

## SCHOOLS FORUM

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### **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2011 AT COMMITTEE ROOM V - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.**

#### **Present:**

Mr N Baker, Mrs Julia Bird, Mr P Cook (Reserve), Mr C Dark, Mrs A Ferries, Mrs J Finney, Mr J Foster, Mrs C Grant, Mr J Hawkins, Mr M Keeling, Dr Tina Pagett, Mr J Proctor, Mr M Watson and Mrs C Williamson

#### **Also Present:**

Cllr Lionel Grundy OBE, Rev. Alice Kemp, Cllr Alan Macrae and Mr C Smith

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#### 104. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mrs. Anne Davies (Diocesan Representative), Mr. John Proctor, Mr. Ted Hatala and Mrs. Ingrid Lancaster-Gaye (substituted by Mr Phil Cooke)

#### 105. **Minutes of the previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 02 December 2010 were presented and signed by the Chairman.

#### **Resolved:**

**To approve as a correct record the minutes of the School Forum meeting held on 02 December 2010, with the addition of Mrs Carol Grant as an attendee.**

#### 106. **Declaration of Interests**

None.

#### 107. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Michael Keeling to the Schools Forum. It was explained that Mr. Keeling will represent maintained schools with nurseries in Wiltshire, and replaces Mr. Colin Zimmerman.

## 108. **Review of the Young Persons' Support Service (YPSS)**

The Chairman introduced Mr Colin Smith, who had been commissioned by Carolyn Godfrey (Corporate Director, DCE) in 2010 to undertake an independent review of the Young Persons' Support Service (hereafter 'YPSS').

It was explained that the three main responsibilities of the YPSS were as follows: Firstly the education of children & young people with severe medical needs, secondly behaviour intervention and preventative support for schools, and thirdly the education of young people permanently excluded from schools.

The report identified a number of **key strengths**;

- A high number of dedicated and professional staff
- 'good' outcomes when compared with national averages.
- Strong links with secondary federations
- Provides the education for all permanently excluded pupils

The **main weaknesses** were:

- Inadequate premises
- Insufficient financial controls
- Lack of inter-agency collaboration
- No single 'behaviour' lead

There followed a number of **key recommendations** in each of the service areas of the YPSS:

### **Children and young people with severe medical needs**

- Multi agency commitment to the service
- An integrated autonomous leadership structure
- Access to partnership working
- A review of the on-line learning platform
- Improved financial controls and fair recoupment systems

### **Behaviour intervention and preventative support for schools**

- Responsibilities devolved to area Federations
- Develop an integrated behaviour support service to include: Primary & Secondary mainstream schools; BESD Special Schools and YPSS
- Entitlement to off-site temporary placements in centres
- Development of alternative provision 14-16

### **The education of young people permanently excluded from schools**

- Senior 'Behaviour Champion' to coordinate and integrate relevant services
- Federation access to 'at risk' places in YPSS Centres
- Finance & Budget review and access to AWPU and exclusion levy

- Commission of Special School outreach work for 'at risk' and excluded pupils
- Rationalisation of Centre provision
- Development of Partnership working with Centre staff

The Chairman thanked Mr Smith for his report and his presentation, and invited the officers and forum members to comment. Questions were asked surrounding Further Education (FE) provision under the new model, including to some 14-16 year-olds; how increasing numbers of schools moving to academy status would affect the focus on using area federations and partners wherever possible; and the possibility that the new model generated increased travel to/from YPSS hubs for children.

Stephanie Denovan and Mal Munday thanked Mr Smith and emphasised the report's usefulness. As a result of the Management review the targeted learning branch will become integrated within the wider Schools and Learning directorate, and following the report's recommendations there will be three named managers with lead responsibilities for; *Behaviour and Attendance (across phases)*; *Collaborative working* and for *Inclusion*. The composition of the YPSS management committee may be adjusted as necessary to reflect the new arrangements. Appointments were currently underway to finalise these posts and structures. Major changes would be implemented from the beginning of the next academic year.

