

Schools Forum
School Funding and SEN Working Group

MS TEAMS MEETING

29th November 2021

Minutes

Present: Marie Taylor (Chair), (Finance, local authority ((LA)), Grant Davis (Finance, LA), John Hawkins (Teacher / Governor rep), Catriona Williamson (Mere), Lisa Percy (Hardenhuish), Cate Mullen (Head of Inclusion & SEND, LA), Rebecca Carson (Woodford Valley) Sam Churchill (Hilmarton) Phil Cooch for Georgina Theobald-Kiely (Downland) Graham Nagel-Smith (Morgan's Vale & Woodfalls)

Apologies: Simon Thomas, Gary Binstead (LA), Andy Bridewell (Ludgershall Castle), Helean Hughes (Director LA), Graham Shore (Holy Trinity)

1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>MT welcomed the group to the virtual meeting. Various members had advised that they would be late / time limited and so the agenda was re-designed to accommodate and will be in a more logical order for Schools Forum next month.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes</p> <p>These were considered at Schools Forum in October – no actions outstanding.</p>	
3.	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
4.	<p>8.30am – High Needs and DSG Management Plan (CM attended for this item)</p> <p>CM provided a verbal update to the group. Of note, next steps include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of the work Matt Sambrook started (pre COVID) with schools around banding • Develop Secondary ELP provision • Transition Post 16 with Cara Madden leading on preparation for adulthood <p>CM has submitted a bid for a further three year funding for transformation work funded by the government's flexible use of capital receipts – this is limited only by the amount of capital receipts available and Cabinet prioritisation of schemes.</p> <p>JH said he was pleased to hear about support for secondary schools and asked about the ISS appeals processes – CM responded that the LA would continue to oppose appeals wherever it is appropriate and possible to do so and an efficient use of resource, particularly difficult around the national trial element re: partner services (e.g. therapeutic support)</p> <p>CM felt that not all HT colleagues had an understanding of the HNB pressures and the impact their decisions had on the budget. Suggested this was kept live with inclusion in HT briefings etc. MT added if there was pressure from the DfE to reduce numbers of EHCPS or funding levels, this would impact schools so important to share messaging</p>	GD/MT

5.	<p>9.00am – De-Delegation Consultation & Block Transfers (GD)</p> <p>GD shared his report and results of the local annual consultations</p> <p><u>De-delegated</u> consultation is limited to maintained schools – 25 responses with the majority preferring a de-delegated model across all services</p> <p><u>HNB 0.5% transfer</u> (est £1.58M) – for all schools – 19 responses, all supported the transfer with only 1 preferring reduced top ups and 3 a hybrid of the two. Majority supported transfer at 0.5% as in previous years.</p>	
6.	<p>9.15am Budget Monitoring for the period to 31st October 2021 (MT)</p> <p>MT shared her report with the group. The forecast overspend for 21/22 is £8.271m across all blocks.</p> <p>Highlights: Early Years – (£1.264M) lower part time equivalent (PTE) take up of the 3&4 year old grant than funded for – the majority of this will be re-couped by the DfE in 22-23 financial year.</p> <p>School Budgets – (£1.376M) the underspend is largely driven by the growth fund and this offsets the DSG overspend position.</p> <p>The HNB overspend is £10.911m – an increase since the August report as September placements are now firmed up again, based on higher numbers of EHCPs and levels of support requested.</p> <p>An estimate of £1M has been included to reflect TSF (Transition Support Fund) payments reflecting the current delay to timeliness of EHCP assessments – this sum will be formed up as learners are identified.</p> <p>Due to the pandemic and subsequent delay there is a lower than anticipated growth rate in the number of EHCPs issued.</p> <p>The pressures on the HNB continue and the HNB working group will be prioritising demand management, savings projects, commissioning and spend controls.</p> <p>Of major concern remains the impact of this on the DSG deficit reserve balance which is held in the local authority's balance sheet. The reserve balance is now forecast to be £26.701m at 31st March 2022.</p>	
7.	<p>9.25am School Revenue Funding 2022-23 'in principle' decisions (GD)</p> <p>GD shared his report, there was discussion around advantages of mirroring the NFF with regard to sparsity in preparation of the DfE's clear intention to move to a hard formula in 23-24.</p> <p>LP commented that at a recent RSC workshop, they were clear they wanted us to prepare and move towards a hard formula</p> <p>GD commented that the consultation mentioned at least a mandatory 10% move towards the NFF year on year by 23-24</p> <p>RC asked what the outcome of the move to academic year funding was for maintained schools – GD updated the DfE were yet to publish the outcome of that consultation</p>	

