

SCHOOLS FORUM
MEETING HELD ON 31 OCTOBER 2017

PRESENT:

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

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

Secondary School Governor: Mr J Thompson

Secondary School Headteacher: Mr C Walker

Academy Representatives: Mr E Huntington and Mrs G Booth

Special School Representative: Mrs W Coates (substitute)

LA Representative: Cllr C Clark

Trade Union Representative: Mr L Russell

14 – 19 Representative: Mr P Cook

PVI Representative: Mrs C Prendagast

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

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, Ms E Carr, Mrs S Randle, Mrs L Spellman and Mr 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 4 JULY 2017**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2017 be approved as a true record.

5. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

5.1 **Scheme for Financing Schools**

A Bryson explained that this would be presented once the consultation period had ended.

5.2 Apprenticeship Levy

P Cook explained that between 20 and 25 Schools had registered through Stockton Riverside College for apprenticeship courses.

The Chair updated that the Teaching apprenticeship course had been released this week with a closing date for applications to be a Teaching School in the first round also this week.

At this juncture the agenda was reorganized as follows:

13. HIGH NEEDS SUB GROUP UPDATE

S Symington referred to the previously circulated update on the High Needs sub group. It was explained that there were too many initiatives and changes happening across the LA with regards to High Needs. The project needed to be deferred until such time that current initiatives were known. It would be helpful for the group to have a mapping of the initiatives in place to avoid any duplication of work. D McConnell could facilitate this. The project could be re-established to look at out of borough provision at a more convenient time. S Symington noted her term of office was coming to an end and any subsequent work would be dependent on re election.

D McConnell

D McConnell thanked S Symington for all her hard work leading the sub group. It was agreed that it was difficult for the sub group to undertake this piece of work now however it would be a useful exercise in the future particularly looking at how specialist provision is allocated and budget impact.

6. BUDGET MONITORING - SCHOOLS BUDGET 2017-18

A Bryson referred to the previously circulated paper on Schools Budget Monitoring. The following was highlighted:

Schools Budget

- Overall there was an overspend of £1.13 million forecast for the end of the year;
- This was mainly due to an overspend in High Needs top ups relating to an increase in demand and also expensive out of Borough placements;
- The new Enhanced Provision was in a transitional period and it was clear this continued to be a challenging situation;
- There was an estimated overspend of £105k in SEN Support services relating to the HVI increased rates. This provision was being reviewed with an aim to provide within Stockton LA;
- There had been a saving in the growth fund of £200k;
- SEN transport had an estimated overspend relating to the PRU due to increased demand;
- There had been an underspend of £479k carried forward from the 2016-17 budget which had offset some of the over spends;
- It was agreed this was not a great position however it was anticipated that the Enhanced provision and the NE12 arrangements would show some budgetary impact in future years;
- The overspend needs to be carefully managed;
- *It was questioned how the savings would be made.* Transitional costs associated with the new enhanced provision would cease over time. The Enhanced provision should show savings alongside a reduction in costly external providers.

- *With regards to expensive out of Borough placements, the Free School bid was questioned.* D McConnell explained that the LA were disappointed that the Tees Valley bid had been unsuccessful however the feedback had been analysed and the Tees Valley would move forward with a new bid. The original bid was too ambitious and consequently a simpler model would be submitted as soon as the window for applications opened. Some provision had been secured through existing settings alongside work with the North East Autism Society;
- Meetings had been held with the DfE and all LA's were in the same situation with regards to demand for high needs funding and places;
- D McConnell reiterated that although the LA had been approached to submit a Free School bid, it would be a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) that would manage the Free School. Although the bid had successfully demonstrated need, the model was not deemed attractive to a MAT;
- It was noted that there was no timeline for the next round of applications.

RESOLVED that Schools Forum note the current financial position on the Schools budget.

7. NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA PHASE 2 CONSULTATION

A Bryson referred to the previously circulated report outlining the responses to Phase 2 of the consultation. A link had been highlighted to the final consultation report. The main concerns had been detailed.

RESOLVED to note the report content.

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RESOLVED to note the report content.

9. EARLY YEARS SINGLE FUNDING FORMULA UPDATE / PROPOSALS

A Bryson referred to the previously circulated report. This related to the introduction of funding for three and four year olds additional hours for working parents, the Early Years Module (One System) and proposals for retrospective adjustments. Significant changes had already been implemented with the LA paying £4 per hour from 1 April 2017 and passing on 95% of funding to providers.

The One system now collected data in a more accurate and timely manner and consequently the way payments are made could also be changed. S Richardson explained that it was very difficult for Schools to manage their budgets with retrospective payments alongside staff having to enter data twice. G Waller explained that the new system should mean that School staff do not have to enter the same data onto the finance spreadsheet as the One system should provide this report to the finance team.

There maybe some transitional budgetary issues and these would be dealt with favourably.

RESOLVED that Schools Forum agree with the proposals regarding retrospective Early Years adjustments and the changes concerning Early Years funding.

10. DELEGATION / DE-DELEGATION 2018-19

A Bryson explained that this was an annual requirement and related to maintained Schools only. A paper had been circulated alongside a Trade Union letter of support. The De delegated budgets areas were highlighted in section 10 of the report and were based on a per child basis. It was proposed the total allocation would be £278,327.