#### **Resolved:**

**To note the report, and urge officers to take appropriate action, building on the changes already made.**

#### 109. **Report of the School Funding Working Group**

Liz Williams updated members of the Forum on the outcomes of the meeting held on 07 January 2011.

#### **Delegation of Health and Safety maintenance budgets**

Proposals for the budget for health and safety maintenance to be delegated on the basis of a flat rate and per pupil sum had been developed. The Schools Forum emphasised the need for comprehensive guidance for schools to be provided to enable this delegation to take place most cost-effectively and safely.

#### **Section 251 Benchmarking**

The SFWG considered the Section 251 Benchmarking report and identified two areas where Wiltshire benchmarks as a high spender relative to statistical neighbours – *Speech & Language therapy* and *School Improvement*. The statistical neighbours would be canvassed to establish the reasons for this and an update will be produced to inform SFWG/School's Forum.

#### **Updated Schools Finance Guidance**

It was explained that new guidance had been issued from the DfE on local authority funding schemes, effective from 01 April 2011. In most cases there

was no conflict with existing arrangements in Wiltshire and any necessary amendments locally will be made in accordance with the guidance.

The SFWG advised that no decision be made regarding the continuance of the Wiltshire controls on surplus balances scheme until a later date. The School Forum agreed with this and decided that it was appropriate that a paper be brought back to the March Schools Forum meeting, in order for a decision to be made on the issue. Any decision could then be communicated to schools in the local authority area, giving them fair notice to adjust their budget calculations accordingly. Phil Cooch would seek to circulate details of Surplus balances in advance of the March Schools Forum meeting.

### **Schools Funding Settlement**

Much work had been undertaken by the group at meeting on the 07 January and a subsequent meeting on the 14 January resulting in a number of recommendations regarding future allocation of former standards funds monies which have been rolled into the DSG 2011/12. In light of the figures, the group recommended that the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant continue to be retained centrally, as previously discussed at school forum, and that the pupil premium for pupils in maintained special schools and the YPSS be paid directly to the schools/YPSS.

#### **Resolved:**

- a) **That budgets for health and safety maintenance contacts be delegated to School as follows**

	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Special</b>
<b>Flat Rate</b>	<b>£50</b>	<b>£500</b>	<b>£250</b>
<b>Per Pupil</b>	<b>£0.65</b>	<b>£0.81</b>	<b>£0.70</b>

(Paragraph 4 in the report)

- b) **That the Health and Safety Manager should issue guidance to schools on available countywide contracts and providers of specialist maintenance equipment such as gym and kiln equipment.**
- c) **That further information on the detail behind the benchmarking figures on Speech & Language therapies and on Schools improvement be sought from statistical neighbours and reported back to the Schools Funding Working Group (Paragraph 5)**
- d) **That a decision on whether to retain the Wiltshire Controls on Surplus balances scheme be delayed until further detail is known about the national picture and the government's view on surplus balances in school. An update with recommendations should come to the March meeting, so a decision can be made.**

- e) That the pupil premium for pupils in maintained special schools and the YPSS be paid directly to the schools/YPSS
- f) That the recommendation that the former Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant continue to be retained centrally, be noted and considered as part of Item no.7 – Dedicated Support Grant 2011/12 [Minute no. 110]

#### 110. Dedicated Schools Grant 2011/12

Liz Williams, Head of Finance (DCE) circulated notes from the meeting of the Schools Funding working group that took place on 14 January 2011 which included a table of existing grants and proposed new delegation methods for consideration by the Forum. Also circulated were amended charts listing the composition of Headroom pressures on the budget and potential ways these could be addressed.

Phil Cooch circulated a set of calculations for each grant to be rolled into the DSG [Packs 1-8], which showed the effect on the budget of schools in Wiltshire of proposed changes to the methods of delegating the funds.

