

SCHOOLS FORUM

WEDNESDAY, 18 JULY 2018

PRESENT: -

School Members: Fiona Godfrey, Mainstream Academy
James Povoas, Mainstream Academy
Karen Pyman, Mainstream Academy
Ben Slater, Pupil Referral Unit Headteacher
Jackie Smith, Special Schools Headteacher
Ray Williams, Primary Governor

Non-School Members: Peter Smith, Trade Unions
Jo Morris-Gold, Early Years

Officers: Peter Nathan, Head of Education
Anne Mackay, Finance Manager Education

Also Present: Councillor Mary Martin, Cabinet Member for Education and School Attainment

Apologies for absence were received from Bob Linnegar (Mainstream Academy), Emma Leigh-Bennett (Mainstream Academy), Mark Edwards (Governor - Secondary), Clive Zimmerman (Mainstream Academy) and Emma Lindsay (Diocese of Bristol).

1. Appointment of Chair

Resolved – That Jackie Smith be Chair of the Schools Forum for the Municipal Year 2018/19.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chair

Resolved – That James Povoas be Vice Chair of the Schools Forum for the Municipal Year 2018/19.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 20th March 2018 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

4. Public Question Time

No public questions were asked or submitted for this meeting.

5. 2017-18 Dedicated Schools Grant Budget Outturn Position

The Finance Manager, Education, presented a report regarding the final position of the 2017/18 retained Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget following closure of the Local Authorities 2017/18 final accounts. The report provided

information on the final spend against the 2017/18 centrally retained budget including commentaries on those areas of the budget where forecast figures proved to be inaccurate. The Finance Manager advised that the retained DSG was monitored in accordance with standard Council budgetary control procedures and submitted monthly to the Education Leadership Team and periodically submitted to the Corporate Management Team and Cabinet.

The Finance Manager referred to the latest outturn position and explained that, as reported to Schools Forum on 17th January 2017, the overall value of the 2017-18 centrally retained DSG budget was £33.346m. This included £1.351m of 30 Hours Implementation Funding, which was included in the 3&4 year old budget. She referred to the financial movement over the year which was favourable at £0.472m when compared to the previous position reported to the Forum in March which was £0.127m above budget.

The Finance Manager advised that the main changes were due to an increase in High Needs Top ups following banding adjustments in both special and mainstream settings, an increase in the number of pupils supported by High Needs Top ups, and costs related to support provided to a school in financial difficulties. These additional costs were offset by a reduction in Post 16 places taken up, a recoupment adjustment for pupil growth confirmed by the Educations and Skills Funding Agency and increased take up of Early Years 30 Hours provision, resulting in a favourable net movement.

In response to a question regarding the balance, the Finance Manager confirmed that this will offset any in-year pressure.

Resolved - That it be noted that:

(a) The final outturn position (subject to external audit) on the 2017-18 will be £0.345m below the budget estimate.

(b) The Early Years expenditure £0.350m to create additional places was carried forward and will be paid to providers during 2018/19.

6. 2018-19 Dedicated Schools Grant Budget Position

The Finance Manager, Education, submitted a report on the latest projected 2018/19 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) retained budget position. It was noted that the latest projection on the 2018/19 retained budget was an out-turn position that would be £0.333m above budget with the projected out-turn position for the unallocated DSG balance would decrease to £0.230m. It was noted that Appendix A gave a detailed breakdown of figures and that this information was submitted to the Education Leadership Team at the end of May 2018.

The Schools Forum noted the main budgetary pressure was an increase in take up of 30 hour places by eligible 3 & 4 year olds, which also increased the DSG funding expected. The High Needs Top ups forecast has been increased due to additional places in Post 16 special provision and projections for pupils expected to be in provisions in September and costs related to the provision of educational and leadership support provided to a school. These additional costs are offset by a reduction in costs as fewer places have been taken up by 2 year olds, leading to a reduction of the DSG. In response to a question regarding the low take-up for 2 year olds places, the Finance Manager confirmed that this may have been due to the increase of places allocated for the 3 year olds.

