

Schools Forum
School Funding and SEN Working Group
MS TEAMS MEETING
23rd May 2022
Minutes

Present: Marie Taylor (Chair), (Finance, local authority ((LA)), Grant Davis (Finance, LA), Cate Mullen (Head of Inclusion & SEND, LA), Helean Hughes (Director LA), Lisa Percy (Chair of SF / Hardenhuish), Sam Churchill (Hilmarton) Graham Nagel-Smith (Morgan’s Vale & Woodfalls), Andy Bridewell (Ludgershall Castle),

Apologies: Simon Thomas (LA), Gary Binstead (LA), John Hawkins (Teacher / Governor rep), Catriona Williamson (Mere) Rebecca Carson (Woodford Valley) Georgina Theobald-Kiely (Downland) Graham Shore (Deputy Chair SF / Holy Trinity)

1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>MT welcomed the group to the virtual meeting.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes</p> <p>These were checked as complete with no outstanding actions.</p>	
3.	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
4.	<p>Schools Funding (DSG) Budget Monitoring (MT)</p> <p>MT shared her report & appendices – highlights, underspends in EY will be adjusted for in June/July by the DfE. Schools block growth fund underspend offsets the HNB pressures. HNB pressures in line with demand for services and previous years demand patterns - recovery work in this area on going – Wiltshire hope to take up the DfE’s Developing Better Value programme offer when it becomes available, this has funding attached.</p>	
5.	<p>Schools Funding – DSG Budget Statement (MT)</p> <p>MT shared her report & appendices – highlighting the original DSG budget position including block transfers and agreed de-delegation together with the new Supplementary Funding which has allowed inflation linked increases to top ups and named pupil allowances (NPAs) for 2022-23.</p> <p>The allocation for HNB is unlikely to fully fund demand and early estimates of HNB are at £11m overspend which will push the DSG deficit reserve to £36m. Recovery actions covered with the HNB verbal update later in the agenda.</p>	
6.	<p>Verbal Update: High Needs Working Group (CM)</p> <p>CM updated the group on the costed provision map which has been developed alongside SENCOS. The map shows the funding and activity/ support and associated costs – the two should align. In order to evidence success, a dip sample will be carried out, including where changes to better reflect the learner’s plan have been recommended.</p> <p>CM went on to talk about new provision being commissioned under the “Places and Spaces” with SEMH provision continuing to be developed. and MT added that for every local school based specialist place, the potentially independent special; school (ISS) places were avoided.</p>	

	HH briefed the group on the DfE developing better value (DBV) offer which the local authority are keen to engage with.	
7.	<p>F40 Update (GD)</p> <p>GD shared his report outlining the extensive and recent work of the f40. The majority of members are shire counties who, like Wiltshire are poorly funded in comparison to others. MT asked GD to remind us what the annual membership fee was (it's £750) and the consensus was this provided good value particularly as the f40 political lobbying focus in recent years had concentrated on SEN and this is a concern for many.</p>	
8.	<p>Consultations (GD)</p> <p>GD shared his report including the results from the NFF consultation (July – Sept 21) and the next stage from the DfE. As Wiltshire aligns closely with the NFF there are no issues however it will be interesting to see how the DfE develop their formulaic approach towards split site allowance, PFI, exceptional circumstances, growth & falling rolls fund. GD went on to explain how the DfE intended SF to have a role moving forward but that this would be more consultation around early years, SEND and de-delegation – uncertainties around continuance of de-delegation – <i>(GD can update at SF as new information has become available and a further 2nd Stage of Consultation will be released before the Summer 2022)</i></p> <p>GD then shared his local formula report to establish a set of questions for the autumn consultations to allow a longer lead in time for schools leaders to respond. As maintained schools convert to academies, the amount of funding available for central services will inevitably reduce and services will need to scale back. The traded model inevitably is more expensive as the financial risk of individual buyback levels is higher.</p> <p>For 23-24 financial year, education functions (School Improvement Brokerage & Monitoring grant) SIMB will be withdrawn by the DfE and SF will need to consider increasing the amount transferred from mainstream schools. In recent years SF have voted to transfer 0.5% to support high needs pressures and the long term recovery plan for change this will be included in the annual consultation. LP suggested a change of narrative around top ups as these had only just been increased and the national top up funding arrangements are largely unknown. GD to amend.</p>	GD
9.	<p>AOB (MT)</p> <p>Schools White Paper “Shaping the Future” – HH and Lesley Lowe have started looking at the SIMB (also known as LAMB) compared with chapter 4 of the white paper alongside primary and secondary / special heads. There is a meeting 24/6 to bring this work together and this will link into the Autumn consultation. The risk to a hybrid model is the unit price for schools which will need to increase to mitigate against uncertainty.</p> <p>SEN Review – SEN Board are preparing on a local area response which will be shared with schools and heads encouraged to respond. The local authority may do a separate response focussed around the financial risk of the DSG deficit reserve to the local authority. 22 questions – a huge range to consider. The closing date has been extended to the 22nd July 2022. HH said we need to feedback to the DfE that the last national change of this scale was moving from statements to EHCPS which was extremely challenging on schools and local authority staff time so the transition process from a local banding to a national banding scheme is likely to require a long lead in time.</p> <p>Household Support Fund – HH thought it would be useful for SF to have some general information around the scheme. MT to draft a report for SF</p>	MT
10	<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next Schools Forum meeting after our June meeting will be Thursday 6th October 2022 @ 1.30pm. This is planned as a virtual teams meeting.</p>	

	The date of the next meeting is scheduled for Monday 19th September at 8.30am . This is planned as a virtual teams meeting.	MT
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