

**SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**MEETING HELD ON 28 NOVEMBER 2017**

**PRESENT:**

Primary School Headteachers: Mrs M Carlton, Mrs S Randle 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 S White

Academy Representatives: Mrs G Booth and Mrs L Spellman

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: Mrs A Allan and Mrs K Hull - observers

*In the absence of Mrs J Conway, Mr L Russell chaired the meeting.*

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 J Conway, Mr P Cook, Ms Y Limb, Mrs C Prendagast and Mr C Walker.

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 31 OCTOBER 2017**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2017 be approved as a true record.

5. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

5.1 **High Needs**

It was noted that the Schools Strategic Education Board had requested that High Needs funding be added to their next agenda in January 2018. A paper would be prepared and shared with Schools Forum. It was highlighted that the

over spend in high needs funding had been discussed by Schools Forum at the October meeting. *It was questioned if there would be a need for any future high needs projects.* Moving forward this may be useful.

## 5.2 Apprenticeship Levy

A Bryson confirmed that a session had been held on 15 November 2017 at the Education Centre.

*At this juncture the agenda was reorganized as follows:*

## 7. SCHOOL FUNDING CONSULTATION 2018-19

A Bryson referred to the previously circulated paper on the School Funding Consultation. The closing date for responses was 24 November 2017. A copy of the consultation paper had been included in the papers. There had been 18 School responses which equated to 23% of all Schools consulted. Four questions had been asked:

**Do you agree with the proposal to move immediately towards the national funding formula?** 17 out of 18 agreed with one disagree.

**It is proposed that the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) is set at 0.25% in Stockton, thereby ensuring all Schools and Academies gain at a per pupil level in 2018/19. This would replace the current MFG which limits losses to minus 1.5% per pupil. Do you support this proposal?** 18 out of 18 agreed to this. It was agreed that this was fair to all Schools. The ESFA announced on 23 November 2017 that Local Authorities would no longer need to apply for disapplication up to 0.5% per pupil.

**Do you support the proposal to set a minimum per pupil funding level as close as possible of £3,300 for primary Schools and £4,600 for secondary Schools in 2018 / 2019 as a transition towards the 2019/20 minimum per pupil amounts?** 18 out of 18 agree with this proposal.

**Do you support the transfer of 0.5% of the Schools Budget (approximately £600k) to meet high needs pressures?** 17 out of 18 agreed with 1 recorded as no views.

### **Recommendations**

- It was therefore the LA's intention to move immediately towards the national funding formula, set a MFG at 0.25% and set the minimum per pupil level as close as possible to £3,300 for primary and £4,600 for secondary Schools;
- To transfer 0.5% of Schools block allocation to support high needs funding pressures.

Members were asked to participate in a vote on the above recommendations. There was a unanimous agreement. It was noted that the LA were disappointed with the low number of responses made by Schools.

RESOLVED to approve the above recommendations.

## 8. DELEGATION / DE DELEGATION 2018 - 2019

M Carlton confirmed that she had communicated with all maintained Primary Schools around their responses for Delegation or De Delegation. There had been 7 out of 37 responses and all agreed to De Delegation. Eligible members were asked to take a vote, this was unanimous.

RESOLVED that Primary Schools agree to De Delegation for 2018 – 2019.

## 9. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

### 9.1 School Clothing Grant

D McConnell tabled a document titled School Clothing Grant Claims 2015 – 2017. It was explained that there had been a strategic review of education across the LA. The Clothing Grant had been available for parents to telephone the LA and request a one off annual payment of £30 to support School uniform purchases. The Education Act 1996 stated that provision of a clothing grant was discretionary and there was no statutory requirement to provide this. Pupil Premium funds were now available in Schools to support uniform purchases. Other LA's no longer offered a clothing grant.

As part of a budget review, the LA were proposing to remove the clothing grant. Families who contact the LA would be sign posted back to School to discuss support through Pupil Premium funding. Members were asked for their comments.

