

SCHOOLS FORUM
MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2018

PRESENT:

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

Primary School Governors: Mr B Winter and Mr C Wilson

Secondary School Headteacher: Mr C Walker

Secondary School Governor: Mr J Thompson

Academy Representatives: Mr E Huntington, Mr S White and Mrs G Booth

Diocesan Representative: Mr C Hammill

Special School Representative: Ms Y Limb

Pupil Referral Unit Representative: Mrs E Carr

PVI Representative: Mrs C Prendagast

14 – 19 Representative: Mr P Cook

LA Representative: Cllr C Clark

Trade Union Representative: Mr L Russell

Officials: Ms D McConnell – Assistant Director, Schools and SEN
 Mr M Gray – Director of Children’s Services
 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 K Hull – Observer NET Trust

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 Mrs M Carlton, Mrs J Gair and Mrs L Spellman.

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 28 NOVEMBER 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2017 be approved as a true record.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

5.1 Clothing Grant

D McConnell referred to the previously circulated paper on proposals around the loss of the clothing grant. The context around the clothing grant was given. There was no statutory requirement to provide a clothing grant and this would have only been for maintained Schools. No other LA's offer this grant to families. There were School schemes in place which provided free uniform through either a voucher scheme or through individual suppliers. Other funding streams had been researched.

There were options outlined in the paper. It was noted that the grant was originally only for secondary Schools and now there was only one maintained School in the LA. It was therefore not feasible to carry on with the clothing grant. The Finance department had been consulted around different options however they felt it was not practical to carry on with an adjusted system.

The LA were proposing to discontinue the clothing grant and sign post families to other options. The clothing grant was funded through the ESG which had since been withdrawn by central Government however as this service was advertised on the LA website any grant applications would be honoured until the end of the financial year.

RESOLVED to approve the proposal to discontinue the clothing grant at the end of the financial year and signpost to other agencies.

6. SCHOOLS BUDGET 2018 / 2019

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

- The paper was based on the recommendations from the consultation exercise on setting the National Funding Formula. The details of this were presented at Schools Forum on 28 November 2017;
- An additional £1.3 million had been allocated to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG);
- The DSG for 2018 / 19 was £161.764million across four School blocks;
- There were 746 more children on the Autumn census;
- £617k had been moved to the High Needs Block;
- £550k was required to cover the Growth Fund items.

Block funding

- A local formula will be used to set Schools budgets for 2018 / 2019 and 2019 / 2020 which mirrored the new National Funding Formula;
- £3,808 was the Primary AWPU and £4,324 was the Secondary AWPU;
- A detailed Schools Block spend table was detailed in the report;
- Early Years was funded at £4 per hour for 2018 / 2019 and in line with guidance the LA will be passing 95% of funding to providers;
- The Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) equated to £302 per child per setting;
- Disadvantaged two year old funding would maintain the rate of £5.11 per hour;
- High Needs – a £1.2 million baseline adjustment has been made to reflect the changes in additional resourced provision. £500k was allocated to cover contingencies.

Growth Fund

There would be an impact on the Secondary sector and this was covered in more detail at agenda item 8. It was proposed that £550k be allocated to the Growth Fund.

Budget Balance

It was anticipated that Schools Budget's would be over spent by £1.19million due to increased pressures on high needs. It was clear that the situation needed careful monitoring moving forward.

Pupil Premium and Other Grants

Pupil Premium Funding rates for 2018/19 have been held at the 2017/18 level. The Looked After Children rate has been increased to £2,300 with £1,400 to schools and £900. The authority is waiting notification on a number of other grants.

High Needs

D McConnell updated the forum on the ongoing high needs work. A paper would be presented to the Strategic Schools Education Board (SSEB) around the transparent way that funds had been allocated which included top ups. Out of Borough placements, exclusions and alternative provision would also be reported. Once this meeting has been held at the end of January, feedback would be provided to the forum.

Summary

It was questioned if the indicative funding for individual Schools would be impacted. A Bryson confirmed that the variances would be down to pupil numbers on census day and that figures were in line with indicative funding information.

