

Schools Funding Working Group

20th October 2014, 8:30am, Council Chamber, County Hall

Minutes

Present: Liz Williams, Grant Davis, Susan Tanner, Neil Baker, Catriona Williamson, Martin Watson, Andy Bridewell, John Hawkins

Apologies: Steve Clark, Phil Cook

1	Minutes from Previous Meeting <i>Universal Infant Free School Meal Entitlement</i> – GD updated the group on the discussions at PHF in relation to capital funding and queries schools had raised in relation to ensuring that they received funding for the correct number of days.	
2	Split Site Allowance – High Needs Provision GD presented a paper outlining the development of split site provision at St Nicholas Special School and also at Greentrees Primary School where a new Resource Base would open in September 2015. Because high needs provision is not subject to the local funding formula it was not possible to support a split site through the formula in the same way as for a mainstream school however Schools Forum would have the discretion to agree that the additional costs associated with a split site school could be recognised and funded from the High Needs block. The Education Funding Agency (EFA) had advised that any allowance for a split site would need to be added to the top up for pupils attending the school and therefore a school specific top up rate would be required in such circumstances. It was agreed to support the principle of a split site allowance for High Needs provision however it was felt that the following criteria needed to be applied before funding was agreed: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the split site provision is developed as part of an agreed strategy between the LA and the school and in the context of the SEN Places strategy2. That the school would need to provide evidence of the expected additional costs of managing the additional site to enable the agreement of funding to be considered in the overall context of the high needs block. Action – GD to work with St Nicholas School to estimate the additional costs associated with the new building.	GD
3	Childcare Vouchers for Staff on Maternity Leave GD introduced a paper from the HR/Payroll Team outlining a change to the system for paying for childcare vouchers for school staff on maternity leave. At present these costs have been borne by the LA as there has been no system in place for recharging schools. It was agreed that for maintained schools these costs should be charged to the central Maternity budget as long as that continued to be de-delegated and that for academies the costs should be charged directly to the school as the maternity budget has been delegated to academies.	

	Action – GD to confirm arrangements and coding with the HR team	GD
4	<p>MFG Disapplications 2015-16</p> <p>GD updated the group on the application submitted for MFG Disapplications in 2015-16. As there were no formulaic changes proposed for 2015-16 no new exclusions had been required and the EFA had agreed those exceptions requested where appropriate.</p>	
5	<p>Schools Budget 2015-16 – Early Years Block</p> <p>EW outlined the main changes to the funding for the Early Years Block in 2015-16.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Participation funding for 2 year olds</i> – as expected the funding for the free entitlement for 2 year olds will move to a census based approach from April 2015. This would impact on the affordability of the hourly rate for 2 year olds and Schools Forum would need to agree a new hourly rate for 2 year old provision for 2015-16. 2. <i>Early Years Pupil Premium Grant</i> – an EYPPG will be introduced from April 2015 and will be paid as an addition to the hourly rate for eligible pupils. The rate would be £0.53 per hour, equating to £300 per year for an eligible pupil taking up the full free entitlement. <p>EW also informed the group that a consultation had been issued to all Early Years settings to seek views on a single hourly rate across all providers. This would need to be managed within existing resources and the implementation of a single rate would result in increases and decreases across different types of provider/setting.</p>	
6	<p>Schools Budget 2015-16 – Schools Block</p> <p>EW presented a paper updating the working group on issues affecting the schools block for 2015-16.</p> <p>No changes are proposed to the Wiltshire formula for 2015-16.</p> <p>A consultation was in process with maintained schools to consider the delegation/de-delegation of central schools block services and the outcome of the consultation would be brought to Schools Forum in November.</p> <p>In July 2014 the DfE had announced schools block funding values for 2015-16. The announcement confirms that Wiltshire will receive an increase in funding as a result of the fairer funding proposals. The schools block unit of funding for Wiltshire, after deductions for CRC savings, would be £4,302.41, an increase of 2.12% on the current year.</p>	
7	<p>Schools Budget 2015-16 – High Needs Block</p> <p>EW presented an analysis of expenditure and activity against top up budgets for the current financial year. Top up budgets are projected to overspend by £3.1m with the key pressures being Named Pupil Allowances (NPA) and top ups for Post-16 provision. The analysis indicated that in both areas activity was higher than budgeted for and it was noted that over 100 more students were now being supported at Wiltshire College than initially funded by the EFA.</p> <p>An Exceptional Place Numbers request had been submitted to the EFA to increase the places funded in 2015-16 however even if this was accepted there would be considerable pressures on the high needs budget for 2015-16</p>	

	<p>and options for savings would still need to be considered.</p> <p>It was agreed that options should include a review of top up rates for post-16 provision and a move to a banded funding system for NPAs, which would also support the move away from the use of hours in allocating funding.</p>	
5	<p>AOB</p> <p>FSM Pool – it was noted that the FSM Pool had now closed but final claims were still being received so the final balance on the pool could not yet be confirmed.</p>	
6	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Tuesday 6th January 2015, 8:30am, Cullum Room, County Hall</p>	