

**Joint Meeting of School Funding Working Group and SEN Working Group**  
**19<sup>th</sup> September 2017, 8:30am**  
**Cullum Room, County Hall**

**MINUTES**

Present:

Liz Williams	Head of Finance
Grant Davis	Schools Strategic Financial Support Manager
Susan Tanner	Head of Commissioning & Joint Planning
John Hawkins	Teachers Associations Representative
Lisa Percy	Head Teacher, Hardenhuish School
Neil Baker	Head Teacher, Christchurch School
Catriona Williamson	Head Teacher, Mere Primary School
Tracy Cornelius	Head Teacher, Kington St Michael Primary School
Phil Cook	Head Teacher, Larkrise School

Apologies:

Debbie Bennett	SENCO, Hardenhuish School

		Action
1	<p><b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b></p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting had been considered by Schools Forum.</p> <p>GD updated the group on progress in relation to the procurement of Schools Management Information System for maintained schools. He also noted that a letter would be sent to schools shortly in relation to options for the procurement of support for the SIMS system.</p>	GD
2	<p><b>Schools Revenue Balances 2016-17</b></p> <p>GD presented a report on the revenue balances for maintained schools for the 2016-17 financial year. Overall, revenue balances across all sectors (Primary, Secondary and Special) were reducing and the level of deficits had increased during the 2016-17 financial year.</p> <p>The group reviewed the detailed appendices and noted that Wiltshire was currently not in a position that would trigger a DfE investigation of the levels of surpluses or deficits.</p> <p>JH confirmed that as a Governor he was very supportive of the Annual Financial Statement that had been introduced to require maintained schools to confirm that the year end position and level of surplus/deficit has been signed off by the governing body. Linked to this NB stated that as part of the work of the Education Transformation Board, a similar approach was being incorporated in to other returns that schools would need to make to the LA.</p> <p>No amendments were proposed to the report</p>	
3	<p><b>Schools Financial Compliance Statement</b></p>	

	<p>GD confirmed the current purpose of the compliance statements as as tool to offer governors and members of a school's senior leadership team confidence that the Local Authority's reporting regime is being met by their school, offering a visual and concise record of their compliance for the year. As a result of changes in structures and reallocations of tasks within the Accountancy Team the production of the data for the return was proving more difficult and it was proposed that the compliance statement ceases to be produced and that work is instead focussed towards a more strategic, proactive approach in working with schools to target key areas in an effort to enhance their financial management and achieve efficiency savings.</p> <p>It was agreed that the recommendation from the working groups would be to cease the compliance statement in its current form and to link with the work of the Education Transformation Board in agreeing the format and content of future returns from schools.</p>	GD/NB
4	<p><b>Trade Union Facilities Time Budget 2018-19</b></p> <p>GD reported on expenditure levels against the TU facilities budget in 2016-17 and 2017-18. The budget is currently set at £50,000 and was overspent by £4,789 in 2016-17 and was projected to overspend in 2017-18.</p> <p>It was agreed that the current collective agreement is of benefit to Wiltshire and should be supported. It was agreed that a proposal should be taken to Schools Forum to increase the budget, and therefore the charge to schools, in 2018-19.</p>	GD
5	<p><b>National Funding Formula for Schools</b></p> <p>EW reported that the DfE had announced further details of the proposed national funding formula for schools and high needs on 14<sup>th</sup> September. The Operational Guidance for schools budgets in 2018-19 had also been issued in early August.</p> <p>Now that the announcements had been made then officers were working on understanding the implications of the national formula. The operational guidance also outlined a timetable and process for the agreeing of the 2018-19 schools budget and it would be necessary to ensure that sufficient time is built in to the process to include political ratification of the Wiltshire formula. EW was looking at options which would include consideration at a January 2018 Cabinet Meeting or earlier consideration at December Cabinet with delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for final agreement of the formula. Either way it would be necessary for Schools Forum to make its recommendations on the formula at the meeting on December 7<sup>th</sup> 2017.</p> <p>GD presented a report giving the main headlines arising from the proposed national funding formula. One of the key differences from the initial consultation is that the levels of funding had been increased and therefore all schools would gain a minimum of 0.5% per pupil. EW said that the increased funding had been added to the basic per pupil amount which did address some of the concerns that too much emphasis had been placed on additional educational need factors in the initial</p>	

	<p>proposals.</p> <p>The group expressed disappointment that whilst the responses to the initial consultation had been noted by the DfE they did not seem to have been taken in to account.</p> <p>It was noted that there would still be some flexibility to move money between DSG blocks but that this would need consultation with schools and agreement by Schools Forum.</p> <p>It was agreed that a summary report on the key principles and main headlines from the government announcement would be taken to Schools Forum with a summary of next steps.</p>	
6	<p><b>National Funding Formula for High Needs</b></p> <p>EW presented a report outlining the key features of the proposed national funding formula for high needs. The proposed formula had not changed significantly from the original proposals and 50% of funding would still be distributed using historical spend levels.</p> <p>Wiltshire will be on the funding floor for the new formula and therefore will see the minimum increase of 0.5% per head in 2018-19</p> <p>It was agreed that a report on the key features and implications of the national funding formula for high needs would be taken to Schools Forum</p>	
7	<p><b>Projecting Demand for Special School Places</b></p> <p>ST presented a report updating the working groups on the work being undertaken to understand future demand for special school places and the next steps proposed by the local authority.</p> <p>Following the work carried out with special schools and by an independent consultant detailed demand analysis work has been carried out to estimate the anticipated demand for special school places across Wiltshire by area and by type of need. It is estimated that an additional 220 special school places for 5-16 year olds, and a further 88 post 16 places, would be required by 2026.</p> <p>ST confirmed that the LA would be taking a paper to Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> November seeking permission to go to consultation on proposals to address the issues of demand and securing a better geographical distribution of provision. Special Schools have also been invited to submit proposals which address these issues for inclusion in any consultation document.</p>	
8	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>Next joint meeting of the SEN Working Group and School Funding Working Group to take place on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November, 1:30pm, County Hall, Trowbridge</p>	