

**SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**MEETING HELD ON 15th OCTOBER 2013**

**PRESENT:**

Primary School Headteachers: Mrs M Carlton, Mrs J Conway and Mrs J Rea

Primary School Governors: Mrs A Cains, Mr H Smith and Mr C Wilson

Secondary School Governor: Mr L Wadey

Diocesan Representative: Dr P Mackie - Chair

L A Representative: Councillor Mrs C Clark

Officials: Ms J Humphreys – Corporate Director – Children, Education and Social Care

Mrs L Brown – Head Education, Early Years and Complex Needs

Mr G Cummings - Head of Operational Finance

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 G Leck, Mr C Walker, Mr I Bartle, Mrs E Horne, Mrs M O'Connor and Councillor Mrs A McCoy.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

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 – 9<sup>th</sup> JULY 2013**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2013, be approved as a true record.

5. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

5.1 **Schools Budget Outturn 2012/13**

Members were informed that a budget had been set for the PRU and that maintained schools were covered under their current insurance policy for flooding.

6. LOCAL AUTHORITY MEDUIM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE – G CUMMINGS

This item was deferred until later in the meeting.

*Members AGREED to take Agenda Item 10 at this point in the meeting*

10. SCHOOLS BUDGET MONITORING 2013/14

The circulated report provided members with the current projected outturn position on the schools budget based on information to the end of August 2013. D New highlighted that there was a £256K underspend forecast and the reasons for the variance were;

- SEN Support Services - £67K underspend as a result of staffing vacancies not being filled;
- Contribution to Combined Budgets - £50K underspend as the contribution to Mental Health and Parenting projects was not required as they were being covered by existing staff;
- Dedicated Schools Grant b/fwd - £151K underspend as the balance to fund the 2012/13 overspend was lower than anticipated.

He advised members that the situation may change later in the year as this was the first year of operation for the new SEN High Needs funding arrangements and although a £500K contingency had been set aside, application were still being submitted to the High Needs Panel. Also the situation regarding Post 16 High Needs Funding (which was the responsibility of the LA) remained unclear as the top ups were still being analysed and finalised. Members had previously been informed that additional funding had been received from the DfE, in response to a Business Case put forward by the LA.

*Mrs J Conway entered the meeting*

P Mackie - Chair sought members' views whether to maintain a contingency each year for SEN pupils turning up during the year, with the contingency being based on historical data. Following discussion, members considered that it would be beneficial to maintain a contingency.

In response to a member's question D New advised that the £67K underspend for SEN Support Staff was due to specialist teachers leaving the department.

RESOLVED

- a) to note the current financial position on the Schools Budget, particularly the comments around the High Needs Funding;
- b) that members receive a further update at the next meeting.

D New

7. TAMHS UPDATE – L BROWN

This item was deferred until later in the meeting.

8. LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD – J HUMPHREYS

J Humphreys informed members that the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) had written to all partners to inform them that the current budget would not be sufficient to maintain the staff to support the LSCB. Partners were being asked to increase their contribution in order to maintain the function of the LSCB, therefore she was seeking members support to increase in contribution on behalf of school, she advised members that the LA contribution was completely separate.

P Mackie questioned whether Health contributed to the cost of the LSCB? J Humphreys advised that Health was a large contributor, although the LA remained the largest contributor. She explained the history to the funding of the LSCB, highlighting that contribution would be annually and should there be an underspend; this would be carried forward into the next financial year. She outlined that should one be required Serious Case Reviews cost about £30K.

Following discussion, members,

RESOLVED to approve a contribution of £25K for the 2014/15 financial year from the existing contributions from Combined Budgets.

9. DfE STATISTICAL RELEASE 2013/14 PLANNED EXPENDITURE

Members had received the DfE document with their meeting papers. The Statistical Release provided a summary of the planned expenditure by Local Authorities (LAs) on a range of services relating to schools, education, children and young people's services for the financial year April 2013 – March 2014.

D New advised members that the report enabled comparisons to be made at national, regional and local levels, although he did advise some caution in their use. For example, in table 7 the high needs figures did not include top up funding.

*L Brown entered the meeting*

J Humphreys highlighted that Stockton delegated high amounts per child and was not a high central spender.

RESOLVED to note the DfE Statistical Release 2013/14 Planned Expenditure.

*Members AGREED to take Agenda Item 7 at this point in the meeting.*

7. TaMHS UPDATE – L BROWN

L Brown informed members of the work being undertaken by the Health and Wellbeing Commissioning Group with regard to the formulation of a tender / contract for the provision of TaMHS. The proposal was that the contract (based on last year's funding) would be more than just a referral service; it would include capacity for training of schools staff and would initially be for 1 year, with the opportunity to extend the contract to 5 years.

