

SCHOOLS FORUM
MEETING HELD ON 11th DECEMBER 2012

PRESENT:

Primary School Headteachers: Mrs J Conway and Mrs S Jones

Primary School Governors: Mr H Smith and Mr C Wilson

Secondary School Headteachers: Mrs S Cain and Mr J White

Secondary School Governor: Mr L Wadey

L A Representative: Councillor Mrs C Clark

14 – 19 Representative: Mr M Clinton

Trade Union Representative: Mr D Campbell

Observer: Councillor Mrs A McCoy – Cabinet Member Children and Young People

Officials Mrs L Brown – Head Education, Early Years and Complex Needs
 Mr D New – Senior Finance Manager
 Mrs N Fletcher – Secretary to the Forum

1. **EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

Members noted the Evacuations procedures to be used to exit the building in an emergency.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr I Bartle, Mrs A Cains, Mrs M Carlton, Mr A Khushi, Mr G Leck, Dr P Mackie, Ms J Wilson and Ms J Humphreys.

In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, Mrs J Conway chaired the meeting having been elected to do so by members present

3. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Members were invited to declare any personal or business interests they may have in any item included on the agenda.

No interests were declared.

4. **MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING – 23rd October 2012**

RESOLVED

- a) that the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd October 2012, be amended to read;

5.1 **Updated Draft Operating Procedures**

Paragraph 6 -*As the Chair of the Forum was not a school representative he had no voting rights **for funding formula votes and de-delegation votes limited***

to either primary or secondary representatives. Therefore it was

SCHOOL FUNDING REFORM CONSULTATION RESPONSES / FUNDING FORMULAE PROFORMA RETURN TO THE DfE BY 31st OCTOBER 2012 / IN PRINCIPLE DECISIONS

Include under Q 2 paragraph 1 - **Following discussion around de-delegation under each heading, sector members, RESOLVED**

- b) that the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd October 2012, as now amended, be approved as a true record.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

6. HIGH NEEDS 2013/14

A report had been circulated updating members on the progress to date on the High Needs Funding Reform; the report included an explanation of the current arrangements together with the proposed new formula funding arrangements. D New emphasized that this was very much a first draft on which comments were sought, highlighting;

Post 16 – still waiting for information from the DfE as to how Post 16 funding would operate, the assumption at this stage being that it would be cost neutral;

Top Up Funding – will move in real time, following the pupils on the roll of the school, although planned place funding stayed in place;

He drew members' attention to the banding criteria as outlined in Appendix 1, and Appendix 2 outlined the level of estimated support received within each band.

He continued by giving a précis of the matters for consideration under the following headings;

- Residential provision;
- Special School Catering – new delegation;
- Special Units / Support Bases currently funded at less than £10k per place;
- Groups;
- New designation as a Support Base;
- Outreach;
- SEN Equipment;
- Budgetary Pressures / In Year Growth;
- Transitional Protection Arrangements;
- Alternative Provision;

D New concluded his précis by outlining the next steps, which were that the circulated paper, with any amendments agreed by the Forum would be distributed to all schools and academies in the Borough for information, comments were to be submitted by early January 2013. Their comments would then feed into the next meeting of the Forum. In January 2013 he would also be attending meetings of both the Primary and Secondary Headteachers Groups to update them on the current situation regarding the new funding formula.

Following discussion of the report , members,

RESOLVED that

- a) Residential Provision – to have a residential band to reflect overnight stays;
- b) Groups - to support options c – Undertake a re-banding exercise with all schools that had group funding and band each pupil;
- c) Special Units / Support bases – to be funded at £10,000 per place
- d) Note the new designation of a support base for children with autism at Our lady and St Bede Secondary School
- e) Support the arrangements for outreach services, SEN equipment and Alternative Provision

7. TARGETED MENTAL HEALTH in SCHOOLS (TaMHS)

Members had received a report updating them on the possible options in relation to the TaMHS borough wide project currently funded until 31st March 2013.

L Brown gave a resume of the report highlighting how the current project cost £500,000 per annum, with the cost being split 50/50 between the LA and schools. The schools element being funded from one off sources and thus was non recurrent. She advised members that a decision was required as how to proceed with the project, she highlighted the options available;

- a. to cease the contract at 31st March 2013;
- b. to procure for a further year (with review of contractual clauses);
- c. to go out to procure a joint service from 1st April 2013;
- d. to extend the contract until the end of July 2013 at a cost of approximately £167k (with review of contractual clauses).

