

Schools Forum Schools Funding Working Group

Minutes – 15th November 2011

Present: Liz Williams, Martin Watson, Phil Cooch, John Hawkins, John Kimberley, Judith Finney, Tim Gilson, Catriona Williamson

Apologies: Carol Grant, Neil Baker

		Action
1	<p>Minutes from Previous Meeting</p> <p>The note of the meeting of 30th September had been discussed at Schools Forum</p> <p>The consultation document on SEN Support Service Analysis had not been considered by primary or secondary school clusters. It was noted that this could not now be discussed at Schools Forum on 1st December and would be deferred until a future meeting. The group discussed what information would be required to be able to consider whether funding for any particular service could be delegated to schools.</p> <p>Carbon Reduction Commitment – consultation now issued to schools. CW queried what would happen if there are multiple users of the buildings on a school site, how would the charge be split. EW to raise with the Climate Change team and ask that they respond directly to CW</p>	EW
2	<p>Schools Financial Regulations Consultation</p> <p>PC presented a paper outlining the main issues that had arisen within the DfE consultation on the 2012 School Funding Regulations. There were 3 main issues:</p> <p>Minimum funding Guarantee (MFG) Disapplications – it was agreed that this was a positive change and would reduce the delays experienced in the 2011/12 budget setting process</p> <p>Pupil Premium for Excluded Pupils – further clarification had been sought from the DfE but the group supported the principle of the premium following the pupil.</p> <p>Remissions of Boarding Fees – it was noted that this was a technical change and would have no impact on Wiltshire.</p>	
3	<p>Controls on Surplus Balances Scheme</p> <p>PC presented a paper asking the SFWG to consider whether the Controls on Surplus Balances Scheme should continue in 2012/13. Schools Forum had previously agreed to continue the scheme in 2011/12 and review when more was known about the national picture. PC reported that the DfE had confirmed that no further guidance will be issued on schemes or levels of balances in schools. The number of schools with excessive revenue balances in Wiltshire has decreased whilst the scheme has been in operation as has the value of those balances.</p>	

	<p>MW confirmed that there are also controls in place for Academies. Academies are only allowed to carry forward a balance of 2%.</p> <p>Following discussion it was agreed to recommend to Schools Forum that the scheme be continued for a further year in 2012/13.</p>	
3	<p>DSG Estimate 2012/13</p> <p>EW presented the initial estimate of DSG for 2012/13 based on the October pupil count in schools but still using the January 2011 pupil numbers for Early Years. The calculation indicated a reduction of 122 pupils compared with the 2011/12 census leading to a reduction in DSG of £0.565 million.</p> <p>As discussed at previous meetings savings of up to £1.9 million will also need to be identified to account for non recurring funding in the 2011/12 budget.</p> <p>It was noted that the calculation was still work in progress and would be updated for presentation to Schools Forum on 1st December.</p>	EW/PC
4	<p>Section 251 Benchmarking</p> <p>PCEW presented a briefing paper detailing the “headlines” from the DfE Section 251 Benchmarking Data in relation to the schools budget. A further paper, including data on other Education and Children’s Services spend would be prepared for Schools Forum.</p> <p>The data confirmed Wiltshire receives the lowest DSG unit of funding per pupil of its statistical neighbour group but has the 5th highest delegated budget per pupil.</p> <p>Increases in Primary Schools in Wiltshire were the highest per pupil from 2010/11 to 2011/12 and increases in secondary and special schools were the second highest in the group of statistical neighbours.</p> <p>5% of primary schools in Wiltshire receive the MFG as opposed to the local formula compared with up to 60% in similar authorities. 5% of secondary schools in Wiltshire receive the MFG compared with up to 31% in similar authorities. No special schools in Wiltshire receive the MFG.</p>	
5	<p>Date & Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>Wednesday 11th January 2012, 8.30am, County Hall</p>	
6	<p>Controls on Surplus Balances Scheme 2010/11</p> <p>On the rise of the meeting a panel meeting was held to consider the appeals from those schools which had exceeded the permissible level of revenue balance.</p> <p>The Panel decided that the two schools which failed to submit an appeal should have their excess balances removed.</p>	

With regards to the appeal received from the third school, it was agreed that the school should be asked to resubmit their 2010-11 Intended Use of Revenue Balances form showing the painting project as a “planned investment” and therefore no claw back should apply.	
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