

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM

Wednesday, 21 September 2016  
Robertson House, Stevenage

### ATTENDANCE:

<b>Chair</b>	Alan Gray (Chair)
<b>School Members</b>	Richard Haynes (Vice-Chair), Alisdair Skinner, Brian Frederick, Karen James, Paul Johnson, Rob Staples, Tracy Prickett, Don Leavy, Tony Fitzpatrick, Alison Saunders, Robert Fielden, Liz Hitch, Samantha Jayasuriya, Jan Liversage
<b>Non- School Members</b>	Helen Blay, Zoe Hancock
<b>Substitutes</b>	
<b>Officers</b>	Simon Newland, Catherine Tallis, Cheryl Faint, Jonathan Burberry, Melany McQueen, Brenda Dennett, Martin Smith, Anne Powell Davies, Marcus Cooper
<b>Apologies</b>	Morris Bright, Sarah Lalis, Cllr Judi Billing
<b>Observing</b>	Cllr David Williams, Cllr Mark Watkin, John Grubb, David Williams (NUT)

### Election of Chair:

Alan Gray nominated by Liz Hitch- re-elected as Chair

Richard Haynes nominated by Alisdair Skinner- re-elected as Vice Chair

### 1. Minutes of Last Meeting & Matters Arising

Minutes of Wednesday 13 July were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Matters arising:

- Independent placements- there is an early October meeting with the High Level Needs sub-group where an updated schedule of historic changes in this budget will be presented.
- Family Support Workers review: a desktop survey on the service has been completed in draft which will be reviewed at Children's Services Board. Heads will then be consulted on the content and approach of the paper.

### 2. Final Dedicated Schools Grant and Updated Schools Budget 2016-17

Jonathan Burberry presented the paper outlining the level of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) available following the announcement of the final 2016-17 DSG.

Forum noted the changes in DSG and in the Schools Budget since January.

Forum agreed to support the carry forward of the additional DSG resources to 2017-18, as outlined in section 3 of the paper.

Vote For: 13 Against: 0

### **3. Schools Contingency Q1 Monitor 2016/17**

Jonathan Burberry reported to the Forum on the Quarter 1 Schools Budget Monitor.

The Quarter 1 forecast projects an underspend of £3.935m. The main elements of this are underspends on the following budgets:

- Independent Placements: £1.911m;
- the SEN Strategy Development Fund: £1m;
- the Growth Fund (net of extra DSG for the Fund): £0.874m

The Forum noted the Quarter 1 monitor position.

Two additional variances have been identified since the Quarter 1 monitor. These are an underspend on school rates, due to community schools converting to foundation status, and an overspend on the schools contingency.

An Annex was presented setting out the overspend of the Contingency budget relating primarily to a maintained school converting to Academy Status in deficit and three other small secondary schools in exceptional circumstances. Forum noted the very challenging financial circumstances that some schools are operating in.

### **4. Initial Report on Schools Budget Strategy 2017/18**

Forum considered a preliminary outline of key issues relating to the 2017/18 Schools Budget. These included lists of budget pressures and savings as well as the gap between the pressures and the resources available. It was noted that early years differed from the other blocks in that the additional resources provided through the Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) are expected to create budget headroom in the early years block.

The paper asked Forum to agree in principle the use of £8m DSG carry-forward to support the schools block budget, with the early years and high needs block budgets being set at DSG received.

The maintained nursery school representative urged caution about allocating all the available carry-forward to the schools block given a potential significant cut to the funding for maintained nursery schools, resulting from the introduction of the EYNF.

The approach set out in the paper was supported but will be revisited when more information is available on the impact of the early years funding changes on maintained nursery schools.

A more detailed discussion will take place at the December meeting on budget decisions for 2017-18.

## **5. Primary and Secondary Schools Funding Formula 2017/18**

The change of IDACI bands by the DfE necessitates a formula change. Unit funding rates for the new IDACI bands have been proposed to minimise turbulence.

Forum supported proceeding to consultation with schools on the proposed change to the IDACI factor outlined in the paper.

Vote: For: 14 Against: 0

## **6. Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) Exceptions and Pupil Number Variations**

It is proposed to continue the two existing MFG exceptions in 2017-18. Forum supported the Minimum Funding Guarantee exceptions outlined in section 6 of the paper.

Vote: For: 15 Against: 0

Forum supported the pupil number variations for 2017-18 set out in Annex A of the paper.

Vote For: 13 Against: 0.

Forum endorsed reopening negotiations with the DfE on the longstanding issue of Samuel Ryder's MFG given the delay to the National Funding Formula.

## **7. Recommendations Following Growth Fund Review**

Brenda Dennett presented the paper to the Forum seeking support for recommendations on three of the four outstanding items considered by the Growth Fund Review Group.

