

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM

Wednesday, 7 December 2016
Robertson House, Stevenage

ATTENDANCE:

Chair	Richard Haynes (Vice-Chair)
School Members	Alisdair Skinner, Brian Frederick, Karen James, Paul Johnson, Tracy Prickett, Don Leavy, Tony Fitzpatrick, Alison Saunders, Robert Fielden, Liz Hitch, Samantha Jayasuriya, Jan Liversage, Nick Rowlands
Non- School Members	Helen Blay, Zoe Hancock
Substitutes	Sue Howe
Officers	Simon Newland, Catherine Tallis, Cheryl Faint, Jonathan Burberry, Melany McQueen, Sally Orr, Trevor Mose, Jan Paine, Marcus Cooper (observing), Martin Smith, Kevin O'Brien, Patricia Walker, Debbie Orton, Jennie Newman
Apologies	Alan Gray, Morris Bright, Sarah Lalis (Sue Howe attending), David Shaylor, Denise Skewis
Observing	Cllr David Williams, Cllr Mark Watkin, John Grubb, David Williams (NUT)

As Alan Gray sent his apologies for this meeting, Richard Haynes (Vice-Chair) took the chair for this meeting.

The Chair welcomed Nick Rowland (Chair of PHF) to the Forum as a new Primary Heads representative replacing Rob Staples. Forum expressed thanks for Rob's contribution over a number of years.

1. Minutes of Last Meeting & Matters Arising

Minutes of meeting held on 21 September were agreed and taken as an accurate record.

Family Support Workers Review Survey to be circulated to Primary Heads representatives on the Forum.

Cllr David Williams updated Forum on representations he had made to Government in relation to future education funding.

2. Special Schools Places, Outreach and Use of High Needs for Capital

Debbie Orton provided Forum with an overview of the current demands and pressures on special school places and an update on other issues in the sector.

Under Section 8 in the Report on Outreach Brian Frederick requested that Schools Forum referred back for further consideration the Outreach proposal for Woolgrove. This School's catchment area covers DSPL Areas 1&2 and his view was that there

were no educational grounds to restrict the Outreach Service provided by Woolgrove to DSPL 1, as proposed in the new arrangements.

However, it was outlined that the basis of the Outreach proposal was a named school to provide Outreach for each DSPL area, and this general approach was supported in discussion by Forum members.

Recommendations:

3.1 The Forum agreed the commissioning of an additional 68 places across the special school sector. The cost is estimated to be just under £1M to fund these places from September 2017.

Vote:

Agreed: 16 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

3.2 The Forum agreed to support the Minimum Funding Guarantee exceptions.

Vote:

Agreed: 16 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

3.3 Forum agreed to endorse the potential use of up to £2.266M in total of high needs funding for capital expenditure in 2017-18 in order to address pressing capacity issues in the special school sector, as outlined in section 7 of the paper. (It was noted that the use of this revenue funding for capital is subject to permission from the EFA.)

Vote:

Agreed: 16 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

3.4 Outreach Proposals agreed with the proviso that there was further consultation with DSPL Area 2 regarding the possibility of a local agreement round the role of Woolgrove.

Vote:

Agreed: 16 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

3. Exceptional Needs Funding

Debbie Orton updated Forum on the exceptional needs funding and the demands and pressures.

There is a workstream on ENF which was set up to take forward the recommendations of the independent review. One of the recommendations was to consider an increase to the budget. The workstream has carried out an exercise to review decisions made and is recommending a 10% increase. There is ongoing work regarding the multiple case threshold and recommendations will be brought to a future Forum meeting.

Recommendations:

Forum agreed to increase the ENF budget by 10% and to bring the hourly rate in line with the recommended pay scale (a total net amount of £574K).

Vote:

Agreed: 16 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

Forum also noted both proposals made.

4. Work of the Behaviour Workstream

Debbie Orton and Martin Smith updated Forum on the work of the behaviour workstream presented to Schools Forum on 21 September.

The proposals in this report were based on a reallocation of resources in accordance with the DSPL model indicators; and securing an increase in funding to ensure that no area is disadvantaged as a result of this re-allocation.

Recommendations:

Forum agreed that a High Needs Primary Behaviour Support Service is commissioned in each DSPL area in accordance with the outcomes in the SEND and Behaviour strategies and that the increased funding would be earmarked and allocated to an area only when these arrangements were established.

Forum agreed that increased funding for secondary behaviour would also be earmarked and noted that there was further work to do to determine how this would be allocated.

Vote: Primary – Recommendations 1, 2 and 3
Agreed: 15 Against: 0 Abstained: 1

Vote: Secondary – Recommendations 4 and 5
Agreed: 16 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

5a. Speech and Language Therapy Contract

Debbie Orton sought Forum's agreement on the development of a joint arrangement between Education and Health for an integrated speech and language contract from April 2018.

A question was raised about the arrangements for review and monitoring of the contract.

Debbie noted that it is a priority to ensure robust reviews and evaluations against outcomes are in place through the future commissioning arrangements.

This was confirmed by Patricia Walker, SEND Commissioner, at the table.

