

SCHOOLS FORUM
MEETING HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2017

PRESENT:

Primary School Headteachers: Mrs M Carlton, Mrs J Conway (Chair) and Mrs S Richardson

Primary School Governor: Mr B Winter

Secondary School Governor: Mr J Thompson

Academy Representatives: Mrs L Spellman and Mr E Huntington

Special School Representative: Ms Y Limb

LA Representative: Cllr C Clark

Trade Union Representative: Mr L Russell

Officials: Ms D McConnell – Assistant Director, Schools and SEN
 Cllr A McCoy – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
 Mr G Waller - Accountant
 Mr A Bryson – Finance Manager
 Mrs E Barrett – Secretary to the Schools Forum

Also in attendance: Ms J Humphreys and Ms F Bailey

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 Mr C Hammill, Mr M Gray, Mrs J Gair, Mrs S Randle, Mrs S Symington, Mr C Walker, Mr S White and Mr P Cook.

The Chair highlighted the high number of apologies and wanted to reiterate that Schools Forum was a statutory requirement and therefore attendance was appreciated.

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. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**

RESOLVED that Mr L Russell be appointed as Vice Chair.

5. **MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING 13 DECEMBER 2016**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2016 be approved as a true record.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

6.1 EY Consultation

This had been undertaken with only 4 responses received from 2 Schools and 2 providers. 3 were positive with 1 negative response however this had been followed up as there was a query around the content of the consultation.

6.2 Operational Guide

A Bryson outlined that if any members required a copy to contact the Secretary.

7. FUNDING FOR DESIGNATED EDUCATION OFFICER

J Humphreys referred to the previously circulated paper. It was explained that the Multi Agency Children's Hub partnership had been set up in conjunction with Hartlepool LA. The Designated Education Officer (DEO) had been funded for 12 months by Hartlepool LA. Although this was not a statutory role the DEO attended strategy meetings and gathered information for Schools. The funding for the DEO ceases March 2017.

Hartlepool Schools Forum had agreed to consult and would report their outcome in February 2017. There were 3 options to consider:

- The DEO post ends with tasks redistributed with no further funding required;
- Stockton would fund the post at 66% of the cost with Hartlepool funding 34% to reflect the workload;
- A buy back scheme would be established although Hartlepool would be unlikely to agree this option as the risks were too high.

J Humphreys explained that all Secondary Schools in Stockton had made some contact with the DEO. Schools Forum were asked for their preferred option of either 1 or 2 to take back to Hartlepool LA.

Members asked if there was a clear recommendation that the post continued. It was agreed that the DEO was a key post. Schools reiterated that they attend their own strategy meetings, the DEO was available to offer support and advice and received paperwork.

Members asked how the post was currently funded. Hartlepool LA had funded this through their own budget with Stockton paying nothing. It was questioned how many Schools did not use the DEO service. There were 14 Schools who had not accessed this support although it was unclear why this was. It was noted that these Schools may need to access this service in the future. Members agreed it was a valuable service and that they would like to see the DEO post continue.

E Huntington questioned if there could be a different option of funding on a per pupil basis. It was agreed this could be an option and would equate to around £1.20 per pupil.

RESOLVED to raise the option of funding the DEO post on a cost per pupil basis at Education Matters and Secondary Headteachers meeting.

J Humphreys withdrew from the meeting.

8. APPRENTICESHIP LEVY

F Bailey introduced herself and referred to the previously circulated paper. The following was highlighted:

- The apprenticeship levy would be introduced from April 2017 and would be

- payable by settings with a payroll of over £3 million;
- Stockton LA would fall into this category with all maintained Schools liable to pay the levy;
- The levy fund would need to be spent within 2 years on apprentices;
- This could include upskilling the existing workforce however this would relate mainly to back office support staff in areas including Business Administration, Customer Service, ICT, Marketing and Accountancy;
- There were Teaching Assistant Apprenticeship standards out for consultation;
- Contracts must be made with an approved training provider.

Members were concerned that School budgets were being set and it was unknown how much levy would be payable.. SBC Finance were calculating the effect on individual schools. F Bailey explained that Schools could access more funding than they had paid into the levy. Members were concerned that this would be an additional financial burden and that Bursars were not passing this information onto Schools.

It was asked how you would apply for the funding. There would be a mechanism through Schools Forum to allocate the ring fenced levy funding.