It was explained that the funding settlement for 2011/12 contains significant changes which increase the complexity of the budget-setting process this year. These were:

##### **The Pupil Premium**

This will be paid to local authorities to support pupils from deprived areas using eligibility for free school meals in the last 6 months as an indicator.

- General Scheme: The value of the pupil premium in 2011/12 is £430 per pupil – no figure has been announced for future years however the national total spend on the pupil premium is set to increase from £625 million in 2011/12 to 2.5 billion in 2014/15. The premium will be paid direct to schools
- Non Mainstream Support: Pupils in non-mainstream settings, including special schools, independent special schools, pupil referral units and children not in school will attract the pupil premium.
- LAC Children: Children who have been looked after for more than 6 months will also attract a pupil premium at the value of £430
- Forces Children: Children whose parent(s) are in the armed forces will also be eligible for the pupil premium at a rate of £200 per pupil.
- Pupil Premium/DSG: The Pupil premium funds are received separately and in most cases go directly to schools. The funds are separate to the provisional DSG and the minimum funding guarantee (MFG).

A discussion ensued surrounding the indicators that are to be used to determine eligibility for the Pupil Premium. Of particular concern and interest was the time-lag that could be apparent between the data submitted for each period (based on those children receiving FSM / in care for over 6 months), and the real need

which could vary. It was hoped that a system of updates could be arranged for LAC cases, which was not overly bureaucratic/complex to administer.

It was also highlighted that the government would not continue the practise of double-funding pupils who have dual-subsidary registrations at PRUs.

### **Dedicated Schools Grant – Estimate for 2011/12**

Pupil numbers are estimated at 63,881 for the 2011/12 DSG Estimate, and increase of 0.98% from the previous year, and the increase arises in Early Years, as a result of the extension of the free entitlement for 3 and 4 year-olds to 15 hours from 12.5 hours provision. This gives an estimated DSG of £273.117 million after adjustment for academies. An increase of 1.2% is entirely due to increased pupil numbers as there has been no inflationary increase.

The DSG requirement for 2011/12, prior to any investment priorities being met, is £273.708 million. This is a shortfall against the estimated grant of £0.591 million.

A revised estimate of budget headroom was circulated and members considered which priorities and cost pressures should be funded. A final report will be come to Schools Forum at the 02 February meeting for decisions to be made, but members provided indication to officers of which of the identified areas required further investigation, and which they believed did/did not warrant funding on the basis of existing information.

Initial recommendations:

- \* 1 – New School Allowance - Fund this – Needs to be funded for a 3 year period.
- \* 2 – FSM Increase - The Schools Forum felt the risk of this increase could be managed within the overall delegated budget – do not fund
- \* 3 – Revaluation of Reception AWPU - recommended funding at 2010/2011 KS1 value as the cost will need to be addressed
- \* 4 – Additional take up of Free Entitlement for 3 and 4 year-olds - use indicated underspend from 2010/11
- \* 5 – Special School banding - A recommendation is to be received from the SEN working group at the next Schools Forum meeting following consideration of potential underspends in central SEN budgets
- \* 6 – YPSS – no decision at this stage
- \* 7 – Looked After Children Education Service - use Pupil premium creatively, do not fund from DSG,
- \* 8,9,10 on Chart – Early Years Foundation Stage Training / Primary Languages Adviser / Every Child Programmes (Leading Teacher) – staff to be employed centrally but funded from former standards funds: Schools Forum did not take the recommendation of the SFWG to continue to fund these posts for a year from DSG

### **Allocation of the Former standards funds.**

The Schools Funding Working group had met on Friday 14 January, the Chairman explained, and since the meeting, officers had produced packs modelling the effects on Wiltshire Schools' budgets, that the proposed changes

to distribution methods would create. These were circulated as packs 1-8. The Chairman thanked the Finance team for their hard work over the weekend.

