

SCHOOLS FORUM

TUESDAY, 12 JULY 2016

PRESENT: -

School Members: Janet Urban, Chair - Primary Headteacher
Jackie Smith, Vice Chair - Special Headteacher
Ray Williams, Primary Governor
Ben Slater, EOTAS
Sue Banks, Secondary Headteacher
James Povoas - Academy Headteacher
Clive Zimmerman – Academy Headteacher

Non-School Members: Kate Adams, Early Years Representative

Officers: Ian Burbidge (Head of Finance, Schools)
Anne Mackay (Finance Manager, Education)
Peter Nathan (Head of Education)

Also Present: Councillor Fionuala Foley, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Karen Reeve (Director of Children's Services).

Apologies for absence were received from Wendy Conaghan (Academy Headteacher), Andrew Miller (16-19 Partnership), Peter Smith (Trade Unions) and Charles Law (Special Governor).

1. Appointment of Chair

Resolved – That Janet Urban (Primary Headteacher) be Chair of the Schools Forum for the Municipal Year 2016/17.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chair

Resolved – That Jackie Smith be Vice Chair of the Schools Forum for the Municipal Year 2016/17.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15th March 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

On behalf of the School Forum, the Chair offered congratulations to Jackie Smith on receiving the MBE (Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) award.

4. Public Question Time

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

Mr Alastair Dixon-Patterson, Lydiard Park Academy, asked questions regarding the Minimum Funding Guarantee, responses he had received to previous questions on that subject and the budget for next year and reasons for the projected underspend against Dedicated Schools Grant for 2016/17.

The Chair thanked Mr Dixon-Patterson for his questions. Mr Peter Nathan, Head of Education responded at the meeting.

5. Final Dedicated Schools Grant Outturn 2015-16

Mrs Anne Mackay, Finance Manager, Education, presented a report regarding the final position of the 2015/16 retained Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget following closure of the Local Authorities 2015/16 final accounts. The report provided information on the final spend against the 2015/16 centrally retained budget including commentaries on those areas of the budget where forecast figures proved to be inaccurate.

Mrs Mackay referred to the update presented to the Forum in March 2016 advising that the anticipated overspend would be £0.839m. She explained that due to pressures which related to the revised census numbers for 2 year olds and 3 and 4 year olds, the overspend increased. The Forum noted that these figures were lower than anticipated and this affected funding and expenditure for participation.

Resolved: That it be noted that:

(a) That the final outturn on the 2015/16 centrally retained DSG budget was an in-year overspend of £0.889m.

(b) That after taking account of the brought forward balance, in-year underspend and allocations of funding previously agreed by the Schools Forum, the total DSG balance available for redistribution as at 31st March 2016 was £0.209m.

6. 2016-17 Dedicated Schools Grant Budget Position

Mrs Anne Mackay, Finance Manager, submitted a report advising the Forum on the latest projected 2016/17 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) retained budget position.

Mrs Mackay advised that, based on information at the end of May 2016, an underspend of £0.359m was projected against the retained DSG Budget for the current financial year. She confirmed that the DSG figures were submitted monthly to the Corporate Management Team and presented at Cabinet. She drew attention to the £0.568m unallocated DSG balance and explained that this had resulted due to the adjustment undertaken following the lower than expected figures of 2 year old and 3 and 4 year old funding and the High Needs Contingency forecast.

In response to a query regarding the underspend being returned to schools, Mr Burbidge, Head of Finance, Schools, confirmed that the position would be considered but pointed out that the final year end figure would not be available when setting out the 2017/18 budget and that the underspend could only be used to finance one off projects for schools which were of benefit to Swindon pupils. He confirmed that these decisions would be submitted to the Forum for consideration as and when they arise. Mr Burbidge further referred to future funding pressures, particularly resulting from the Fair Funding consultation exercise and explained that a financial balance was sought when setting budgets.

Resolved: That it be noted that:

(a) The latest projection on the 2016/17 retained budget was an underspend of £0.359m.

(b) The unallocated DSG balance will increase to £0.568.

7. 2016-17 Dedicated Schools Grant Budget and Forward Look

The Forum considered a report by Mr Ian Burbidge, Head of Finance, Schools, that included information on the latest position of the 2016/17 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlements and budget. He explained that following the Forum's meeting on 12th January 2016, the report addressed (a) an update on the Early Years 30 hours implementation and its implications, (b) an update on the pupil growth & trigger funding policy, (c) the additional trigger and growth funding for 2016/17, (d) the potential future growth places and costs, (e) an update on the notional Special Educational Needs top-up funding, (f) the tuition service review, (g) the new Special Schools Primary provision, (h) the potential free school bids affecting Swindon, (i) the impact of the apprenticeship levy on schools in Swindon, and (j) the review to be undertaken of the Financial Regulations applicable to maintained schools.