Members were concerned that this would impact on small Primary Schools who would not have an identified need for training or an apprentice. It was acknowledged that this would be more beneficial for larger Schools.

Members questioned if they already had an apprentice would there be changes. The funding would continue from central Government however the individual School would still be liable for the levy payment.

F Bailey outlined that there were 36 pathways available and these would be circulated to members. *Members asked if there was a bespoke apprenticeship for a teaching qualification.* F Bailey explained that she could model one however the levy only paid for the training aspect.

F Bailey withdrew from the meeting.

9. NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA PHASE 1 AND 2 CONSULTATION

A Bryson referred to the previously circulated paper and the following was highlighted:

Phase 1 Consultation Responses

There were 25 questions asked in the consultation:

- Reforming the funding system – a hard funding formula would be introduced in 2019 / 2020 based on a per pupil system;
- National Funding Formula – the formula would comprise 4 building blocks to reflect the costs detailed in the report which equated to 13 factors;
- Transition to a reformed funding system – the minimum funding guarantee would continue at minus 1.5% to provide stability. The schools block will be ring fenced with limited ability for the LA to move funding into the high needs block;
- Funding that will remain with the LA – the central schools services block will comprise the DSG and the retained element of the ESG;
- Future of the ESG – Schools Forum would agree any additional funding.

Phase 2 Consultation Proposals

The second phase of consultation was open and would close 22 March 2017. The following areas were the focus:

- Constructing the national funding formula – the factors that would be used;
- The impact of the national funding formula – draft figures provided to the LA to analyse the impact and a response would be submitted;

- Implementation of the funding formula – there would be a soft formula introduced for 2018 /2019;
- Proposals for the central schools block – how this block would be constructed.

Members were requested to forward any comments to A Bryson by the end of February to be included in the LA response. *Members asked if there were any indications of the impact on the LA.* It appeared that overall funding looks like 0.7% increase however the impact on individual Schools may be different.

RESOLVED that Schools Forum note the report.

10. NATIONAL HIGH NEEDS FUNDING FORMULA PHASE 1 RESPONSE AND PHASE 2 CONSULTATION

A Bryson referred to the previously circulated report and the following was noted:

Phase 1 Consultation Responses

- Structure - There had been 14 questions asked with 69% agreeing that the principles were correct. The DfE continues to distribute high needs funding to Local Authorities and that top up funding be retained at a local level;
- Basic Design – the building blocks were included in the report;
- Transition – more protection for high needs funding, there would be a funding floor rather than a MFG;
- SEND funding distribution – the DfE changed the proposal and that children on roll would be funded at £6,000 per place with new places offered at £10,000 per pupil. *Members asked if this £6,000 was in addition to the AWPU.* Yes although the total would be less than new funded places of £10,000.

Phase 2 Consultation Proposals

There would be a weighting for each factor. 50% of funding would be a baseline with the remaining 50% allocated be weightings. There was some flexibility moving forward for 2018 / 2019 to transfer from Schools Block to High Needs Block.

RESOLVED that Schools Forum note the report and pass any comments to A Bryson by the end of February to be included in the LA response.

Annex A

This paper outlined the responses to the formula factors. *Members asked if the ability to move funds between the High Needs Block and Schools Block would be detrimental to maintained Schools.* Any transfer of funds would be a Schools Forum decision.

11. SCHOOLS BUDGET 2017 / 2018

A Bryson referred to the previously circulated paper and noted the following:

The Schools funding element was broadly in line with previous years. The EY recommendations had been factored in the EY Block.

- The DSG for 2017 / 2018 was £155,907 million which was a slight increase on the previous year;
- The DSG was allocated as follows: £118.6 million to Schools Block, £12.69 million to EY and £24.617 million to High Needs;
- The Schools Block was based on £4,420 per pupil funding. The £118.6 million included the retained element of ESG. There was an increase in funding based on an increased number of pupils of 2.3%;
- The Early Years Block included the new Disability Access Funding of £55,000, the inclusion fund had £120,000 allocated with 95% of funding passed through to providers;

- Disadvantaged 2 year olds funding had increased by 7.1% to £5.20;
- The High Needs Block was £24.617 million which was an increase of £3.3 million. £2 million would transfer from the Schools Block. The Post 16 budget would transfer at £774,000. This included an additional £444,000 share of the national uplift funding.

