

SCHOOLS FORUM
MEETING HELD ON 21st JANUARY 2014

PRESENT:

Primary School Headteachers: Mrs M Carlton, Mrs J Conway, Mr T Gittins, Mr G Leck and Mrs J Rea

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

Secondary School Headteachers: Mr C Walker and Mrs J Wilson

Secondary School Governor: Mr L Wadey

Special School Headteacher: Mrs E Horne

Academy Representatives: Mrs M O'Connor and Mr B Jordon

Diocesan Representative: Dr P Mackie - Chair

L A Representative: Councillor Mrs C Clark

Trade Union Representative: Mr D Campbell

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

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

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

Mr D New – Senior Finance Manager

Mrs N Fletcher – Secretary to the Forum

Also in Attendance: Mr G Waller - Accountant

1. **EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

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

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies submitted, Members were informed that E Horne would be late in arriving at the meeting.

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.

D Campbell as the Trade Union Representative declared an interest in agenda item 8 Delegation / De-delegation.

4. MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING – 10th DECEMBER 2013

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 2013, be approved as a true record.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

5.1 Schools Forum Induction Pack

C Wilson reported that he had reviewed the proposed Induction Pack and had suggested a couple of minor amendments which he would pass to D New.

5.2 Local Children Safeguarding Board (LCSB)

J Humphreys informed members that at the recent Board meeting discussions had taken place around the proposal that CAF Teams be set up around the school cluster model. She and the Director for Public Health had been tasked with the job of looking at how the proposal could be funded.

5.3 Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TAMHS)

L Brown advised members that work had progressed to the tender stage for the new contract and J White would be managing the process through to conclusion.

E Horne entered the meeting.

6. COUNCILS MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE

D New gave a verbal update on the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, he reported that between 2010/11 and 2015/16 the Council's budget would reduce by £54m which in real terms was a reduction of 56% and as a result the Council was under great financial pressure. The Big Ticket Review of Childrens' Services highlighted overspends of £1.2m on out of borough high needs educational placements and a further £1m overspend on children in independent foster care. In order to help manage these pressures downwards the LA was working with Spark of Genius to develop the King Edwin site to provide educational places for some of these most vulnerable pupils. He advised members that a further MTFP report was to be presented to Cabinet in February.

J Humphreys informed members that Paul Moffat is to undertake a review of fostering and adoption services across the Borough to ascertain how cost maybe reduced.

J Conway questioned how many pupils were currently based at Spark of Genius? L Brown reported that Spark of Genius was open but not fully operational as there had been a number of issues around the LA purchasing properties as Family Homes. To date one property had been purchased but was not yet OfSTED registered.

7. SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS

The circulated report was to update members on the responses received following the consultation on the proposed changes, (including those directed by the DfE) to Stockton's Scheme for Financing Schools. D New reported that a majority of the changes were required by legislation and that one response had been received from the consultation, which was a specific concern that related to decisions around redundancy costs.

L Wadey informed members that he had put in the response as Chair of Governors of Northfield School. He had questioned whether Governing Bodies would be informed when the LA was holding back money for redundancy costs, as he understood that the default position was that LA was responsible for redundancy costs and what was the position of Schools Forum in this.

L Brown suggested that Headteachers would be informed of any financial implications for their schools with regard to redundancy costs with expectation that this would be conveyed onto Governing Bodies.

J Conway reported that recently when monitoring her budget, she had discovered that the school had been charged for redundancy costs relating to a member of staff who had left over a year ago. She had received no notification of this reduction from her budget.

D New advised that the decision is a LA decision following the criteria set out in the scheme. Although the default position is that the LA pays redundancy costs and schools pay any pension related costs there are exceptions to these arrangements as the DfE examples included in the scheme indicated. Schools would have recourse to the complaints procedure under the Prospectus of Services in the event of any appeal / dispute.

P Mackie suggested that Headteachers and governors should be consulted and that all cases should be considered fairly in the best interest of pupils.

RESOLVED to approve the changes to the scheme as consulted upon. .

