

**SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**MEETING HELD ON 27 JANUARY 2015**

**PRESENT:**

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

Primary School Governors: Mr H Smith and Mrs S Symington

Secondary School Headteacher: Mr C Walker

Secondary School Governor: Mr J Thompson

Academy Representatives: Mrs M O'Connor and Ms B Atkinson

Special School Headteacher: Mrs E Horne

Diocesan Representative: Mr C Hammill

L A Representative: Councillor Mrs C Clark

14-19 Representative: Ms J Bailey

Officials: Mr D New – Senior Finance Manager  
Mrs L Brown - Head of Education, Early Years and Complex Needs  
Cllr A McCoy – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People  
Mrs E Barrett – Secretary to the Schools Forum

Also in attendance: Mr J Mitchell – Egglecliffe Secondary School Pupil

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 Ms J Humphreys, Mr S White and Mr C Wilson.

David New welcomed the new members of the Schools Forum to the meeting and introduced Joseph Mitchell who was undertaking work experience.

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. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

RESOLVED that Mrs J Conway be appointed as Chair of Schools Forum.

5. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR (IF NEEDED)**

RESOLVED that Mrs M O'Connor be appointed as Vice Chair of Schools Forum.

6. MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING – 21 OCTOBER 2014

Amend : Mrs J Conway had submitted her apologies.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting, as amended, held on 21 October 2014 be approved as a true record.

7. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

8. SCHOOLS BUDGET POSITION UPDATE 2014 - 2015

D New gave members an update on the Schools Budget. There was an anticipated underspend of £601,000 noted. The following variances were highlighted:

**Line 1.0.1** – an underspend of £967,000 was anticipated. This was due to estimated funding received for the disadvantaged 2 year old scheme however the participation had been less than anticipated. The DfE were not recouping the surplus at this time.

**Line 1.2.1, 1.2.2** – an overspend was anticipated of £339,000. This was a result of additional agreed place costs not funded through EFA and Top up funding to Academies, Free Schools and maintained providers. Additional places for children with complex needs had been funded with examples like AshTrees Academy increasing their numbers on roll.

**Line 1.2.3** – an overspend of £261,000 was anticipated for top up funding with independent providers.

**Line 1.2.5** – an underspend of £96,000 was expected in SEN support services as there were a number of vacancies in this area.

**Line 1.3.1** – an underspend of £48,000 was noted due to vacant posts in the Early Support Nursery and a reduced spend on supplies and services.

**Line 1.4.10** – an underspend of £70,000 was anticipated in the Pupil Growth fund. There were only two Schools who met the eligibility criteria for this fund which was less than expected.

The Borough currently has approximately 700 disadvantaged 2 year olds taking up places. However, further work is needed to support initiatives to increase the take up of places. £540k of this years two year old funding allocation has been earmarked to progress towards the DfE target number of 1,100 eligible 2 years olds and has therefore been included in the projected spend position. Depending on the timing of the completion of these initiatives funding may need to roll over into 2015/16

There were two months left until the end of the financial year however the current Schools Budget position for 2014 – 2015 had been used to plan for 2015 – 2016.

E Horne questioned if the DfE request a breakdown of the categories noted on the report. D New confirmed that the categories were statutory and the data was reported by category total as requested.

RESOLVED that members note the report.

## 9. DELEGATION / DE-DELEGATION

D New referred to the Delegation / De-delegation report that had been circulated prior to the meeting. Members noted that a decision would be needed on the relevant centrally retained functions. If De-delegation was agreed then the LA would retain the budget and responsibilities, if delegation was agreed then the budget and responsibilities would pass to the individual Schools. It was noted that only representatives for maintained Schools could vote on these areas as Academies had their own arrangements through EFA.

Budgets proposed for de delegation were itemized in the report. The data was based on 51 Primary Schools and 4 Secondary Schools. The contingency of £37,462 had been built into the budget to correct any formulae errors.

Staff Cover Costs budget related to a shared cost for Staff to undertake any Trade Union duties and training. This would be an individual charge per School if a delegated function. A letter had been forwarded to all members from the relevant Unions outlining their perspectives.

Free School Meal eligibility was the cost for Customer Services to check eligibility to the scheme.

*S Symington joined the meeting.*

At this juncture relevant members were invited to vote on each sector for continued de-delegation and the following was recorded:

### 9.1 **Contingencies**

Primary – 5 voted Yes for de-delegation  
Secondary – 2 voted Yes for de-delegation

### 9.2 **Support to Schools Partnerships Fund**

L Brown confirmed that she had met with Headteachers prior to this meeting to discuss this partnership fund and the view from this meeting was to continue with the current arrangement.

Primary – 5 voted Yes for de-delegation  
Secondary – 2 voted Yes for de-delegation

### 9.3 **Staff Costs Supply Cover – TU facilities time**

Primary – 5 voted Yes for de-delegation  
Secondary – 2 voted Yes for de-delegation

### 9.4 **Behaviour and Support Services**

L Brown outlined that this Support had been discussed as part of a larger Service review and that a report would be submitted to Cabinet in February 2015. This had been discussed with Headteachers. Members agreed this was an important area and in future, further support would be required. M Carlton noted that this support could be reviewed by a working party as there were implications for Staff salaries and positions.