Resolved - That it be noted that:

(a) The final outturn position (subject to external audit) on the 2018-19 retained budget was £0.333m above the budget estimate.

(b) Following the projected out-turn position, the unallocated DSG balance will decrease to £0.230m.

7. 2018-19 Dedicated Schools Grant Update

The Finance Manager, Education, submitted an update on the 2018/19 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). She confirmed that a similar report was submitted at the Forum's meeting on the 17th January 2018 and members agreed that an update on various issues would be submitted at this meeting. She advised that the report addressed the following topics:

1. The Oakfield Project
2. High Needs update including the impact of September 2018 increase in places and an update on Special Free School Place funding
3. Advisory Teaching Services (previously referred to as Commissioned Services)
4. Post 16 budget update
5. Early Years Funding
6. Notional SEN
7. Termination of employment costs
8. SEND Capital
9. Basic Need Funding
10. Free Schools
11. Consultation on 2019/20 Local Funding Formula for Schools and Academies

Following the introduction of the report, the Finance Manager, with the Head of Education, responded to members' questions and comments on the following issues:

- The growth in child population in Swindon affecting the High Needs budget.
- Social care funding boosting the DSG.
- Funding residential provision.
- Undirected funding available for the DSG.
- The LA's review of the special Educational Needs and Disability Assessment and Commissioning Team (SENDACT).
- How a deficit in the DSG may affect the High Needs Funding Block.
- Post-16 top-up funding.

Resolved – (1) That it be noted that:

a) The Oakfield project will transfer as an entity to EOTAS and this will take place by the end of the 2018/19 academic year (July 2019).

b) The report included an update on the intended actions in 2018-19 For High Needs.

c) The report included details on the 2019/20 full year impact of the increased places in September 2018.

d) There will be change in responsibility for funding places in Special Free Schools from April 2019.

e) A full review of the Advisory Teaching Services will be reported to Schools Forum in October.

f) the LA's latest estimate was that a total of 353 FTE post (excluding sixth form) high needs students will need to be financed during the 2018/19

academic year.

g) the report included information on the annual allocations for categories of providers, the overall financial year and academic year budget position as shown in Table 3.

h) a contingency budget of £0.230m for 88 identified high needs students with no confirmed destination in the financial year (Table 3) will be implemented.

i) the current budgeted figures would result in an underspend of £380k, and that the banding values / contingency will be reviewed as part of the October Schools Forum report (Table 3).

j) the indicative banding values will be reviewed if there was significant variance in actual take up of places.

k) the outcome of a consultation to be carried out in autumn 2018 will be reported to January's Schools Forum meeting for implementation prior to the commencement of the summer term 2019.

l) a further consultation will take place on options for the 2018/19 Notional SEN formula.

m) The report included an update on SEND Capital.

n) The report included an update on Basic Need Funding

o) The report included an update on Free Schools

p) The LA will arrange a consultation event for all schools and Academies in November regarding schools' budgets.

q) An Extraordinary Schools Forum meeting may be required in December 2018 to agree on principles of the new formula for 2019/20.

(2) That with regard to the 2018/19 DSG the following be agreed:

a) To set up a High Needs Sub Group.

b) The 2018/19 indicative banding values be as shown in Table 4.

c) A stakeholder consultation by the Early Years team be undertaken to assess the impact of reducing the number of Tasks per term, and to increase the funding paid up front for 3 and 4 year olds from 50% to 75% and also to assess demand for monthly payments.

d) A stakeholder consultation be undertaken assessing the impact of amending the middle rate funding criteria for 3 and 4 year old funding.

e) That further to (d) above, the Finance Manager, Education, submit an update at a future meeting of this Forum.

f) That the LA can offset any termination of employment costs against the savings made in each DSG service area, where the termination of employment costs are less than the savings incurred.

g) That further to (f) above, the Finance Manager, Education, liaises with those schools that were to be affected.

h) That the LA will apply to the Secretary of State for a Disapplication of the Finance Regulations in autumn 2018.

(3) That Finance Manager be requested to circulate information regarding the decrease in new statutory plans and the SEN support being provided.