

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING HELD ON 6 OCTOBER 2016 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Mr N Baker (Chairman), Mr M Watson (Vice Chairman), Mrs A Bates, Mrs R Collard, Miss Tracy Cornelius, Mr J Hawkins, Mrs S Jiggins, Mr J Proctor, Mr N Roper, Mr S White, Mrs C Williamson and Miss Cathy Shahrokni

Also Present:

37 Apologies and Changes of Membership

Apologies were received from Mrs Chilcott – South Wilts Grammar; and David Whewell – Wiltshire Governors Association, and Amanda Burnside who was substituted by Cathy Sharokni.

38 Minutes of the previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2016 were considered.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 15 June be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

39 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest made.

40 Chairman's Announcements

There were no announcements from the Chair.

41 Children and Young People's Trust Board Update

The Service Director for Commissioning and Performance, Department for Children and Education provided a verbal update regarding the Children and Young People's Trust Board.

The meeting noted the update.

42 **Budget Monitoring**

The meeting received a report, circulated as a supplement, which provided budget monitoring information against the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the financial year 2016/17.

Issues highlighted in the course of the presentation and discussion included: that was a projected £420k underspend against the budget; that the underspend had mainly been in the Early Years budget; and that top up budgets were, broadly, breaking even, but that there was a separate paper on that matter.

Resolved

To note the budget monitoring position at the end of August 2016.

43 **Reports from Working Groups**

Minutes and updates on working groups of the Forum were provided and considered as follows:

43a Report of Meetings of Early Years Reference Group - 16 September 2016

Resolved

To note the minutes of the Early Years Reference Group meeting.

43b Report of School Funding Working Group meetings 5 July and 20 September 2016

The Forum considered the notes and any matters arising.

Resolved

- 1. That Schools Forum notes the minutes of the School Funding Working Group meeting.**
- 2. To agree not to amend the current formula for split site allowances for mainstream schools (paragraph 3)**
- 3. To agree to not allocate a split site allowance from the High Needs Block for Exeter House (paragraph 3)**

- 4. That in considering proposals for the delegation and de-delegation of budgets to maintained schools, Schools Forum note the recommendations of the School Funding Working Group (paragraph 5)**
- 5. That Wiltshire Council incorporate the School Financial Management Statement in the Wiltshire Scheme for Financing Schools, including it as part of the compliance process (paragraph 6). – agreed as part of discussion in item 11.**
- 6. That in considering the proposal to review ELP guidance, Schools Forum note that the Schools Funding Working Group is in support of the proposal (paragraph 7)**

44 Early years Block 2017-18

The meeting considered the report that provided an update regarding the DfE proposals for changes to the funding for the free entitlement to childcare for 3 & 4 year olds and the extension to 30 hours of free childcare for children of eligible working parents; and asked the Schools Forum to consider the implications of the proposed changes for the Wiltshire Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF).

Issues highlighted in the course of the presentation and discussion included: that the consultation was out on the 11th August and was required to be submitted by the end of September, so consultation was undertaken with the Early Years Reference Group not the whole Schools Forum; that the overall view was broadly sympathetic in respect of the proposal for a national funding formula but with some specific concerns, highlighted in the report; the main implications for the single forum; that Wiltshire was ahead with regard to some aspects but other actions will need to be taken; the new supplements that can be included in the Formula; the optional supplements that could be offered and the impact on the baseline budget allocation; that the Officers would review the formula taking into account the changes and bring proposals to the EY reference group in November and then bring proposals to Schools Forum in December; and the concerns, expressed by some, that the change in formula could affect the quality of provision.

Resolved

- 1. To note the report and the response to the DfE consultation.**
- 2. To agree that the Wiltshire EYSFF should be reviewed in the context of the DfE consultation and that proposals will be brought to the December meeting. The outcome of the review will include options for changes to the EYSFF and in relation to the % pass-through of funding.**

45 **High Needs Block**

The meeting considered the following items:

45a High Needs Block Update Report

The meeting considered a report, circulated as a supplement, on savings implemented within the 2016-17 high needs budget; and provided an update on placements in Independent Special Schools as requested at the previous meeting.

Issues highlighted in the course of the presentation and discussion included: The comparison of changes in volume and changes in unit cost; the changes in the projected spend, and that the increase is mostly due to volume but also, in part, due to increase in unit cost; the issue of upskilling and providing facilities within mainstream schools; where the more complex needs are more appropriately addressed; and that the Wiltshire college work had been recognised to meet local need.

Resolved

To note the report.

45b High Needs Post 16 Data Analysis and Funding Report

The meeting considered a report on the analysis of activity and spend on the Post- 16 high needs element of the High Needs Block.

