

SCHOOLS FORUM

TUESDAY, 12 JANUARY 2016

PRESENT: -

School Members: Steve Colledge, Chair - Academy Headteacher
Wendy Conaghan, Academy Headteacher
Rhian Cockwell, Primary Headteacher
Janet Urban, Primary Headteacher
Jane Wheatley, Primary Headteacher
Andrew Henstridge, Primary Headteacher
Alison Lowe, Primary Headteacher
Susan Banks, Secondary Headteacher
Jackie Smith, Special Headteacher
David Bell, Secondary Governor
Ray Williams, Primary Governor
Charles Law, Special Governor
Ben Slater, EOTAS
Kate Adams, Early Years

Non-School Members: Peter Smith, Trade Unions
Officers: Peter Nathan, Head of Education
Ian Burbidge, Head of Finance, Schools
Anne Mackay, Finance Manager – Education

Also Present: Councillor Fionuala Foley (Cabinet Member for Children's Services)

Apologies for absence were received from Ruth Lee (Diocese of Clifton), Andrew Miller (16-19 Partnership), Ram Thiagarajah (BME), Sharon Kirwan (Academy Headteacher) and Lauren Costello (Academy Headteacher).

21. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 1st December 2015 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

22. Public Question Time

The following question was asked in accordance with standing Order 28 –

Questioner

Alastair Dixon-Patterson, Lydiard Park Academy

Question

Mr Dixon-Patterson asked a series of questions relating to (a) clarity on the amount of Dedicated School Grant carried forward at the end of the financial year, (b) the amount of £387,000 of funding received by the Local Authority used for High Needs funding and the impact on the current deficit, (c) central budget funding, (d) whether

proposed funding changes were to be viewed as permanent, (e) reference to proposed balance of funding options submitted at 5.9 in Agenda Item 4 of the report, (f) reference to the Tuition and Exclusions budgets.

Response

The Chair thanked Mr Dixon-Patterson for his questions. The Chair, Mr Peter Nathan, Head of Education, Mr Ian Burbidge, Head of Finance and Mrs Anne Mackay, Finance Manager, Education responded at the meeting.

Members agreed that public questions were to be submitted in writing at least 24 hours prior to a meeting to enable officers to provide a detailed response.

23. 2015-16 Dedicated Schools Grant Budget Position

Mr Ian Burbidge, Head of Finance, Schools, presented a report setting out the latest position of the 2015-16 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget.

Mr Burbidge advised that based on information at the end of November 2015, an overspend of £0.858m was projected against the retained DSG Budget for the current financial year. He drew attention to the change in forecasting following the Special Resource Provision peer to peer banding moderation process and an increase in placements commissioned in September and October 2015.

Members discussed the banding and top-up funding for Special Schools and Special Resourced Provision (SRP) and noted that banding allocations had been mobile over the past five years, making budgeting difficult. The Chair referred to communication sent out by the Finance Department to all Headteachers on the 5th January 2016 advising of the bandings review to address the deficit.

Resolved: That the Schools Forum notes:

(1) That the latest projection on the 2015-16 retained budget was an overspend of £0.858m.

(2) That the unallocated Dedicated School Grant balance would be reduced to £0.240m.

24. 2016-17 Dedicated Schools Grant Settlement and Budget

The Forum considered a report by Mr Ian Burbidge, Head of Finance, Schools, updating the Forum on the 2016-17 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlement, including (a) estimates of the level of expenditure to be allocated to Early Years, Schools, Academies High Needs settings and centrally retained budgets, (b) the submission of the Authority Proforma Toolkit to the Education Funding Agency, enabling main stream budgets to be calculated, (c) expenditure proposals for all High Needs block funded items including High Needs students in Mainstream schools, Special schools, Special Resourced Provisions, Alternative Provision, Post-16 and Further Education, Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools and Other Local Authority Commissioned High Needs, (d) submission of the Section 251 Budget Statement to the Education Funding Agency by end of March 2016.

Mr Burbidge, Head of Finance, Schools, explained that a census was being undertaken to determine future numbers of Early Years pupils and referred to the predicted increase in pupil numbers for 2016. He advised that the Pupil Premium

for Early Years would be based on the census figures for January 2016 and 2017. Members noted that funding for the schools block Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) had increased. Mr Burbidge referred to the increase in pressure as DSG funding for 2 year olds had remained unchanged by the Department for Education. Mr Burbidge continued to guide members through key points in the report commenting on the most significant implications.

