and only phase members from maintained schools were eligible to vote as explained in the DfE guidance.

Resolved in relation to the delegation or de-delegation of central budgets to maintained primary and secondary schools:

- 1. To de-delegate Schools Contingency for both primary and secondary phases**
- 2. To de-delegate FSM Eligibility Service for both primary and secondary phases**

- 3. To delegate Insurance for both primary and secondary phases**
- 4. To de-delegate the SIMS, HCSS and Copyright Licences for both primary and secondary phases**
- 5. To de-delegate Trade Union duties for both primary and secondary phases**
- 6. To de-delegate Maternity Costs for both primary and secondary phases**
- 7. To de-delegate Ethnic Minority Achievement and Traveller Education Services for the primary phase**
- 8. To delegate the Ethnic Minority Achievement and Traveller Education Services for the secondary phase**
- 9. To de-delegate the Primary Behaviour Support Service for the primary phase**
- 10. To recommend to Cabinet that central budgets are de-delegated or incorporated as summarised in appendix 4 with amendments as detailed above.**

46 Urgent Items

The Forum thanked Phil Cooch for 38 years of service at Wiltshire Council and wished him every success in the future.

(Duration of meeting: 1.38 - 3.00 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Kirsty Butcher, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 713 948, e-mail kirsty.butcher@wiltshire.gov.uk

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