

SCHOOLS FORUM
VIRTUAL MEETING
HELD ON 6th OCTOBER 2020

PRESENT:

Primary Maintained School Headteachers: Mrs S Richardson, Mr A Ruffell and Mrs C Taylor

Primary Governors: Mrs L Dowson, Mrs M Dowson and Mr C Wilson

Secondary Academy Headteacher: Mrs G Booth

Special School Representative: Mr M Little

Trade Union Representative: Mrs M Williams

LA Representative: Councillor C Clark

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs J Armstrong – Prospected Primary Academy Headteacher Representative
Mrs A Allen – Senior Finance Partner Nicholas Postgate Trust

OFFICIALS: Mr A Bryson – Chief Accountant
Mr M Gray – Director Children's Services
Mr E Huntington – Head of Education
Mr G Waller – Senior Accountant
Mr D New – Senior Finance Officer
Mrs N Fletcher- Secretary to the Forum

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

RESOLVED that the apologies for absence submitted on behalf of Mrs E Carr, Councillor L Evans, Mrs L Graham, Mr R Henderson, Mrs L Spellman and Mr S White be received with the consent.

2. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

Following consideration members,

RESOLVED that

- a) Mrs S Richardson be appointed Chair, with a two-year term of office;
- b) Mrs M Williams be appointed Vice Chair, with a two-year term of office.

3. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

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

No interests were declared.

4. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 23rd June 2020**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd June 2020, be approved.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

6. SCHOOLS' BUDGET MONITORING TO 30th SEPTEMBER 2020

A copy of the Schools' Budget Monitoring 2020/21 report and appendix as at 30th September 2020 had been circulated in advance of the meeting for members' consideration. It was estimated that there would be a cumulative deficit of £5.737m by the end of the 2020/21 financial year. This included the overspend brought forward from 2019/20 of £4.424m, therefore the additional deficit forecast in year was £1.313m. At the Forum meeting in January 2020 a number of strategies had been put forward to reduce the deficit in 2020/21, unfortunately, current circumstances in relation to COVID-19 had meant that a majority of the savings were unlikely to be achieved. Appendix 1 outlined the revised budget against projected outturn for 2020/21 as at 30th September 2020, in the prescribed DfE Section 251 reporting format.

A Bryson welcomed questions from members.

G Booth sought clarification as to what the Further Agency Placements were which had resulted in additional costs of £188k. G Waller explained that these were specialist out of borough placements for high dependency pupils with SEND and social needs.

C Wilson questioned why there was an estimated £40k overspend due to secondary school indicative admission numbers for September 2020 being higher than anticipated. G Waller reported that Stockton was experiencing high levels of migration into the borough and movement around the borough.

S Richardson highlighted that the 2020/21 budget had been set with a slight overspend, she questioned whether this would happen on 2021/22. A Bryson explained that in for 2021/22 the proposal was not to set a deficit budget and try to clawback some overspend.

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

7. DELEGATION / DE-DELEGATION 2020/21

The Delegation / De-delegation 2020/21 paper had been distributed to members in advance of the meeting. The paper outlined the LA's proposed options of de-delegation, to enable maintained school members to seek their colleagues' views, prior to voting on the de-delegation of services. A Bryson highlighted that voting on the proposals would take place at the Forum's November meeting and results of the vote would be binding on all maintained schools within each sector. Academies could choose to buy in. Section 10 of the paper outlined the services and their related estimated funding, together with the basis as how the costs would be calculated for each school

S Richardson reported that she had already begun consultation with maintained primary colleagues.

In response to a member's question, E Huntington reported that the Support to Schools Partnership Fund was only for maintained schools.

A Ruffell requested a breakdown on the trade union facility time funding spent on maintained schools for each sector.

In reply to a further question, D New confirmed that each service would be decided separately sector by sector.

RESOLVED that the eligible Schools Forum members representing maintained schools

A Bryson

seek the views of their respective maintained school colleagues with a view to a vote at the Schools Forum meeting on 17th November 2020.

8. DfE UPDATES – FUNDING / CONSULTATIONS

The Schools Funding Arrangements 2021/22 and Other Funding Updates report circulated prior to the meeting provided information on the latest information regarding the 2021/22 national funding formula for schools published by the DfE in July 2020, under the following headings;

- National Increases
- The National Funding Formula for Schools
- The National Funding Formula for High needs
- The National Funding Formula for Early Years
- The National Funding Formula from Central Schools Services
- Other Update

And the appendix to the paper outlined the timetable / key dates set by the DfE.

A Bryson highlighted that the basic structure of the schools National Funding Formula (NFF) was not changing in 2021/22, however the DfE was changing some existing features of the formula, alongside making some technical changes as detailed within the paper. The key factors in the NFF would increase by 3%. He also informed colleagues that the LA would be consulting on the Minimum Funding Guarantee in the local formulae, with the results of the consultation to be presented during the November meeting.

A Bryson welcomed questions from members.

M Little questioned for High Needs Providers how the Teachers Pay and Discretionary Grants would be pass-ported. A Bryson reported that there would be no change to how these grants were currently pass-ported.

G Booth questioned what impact /effect changes related to the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) would have in Stockton, she expressed concern that changing to ranking from scores would have a negative impact. G Waller explained that he had yet to analysis the impact.

M Williams reported that at a recent JCC meeting concerns had been raised at the increasing PPE costs schools were experiencing due to COVID-19. She questioned whether there would be a central budget to support schools with these additional costs. M Gray highlighted that the DfE had allocated additional funding, during the period March – July, for COVID-19 related costs, but since then no further funding had been received. He explained that the LA had raised the matter with the DfE, but there had been no movement. He was happy to compile information from schools regarding their additional costs directly related to COVID-19 to support lobbying of the DfE.

RESOLVED that members note the report.

9. FORWARD PLAN

A Bryson explained that in order to meet the disapplication timetable set by the DfE, it would be necessary to bring forward the November meeting of the Forum.

RESOLVED that the date of the next meeting of the Forum be changed from 24th November 2020 to 1:30pm on Tuesday 17th November 2020.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no matters raised.

11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting be held at 1:30pm on 17th November 2020.

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