It was confirmed that this will go through the necessary channels and then to Schools Forum. Forum will make the final financial decision regarding allocation of DSG to the contract and will see model before and the financial parameters.

Recommendations on 3.1 and 3.2:

Vote: On integrated model
Agreed: 16 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

5. Specific Learning Difficulties Services

Debbie Orton sought the Forum's agreement to the SEND Executive's recommendations for the future funding of SpLD high level needs services in Hertfordshire.

Although it is not appropriate to fund Tier 1 services from High Needs -there could be opportunities for individual schools to purchase Tier 1 work.

Recommendations:

Forum agreed to endorse the recommendation for Model 4.

Vote:

Agreed: 15 Against: 1 Abstained: 0

6. Post-16 High Needs Funded Places and Top-up Funding at Colleges

Patricia Walker attended to updated the Forum on the budget pressures for High Needs provision in colleges in 2017/18.

A query was raised about the 4% increase in respect of complexity, and whether this was potentially inequitable, given that it was not reflected for special schools as well.

It was agreed to go back and consider this through the special schools workstream and come back to Schools Forum in February with a clearer model including special schools.

Recommendations:

Forum noted the budget pressures and agreed to the recommendations in 3.1.

Vote:

Agreed: 16 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

7. Wynchlands Crescent Proposal

Kevin O'Brien attended to provide Forum with an overview of the 'invest to save' proposal to develop a complex needs resource using an existing building at Wynchlands Crescent in St Albans. The purpose of this is to offer a residential care service for five young people who will remain attending their local special school. The children will be at the edge of care and the aim will be to return them home.

It was noted that the service will be registered as a Children's Home. Out of County Placements are usually jointly funded and the aim will be to save costs on an 'invest to save' model. A contribution has been provided by Children's Services, the CCG Boards and the Transforming Care Board.

Recommendations:

Forum agreed to contribute £140,000 to a joint funding arrangement in partnership with Children's Social Care and Health to create the revenue funding necessary to

deliver the service as an 'invest to save' model. This will come out of the independent placements element of the high needs budget, and would require monitoring of the achievement of savings flowing from the proposal.

Vote:

Agreed: 16 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

8. Schools Budget 2017/18

Jonathan Burberry provided Forum with an update on the Schools Budget proposals for 2017/18 and requested that the Forum agree the key principles to be adopted in finalising the budget.

Forum noted the present position in respect of the overall Schools Budget and that the details of the Early Years budget will be considered by Forum at a future meeting. The DfE has only just announced the Early Years funding arrangements for 2017-18 and the Authority needs to consult with providers.

It was agreed that a paper would be brought to a future meeting looking at the impact of school organisation issues on budget pressures in respect of new schools, growth and the falling rolls fund.

Recommendation:

Forum agreed the following recommendations:

To endorse the approach that £9m of the carry forward should be used to support the schools block budget in 2017-18, in order to keep primary and secondary unit funding rates in 2017-18 at their current levels.

To endorse the approach that any additional resource which is available from this carry forward should be used for an equal percentage increase in the primary, KS3 and KS4 AWPUs.

To endorse the approach that the high needs and early years' elements of the schools budget should be set at the level of the relevant blocks of DSG.

Vote:

Agreed: 16 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

Forum also agreed to support the high needs budget changes detailed within the report as the basis on which the Council should draw up the high level needs budget for 2017-18, subject to the following two provisos:

- there should be a review of the need for the budget pressure in respect of special school meals;
- there should be further work to determine the appropriate split of Early Years SEND between the high needs and Early Years blocks. .

Vote:

Agreed: 16 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

9a. Update on Item 9 – Consultation on De-Delegation for Core Education Support Services in 2017/18

Catherine Tallis provided Forum with an update on relevant parts of this paper following the publication of updated guidance on Schools Revenue Funding for 2017/18 released on 2 December 2016. This was considered alongside item 9, below.

Recommendations:

The Forum agreed the following:

- (i) To de-delegate £9 per pupil for core education services (school improvement) in 17/18 following the withdrawal of ESG

Vote: Maintained Mainstream Primary Schools

Agreed: 5 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

Vote: Maintained Mainstream Secondary Schools

Agreed: 1 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

- (ii) To centrally retain £1 per pupil in mainstream schools in 17/18 to cover other duties previously funded through the ESG.

Vote: Primary and Secondary Mainstream Maintained Schools:

Agreed: 6 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

- (ii) To include within central early years services £250,000 from Early Years DSG to support those elements of the core contract relating to nursery provision within primary schools.

Vote:

Agreed : 15 Against: 0 Abstained: 1

- (iii) To support a minimum £554,000 contribution from Central Services DSG (Retained Duties) towards the costs relating to these retained duties.

Vote:

Agreed: 15 Against: 0 Abstained: 1

- (iv) Broader financial model on which the £10 per pupil is predicated.

Vote:

Agreed: 15 Against: 0 Abstained: 1

- (v) To establish an HfL contract oversight group, as a sub-group of Forum drawn from maintained schools representatives.