8. DELEGATION / DE-DELEGATION

Members had been circulated with a report which outlined the proposed options of de-delegation for 2014/15. D New advised members that under the Government's funding reforms there was an assumption of delegation for a number of budget areas which were currently held centrally for maintained schools and delegated for academies. Maintained schools' primary and secondary representatives on the Schools Forum could vote, by sector, to de-delegate the areas proposed by the LA. The outcome of the vote was binding for all maintained schools in that sector. If members voted against the proposals for de-delegation then a range of costs and associated responsibilities currently met centrally by the LA would transfer to maintained schools, for them to manage themselves. The budget for these costs would also transfer to schools on a formula basis which was consulted and agreed on last year. The budgets proposed for continued de-delegation were;

Service	Primary £	Primary Basis	Secondary £	Secondary Basis	Total £
Contingencies	£30,032	£2.11 per child (NoR)	£13,776	£2.55 per child (NoR)	£43,808
Contingencies – Support to Schools Partnership Fund	£76,502	£5.37 per child (NoR)	£35,101	£6.50 per child (NoR)	£111,603
Staff costs supply cover – TU facilities time	£22,472	£1.58 per child (NoR)	£10,310	£1.91 per child (NoR)	£32,782

Behaviour and Support Services	£117,669	LowAtt_%_P RI_78	£91,807	LowAtt_%_ SEC	£209,476
Free School Meals eligibility	£35,168	£2.47 per child (NoR)	£16,134	£2.99 per child (NoR)	£51,302
Support for underperforming ethnic minority groups and bilingual learners	£47,125	EAL_3_PRI	£39,564	EAL_3_SEC	£86,689
Totals	£328,968		£206,691		£535,660

D New highlighted that the total cost of £535,660 was less than in 2013/14 as a result of the increased number of academies in Stockton.

Contingencies

C Wilson questioned whether under contingencies could some of the £111,603 related to support to the Schools Partnership Fund be used by the Transforming Governance Group to improve governance in schools.

L Brown suggested that procedures would have to be established for the School to School Group and the Transforming Governance Group to work together.

L Wadey questioned given that the allocation for contingencies was so small why continue to hold the money centrally.

D New advised that the allocation had provided protection for schools in the event of formula errors in previous years, especially small primary schools.

RESOLVED

- a) to delegate the £30,032 primary allocation for contingencies;
- b) to delegate the £13,776 secondary allocation for contingencies;

Contingencies – Support to Schools Partnership Fund

L Brown informed members that the Support to Schools Partnership Fund was used to provide School to School support under the auspices of Campus Stockton to vulnerable schools.

J Conway questioned how the money was used; from this allocation would schools be paid to release their teachers to provide support to vulnerable pupils.

L Brown confirmed that the money maybe used to release teachers, if that was the support required, she highlighted that this fund was not used for the salaries of EIS staff.

C Walker considered that it would not be beneficial to stop the financial support during the early development of the Campus Stockton School to School support.

E Horne suggested that consideration would need to be given as to how academies could contribute to this fund as they were supportive of the School to School support.

J Conway suggested that if the money was not de-delegated, schools could choose what support they required.

T Gittins suggested that a breakdown of how the money had been spent in previous years would be useful.

RESOLVED

- c) that the decision on the de-delegation of Contingencies – Support to Schools Partnership Fund be deferred to the next meeting;
- d) that school representatives undertake further consultation with their colleagues.

Staff Costs Supply Cover – Trade Union Facilities Time

D Campbell informed members that the joint Trade Unions were asking that the Forum to de-delegate funding as they considered this to be a more economical method of providing Trade Union Support to staff within Stockton.

RESOLVED

- e) to de-delegate the £22,472 primary allocation for Staff Costs Supply Cover – Trade Union Facilities Time;
- f) to de-delegate the £10,310 secondary allocation for Staff Costs Supply Cover – Trade Union Facilities Time.

Behaviour and Support Services

L Brown informed members that this allocation funded the provision of advice, support and training to schools, on behaviour, social and emotional aspects of learning and included staff salaries.

RESOLVED

- g) that the decision on the de-delegation of Behaviour and Support Services be deferred to the next meeting;
- h) that school representatives undertake further consultation with their colleagues.