8.	<p>9.45am DfE Consultations – Autumn 2021 SIMB Consultation – DfE and Local (verbal update) (GD)</p> <p>DfE Consultation - GD updated the group following the exceptional meeting held in October. The SF standard response has been shared with schools and chairs of PHF and WASSH to be promoted. National interest with challenging responses from local authorities and lobby groups such as the F40. The Director of Ed & Skills has written to Wiltshire MPS to ensure they are aware of the impact of the withdrawal of this grant.</p> <p>Local Consultation – GD updated the group on the local consultation which has now become a necessity around de-delegation of school improvement, brokerage & monitoring. Responses are due 6th December and so these will be included in the report for Schools Forum.</p>	
9.	<p>10.00am Growth Fund Criteria (GD)</p> <p>GD took the group through the report and the opportunity to set up a falling rolls fund, the group felt this was not appropriate for Wiltshire at this time. GD commented that only about 50% of the LA's in the country have these and the criteria can be complex.</p>	
10.	<p>10.10am Early Years / High Needs / CSSB Update report for 22-23</p> <p>MT took us through the report</p> <p><u>Early Years</u> – no allocation notified yet however, national announcements around significant increases in funding and hourly rates – the local authority sets the EY budget, in consultation with the EYRG and so this will take place at the January EYRG meeting.</p> <p><u>CSSB</u> – the CSSB section A; licences for all schools – no decision required but other parts need to be approved by SF on a line by line basis in January. There is the usual 20% reduction to the historic commitments, overall a £0.149M increase Query around whether the HNB transfer sum could be re-directed to support school improvement – MT and GD to check CSSB guidance to see whether this is possible and will allow planning time to change service activity should de-delegation not be agreed by SF next month.</p> <p><u>High Needs</u> – overall a £4.825M increase but pressures estimated to exceed this additional funding</p>	MT/GD
11.	<p>Verbal Update - COVID Funding</p> <p>DfE COVID recovery premium £1bn – based on pupil premium pupils, the DfE have announced this will continue for 2 more years. The proposed rates remain at £145 for Primary but expected to double for Secondary schools</p> <p>.</p>	
12.	<p>AOB</p> <p>a) Funding – GD shared a slide from a DfE academy school bursar workshop around additional funding - £1.6bn on top of 22-23 previous plans to cover additional Health & Social Care Levy on national insurance and inflation (energy.)</p> <p>b) Virtual Meeting in December – the group considered whether the meeting planned for County Hall in December would be better held virtually due to the high rates of COVID in Wiltshire and the periods of time HT needed to be away from school when covering teaching staff absence. It was decided the meeting should be held virtually. To be reconsidered for January 2022 meeting. GD/MT to inform LP in Dem Services.</p>	GD/MT

10	<p><i>Date and Time of Next Meeting</i></p> <p>Next meeting – Monday 10th January 2022 @ 8.30am This is planned as a possible virtual teams meeting.</p> <p>Schools Forum papers will be circulated by Lisa Pullin Wednesday 1st December 2021</p> <p>Next Schools Forum meeting Thursday 9th December 2021 @ 1.30pm. This is planned as a possible virtual teams meeting.</p>	MT
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