

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM SUB-GROUP**

**Tuesday, 28 June 2016**

**ATTENDANCE:** Simon Newland (Chair), Jan Paine, Tony Fitzpatrick, Andy Griffiths, Tracy Prickett, Rob Staples, Alisdair Skinner, John Grubb, Catherine Tallis, Samantha Jayasuriya, Patrick McAteer

**APOLOGIES:** Richard Haynes

### **1. Funding**

- 1.1 £77 per pupil will be lost in ESG funding from Sep 17. £2.7m of grant will remain for general duties. Sub-group asked for a break-down of the retained duties and the funding breakdown. SN indicated that once the NFF Consultation was received, this would be prepared and shared as the LA would need to be clear the retained duties for which the LA would continue to have a statutory duty to deliver.
- 1.2 The Government will permit schools to de-delegate funding to the LAs to pay for central services agreed via Schools Forum. This will put maintained schools on an equal footing and is analogous with the Academies top-slice. It is not yet absolutely certain that funding for School Improvement will be eligible for this type of de-delegation; this will be clear when the second part of the NFF Consultation is published.
- 1.3 The LAs position is that they wish to propose to Forum a number of central services previously general duty Education Services Grant for schools to de-delegate funding to in order for these services to continue.

### **2. HfL Contract**

- 2.1 HfL Contract runs to September 2017 with a provision for extension. A decision will need to be made by Christmas 2016 on the future of the HfL Contract. The timeframe for agreeing any proposed de-delegation has been written taking note of this date given a 6-9 month lead in process of offering a service on a new basis. Likewise, schools will need to be aware of service offers ahead of their budget setting process. The timeframe is subject to clarity from the DfE around the parameters of the NFF.
- 2.2 Colleagues indicated that legacy of de-delegated budgets and the LA providing 'bought-in' services will need to be borne in mind when developing a menu of options for the group to consider in the Autumn.

- 2.3 The current HfL Contract enables effective up-stream work to schools which has supported a number of Hertfordshire Schools. The result has been that there are now less than 10% schools causing concern- in theory the school improvement could be reduced but instead is re-invested upstream as goalposts shift for schools.
- 2.4 If the quality of services in Hertfordshire is to be retained and schools are able to call in support when needed then the Monitoring, Challenge and Support function is critical. There may be other ways of delivering this e.g. pay as you go. Colleagues articulated that Heads that have led schools that have required support would be very keen to buy-into a service; and those that haven't will need to see and understand the need. The coasting schools agenda will be key to the business case. Schools will need to see the service as an insurance policy.
- 2.5 An alternative model would be PAYG. This would result in an erosion of quality as HfL could not operate financially on this basis.
- 2.6 For September, in addition to the detailed costings, examples that can be recognised of value-added through the £4m core contract. GBs and Heads need to understand that the money is being removed from the system and present the Hertfordshire solution to maintaining quality of provision.
- 2.6 A number of non-HfL services currently funded through ESG were discussed including Outdoor Education, School Milk, Redundancy and Early Retirement. Further thought will need to be given to the continuity of these services once the ESG ends.

### **3. Music Service**

- 3.1 The Music Service was discussed in a higher level of detail. The service currently receives a net contribution from ESG. An exercise is underway to look at a sustainable business model following the ending of ESG funding. Schools will be engaged in the process once the business model has been developed in greater depth. Colleagues welcomed the opportunity to rethink provision and suggested that schools should be engaged.

### **4. FSWs**

- 4.1 Concern was raised that the FSW agenda was effectively subsidising the remit of CS and that there is a black-hole of service meaning that they cannot be used for preventative work as they are being used to fund gaps in complex high-profile cases that need to take priority. If schools buy-back into the service then it needs to be a service run for schools and delivers its original purpose rather than to support the social services team. The business case for not continuing the service needs to be understood. There is an argument for local arrangements funded by schools in order to meet the needs of the children.