It was noted that Schools Forum did not previously take up the option of additional funds to School Improvement Services however this may need to be renegotiated and refers to Agenda item 12. Consultation was still underway with Council regarding the loss of the ESG funding.

It was questioned that if more Schools converted to Academy would the amount per pupil reduce. G Waller explained that the amount per School was roughly the same and the amount stated would be maintained per child.

It was noted that if Schools wanted to buy these services themselves the costs would be much higher as they would lose the economies of scale. It was also highlighted that Schools would need time to research other options if delegation was proposed.

D McConnell outlined that in Agenda item 12 a move to more traded services would be investigated with Schools buying in a SLA for particular areas.

In response to a question, L Russell explained that almost 100% of Schools regardless of status bought into Trade Union time

RESOLVED that:

- a) Secondary School representative agrees to continued De Delegation;
- b) Primary School representatives take this back to Primary Headteachers for their views before making a decision at the next Schools Forum meeting.

M Carlton

11. PROVISIONAL FUNDING FORMULA 2018-19

A Bryson referred the previously circulated paper. The results of the two consultations had been used to produce two operational guides and the following was highlighted:

National Context

- There was an additional £1.3 billion to support the introduction of a national funding formula over the next two years;
- LA's can continue to use their local formula for funding in 2018 – 19 and 2019 - 20. For 2020 – 21 there would be a half way position to the hard national formula although this was still in consultation;
- In section 8.1 – 8.8 the main changes were outlined;
- There would be four blocks created including a new block- Central School Services Block (CSSB), Schools Block, High Needs Block and Early Years Block;
- Within the Schools Block the Government will provide for at least 0.5% per pupil increase for each School in 2018 – 19;
- Funding per pupil for Primary would be transitional at £3,300 in 2018 – 19 and move to £3,500 in 2019 -20. Secondary funding per pupil would be £4,600 in 2018 – 19 and move to £4,800 in 2019 – 20;
- The minimum funding guarantee (MFG) can be set between 0 and minus 1.5% per pupil;
- The Schools Block is ring fenced however up to 0.5% can be transferred between blocks with agreement from School Forum. Anything above 0.5% needs to be submitted to the Secretary of State.

Local Context

Indicative figures had been provided per Block by Government however this was not an accurate picture as this data was based on last year's census and actual funding would be based on October 2017 census data. The chart shows slight increases across each block. G Waller added a caveat that Free Schools had to be funded through this pot however no additional funding was received for these children. This equated to around £800k.

Local Consultation

G Waller was investigating modelling the new funding arrangements locally. Any proposed changes needed consultation with all Schools however this was just for 2018 – 19. Paragraph 34 outlined the areas that needed consultation however the deadline for returns to the EFSA was 30 November 2017. A Bryson would prepare and circulate a consultation document for Schools to comment and return prior to the next Schools Forum meeting. Consequently the next meeting has been moved forward from 12 December 2017 to 28 November 2017. Indicative funding data would accompany the consultation form along with various options. It was requested that this be in user friendly terminology.

A Bryson explained that the hard National Funding Formula as it stands was unaffordable to implement immediately and needed to be pro rata across the factors. G Booth outlined it was imperative that turbulence in funding needed to be kept to a minimum where possible. It was reiterated that the pot of funding was the same it's the process of allocation that would be different. The MFG should create stability.

G Waller explained that the Government data provided on the Collect system was based on a global calculation however the LA used individual School data and therefore the two did not match which the DfE have acknowledged.

In response to a question, A Bryson agreed that a drop in session could be arranged for any School to come and ask questions around the consultation. It was reiterated that this consultation would need to be repeated each year until 2020 – 21. Consultation papers would be released week commencing 13 November 2017.

A Bryson
Secretary

RESOLVED to note the content of the report.

12. STRATEGIC REVIEW OF EDUCATION – UPDATE REPORT

D McConnell referred to the previously circulated Cabinet report around the loss of the Education Services Grant (ESG) of £1.8million. Cabinet had secured one year of funding for School Improvement for existing services. However a strategic approach was needed for 2018 – 19 and onwards. Page 4 outlined the statutory duties that needed to be provided for both maintained Schools and Academies.

Page 6 outlined the Service reviews that were underway. Vacant posts were frozen within EIS. There had been reviews of both the SEN and attendance teams. The LA were developing a traded services model through the Learning Partnership Trust. This model identifies universal statutory services and then different levels of options and associated costs. This would be launched shortly with D Merrett running workshops. The anticipated income had been added to the report.

There had been no successful North East bids to the Strategic School Improvement Fund in the first round. Applications for the second round would be submitted to a regional board for analysis where recommendations would then be sent to the National Group, it was anticipated that there would be more success with this route.

The emergence of the Tees Valley Combined Authority had been a difficult journey including a new Mayor in place.

The next steps included a remodelling of the Early Years service to produce cost savings as this was a non statutory function. There was opportunity for some funds to be de delegated.

Cllr McCoy explained that Cabinet endorsed the report and were very appreciative of the work completed.

RESOLVED that Schools Forum note the report.

14. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no other items to discuss.

15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting would be held at 1:30pm on Tuesday 28 November 2017 at The Education Centre in Stockton Sixth Form College.