

**SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**MEETING HELD ON 20 OCTOBER 2015**

**PRESENT:**

Primary School Headteachers: Mrs S Randle, Mrs J Conway (Chair) and Mrs J Rea

Primary School Governors: Mrs S Symington, Mrs J Gair and Mr B Winter

Secondary School Governor: Mr J Thompson

Secondary School Headteacher: Mr S White

Special School Representative: Mr P Ewart

L A Representative: Councillor Mrs C Clark

Also in attendance: Mrs A Greer – EFA observer

Officials: Mr D New – Senior Finance Manager  
Ms D McConnell – Head of Schools and SEN  
Miss J Humphreys – Corporate Director  
Mrs E Barrett – Secretary to the Schools 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 were submitted on behalf of B Atkinson, C Hammill, A McCoy, J Bailey, M Carlton, B Jordan, M O'Connor and C Walker.

The Chair welcomed the new members P Ewart, B Winter and J Gair and also the EFA observer A Greer.

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 – 6 JULY AND 1 OCTOBER 2015**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July and 1 October 2015 be approved as a true record.

5. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

5.1 **Two Year Old offer**

J Humphreys outlined that the LA were anticipating an increase in the numbers of eligible two year old's taking up the offer particularly as new providers had been established in the Hardwick area.

6. BUDGET MONITORING – SCHOOLS BUDGET 2015 - 2016

D New outlined the current financial position as detailed in the previously circulated report. The following salient points were highlighted:

- There was a projected overall overspend of £202,000 at the end of this financial year;
- The details of the overspend were highlighted in Appendix 1;
- Individual Schools Budget incorporated the two and three year old funding however this was overspent by £297,000. This was due to an increase in the number of children accessing this provision through the summer term however funding was based on January data subsequently these places were funded by the LA;
- High Needs Top Up Funding showed an overspend of £450,000. This was a result of pressures on individual specialist provision and additional top ups that have been agreed along with SEN support services;
- Dedicated Schools Grant showed a claw back of £178,000 relating to previous year's pupil number adjustments;
- The figures in Appendix 1 assumed retrospective funding based on January 2016 census data. There was an estimate of additional two and three year old funding;
- There was a £2.1 million underspend noted at the start of this budget however the current situation showed an overspend.

RESOLVED that members note the current financial position.

7. DFE FUNDING UPDATES AND PROVISIONAL FUNDING FORMULA 2016 - 2017

D New outlined that announcements had been made by the DfE with regards to funding formula and high needs funding. Further details would be released on 25 November 2015 in the Spending Review.

**Schools Block**

There would be a flat cash position for 2016-2017 with no inflationary measure added to the DSG. Each LA is required to prepare a return with their draft formulae to EFA by 30<sup>th</sup> October. In order to maintain as much stability as possible in school funding no changes are proposed to the methodology of local funding formula for 2016/17. There were 14 allowable formulae factors however the LA would not change the factors used from 2015/16. A final submission of the APT tool needed to be made by 21 January 2016. The minimum funding guarantee of minus 1.5% would remain in place. There was no indication of any changes post 2016/17.

S White outlined that cash rates were flat however the costs in Schools had increased particularly with regards to increases in National Insurance contributions and superannuation. It was important to gauge the real term effects on budgets particularly in order to forward plan effectively. There were issues attracting specialist Teachers into Schools presently however the reality of a budget cut would mean Governors need to carefully plan their staffing budget moving forward. Members discussed the lack of specialist Teachers and the impact on teaching and learning. It was noted that Maths, Science and MFL were key areas. The LA SCITT programme was explained.

J Humphreys requested that the Finance Team prepare a paper which showed a financial point two / three years ago for both Primary and Secondary Schools compared with the current budgetary position to highlight pressure points and to be able to highlight any future implications.

D New

S Symington explained that more financial training needed to be given to Governors in order that measured decisions could be made. It was advised that School and Governor Support could facilitate this training and that it was imperative that skills audits were

updated to highlight any gaps in financial knowledge. Members also noted that the redundancy process took time and any potential reductions needed to be highlighted now in order that the process could begin in January 2016.

There would be a budgetary impact next year as a result of pension changes, general inflation and the living wage as these would not attract any additional funding. There would also be a lag effect due to the Primary Admissions trend and pressures on the growth fund. This would need to be taken into account moving forward as non recurring funds had been used this year to support the growth fund. There would be additional pressures on LA central services if more Schools converted to Academy status as their DSG and ESG moves to EFA.

L Brown was undertaking a piece of work around School Place Planning as a result of changes in location of Primary Admissions on which the Forum has previously been cited.

### **Early Years**

The Early Years block funding would be confirmed after the Spending Review in November 2015 however this would still be based on participation.

### **High Needs**

It had been announced that there would be no additional funding for High Needs in 2016/17. Funding would be based on numbers on roll 2015/16. This would not fund any growth but still allowed flexibility at local level in funded places between settings. Special School Protection would continue at minus 1.5% of overall funding based on the previous year's equivalent places.

### **Future Years**

Proposals would be put forward by the Government to ensure a fairer funding system for all Schools. However it was unlikely that there would be any additional funds with regards to transition into a new national funding formulae.

RESOLVED that members note the report and support the submission to the DfE of the provisional local formula proforma as detailed in the report.

## **8. DELEGATION / DE-DELEGATION 2016 - 2017**

D New highlighted that Delegation and De-Delegation was an annual requirement for Schools Forum to agree with regards to maintained Schools. Delegation meant that funds were sent to maintained Schools and De-Delegation meant that the LA retained the funds to provide services centrally. Academies were funded differently through EFA.

The purpose of the paper was to provide the information to members prior to a vote taking place at the December meeting. The proposed budgets for continued De-Delegation were listed on the report.

It was highlighted that there 48 eligible Primary Schools and 3 Secondary Schools (ie maintained schools).

Staff costs were discussed. This budget related to Trade Union facilitation and a supporting letter from the Unions had been submitted with the meeting papers.

It was highlighted that previously the only area of concern had been in Behaviour and Support Services. D McConnell gave an overview of this area and the relevant teams and referred to the recent restructure.

9. HIGH NEEDS REVIEW UPDATE

S Symington gave a verbal update on the work of the High Needs sub group. It was noted that at the Schools Forum meeting 6 July it had been agreed that High Needs funding was under severe pressure hence the need to set up a project review group.

G Waller and J Harvey had populated a project plan with relevant papers being pulled together. Regular meetings would be held with the sub group including any specialist partners.

J Humphreys outlined that a differentiation needed to be made between out of borough placements for LAC and specialist provision places. A larger proportion of the out of borough placements were due to specialist Schools provision. A report highlighted the numbers and costs of out of borough placements using last year's data. There were also issues highlighted with the Breckenbrough provision as there were a number of students accessing this however their needs could be met locally if we had capacity locally.

S Randle highlighted that there were falling rolls within some LA Schools and could this be explored further with regards to providing additional specialist places. J Harvey confirmed that there had been some initial discussions with Schools however many of the places were within the Primary age sector. Members agreed that the biggest challenge would be premises as locally Beverley School was full and Breckenbrough was almost at capacity.

10. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no further items of business to discuss.

11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting would be held at 1:30pm on Tuesday 8 December 2015 at The Education Centre in Stockton Sixth Form College.