Proposed Distribution

The Schools Block spend was highlighted in the paper. The APT tool needed to be returned to the DfE by 20 January 2017 subject to Schools Forum agreement. The majority of the rates remained the same as 2016 / 2017.

Early Years

A change in funding formula for 3 and 4 year olds meant that funding to the LA would be £4.00 per child per hour. This was a substantial increase from the previous £3.41. The Early Years Pupil Premium funding was passed to providers at 53p per hour per eligible pupil. Disadvantaged 2 year olds rate would be set at £5.11 per hour which was an increase of 7.1%.

High Needs

Funding was formulated on a baseline figure with a contingency amount for 2017 / 2018 to cover top ups. There was excess funding required from the Schools Block and £387,000 would transfer into the High Needs Block however this was much lower than last year.

Central Fund

- Growth Fund – there was no additional funding from the DfE for this therefore £550,000 had been set aside to cover growth, this was a slight reduction from the previous year. The LA would still fund the exceptional places agreed from April 2016 however all the identified Schools needed to provide a rationale for funding each year to Schools Forum;
- It was proposed that central items remain unchanged as detailed in the report.

Proposed Schools Budget

It was noted that any under or over spend from the current year would be carried forward. It was anticipated that there would be a £400,000 over spend to be included. Appendix 1 outlined the over spend areas as previously brought to Schools Forum.

Pupil Premium

Funding remained the same as 2016 / 2017 with LAC funded at £1900 per pupil of which £1400 was distributed to the Schools and £500 retained by the LA. Total pupil premium in 2016/17 was £9.4m. Universal Free School Meals continued at £2.30 per pupil per day. Sports Premium continued however the actual amounts had not been announced. Year 7 catch up funding would also continue.

Members were asked to consider the recommendations outlined in the paper.

RESOLVED that Schools Forum:

- Note the 2017 / 2018 Dedicated School Grant settlement;
- Support the funding formula as set out in para 11 and proposals for growth fund (para 30d);
- Agree the proposed central spend items and associated budget for 2017 / 2018 on Schools and Early Years Block (para 31 & Appendix);
- Note the in line position with the national funding increase of 7.1% and raise the hourly rate for the extended two year old provision to £5.11 (para 22);
- Note the position on High Needs spend (paras 23 to 29);
- Agree the proposed planned recovery of the expected carry forward overspend balance of £400,000 (para 34);
- Note the overall challenging budget position and if there were to be any

overspend in 2017 / 2018 this would have to be met from the following years DSG allocation (para 35);

- Note the position re Pupil Premium (paras 20 7 39-41).

12. HIGH NEEDS SUB GROUP UPDATE

S Symington had circulated a paper on the final meeting of the High Needs sub group. D McConnell outlined the recent Hartlepool inspection letter and the areas of concern.

There had been some issues around payments to Schools of high needs funding. A Bryson explained that the LA were now up to date with outstanding issues, this had been as a result of capacity issues however more resources had been allocated. There were some mismatches on the circulated spreadsheet between Schools data and the Bursar. D McConnell agreed that it was unacceptable for Schools to have to wait for agreed payments to be made and this situation had since been resolved.

Members asked about an SEN inspection. D McConnell explained that it was unlikely that this would be imminent as the LA had recently had a Safeguarding inspection.

13. SEND UPDATE

D McConnell referred to the previously circulated Cabinet Report on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) update for Stockton. This provided the feedback to the consultation. The detail was discussed.

Cabinet had endorsed the recommendations in the report which included:

- Specifications for the new ARP / enhanced Schools / hubs;
- More resources offered ;
- Review the EY provision including nursery;
- Free School – waiting for the DfE to approve the application.

Cllr McCoy outlined that the principles were to ensure better provision across the LA. There had been a robust consultation including Early Support. *Members asked about timescales.* The draft specifications were needed by February 2017 with procurement to follow and anticipating that new providers would be set up for September 2017. *Members questioned the staffing implications at Schools with current provision.* D McConnell agreed that there would be budget implications for some Schools which may include redundancy situations.

14. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no further items of business to discuss.

15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting would be held at 1:30pm on Tuesday 7 February 2017 (hold date) and Tuesday 2 May 2017 at The Education Centre in Stockton Sixth Form College.