

Schools Funding Working Group

3rd June 2015, 8:30am, West Wilts Room, County Hall

Minutes

Present: Catriona Williamson, Neil Baker, Martin Watson, John Hawkins, Phil Cook, Julia Cramp, Grant Davis, Susan Tanner, (Phil McMullan & Liza Gordon for Item 6)

Apologies: Andy Bridewell, Jan Hatherell

1	Minutes from Previous Meeting The minutes from the previous meeting were discussed and agreed.	
2	Budget Monitoring 2014-15 GD presented a summary of the budget out-turn position for the schools budget for the 2014-15 financial year. The report demonstrated that there was an overall overspend on the DSG of £2.001M for the 2014-15 year. The overspend was attributed in the main to an overspend of £2.192M in the High Needs Block which was in accordance with projections presented at earlier meetings. There were savings within the High Needs Block and also from within the Schools Contingency. There was also a cost pressure stemming from the 'term time only' payments made during the year. The report also showed the impact on the DSG reserve and that it had reduced from £3.502M to £1.151M during the year but that there were still commitments in respect of outstanding 'term time only' commitments, which as yet could not be quantified, but are estimated at £0.2M	
3	Update - Early Years Final Settlement 2014-15 GD presented a paper to update the group on the final out-turn for the Early years Funding. The Early Years funding is based upon a provisional settlement with a final adjustment to reflect the outcome of the January census. The retrospective adjustment to reflect the January census will be paid in the 2015-16 year but relates to the 2014-15 year. The additional funding awarded to Wiltshire is £0.153M and has therefore increased the DSG settlement from £193.168M to £193.321M.	
4	High Needs Budgets 2015-16 GD presented a paper to update the group on the cost pressures in the High Needs budgets for 2015-16. The cost pressures are being addressed through a number of measures which had been presented to, and agreed at the March Schools Forum meeting. A RAG rated table was presented which detailed all of the savings measures and categorised the various measures. A discussion took place regarding each of the measures and their associated RAG ratings and some were amended. The RAG ratings represents a 'savings' document but will need to be considered in light of the actual budget position for 2015-16.	

	<p>The recycling of ELP places was discussed and agreed that the £10k of place funding would be recouped for each additional place and accordingly £10k is to be awarded for each additional place, on a proportionate basis. The principle had been agreed at WASSH and members had confirmed their acceptance.</p> <p>Whilst there are occasions where a pupil may move from mainstream to ELP, a school may receive the AWPU plus the place funding. However it was considered that instances of this are minimal and that working to the £10k was the most appropriate and workable solution for schools.</p> <p>There is anticipated to be a backlash from some Resource Base (RB) schools who will consider their RB not to be cost effective. Susan Tanner is writing to all RB's to establish their future plans and has had much feedback from schools.</p> <p>ST will look at each case individually with a view to ensuring that there is consistency across all RB's and if there are to be any individual decisions, then these would be presented to SFWG.</p> <p>Savings from the closure of the RB at the Manor are subject to pressure as some of the funding will be required to place these pupils.</p>	
5	<p>Schools Traded Services – Changes to Governance Arrangements</p> <p>JC presented a paper which informed the group that a number of small price increases were to be applied for three of the Right Choice services;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HR Advisory Services - HR Admin & Payroll - Accounting & Budget Support <p>A price increase of 5% for these services from September is to be applied. The average impact of this uplift in 2015-16 will be £105 per school.</p> <p>CW & NB expressed their concerns that prices were being increased prior to any of the Traded Service reviews being completed and that this was not the position which schools had been expecting. JC outlined that full reviews were being conducted and that the results would be presented back to the group. Any increases would be communicated to schools having initially been taken to the new Stakeholder group first.</p> <p>It was discussed that schools required sufficient notice of any changes to enable them to make alternative purchasing decisions if necessary.</p>	
6	<p>Buildings Pool Service</p> <p>Phil McMullan and Liza Gordon from the Property team presented a paper outlining some proposals to a change in the delivery of their service from April 2016. The current Buildings Pool Scheme is considered to be unwieldy and there are some misconceptions as to exactly what is covered by the scheme. The proposals were outlined and a number of questions were fielded. Phil and Liza were asked to attend the next PHF meeting where their proposals could be presented to a wider audience, for feedback.</p>	
7	<p>Procurement of Licence for Schools Information Management System</p> <p>A report was presented to the group outlining the current procurement options for the Capita SIMS product. The group noted the content of the report and asked that the LA continue to seek out the most economically advantageous option for schools.</p>	

8	AOB As per last year, it was discussed whether an October and a December Schools Forum meeting would be required. The group agreed that unless there were to be an announcement about a National Funding Formula, then we should move to combining the two meetings and hold it in November.	
9	Date of Next Meeting SFWG - Tuesday 20 th October 2015, 8:30am, Longleat Room, County Hall Schools Forum - Thursday 12 th November 2015, Council Chamber, County Hall	

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