

SCHOOLS FORUM
VIRTUAL MEETING
HELD ON 17th NOVEMBER 2020

PRESENT:

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

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

Secondary School Maintained Representative: Mr R Henderson

Secondary Academy Headteacher: Mrs L Spellman, Mr S White

Special School Representative: Mr M Little

14 – 19 Representative: Mrs L Graham

Trade Union Representative: Mrs M Williams

LA Representative: Councillor C Clark

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: 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
Mrs W McConnell- Secretary to the Forum

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Caroline Taylor and Gill Booth

2. **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.

3. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 6th October 2020**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6th October 2020, be approved.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

4.1 **Union Time**

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

Mr Bryson had spoken to the Trade Union who were unable to provide a breakdown as their case work with both secondary and primary schools covered a number of areas and collective issues which were not possible to break down. Mrs Williams added that if the Union was working with an academy in respect of schools joining this could involve working with both primary and secondary schools on shared issues

A member asked what happened to any allocated funding that was not

used. Mrs Williams explained that funding was always fully spent and union representatives often undertook work in their own time.

5. DELEGATION/DE DELEGATION DECISION 2021/22

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 of services.

Funding for the de delegated services would be allocated through a formula and the authority was proposing the option of de delegation (i.e. central management) for all of the areas covered in the report for 2021/22.

An equivalent paper had been presented and discussed at the previous meeting so members were aware of the proposals they were voting on at today's meeting.

Members were reminded that maintained schools' primary and secondary representatives on the Schools Forum can vote by sector and the outcome of the vote was binding for all maintained schools in the sector.

Mrs Richardson had contacted her primary colleagues and from the responses received all had agreed with the proposal.

A vote was held

RESOLVED

- All the eligible schools forum primary representatives agree unanimously to the proposal to de delegate services.
- All the eligible schools forum secondary representatives agree unanimously to the proposal to de delegate services.

6. HIGH NEEDS UPDATE REPORT

Members had been circulated with a report to provide an update on the financial position for High Needs, factoring in the latest funding announcements

A school budget monitoring report had been presented to the Forum and showed that the majority of pressures related to the high needs budgets and subsequently that the estimated cumulative deficit on the DSG would rise to £5.737 million by the end of 2020/21. Details of the latest high needs pressures were included in the report along with the funding for 2021/22, the High Needs position and how this was being addressed.

It was noted that the forum had previously agreed to block transfers but these were insufficient to counter the significant cost pressures.

A breakdown of the specific pressures over the last four years was included in the report.

A number of measures to reduce expenditure were being undertaken and overseen by the SEND Core Group and a list of the actions was appended to the report.

Mr White requested details of the local numbers compared to national figures to ascertain the funding allocated to each category and what were the greatest needs. This would help with future planning.

7. NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA CONSULTATION

At the last meeting members had agreed to a consultation exercise in respect of the proposals for next year's funding arrangements.

A report had been circulated which set out the results of this local consultation with maintained schools and academies which covered preferences for the schools funding

formula and a 0.5% transfer from the Schools to High Needs block for 2021/22.

Of the 78 schools consulted with, 20 responses were received and a copy of the document issued to schools had been circulated along with a log of the comments received.

Members were asked to consider the following three questions and a vote was taken.

- 1. Do members agree, funding permitting, to increase the formula factors in line with the NFF? This would be an increase of 3% to the formula's core factors (plus lump sum), except for the Free School Meals which would be increased by 2% and the PFI factor increasing in line with inflation**

RESOLVED following a vote, the forum members unanimously agree to the proposal.

- 2. Do members agree to set the MFG at the maximum of plus 2.0%, assuming the level of funding permits this?**

RESOLVED following a vote, the forum members unanimously agree to the proposal.

- 3. Do members agree to adjust the Basic Entitlement AWPU if funding allocated to the LA is greater than that needed to fulfil the National Funding Formula?**

RESOLVED following a vote, the forum members unanimously agree to the proposal.

Members were asked to consider the following question:

- 4. Do members support the transfer of 0.5% (£0.687m) from the Schools Block to High Needs Block in 2021/22**

Of the 20 responses received regarding this proposal 17 (85%) supported the proposal 2 did not (10%) and 1 did not provide a view. Details of the responses received had been included in the report

A member asked why there was no change to some schools budget when they contributed their 0.5% allocation. Mr Waller explained that this was linked to the minimum funding guarantee and can therefore have an effect on the schools budget

Following a question Mr Bryson acknowledged that If Schools Forum did not agree with the proposal, the DfE are able to decide, if the local authority requested this via the disapplication request process. Mr Gray added that he would consider any views from Forum members but there was a need due to the deficit to transfer these funds and these actions would enable the deficit to be reduced.

RESOLVED that following a vote in respect of question 4 the forum members agree to the proposal.

- 8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no matters raised.

- 9. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

RESOLVED that the next meeting be held at 1:30pm on 19th January 2021.

DRAFT