Primary – 5 voted Yes for de-delegation  
Secondary – 2 voted Yes for de-delegation

### 9.5 **Free School Meals eligibility**

Primary – 5 voted Yes for de-delegation  
Secondary – 2 voted Yes for de-delegation

### 9.6 **Support to underperforming ethnic minority groups and bilingual learners**

Primary – 5 voted Yes for de-delegation

Secondary – 2 voted Yes for de-delegation.

## 10. SCHOOLS BUDGET 2015 - 2016

D New outlined the summary of the Schools Budget 2015-2016 and the following salient points were highlighted:

Overall the allocation to the LA had increased from 2014-2015 and a detailed breakdown had been provided. It was noted that this did not include the 2 year old funding stream.

The changes for 2015-2016 included the growth in the numbers of additional pupils in mainstream Schools and Academies, Free School Funding to be recouped, Early Years Pupil Premium that now includes disadvantaged 3 and 4 year olds and an increase in the High Needs Block.

The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) was divided into 3 blocks where the overall budget was ring fenced but the individual blocks were flexibly funded.

### **Schools Block**

£4,479 per pupil was funded for 2015/2016 which equated to £115.9m. Stockton received an additional £974,000 to reflect the increased number of pupils. There had been an increase of 295 pupils since the October 2014 census which represented 1.2% increase with all of this falling in the Primary sector whilst the numbers across Secondary had remained static.

### **Early Years Block**

There was a provisional allocation of £3,634 per full time equivalent pupil which equated to funding of £7.682m for three and four year olds. This allocation was based on an estimated number of children and would be updated after January 2015 & 2016 census days. D New would continue to update the Forum on any changes to this funding.

In determining the budget, there had been an assumption of 900 eligible 2 year olds which would equate to a funding of £2.5m.

Members discussed the difficulty with constantly changing data and of providing adequate spaces for 2 year old provision. It was noted that the DfE were moving to a participation led 2 year funding stream.

### **High Needs Block**

Stockton's allocation for 2015 – 2016 was £21.039m to support top up funding for special needs children placed both in the LA and outside the Borough. This equated to an increase of £447,000.

D New highlighted that the LA were disappointed they had only received an additional five funded places at Ashtrees Academy.

A consultation on changes to the distribution of funding for high cost SEND within the DSG had been launched with a closing date of 27 February 2015. A link had been provided for members to access online.

### **Spending**

A table had been provided which outlined the proposed formula factors for 2015 – 2016 including de-delegation and associated values. This showed an additional £1.23m into the total however this does not include special Schools or Support Base children.

It was noted that the only change pertaining to unit value from 2014 to 2015 was Free School Meals Ever 6. This was due to an increase in the numbers of eligible children for

Free School Meals Ever 6 and the need to keep the position affordable.

J Conway questioned when the pupil numbers were gathered. The January census was used going back across 6 years. There had been an issue with Universal Free Schools and eligible parents no longer completing forms to attract the funding.

L Brown requested that Primary Schools collate their individual data on Free School Meal funding and if the numbers of parents applying had reduced.

The Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) would continue to ensure that no School received less than minus 1.5% per pupil than in the previous year.

An increase in Teacher's pension contributions had not been accounted for in the DSG. There was an assumption that individual Schools would absorb this cost within their own budgets. M Carlton highlighted that many Schools may move to a deficit budget within the next 3 years as there was a limit to the amount that could be absorbed individually. Support would be needed from HR at such point that Staffing needed to be reduced to reflect a deficit budget.

A notional SEN budget would continue to be received by Schools. This equated to £9.96m across both maintained Primary, Secondary and Academy sectors. J Conway confirmed it was difficult to keep this notional SEN funding aside in a School budget where the School has to fund the first £6,000 for any SEN support.

The proposed central items remained unchanged from 2014/15 as detailed in the report.

Overall the estimated budget for the Schools Block was £1.458m below the DfE allocation.

### **Early Years Spend**

The existing funding rates and formula used in 2014 would continue for the 3 and 4 year old provision. This had previously been agreed by the Forum.

Early Years Pupil Premium is to be introduced for 3 & 4 year olds with eligibility criteria similar to the 2 year funding. The LA were still considering how this would be administered. In response to a question D New would investigate if a child aged 4 could be classed as Ever 6.

### **2 Year Olds**

700 children had been identified by the LA as eligible for the 2 year old provision. The DfE target figure was 1100 children with funding assumed as 900. There would be no change to the £4.77 per hour per eligible child.

### **High Needs Spend**

D New confirmed the LA had applied for 35 additional funded places however had only been awarded 5. There had been an increase in the funding of alternative placements from £8,000 to £10,000 per pupil.

There continued to be a built in contingency fund for top ups.

The High Needs requirement was in the excess of the DfE Block Allocation therefore £1.458m was required to transfer from the Schools Block however there would still be a shortfall. A review of the High Needs arrangements would be carried out before the next budget.

The proposed budget gap in the High Needs Block of £811,000 would be funded through a brought forward surplus balance.

**Academies**

The Education Services Grant would be reduced from £140 to £87 per pupil in 2015 – 2016.

**Pupil Premium**

It was noted that the amount of funding per Primary child had increased to £1,320 however the funding for a Service Child had not yet been confirmed.

Schools and academies receive over £10 million in Pupil Premium funding.

The Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch up premium would continue at £500 per eligible pupil.

RESOLVED that members approve the budget and recommendations in the report.

11. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no further items of business to discuss.

12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting would be held at 1:30pm on Tuesday 10 February 2015 (if needed) and 5 May 2015 at the Media Centre, The Grange Field Academy.