The £25k allocated to the Local Safeguarding Board was questioned. M Gray confirmed that this was not statutory however the forum had always provided funding for this board, this covered the safeguarding forum and briefings. ***The £30k for the Virtual Headteacher was questioned.*** This was a contribution towards the Virtual Headteacher's salary. £900 of the LAC funding was also put into this fund.

Given that the budget was overspent by £1.19million due to high needs pressures, how would this be managed for 2018/19. There was an additional £1.3 billion allocated to the National Funding Formula and some of this would be used to offset the overspend. It was anticipated that there would be savings made through the new arrangements of enhanced mainstream Schools in the longer term. It was clear however that there was a national picture of overspends on high needs as pressures increased and not just in Stockton. Cllr McCoy outlined that it was the members view that all must be done to balance budgets.

Members asked when would Schools receive their actual budgetary information.

As more information was needed, the Finance teams were working towards the end of February deadline's and would endeavor to release information as soon as possible.

RESOLVED that the forum:

- a) Note the 2018 / 19 Dedicated School Grant settlement;
- b) Agree the funding formula as set out in para 18 and proposals for the growth fund;
- c) Agree the proposed central spend block items and associated budget for 2018/19;
- d) Note the authority intends to maintain the early years rates set in 2017/18 for 2018/19 and the pass through rate at 95%;
- e) Note that the authority intends to maintain the hourly rate for the extended two year old provision at £5.11;
- f) Note the position on high needs spend;
- g) Agree the proposed planned recovery of the expected carry forward overspend balance of £1.190million;

- h) Note the overall challenging budget position and if there were to be any overspend in 2017/18 this will have to met from the following year's DSG allocation;
- i) Note the position re Pupil Premium.

7. BUDGET MONITORING – SCHOOLS BUDGET 2017 / 2018

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

- There was a deficit position of £1.19 million which was a slight increase on the previous reported figure of £1.13 million.

School Budget

- Appendix 1 showed the revised budget and the areas of overspend around top ups;
- There had been a slight reduction in the out of borough costs;
- The total overspend on high needs was £2.1 million;
- There was a £479k surplus carried forward from 2016/17 to offset some of the overspends;
- £250k saving was noted in the growth fund;
- Savings in Early Year's was critical;
- **Members asked why there was such a large deficit.** This was a result of the sheer volume of children needed additional support through the top up funds. Out of Borough placements were difficult to find and consequently more expensive. There were additional costs for setting up the new Enhanced Mainstream Schools alongside funding the existing system during transition. There were no children in these new provisions as yet. There was more Educational Psychologist support which was hoped would reduce the need for expensive placements. M Gray confirmed that the double funding had been planned however this was a short term concern and savings should be seen in the medium to long term. There had been an unprecedented increase in pupil exclusions which generated a cost implication. The Scrutiny Committee were investigating exclusion trends. The Regional Schools Commissioner, Ofsted and some Academy Heads who had a high number of exclusions had been invited to a cabinet meeting, feedback would be provided to the forum ;
- **Members asked about trend reporting.** A Bryson confirmed section reporting could be circulated but information was being provided to the SSEB for the meeting at the end of January.

RESOLVED that members note the current financial position on the schools budget.

8. SCHOOL GROWTH FUND – SECONDARY

A Bryson

A Bryson referred to the previously circulated report on the growth fund for Secondary. There was a Primary School policy in place and consequently there needed to be a Secondary version. **It was questioned if there would be an annual application for funding support in line with the Primary Policy.** A Bryson agreed that this would be added to the criteria. Each School eligible for the Growth Fund must prove annually that there was still a need for funding.

RESOLVED to approve the agreed criteria for the Secondary School Growth Fund to support planned increased in School places.

9. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Agenda

9.1 Chair

The Secretary confirmed that this was the last meeting for J Conway as her term of office was due to expire and she would not be re standing. Members showed

their appreciation for her many years of commitment as both a Primary Headteacher representative and Chair of Schools Forum. Appointment of Chair would be added to the next agenda.

15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

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