*The paper stated £20,000 had been claimed, where had this been paid from. This had been through the ESG however this was no longer provided by central Government. It was asked about Abbey Hill and that children there may need more uniform due to medical issues, was there any additional funding for these. D McConnell agreed this was a valid point and that there may be some funding around disability available, there was an equipment grant within high needs funding.*

Primary members noted that they were unaware that a clothing grant existed and would use pupil premium funding, therefore the removal of this grant would not impact them.

*At this juncture L Russell – Bond joined the meeting.*

Cllr McCoy highlighted that there was only one pot of money and if clothing grant continued to be offered then savings would have to be made elsewhere in the budget.

It was noted that families contacted the LA directly and Schools were not aware who had been allocated a grant. Each School has its own family fund in place where some uniform invoices were sent straight to School for specific families. Schools would prefer not to be sign posted by the LA.

There was a concern that some eligible families did not have a good relationship with School and would not approach them for support. There was also comment that this was such a small pot of money that it was mean spirited to remove the grant.

D McConnell explained that a decision was not required until the new financial year however this grant was in place before pupil premium was introduced. A conversation with Schools would be useful to ascertain their arrangements for supporting families. An agreed script would be needed for contact centre staff to answer enquiries. A draft paper would be prepared and brought back to Schools Forum. Cllr McCoy asked that if the clothing grant was to remain which other services could be reduced by £20,000.

D McConnell

## 6. PUPIL PREMIUM PLUS – L RUSSELL BOND

L Russell – Bond referred to a previously circulated paper. This related to new

conditions of the Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) Grant for Looked After Children and Young People (LACY). A notional amount of £1900 was allocated per LAC.

*G Booth withdrew from the meeting.*

The Virtual Headteacher manages the PPP grant. It had been previously agreed that £1400 of the allocation would go straight to Schools with £500 centrally retained. Any balances left would be redistributed to Schools in need as a balance could not be carried forward.

An audit had been undertaken reviewing the grant through the EPep system. Provisional pupil outcomes had been provided for LACY. In Early years only 25% had achieved a good level of development (GLD); Key Stage 2 combined reading, writing and maths (CRWM) was only 10% although 55% of this cohort had special needs.

The audit highlighted that for 115 pupils the PPP spend was well below the £1400 allocated. This equated to £48,000 underspent across the LA. The central resources paid for two Education Development Advisors (EDA), two part time staff in Youth Direction to work with students Year 9 and above, EP support and a HLTA.

The EPep system had been implemented and would show an overall saving once embedded. Personalised support was provided from the central fund which included enrichments.

Recommendations were noted in the paper. £1400 would remain the amount given to Schools for LACY and the LA would retain any surplus through the EPep system. PPP would increase to £2,300 from April 2018. 3 and 4 year olds would attract £75 per pupil per term opposed to 53p per hour as this would be more manageable.

*Members questioned the comment around using the PPP for admin time.* There needed to be a clear definition of admin time. *It was questioned which of the recommendations would improve outcomes.* L Russell Bond explained that progress data was better than the outcomes data. The key was 1:1 tuition particularly in a foster family setting over the holiday period. It was agreed that some LAC had multiple vulnerabilities and would never achieve the expected outcomes for their age.

*J Gair withdrew from the meeting.*

It was highlighted that some students may only come into care in Year 10 and this impacted on the Key Stage 4 outcomes. *Maths was questioned.* It maybe worth gathering the Maths leads together to look at strategies.

A primary hub had been established to bring the LAC together. The Achievement and celebration sessions were well received.

*S Symington withdrew from the meeting.*

D McConnell explained that the health and well being of the students was important with attendance of LAC higher than the national average and no PEX cases. The LA acknowledged that the academic outcomes were weak however context needed to be added to this data.

It was imperative that funding was fully utilized.

RESOLVED to note all the recommendations in the report.

10. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting would be held at 1:30pm on Tuesday 23 January 2018 at The Education Centre in Stockton Sixth Form College.