D New advised members that in option d. the £167k would again be split 50/50 between the LA and schools, with the DSG being top sliced by £84k to fund the schools share.

Following discussion, members,

RESOLVED that the contract be extended until the end of the academic year at a cost of approximately £167k (with review of contractual clauses).

8. GROWTH FUND

The circulated report informed members that the purpose of a centrally retained Growth Fund was to support predicted in year increases in school places. D New advised members that based on early estimates it was recommended that £150k be centrally retained for this purpose in the primary phase, with the position being reviewed for 2014/15. Given the current capacity in the secondary sector the proposal was that no funding be centrally retained for 2013/14, but the position would be reviewed for 2014/15.

Members were asked to consider the proposed criteria for accessing the Growth Fund. Following consideration, members,

RESOLVED

- a) that paragraph 9 be amended to read;

“Where the predicted numbers for a Primary School (excluding nursery classes) for the following September show an increase of more than 15 pupils in one key stage or 10% of their total roll they may be able to access additional funding”.

- b) to approve the criteria for accessing the Growth Fund as amended.

Mr M Clinton and Councillor C Clark left the meeting.

9. 52 WEEK RESIDENTIAL PROVISION PROCUREMENT

Members received a verbal report from L Brown on the work being undertaken by the LA to procure a partner to provide 52 week residential provision. Discussions were taking place with “Spark of Genius” the preferred provider. When a model had been agreed further information would be presented to the Forum.

10. SCHOOLS FUNDING REFORMS 2013/14 – UPDATE

A report had been circulated to update members on the School Funding Reform information received since the last meeting.

D New reported that the DfE had issued notional spending blocks based on 2012/13 DSG, but did not include;

- Adjustment for non-maintained special schools as they are to be included in the place plus system in 2013/13;
- Funding for disadvantaged two year olds;
- Funding for Post 16 high needs places in colleges and other institutions other than schools.

With respect to the Post 16 high needs, this was a particular concern to the LA as the EFA acknowledged that there was a significant national increase in the number of high needs students, but no additional funding to meet their needs, therefore this could be a pressure on the 2013/14 budget.

The DfE had also decided that from 2013/14 Hospital Schools would be directly funded and in order to fund them local authority’s DSG had been top sliced pro-rata to overall DSG allocations, for Stockton this equated to a reduction in funding of £233k, when in 2012/13 the LA had only spent £57k for hospital tuition. The latest notification of the LA’s provisional gross DSG baseline for 2012/13 (prior to academy recoupment) was £139.6m, split;

- High Needs Block - £19.0m
- Early Years Block - £7.2m
- Schools Block - £113.4m

Reference was made to the appendix showing school level information, in the same format as that provided in Autumns Schools Funding Reform Consultation that was presented to DfE at the end of October. The DfE have set a deadline of 18th January 2013 for the final completed return

D New continued by giving a précis of the information received regarding the funding for disadvantage two year olds. From September 2013 early education would be a statutory entitlement for eligible two year olds (Looked After Children and Children who meet the Free School Meals Criteria) and in Stockton this equated to approx 571 children (ie 20%) in 2013/14. In September 2014 the scheme was to be extended nationally to 40% of two year olds using criteria yet to be determined by DfE.

RESOLVED to

- a) note the report;
- b) That further consideration of the final school proforma due for return to DfE be deferred to the Corporate Director of CESC, Lynda Brown & David New.

11. SCHOOL BUDGET MONITORING 2012/13

The circulated report provided members of the Forum with the projected outturn position on the Schools budget based on information at the end of October 2012. Overall there was a £234K overspend forecast, with the significant variances between planned and projected spend outlined in paragraph 2 of the report. Members

RESOLVED to note the current financial position on the Schools Budget.

12. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

12.1 Schools Forum Operating Procedures

L Brown advised members that Internal Audit were undertaking a review of the Forum's operating Procedures and when the report is received she would report back.

13. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting would be held at 2:00pm on Tuesday 5th February 2013 at the Education Centre, Junction Road, Norton.