

Schools Forum School Funding Working Group

11th January 2013, 8:30am, Lundy Meeting Room, County Hall

Minutes

Present: Liz Williams, Travis Young, Steve Clark, Martin Watson, Neil Baker, Catriona Williamson, Andy Bridewell, John Hawkins

Apologies: Tim Gilson, Phil Cook

1	Minutes from Previous Meeting The minutes from the previous meeting had been considered at the last Schools Forum meeting. There were no further matters arising.	
2	Supply Pool Insurance Scheme EW presented a report on the current balance accrued in the Supply Pool Insurance Scheme. The scheme allowed for cashback to be allocated back to participating schools if the remaining balance was sufficient. EW reported that the balance on the pool for 2012-13 was projected to be £1.345 million and that this would allow cashback to be awarded to schools at the enhanced rate as had been agreed in 2011-12. The recommendation of the School Funding Working Group was that Schools Forum should agree cashback at the “enhanced level” outlined within the report. EW also reported that the scheme does not currently cover maternity leave and that during the consultation with schools on the potential delegation of the budget for maternity costs, schools had fed back that it was difficult to purchase maternity cover from commercial schemes without also purchasing sickness cover. The group agreed that work should be carried out to look at the feasibility and risks of incorporating cover for maternity costs in to the Wiltshire scheme, with proposals to be brought back to Schools Forum later in the year. The group requested that if maternity cover is incorporated within the scheme it be offered as an option for schools rather than schools having to buy the whole package.	EW
3	Free School Meal Pooling Scheme EW presented a report on the Free School Meal Pooling Scheme. It was agreed that any proposals for cashback should be brought back to Schools Forum in March when there was a clearer picture on the expected year end balance for the pool. EW explained that currently the premium that schools pay in to the pool is identifiable on the school funding certificate as it matches the amount allocated to schools for free school meal provision. From 2013-14 this allocation will no longer be identifiable as it is not allowable to include a specific factor for free school meal provision. EW recommended that the premium will still be calculated in the same way ie., number of pupils eligible for FSM multiplied by a rate per meal. Schools will be notified of this by letter when they are invited to join the scheme for 2013-14.	
4	Schools Block Budget 2013-14 EW updated the group on the outcome of the funding settlement for 2013-14. The Schools Block has been confirmed at £249.269 million, and	

	<p>reflects an increase of 513 pupils compared with October 2011. Provisional allocations had also been announced for the Early Years and High Needs Block and EW explained that there is a significant amount of work to do to enable a final view of all of the cost pressures, particularly within the High Needs block.</p> <p>The deadline for submission of the schools block proforma to the EFA has been extended until 22nd January. This would give more time for consideration of priorities across all areas of DSG and it was agreed that as Schools Forum will meet on 24th January that the final Wiltshire submission should be delayed until after that meeting.</p> <p>Initial analysis of the overall DSG settlement, compared with estimated spend, indicated a shortfall of £1.8 million however this is before any cost pressures arising from the implementation of the proposed top up values and planned places across special schools and resource bases, or completion of the analysis of post-16 high needs places.</p> <p>The delegated budget had been modelled by applying the funding values that had been used in the consultation with schools during September. These values had been based on the 2012-13 delegated budget total. Using these funding values resulted in a shortfall against the funding available for 2013-14 for two main reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall topslice made to the 13-14 DSG settlement for the change in funding for Hospital Provision (£0.411m from Schools Block) • One off funding of £1.520 million had been used in 2012-13 to avoid the need to reduce AWPU values by 0.5% <p>Options to reduce the shortfall were discussed and it was agreed that the following options would be modelled for consideration by Schools Forum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reducing formula rates by up to 0.5% - this option had already been built in to the financial planning software for 2013-14 2. Identify savings from central DSG budgets 3. Consider using one off funding from the DSG Reserve – this could only be considered as part of the overall budget discussions so that any one off funding could be prioritised. <p>The Group also requested a summary of the impact on particular groups of schools who may be more vulnerable following the implementation of the new funding formula be produced for Schools Forum.</p>	
6	<p>AOB</p> <p>The Group considered a request that had been submitted by a school for approval to carry forward a general balance in excess of the level that would be allowable under the Controls on Surplus Balances Scheme. Following discussion it was agreed that the Scheme does not have provision for agreeing exceptions in advance and that any “excessive” balance held by the school would be eligible for clawback, subject to appeal. EW to write to the school to communicate the decision.</p>	EW
7	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Date of next meeting was agreed as Monday 25th February, 8.30am</p> <p>It was agreed that Steve Clark should formally join the Group to ensure</p>	

	that maintained secondary schools were represented.	
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