The Forum approved the proposed changes to the Growth Fund for 2017-18 which are outlined in section 5 of the paper, in respect of the following aspects of funding:

- Additional Education Needs funding
- Leadership and management funding for primary school expansions
- Withdrawal of funding when a bulge class leaves

Vote: For: 15 Against: 0

It is anticipated that a paper on funding for new schools, which is the final topic to be considered by the Growth Fund Review Group, will be presented for consideration by Forum in December.

## **8. Early Years Funding Consultation**

Jonathan Burberry presented a paper giving details of the proposals in the DfE's consultation document "An Early Years National Funding Formula".

It was noted that the proposals resulted in significant extra resource for Hertfordshire, primarily as a result of area cost weightings.

In view of the higher costs of nursery schools compared with other early years provision, the DfE is proposing a supplementary allocation of funding. However, this falls short of the additional funding currently provided to nursery schools, and is only guaranteed for two years. The DfE is expected to undertake a specific consultation on nursery schools funding in due course.

Forum noted the information provided in the paper.

## **9. 30 Hour Extended Childcare Entitlement Update**

Melany McQueen provided an update to the new 30 hour extended childcare entitlement that will be rolled out across the country in September 2017. Being one of 8 early implementer authorities is giving Hertfordshire additional time and resource to assess the necessary infrastructure implications and possible solutions. The current trial has highlighted that parents in general are choosing one provider to deliver their full entitlement of 30 hours rather than opting for blended care which is being offered. Over the coming months the priority is to equip all current providers with the necessary learning from the trial so they can start making informed decisions regarding the offer they make available to parents next academic year.

## **10. ESG Withdrawal**

Simon Newland presented a paper seeking agreement to consult on de-delegation to enable HfL to continue to provide a number of services to schools currently funded by Education Services Grant (ESG). ESG will be withdrawn from the end of the Academic Year. Without continuity of these services the impact on schools is likely to be appreciable. A transition programme is underway.

The single largest item of ESG activity is that undertaken by HfL. The White Paper set out a proposition that schools could de-delegate budget to enable the continuation of ESG related services.

Accepting the significant budget pressures in schools, Forum agreed that a consultation should be run to seek the views of schools, and that schools should

pay a pivotal role in shaping de-delegating services and monitoring their performance. .

It was noted that the Executive Member will raise the issue with the Government as a real concern in Hertfordshire.

The maintained sector voted on whether to consult:

For: 7  
Against: 0

The maintained sector voted on whether to develop proposals in consultation with schools

For: 7  
Against: 0

The maintained sector voted on a sub-group of Forum to agree to establish an HfL contract oversight group, as a sub-group of Forum drawn from maintained schools representatives.

For: 7  
Against: 0

#### **11. Outcome of SEND Inspection**

Forum noted the outcome and the findings from the Area SEND Inspection by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission that took place from 4 to 8 July.

#### **12. Behaviour Work Stream Interim Report**

Martin Smith presented an update on the progress of the Behaviour work-stream of the SEND strategy. The Behaviour workstream is tasked with developing a Behaviour Strategy which can support the delivery of effective outcomes for children in Hertfordshire. Forum noted the relevance of this work in the context of school budget pressures and the importance of ensuring consistency in arrangements.

#### **13. SpLD Work Stream Report**

Anne Powell-Davies provided an update on the SpLD workstream of the SEND Strategy. The SpLD Outreach service offer is being shaped and changes to service delivery will be outlined by December 2016, impact the budget from April 2017 and take effect from 1 September 2017.

## 14. Forward Work Programme

The Forward Work Programme is now as follows.

<b>2016</b>		
<b>7 December</b>	Budget Strategy 2017/18	Simon Newland/ Jonathan Burberry
	Results of Consultation on School Improvement De-Delegation (possibly January)	Simon Newland
	Approval of other De-delegated items for 2017/18	Simon Newland
	Approval of Centrally-retained Items for 2017/18 – Central Services DSG Block	Catherine Tallis
	Allocation of Places in special Schools 2017/18	Debbie Orton
	ENF Workstream	Debbie Orton
	SLCN Workstream	Debbie Orton

<b>2017</b>		
<b>16 January</b>	Approval of Schools Funding Pro-Forma	
	Approval of Schools Budget	Simon Newland
	High Level Needs Budget	Debbie Orton
	Early Years Budget	Simon Newland
	Repairs and Maintenance Bi-annual Report	Trevor Mose
	School Meals Price Review	Catherine Tallis
<b>22 February</b>	Autism Strategy and KPIs including Behaviour	Debbie Orton
<b>26 April</b>		
<b>28 June</b>	Review of Membership Quotas	Simon Newland
	Out-turn Report 2016/17	Saira Muschamp
	Summer Consultation	Simon Newland

## **15. Any Other Business**

### **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of Forum will be held on:

Date: Wednesday, 7 December 2016

Time: 1.00pm - 4.00pm

Venue: HDC, Robertson House, Stevenage