Mr Peter Nathan, Head of Education, Mr Burbidge and Mrs Anne Mackay, Finance Manager, Education responded to the following points:

- Work being undertaken to increase the number of Early Years pupils placement take up.
- The increase in the number of High Needs places required in Swindon and how this would affect DSG.
- How options to provide the balance of DSG funding presented in 5.9 of the report would affect each school setting. Forum Members noted that due to the unknown factors that may affect figures presented in 5.9 and the brief consultation period, the Swindon Association of Secondary Headteachers (SASH) was unable to support the options presented in the report.
- The Education Support Grant - the need to submit representations to the Education Funding Agency for financial support following the proposal to reduce the level of funding next year and in subsequent years.
- Clarity on how High Need Bandings had been determined.
- Confirmation that following meetings with School Forum representatives, the Local Authority was in a position to review High Needs banding to address the deficit in the High Needs budget.
- Explanation of Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) and its effect on schools and their budgets.
- Clarity on the makeup of Central Overheads and how EOTAS's (Education Other Than At School) extra payment to Traded Services effected the DSG.
- Confirmation that Early Years was not entitled to utilise school subscriptions and licenses set up for schools by the Department for Education.
- Confirmation that future discussions would need to be undertaken regarding re-modelling Special Resource Provision.

Resolved: That with regard to **Dedicated Schools Grant Settlement 2016/17**, School Forum notes:

- (1) Swindon expects to receive a total DSG settlement of £163.550m in 2016/17.
- (2) The estimated DSG balance at the end of 2015/16 was £0.240m.
- (3) The Early Years block 2016/17 DSG settlement will be subject to revisions by DfE in light of Early Years census information in January 2016 and 2017.
- (4) Further to (3) above, the final settlement will not be confirmed until July 2017.

Early Years Expenditure Proposals 2016/17

- (5) That Schools Forum agrees the proposed 2016/17 Early Years funding rates as shown in Table 7, which will take effect from 1st April 2016.
- (6) That Schools Forum agrees a 2016/17 Early Years budget of £11.636m as shown in Table 7.
- (7) That Schools Forum notes the anticipated overall Early Years budget for 2016/17.

Schools' Budgets 2016/17

(8) That Schools Forum declines the options offered by the Local Authority to balance the DSG funding as presented in 5.9 of the report. Schools Forum members noted that they wished to make a "political" point regarding the relatively low level of funding allocated to Swindon by central government and this was not a criticism of the local authority.

(9) That representation be made to the Education Funding Agency regarding the need to review funding for pupils in Swindon be submitted by the Chair of the Schools Forum together with the Chairs of the Swindon Association of Primary Headteachers, Swindon Association of Secondary Headteachers and Association of Swindon Special Schools Headteachers.

(10) That Schools Forum notes the Notional Special Educational Needs funding top ups payable in 2016/17 at a total estimated cost of £0.400m.

(11) That Schools Forum notes Individual Schools Average Pupil Led funding be reported to the March 2016 meeting of this Forum, which will be used by the Local Authority to claw back funding for excluded pupils during 2016/17.

(12) That School Forum agrees the following de-delegations and proposed length of agreement, each phase of maintained school agreeing for their sector:

- Free School Meal eligibility administration will be charged at £4.80 per pupil in 2016/17 for primary and secondary sectors and was supported until 31st March 2017.
- Trade Union release time will be charged at £1.25 per pupil in 2016/17 and was supported by primary and secondary sectors until 31st March 2017.
- Nylands Campus Outreach Team will be charged at £12.33 per primary pupil in 2016/17 and was supported by primary and secondary sectors until 31st March 2017.

Central Expenditure Proposals 2016/17

(13) That School Forum agrees a total 2016/17 pupil growth budget of £0.616m.

(14) That Schools Forum agrees a total budget for Centrally Retained Services of £1.015m in 2016/17 as shown in Table 12.

(15) That Schools Forum notes the overall budget before the reductions required to balance the budget for 2016/17 as shown in Table 12.

Special Schools and Special Resource Provision Expenditure and Minimum Funding Guarantee

(16) That Schools Forum notes the place funding budget for 2016/17 of £7.704m.

(17) That Schools Forum notes the top-up funding budget for 2016/17 of £8.763m.

(18) That Schools Forum notes that the Minimum Funding Guarantee budget for specialist settings will be £72k for 2016/17.

(19) That following receipt of funding information from the Education Funding Agency, the Head of Finance, Schools be requested to circulate revised Dedicated Schools Grant Settlement and Budget data by end of January 2016.

(20) That School Forum representatives meet with the Head of Education and the Head of Finance Schools regarding re-modelling Special Resource Provision by end of January 2016.