In response to a member's question, L Brown confirmed that Headteacher representatives were leading on the formulation of the specification which would include a quality assurance process. She reported that schools had been very positive about the TaMHS support they received.

J Conway highlighted that within the contract there needed to be flexibility, as "one size" did not fit all schools.

During discussion members agreed that schools would receive better value for money by working together, but suggested that within the specification additional services should be offered at set costs.

RESOLVED to endorse the progress on the procurement of TaMHS services.

11. SCHOOLS BLOCK FUNDING FORMULA 2014/15

Members had been circulated with a report which outlined the funding changes introduced in 2013/14 based on the DfE's School Funding Reforms and the national changes which have been put forward for 2014/15 financial year.

D New informed members that the LA was required to submit its provisional school funding formula for 2014/15 to the DfE by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013 and a final return was required by 21<sup>st</sup> January 2014. In June 2013 the DfE published the 2014/15 arrangements, which would ensure that a vast majority of funding was distributed on a pupil led basis, with only 1 addition to the 12 available factors, of which Stockton used 9 last year. He drew governors attention to some changes to the optional formula factors introduced by the DfE for 2014/15;

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>DfE Change</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Sparsity Factor	New Factor	New factor introduced	The lump sum was introduced to protect small schools so no need to include a sparsity factor within Stockton.
Low Cost High Incidence SEN	Factor Modified	Modified to expand the indicator for secondary sector to encompass pupils that have not achieved level 4 in English <u>or</u> Maths (was both). Note EYFSP to be retained for primary schools.	Propose to maintain total funding levels as currently exist between primary and secondary sectors otherwise this will transfer more funding to secondary sector.
Lump Sum	Factor Modified	Modified to be capped at £175k (was £200k) with ability to differential amounts to primary and secondary sector (for 13/14 had to be the same for both sectors).	To keep changes minimal it is proposed that the allocation would remain at £169k for each school, with no differentiation for primary and secondary schools
Looked after children	Factor Modified	Modified to be a single measure ie LAC from first day	This is the LAC factor that is currently used
Pupil Mobility	Factor Modified	Modified to enable LA to target funding to schools that have 10% of more mobile pupils.	This factor was considered for 2013/14 but did not support stability of funding to 2012/13 levels
MFG		As already notified, this will continue to operate like 13/14, with reductions per pupil limited to minus 1.5%.  In addition capping of gains applies for 14/15.	Noted

*Mr G Cummings entered the meeting.*

J Conway questioned whether pupils with a residency order or special guardianship would be included as LAC. D New advised that there was not the facility in the DfE Formula to include these.

Members were informed that to assist transition the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)

calculation would remain at minus 1.5% per pupil in 2014/15, also following consultation by the DfE (which ended on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2013) there could be a limit on the value gains, capped to ensure that such gains do not exceed the amount required to fund the MFG.

D New informed members that the LA was proposing minimal changes (ie. Only those required by changes to DfE regulations) to the 2014/15 formula and therefore, the proposed changes were;

- a) that prior attainment had to be allocated to the secondary sector on the basis of pupils not achieving level 4 in English or Maths (our current factor allocates on the basis of pupils not achieving level 4 in English and Maths). For the purposes of the return to DfE it was assumed that the same sum of funding would be distributed in 2014/15 as in 2013/14 using the modified measure.
- b) that the cap on gains cannot exceed the value of the minimum guarantee. This in effect means that £338k has to be clawed back and this has been achieved by scaling back proportionately formula factor totals.

Following discussion, members,

RESOLVED to support the proposed formula for 2014/15 as set out in appendices 1 and 2 of the report.

*Members AGREED to take Agenda Item 6 at this point in the meeting.*

#### 6. LOCAL AUTHORITY MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE – G CUMMINGS

G Cummings informed members that the news was not good, although SBC had set a balanced budget for 2013/14, based on current information by 2016/17 the anticipated budget gap would be £17.8m. In order to address the deficit reviews were being undertaken across all SBC services and to date Cabinet had identified £9.4m savings. In addition to these savings “Big Ticket” reviews were being undertaken across the three highest spending departments Waste & Energy, Adult Social Care and Children’s Social Care to identify savings and consider how to stop growth within these areas. He reported that the proposals in the Government Technical Consultation Paper at the end of July would lead to SBC being £8/9m worse off than the position presented in June to Cabinet. Since 2010 SBC had experienced reductions in Government Funding of approximately 40/50%. Members were advised that schools budgets had not been affected to any where near the same extent.

L Brown informed governors that work was being undertaken to fully cost services which could be offered to schools.

#### 12. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business raised.

#### 13. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting would be held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013 at the Media Centre, Grangefield School.