Issues highlighted in the course of the presentation and discussion included: that Wiltshire was a high recipient of young people placed from out of the area; that there had been a significant increase in number of post16 high needs learners, but that the total amount of spend has decreased; it was projected that this amount should decrease; the significant improvement in quality all local post 16 provision; that officers had successfully reduced amount of bureaucracy; that a better choice within the County could be offered to Wiltshire families; and the individual decision that had been made, sometimes based on locality choices.

The Chairman thanked the officers for their thorough report.

Resolved

To note this report.

45c High Needs - Exceptional Numbers of Statements Formula

The meeting considered a report which outlined the current formula for funding schools where there is an exceptional number of statements/EHCP's in a school and the associated implications for the High Needs budget, costs, along with proposals for the future funding of this factor. It was noted that the paper had been published as result of the Schools Funding Working Group.

Chair proposed to defer consideration of this report and refer it back to the Working Group to ask them to consider how the report can best reflect the scope of the issue.

Resolved

To defer consideration of the report to December.

45d Proposal to Review Enhanced Learning Provision Guidance

The meeting considered a report that highlighted the on-going pressure on the High Needs Block (HNB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). A number of actions have been taken to address this pressure, all have focused on achieving savings and efficiency whilst at the same time achieving parity and fairness in the system and the best possible outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/ or disability (SEND).

This paper asked the Schools Forum to support a proposal to review the Enhanced:

- Learning Provision (ELP) Guidance to ensure that it;
- Contributes to the need for financial efficiency
- Is aligned with the reforms set out in the Children and families Act 2014
- Is in accord with the new Wiltshire SEN Banding arrangements

Issues highlighted in the course of the presentation and discussion included: the ongoing pressure, with actions being taken, and how it was hoped to ensure parity and fairness across the system; and how the guidance had changed.

Resolved

To support the proposal that, in order to support the management of the high-needs budget and review some of the discrepancies between secondary and primary funding, the Head of Commissioning and Joint Planning reviews and updates the guidance for ELP to bring it into line with the 2014 Children and Families Act and Wiltshire's new SEND Banding system (the current ELP guidance was last reviewed in 2011).

46 **Schools Block 2017-18**

The meeting considered the report which outlined the key details of the DSG Baseline Funding and the Operational Guidance for Schools Revenue Funding for 2017-18.

Issues highlighted in the course of the presentation and discussion included: budgets for all schools will be submitted in January; that the changes in the baseline funding which would be neutral; that the operational guidance issues this year referred to there being no additional funding; and whether there would be an increase in future funding.

Budget/Service	Proposed Year to Delegate		
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Maternity costs - postponed until Dec 16 Mtg	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Free School Meal Eligibility Service		✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
Licences - SIMS	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Licences - HCSS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓
Subscriptions	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trade Unions facilities costs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓
School contingency budget	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Behaviour Support Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travellers Education Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ethnic Minority Achievement Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>

Resolved

- a) **To approve the criteria for allocating pupil Growth Fund in 2017-18, as per the 2016-17 criteria – agreed**
- b) **To agree that the budget for the Growth Fund is retained at a maximum of £1.00m for 2017-18, as per the 2016-17 baseline figure, confirmed by the EFA – agreed**
- c) **To agree to continue funding schools where there are exceptional premises factors, as in 2016-17 – agreed**
- d) **To consider the proposed services to have the funding delegated or de-delegated and agree the delegation for 2017-18.**
 - i.) **To leave Free Schools Services as de-delegated.**
 - ii.) **Defer Maternity Schools decision for December Forum if figures is there.**
 - iii.) **SIMs delegate,**

47 **Schools Revenue Balances 2015-16**

The meeting considered the report which presented: the position of revenue balances of Wiltshire maintained schools as at 31st March 2016 and identifies those that are in deficit; the analysis of net revenue balances excludes those schools that converted to academy status during the financial year but includes those that converted post 31st March 2016. It was noted that Members had last considered a report on schools' balances and deficits in November 2015, and that in that report the value of surpluses was £10.753 million and 18 schools were in deficit with a total value of £2.27 million.

Issues highlighted in the course of the presentation and discussion included: that historically Wiltshire Council had operated a clawback facility until 13/14; how the DfE had started to challenge schools where they had relatively high surpluses; that a School Finance Statement was made available for all schools to improve their headline budget, making it clear whether they had breached the threshold guidelines for surpluses.

Resolved

That Wiltshire Council incorporate the School Financial Management Statement in the Wiltshire Scheme for Financing Schools, including it as part of the compliance process (*paragraph 6*).

48 **Confirmation of dates for future meetings**

The meeting confirmed the dates of meetings for the remainder of 2016/17, as follows:

- 8 December 2016
- 12 January 2017
- 9 March 2017

49 **Urgent Items**

(Duration of meeting: 1.30 - 3.47 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Yamina Rhouati of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718059, e-mail edmund.blick@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115