

SCHOOLS FORUM
MEETING HELD ON 5 JULY 2016

PRESENT:

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

Primary School Governor: Mr B Winter

Secondary School Governor: Mr J Thompson

Academy Representatives: Mrs L Spellman and Ms B Atkinson

Special School Representative: Mr P Ewart

Diocesan Representative: Mr C Hammill

Pupil Referral Unit Representative: Ms L Chilton

LA Representative: Cllr C Clark

Trade Union Representative: Mr L Russell

Officials: Mr D New – Senior Finance Manager
Mrs E Barrett – Secretary to the Schools Forum

Also in attendance: Mrs L Brown

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 J Humphreys, D McConnell, Cllr A McCoy, M Carlton, J Gair, M O'Connor, S Symington, C Walker and S White.

3. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

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

There were no interests declared.

4. **MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING 26 JANUARY 2016**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2016 be approved as a true record.

5. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

There were no matters arising.

6. **HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY CONSULTATION**

L Brown gave a summary of the circulated document relating to the Home to School Transport Consultation. The following was highlighted:

The Policy had been redrafted for consultation and had been presented to Cabinet on 20 May with a closing date of 5 July 2016. Members have the right to respond. Individuals could reply to the questionnaire online with additional information however they must be received before midnight on 5 July 2016. The 2014 statutory guidance was based upon three main changes:

- An introduction of a formal appeals process for Home to School Transport;
- The LA were exercising their right to remove transport for faith reasons;
- A continued policy to support transporting Looked After Children out of the Borough.

Members were asked if they wanted to complete individual replies to the consultation or a combined response or to note the report. It was noted that Faith Schools had submitted their own responses. Papers could be handed to D New at the end of this meeting.

RESOLVED to note the report.

L Brown was thanked and withdrew from the meeting.

7. SCHOOLS BUDGET OUTTURN 2015 - 2016

D New outlined previously circulated papers and the following was highlighted:

School Budget

Overall there is an overspend of £226,000, this is the first time that there has been a deficit outturn on Schools Budget. The variances between the planned and actual spending were outlined:

- Individual Schools Budget had an overspend of £460,000. This related to a higher uptake of the two year old provision compared to the estimated numbers from the January census. There had been a higher number of three and four year olds accessing provision and therefore a bigger spend than had been anticipated;
- Top up funding showed an overspend of £349,000. This related to increased costs for out of borough provision for agency placements;
- The income from the Delegated Schools Grant (DSG) had been reduced by £178,000 as a result of prior year adjustment for pupil numbers;
- The unallocated DSG brought forward from 2014 – 2015 of £710,000 was used to offset some of the overspends;
- In setting the 2016/17 Schools Budget an assumed £370,000 had been allocated to repay the estimated overspend from 2015/16. This would cover the actual overspend of £226,000 with £105,000 allocated for initiatives to increase the uptake of the two year offer. The remaining £39,000 will remain unallocated. It was agreed this was a very tight budget and would need close monitoring.

School Balances

Overall balances were noted at £5.3 million across maintained Schools although this had reduced by £140,000. Balances equate to around 6% of the annual Individual Schools Budget. Schools that convert to Academies take any surplus balances with them. There were 16 Schools holding balances above the agreed thresholds in both Primary and Secondary sectors. This was comparable with previous years. All surplus balances had been agreed by the LA under the licensed application process. There was one School in a deficit position which was under £10k and the school planned to repay fully in the current year.

RESOLVED that members note the position for 2015/16.

8. HIGH NEEDS SUB GROUP UPDATE

S Symington had prepared a report outlining the work of the High Needs Sub Group. In her absence S Randle gave a summary.

- The consultation around Additional Resourced Provision (ARP) had ended and the outcomes would be presented to the Children's Board;
- There maybe some discussion around a review of the panel system;
- The timescale for any changes to the ARP would be evident through the consultation outcomes with feedback provided to Heads. It was agreed that the impact of any changes for children needed to be minimal;
- Exit strategies, funding and possible redundancies needed to be considered.

9. WORK PROGRAMME AND FUTURE MEETING DATES

RESOLVED to approve the circulated work programme and meeting dates.

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 18 October 2016 at The Education Centre in Stockton Sixth Form College.