Free School Meals Eligibility

D New advised members that budget related to the administration of the Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility scheme currently undertaken by Customer Services.

J Wilson questioned how academies checked FSM eligibility.

L Brown reported that academies bought into the service via a business model.

RESOLVED

- i) to de-delegate the £35,168 primary allocation for Free School Meals Eligibility;
- j) to de-delegate the £16,134 secondary allocation for Free School Meals

Eligibility.

Support to Underperforming Ethnic Minority Groups and Bilingual Learners

L Brown advised governors that budget funded support to schools in meeting the needs of vulnerable learners including Asylum seekers, those from a Gypsy Roma Traveller background, those with English as an Additional Language and those from heritage groups vulnerable to underachievement.

RESOLVED

k) that the decision on the de-delegation of Support to Underperforming Ethnic Minority Groups and Bilingual Learners be deferred to the next meeting;

l) that school representatives undertake further consultation with their colleagues.

Licenses/Subscriptions

D New informed members that the DfE had not as yet issued their costs for the National Copyright Licenses.

RESOLVED

m) to de-delegate the primary allocation for Licenses and Subscriptions;

n) to de-delegate the secondary allocation for Licenses and Subscriptions.

Mrs J Wilson left the meeting.

9. SCHOOLS BUDGET 2014/15

Members had received a report which provided information and recommendations on the local distribution of the Dedicated Schools Grant for the next financial year. Included in the report was an update on the education funding settlement received from the Department of Education on 18th December 2013, the proposed Schools Budget for 2014/15 and confirmed the final Stockton funding formula arrangements for 2014/15. Within the overall budget setting process, there were a number of decisions that the Forum had responsibility for, and these were presented for a decision.

The provisional 2014/15 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocation for Stockton was £144.108m compared to £143.204 in 2013/14. These amounts included funding for both maintained schools and academies. It should be noted that there was no provision for pay and price increases within the settlement.

RESOLVED

a) To note;

- i. the 2014/15 Dedicated Schools Grant settlement;
- ii. that the Early Years Block DSG would not be finalized until confirmation was received from the DfE in 2015;
- iii. that the High Needs Block would not be finalized until March 2014, following a review of the LA's submissions for commissioned places.

b) to support the funding formula set out below and the proposals setting aside a Primary Growth fund of £160k

	2013/14 Unit Value	2014/15 Unit Value	2014/15 % of Total Funding
AWPU - Primary	£2,565	£2,566	36.0
AWPU - Key Stage 3	£3,285	£3,287	16.9
AWPU - Key Stage 4	£4,787	£4,790	17.3
Free School Meals Ever 6 - Primary	£1,644	£1,644	6.7
Free School Meals Ever 6 - Secondary	£2,332	£2,332	5.9
Looked After Children	£1,295	£1,295	0.3
Low Prior Attainment - Primary	£1,037	£1,037	2.5
Low Prior Attainment - Secondary	£2,594	£1,033	1.7
English as an Additional Language - Primary	£601	£601	0.3
English as an additional Language - Secondary	£2,624	£2,624	0.2
Lump Sum	£169,410	£169,410	10.7
Split Site	£41,076	N/A	
Rates	Actual	Actual	1.2
PFI	Actual	Actual	0.3
TOTAL			100.0

- c) To agree the proposed central spend items and associated budget for 2014/15 on Schools and Early Years Blocks;
- d) To support continuation of the hourly rate of £4.77 for the extended two year old provision;
- e) To note the position on the High Needs spend;
- f) To agree the proposed plan for the use of the projected carry forward surplus balance;
 - i. £0.5m for High Needs contingency;
 - ii. £60k for PRU facilities.
- g) To note the position with regard to Pupil Premium;
- h) To note the uncertainty regarding the revenue funding for the universal free infant school meals.

10. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

10.1 SBC Website

L Wadey expressed concern that since the SBC Website had been updated, historical Schools Forum information could not be accessed.

D New reported that he had raised the matter with the Web Team advising them that there were statutory requirements to publish certain information.

11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting would be held at 1:30pm on Tuesday 11th February 2014 at the Media Centre, Grangefield Academy.