Vote: Primary Maintained Mainstream Schools

Agreed: 6 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

Vote: Secondary Maintained Mainstream Schools

Agreed: 1 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

(vi) That the contract oversight sub-group should consider and recommend a model for 2018/19 once the regulatory framework has been published prior to consultation with schools and relevant grant settlements have been confirmed.

Vote: Primary Maintained Mainstream Schools

Agreed: 6 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

Vote: Secondary Maintained Mainstream Schools

Agreed: 1 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

(vii) Forum noted that the implementation of the recommendations depends on the detailed content of the relevant DfE Regulations for 2017/18, when these are eventually published.

9. Results of Consultation on School Improvement De- Delegation (Revised Paper)

Catherine Tallis presented the results of the consultation on the de-delegation of maintained primary and secondary school budgets for core education support services in order for the Forum to make an informed decision on the proposal.

It was noted that 92% of schools were in favour of contributing £10 per pupil in 2017/18 to enable core services to be continued.

10. Primary and Secondary Funding Formula – Changes to IDACI Factor and Additional Minimum Funding Guarantee Exception

Jonathan Burberry updated the Forum on two issues:

- the outcome of the consultation with schools on changing the IDACI factor for 2017/18;
- the application to the DfE for a MFG exception in respect of historic falling rolls protection funding at Samuel Ryder.

It was noted that, as Samuel Ryder's GAG was much lower than the funding deducted from Hertfordshire's DSG in respect of Samuel Ryder, the MFG exception was requested on the basis that it would not be applied to Samuel Ryder's GAG.

Recommendations:

Forum supported the change to the IDACI unit funding rates for 2017-18 in the Primary and Secondary funding formula, as set out in Annex A to the paper.

Vote (schools members):

Agreed: 11 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

Forum wholeheartedly supported the MFG exception in respect of historic falling rolls protection funding at Samuel Ryder Academy, as set out in section 5 of the paper.

Vote:

Agreed: 15 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

11. Approval of Centrally-Retained Items for 2017/18 – Central Services DSG Block (Revised)

Catherine Tallis asked approval from Forum for the holding of a number of central budgets in 2017/18.

The proposed central budgets were as set out in Table 1, section 4.1 of the report, but with the following amendments:

- (i) To continue to retain centrally funding of £78,000 in relation to the Virtual School;
- (ii) To retain centrally £891,000 in relation to Family Support Workers.

The report also sought approval for the retention of £2.8m in relation to duties formerly funded by the Retained Duties element of DSG, together with proposals on the falling rolls fund as detail in the recommendations to the report.

Recommendations:

Forum therefore voted to agree the recommendations as set out in the report as items (i), (ii), (iv) and (v), with item (i) amended as set out above.

Vote:

Agreed: 13 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

Forum noted the discontinuation of the central budget identified in section 5.2 (a) for the school workforce census.

Forum noted that an update on the position of the budget for funding children in residential care will be brought to the January Forum meeting.

12. Approval of Other De-Delegated items for 2017/18

Catherine Tallis asked approval from Forum of the 2017/18 de-delegated budgets as recommended in para 2.1 of the report.

Recommendations:

All Maintained School agreed to the Recommendations in 2.1

Vote: Primary Maintained

Agreed: 6 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

Vote: Secondary Maintained

Agreed: 1 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

13. Early Years Funding Update

Melany McQueen attended to updated Forum regarding Early Years DSG funding. The DfE response to the recent funding consultation has now been received, but too

recently to allow analysis of its content and implications. Offices will therefore need to consult the Early Years sector on the proposals in the document, and on arrangements for EYs funding for 2017/18 without pre-agreeing questions with Forum as is usual practice.

Final decisions on the Early Years budget for 2017/18 would therefore need to be made in February, including in relation to the funding formula for next year.

Recommendations:

Forum noted content of the paper.

Forum agreed to Officers consulting locally with the Early Years sector with a report back to Forum in February.

Vote:

Agreed: 12 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

14. Schools Capital Repairs and Maintenance

Trevor Mose attended to provide an overview of the County Council's planned future schools capital repairs and maintenance programme, and to advise on a number of related property issues.

Recommendations:

Forum noted and endorsed the following:

- Progress of the R&M programme and proposals for future years;
- Current status of the Government's PSBP2 programme;
- Proposals for revisions to the school contributions process.

15. Forward Work Programme

The Forward Work Programme is now as follows.

2017		
16 January	Approval of Schools Funding Pro-Forma	Jonathan Burberry
	Approval of Schools Budget	Simon Newland
22 February	Autism Strategy and KPIs including Behaviour	Debbie Orton
	EYSFF Approval	Melany McQueen
	Early Years Centrally Retained Items	Melany McQueen
	HCL – School Meals	Lin Obrien
	High Level Needs Budget	Debbie Orton

2017		
26 April		
28 June	Review of Membership Quotas	Simon Newland
	Out-turn Report 2016/17	Saira Muschamp
	Summer Consultation	Simon Newland

16. Any Other Business

No other business.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting of Forum will be held on:

Date: Wednesday, 16 January 2017
Time: 1.00pm - 4.00pm
Venue: HDC, Robertson House, Stevenage

DRAFT