The grants to be rolled into the DSG are as follows:

- School Standards Grant
- School Standards Grant (Personalisation)
- School Development Grant
- Specialist Schools
- High Performing Schools
- School Lunch Grant
- Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant
- 1-2-1 Tuition
- Extended Schools – Sustainability
- Extended Schools – Subsidy
- National Strategies – Secondary
- National Strategies – Primary
- Diploma Grant

Please Note: Draft regulations for 2011/12 state that the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant can continue to be held centrally by local authorities (LAs) and it has been recommended to Schools Forum that this should be the case in Wiltshire.

It was explained that the principle difficulty was in replicating the degree of targeting that these grants formerly possessed. However, neither central government nor the council were expecting this to be achievable, if it was desired. The Schools Funding Working group felt that a move to using Age Weighted Pupil Units (AWPU) as the primary method of distribution was the best option, whilst trying to retain an element of targeting that stayed true to the principles of the predecessor grants, without simply replicating the prior distribution

However, when this had been modelled it became clear that there were significant variations in how this affected schools, including a difference in how larger/smaller schools were affected, and issues with those schools who had been recipients of one-off grants.

It was suggested by the Chair that the £36 million worth of funding that accumulated from former Standards Funds be considered by the Forum to be allocated afresh, on a new basis.

Following discussion a number of actions were agreed as follows:

- \* Officers to look at the split between AWPU and flat rate
- \* Select indicative random sample of schools to identify the cost/effects on a per pupil basis, and see if parity exists on this measure.
- \* Officers to produce revised figures, to eliminate the year-to-year changes created by the withdrawal of one-off grants
- \* Establish a greater understanding of Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) issues – including whether or not approval is needed or can be achieved for varying
- \* Look to identify measures which eased the transition from old-to-new funding levels if necessary

## **Devolved Formula Capital Levels**

There is a significant reduction in devolved formula capital levels, for the 2011/12 period compared with the current year, [see attached letter at appendix from Michael Gove to Local Authorities explaining the rationale behind this change]

The new devolved formula capital rates are as follows:

<b>Devolved Formula Capital</b>	<b>LA School</b>	<b>VA School</b>
Per School sum	£ 4,000.00	£ 4,320.00
Per Primary Pupil	£ 11.25	£ 12.15
Per Secondary Pupil	£ 16.875	£ 18.23
Per SEN pupil	£ 33.75	£ 36.45

### **Resolved:**

#### **That:**

- a. **Special Schools and the YPSS should receive the pupil premium directly as agreed under item no.6 [minute no.110].**
- b. **Officers note the priorities identified by the Schools forum and where it believes resources are most needed to address risk and maintain service standards.**
- c. **The former EMAG grant will be retained centrally to continue to fund the EMAS team**
- d. **Further work is required in order for Schools Forum to agree a methodology for allocation of all other former standards funds that are now part of DSG.**

## 111. **Urgent Items**

### **Three-year budgets for Schools**

Discussion emerged during the course of the meeting regarding the Council's requirement for schools to submit a three-year budget each year. Some felt that this was unreasonable to expect following the new provisional DSG settlement figures from government, which covered only the period of 2011/12 rather than the usually three-year period.

### **Resolved:**

**Officers are requested to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of Schools Forum endorsing the submission of 1 year budgets only (in the absence of any legal barriers to doing so). An update/report is to be brought to a future meeting.**

### **Primary Heads Forum**



The PHF had been involved in the report on the development of traded services – Members of the forum were reminded this process was ongoing and some revised wording was suggested.

112. **Confirmation of dates for future meetings**

The dates of upcoming meetings were confirmed as:

Wednesday 02 February 2011

Thursday 03 March 2011

Thursday 23 June 2011

Members were reminded that the next Schools Funding Working Group (SFWG) meeting was 24 January 2011.

(Duration of meeting: 1.20 - 2.25 pm)

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