

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2013 AT COMMITTEE ROOM - MELKSHAM TOWN HALL, MARKET PLACE, MELKSHAM, SN12 6ES.

Present:

Mr N Baker (Chairman), Dr Peter Biggs, Mrs Julia Bird, Mr Andy Bridewell, Sarah Findley-Cobb (Substitute), Jan Hatherell, Mr J Hawkins, Dr Tina Pagett, Mr J Proctor, Ms I Sidmouth and Mr Martin Watson (Vice-Chair)

Also Present:

Cllr Bill Moss

1 Apologies and Changes of Membership

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Steve Clark, Mrs A Ferries, Mrs Jane Franchi, Mr Tim Gilson, Cllr Lionel Grundy, Mrs Sue Jiggins, Mr Michael Keeling, Revd Alice Kemp, Mrs Rosheen Ryan and Mrs C Williamson.

2 Minutes of the previous Meeting

Resolved:

To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2012.

Matters arising:

Min. No. 48 – Minutes of Previous Meeting – MFG Exceptions

Liz Williams reported that after the last meeting, she had contacted the EFA about their refusal of the appeal on the recommendations regarding the special staff costs and service safety net within the Minimum Funding Guarantee Exceptions 2012/13, however the decision remained unchanged. She advised that we would need to reapply each year and there was a possibility that the Service School Protection factor exception could be approved if it could be demonstrated that pupil numbers had increased beyond the numbers being funded through the protection.

Min. No. 54 – Young People’s Support Service Update

Liz Williams explained that since the last Forum meeting she had attended a meeting with representatives from the Passenger Transport Unit to discuss the issues associated with home to school transport. It was confirmed that the budget for the cost of transport to alternative provision during the school day had been included in the sum devolved to schools. However home to school transport for pupils should continue to be met through the LA home to school transport budget; any further issues/updates would be reported to WASSH in due course.

3 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Chairman's Announcements

There were no Chairman’s announcements.

5 Children and Young People's Trust Board Update

The Forum received a verbal update from the Service Director, Commissioning and Performance.

She explained that Wiltshire had been chosen to be a Pathfinder following the publication of the SEN and Disability Green Paper *Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability*. Draft legislation had now been published bringing in the use of Education, Health and Care Plans (which would replace statements of SEN) and changes were expected to be implemented from April 2014. Alongside these changes, the Pathfinder was continuing to focus on promoting Personal Budgets and putting together Wiltshire’s Local Service Officer for parents and carers of children with SEN and disabilities.

Further work was taking place on the Complex Families Project (Wiltshire’s response to the Government’s Troubled Families initiative). This was a payment by results project and the Wiltshire Families First service provided by Action for Children was a key element of this project (accessed through the Gateway Panel). Alongside this work, there had also been a revision of the Multi Agency Threshold document involving payment by results and also a revision of the Multi Agency Threshold document, both of which it would be helpful to discuss at both PHF and WASSH.

A Safeguarding Peer Review would be taking place during the week commencing 28 March which would be following the inspection of Safeguarding in Children’s Services in March 2012. The Peer Review provided a check on progress on actions needed to improve safeguarding practice and improve outcomes for children and young people.

6 **Budget Monitoring**

The Forum received a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, which set out budget monitoring information against the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the financial year 2012-13 as at 31 December 2012.

It was noted that at present there was an underspend of £352,000 against the overall schools budget.

Resolved:

To note the contents of the report.

7 **Reports from Working Groups**

School Funding Working Group

The report of the School Funding Working Group, together with the minutes of the Group's meeting held on 11 January 2013, were received and noted.

SEN Working Group

The report of the SEN Working Group, together with the minutes of the Group's meeting held on 16 January 2013, were received.

Resolved:

- (1) To agree that for pupils from a special school, resource base or ELP, the contribution required from the school towards the medical needs service should be the equivalent of 80% of the per pupil rate allocated to mainstream schools for the age of the pupil.**
- (2) To note the recommendations of the Group in respect of planned places and top up values for high needs provision, which would be considered as part of the overall consideration of the 2013-14 budget.**

Schools Services Working Group

Simon Burke gave a verbal update on the work of this Group. He explained that arrangements were being made for a broadband connection to be provided at a significantly lower cost than that currently being supplied. The Council was moving away from a single contract to individual arrangements being made per site.

8 **Supply Pool School Insurance Scheme**

Consideration was given to a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, about the current position within the Supply Pool School Insurance Scheme and proposals for development of the scheme.

Resolved:

- (1) To agree the following proposals:-
 - (i) To offer 2013/14 Premiums at a 0% increase on 2012/13's prices.
 - (ii) To continue cashback payments.
 - (iii) To start investigating an extension of the scheme to cover maternity in future years.
- (2) To agree that the basis of the cashback calculation for 2012/13 should be enhanced as in 2011/12.

9 Free School Meals Pooling Scheme

The Forum considered a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, providing an update on the balance on the free school meals pool and setting out proposals on how to calculate the premiums for the next year.

Resolved:

- (1) To agree that the calculations for Cashback and year end predictions be prepared for consideration at the next Schools Forum meeting due to be held on Thursday 14 March 2013.
- (2) To base the premium for the 2013/14 scheme on the number of FSM pupils in the October 2012 census multiplied by the unit rate applied in 2012/13.

10 Schools Funding Formula and Schools Budget proposals 2013/14

Consideration was given to a report by Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director, which:-

- (1) outlined the detail of the schools funding settlement for 2013-14 and requesting consideration of the implications for the Wiltshire schools budget,
- (2) set out the estimate of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2013-14 and
- (3) presented budget proposals for 2013-14 for the overall schools budget including cost pressures and savings proposals.

After considering in detail the contents of the report and further advice provided by Liz Williams, Head of Finance,

Resolved:

- (1) To allocate any increase in DSG arising from the January early years census to the EYSFF budget to support increases in population and take up of places.

- (2) To agree an hourly rate for 2 year old places in private, voluntary and independent settings at £5.43 plus an additional 25p per hour as a start up rate per pupil for 2013-14, to be reviewed on an annual basis.**
- (3) To roll forward any underspend against the funding allocation for 2 year old places to support the continuation of the hourly rate in future years, subject to an annual review.**
- (4) To reject the option to reduce the Lump Sum to achieve savings in the schools budget as the level of lump sum had been agreed after consultation with schools, and because schools were not protected against changes to the lump sum through the minimum funding guarantee.**
- (5) To request Liz Williams to prepare a fresh model showing a reduction of between 0.3% and 0.5% per pupil rate to be circulated electronically within a week to members of the Schools Forum for approval and then subsequently submitted to the Education Funding Agency (EFA).**
- (6) To approve the required funding for pupil growth as set out in paragraph 44 of the report.**
- (7) To approve the following top-up rates for high needs provision:-**
 - (i) Top-up rates for special schools based on existing banding models but with a 2% turbulence element added across all top ups.**
 - (ii) Top-up rates for resource bases based on existing banding rates, with an additional A+ band for ASD/SLCN centres but including a 10% increase to complex needs centre rates.**
- (8) To consider at the next meeting proposals for an amount from the DSG reserve to be identified to support the Local Authority in working with more vulnerable schools following the implementation of the new formula.**
- (9) To recommend to Council that the overall schools budget be set at £302.184 million.**

11 Confirmation of dates for future meetings

Resolved:

To confirm the dates of future meetings as follows:-

**14 March 2013
27 June 2013
3 October 2013
12 December 2013**

12 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 1.30 - 4.30 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Roger Bishton, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 713 948, e-mail roger.bishton@Wiltshire.gov.uk

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