Mr Burbidge and Mr Peter Nathan, Head of Education responded to members' queries regarding:

- The differential pre-opening start-up funding allocation between the various school sectors. Members noted that pre-opening set-up costs would be reviewed following the opening of Crowdy's Hill School.
- A member of the Forum advised that expenditure on pupil growth funding for secondary schools could be avoided as there were currently places available in some secondary schools.
- The anticipated financial impact of the increase of SENRAP provision relating to the increase in Early Years provision from 15 hours to 30 hours from 2017.
- Acknowledgment that quality assurance was an important element when reviewing future provision by the Tuition Services.
- The number of Free School bids received, progress made on the applications, reference to one form entry schools and the effect on schools if any of the bids were unsuccessful.

Resolved: That the School Forum notes:

(a) The current arrangement for the 30 hours Early Years implementation.

(b) The forecasts of required pupil growth funding that will need to be considered as part of future budget setting processes.

(c) That officers have reviewed Notional SEN funding in other local authorities.

(d) That officers will recommend that subject to modelling results all mainstream High Needs funded pupils will be included in future calculations and some element of AWPU (age weighted pupil unit) funding will be taken into account when calculating the Notional SEN budget.

(e) That officers will consult with the various Associations and present modelling outcomes for discussion at the October 2016 meeting of the Forum.

(f) The current state of the Tuition Service review.

(g) That the Local Authority intends to open a new specialist primary provision at Crowdy's Hill Special School from September 2016.

(h) That Swindon has been selected to implement the 30 hours of Early Years provision.

(i) The current status of the free school bids that have been submitted to the Education Funding Agency to provide new free schools in Swindon.

(j) The potential impact of the apprenticeship levy on schools in Swindon.

(k) That the Local Authority will undertake a review of the Financial Regulations applicable to maintained schools.

(l) That Members be requested to cascade information on the apprenticeship levy on schools to all the School Associations.

(m) That the School Forum approves the growth and trigger funding policy as detailed at 3.17 of the report.

(n) That the School Forum notes the trigger funding budget will overspend by £115k as result of the need for additional reception places in North Swindon.

8. Post 16 High Needs Funding Update

Mrs Lyn Frith, Education Commissioner, submitted a report updating the Forum on the level of funding available and the proposed funding allocations for 2016/17 for post 16 high need students that included students attending further education colleges, independent specialist college and other training providers.

Mr Ian Burbidge, the Head of Finance, Education, and Mr Peter Nathan, Head of Education commented on the various issues that influence funding allocations and responded to members' queries regarding:

- Figures that would be amended following confirmation that the Specialist Post 16 Institutions (SPI) now commissioned 41 places for September 2016.
- The need to review the indicative banding values if further SPI places were acquired.
- Recognition that this would have an impact on the overall budget.
- The confirmation that Element 2 funding would be paid on a lagged basis directly by the Education Funding Agency.

Resolved: That it be noted that:

(a) The Local Authority's latest estimate was that a total of 367 FTE post 16 (excluding sixth form) high needs students will need to be financed during the 2016/17 academic year.

(b) Members agreed the 2016/17 indicative banding values as shown in Table 2 of the report.

(c) Further to (b) above, these will be reviewed if there was significant variance due to actual take up of places and an update presented to the October 2016 meeting of the Forum.

(d) The estimated annual net costs of 40 places at Specialist Post 16 Institutions was £0.460m and will be charged to the 2016/17 financial year budget.

(e) The annual allocations for Further Education College and Training Providers totalling £1.345m will be charged to the 2016/17 financial year.

(f) A contingency budget of £0.193m for 65 identified high needs students with no confirmed destination in the financial year.

(g) The overall financial year and academic year budget position as shown in Table 2 of the report.

(h) The Head of Finance, Education, be requested to circulate information regarding the provision of Element 2 funding.

9.

Any Other Business

The Chair advised members that David Bell, Chair of Governors at Doran School had resigned from the Forum. On behalf of the Forum, she thanked Mr Bell for all his hard work on behalf of the Forum and wished him all the best for the future.

10.

Date of next meeting

Meetings of the Forum are scheduled for the remainder of 2016/17 as follows:

- 18th October 2016, 4.00 p.m. in Committee Room 6.
- 17th January 2017, 4.00 p.m. in Committee Room 6.
- 28th March 2017, 4.00 p.m. in Committee Room 6.

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