

SCHOOLS FORUM

TUESDAY, 20 MARCH 2018

School Members: Rhian Cockwell, Primary Headteacher
Ray Williams, Primary Governor
Jackie Smith, Special Schools Headteacher
Charles Law, Special Governor

Non-School Members: Jo Morris, Early Years
Emma Lindsay, Diocese of Bristol

Officers: Anne MacKay (Finance Manager, Education)
Peter Nathan (Head of Education)

Also in attendance: Councillor Fionuala Foley.

Apologies for absence were received from Mark Edwards (Governor - Secondary), Janet Urban (Chair - Primary Headteacher), Ben Slater (Pupil Referral Unit Headteacher), Alison Lowe (Primary Headteacher) and Nick Capstick (Special Academy).

25. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th January 2018 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

26. 2017-18 Dedicated Schools Grant Budget Position

The Finance Manager, Education, presented a report updating the Forum on the latest 2018/19 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) retained budget position, including (a) the year end position against the 2017-18 retained budgets on information available in January 2018, and (b) the ring-fencing of any DSG balance (positive or negative).

Following introduction of the report, the Finance Manager, Education, responded to members' questions and comments in respect of:

- Monitoring of the DSG in accordance with the Council's standard budgetary control procedures.
- Monitoring of the DSG position by the Education Leadership Team, Cabinet, People's Leadership team and Education Leadership Team.
- The centrally retained DSG budget of £33.346 million which included £1.351 million of 30 Hours Implementation funding.
- Additional funding and support to schools following banding adjustments in both special and mainstream settings and an increase in the number of pupils supported by High Needs Top Ups.
- The anticipated budget overspend of £127,000 which would reduce the existing unallocated DSG balance to an estimated balance of £419,000.

Resolved – (1) That the latest projection on the 2017/18 retained budget of an overspend of £127,000 be noted.

(2) That, further to (1) above, it be noted that the projected outturn position of the unallocated DSG budget will decrease to £419,000.

27. 2018-19 Dedicated Schools Grant Budget

The Finance Manager, Education, presented a report updating the Forum on the latest 2018/19 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlement and Budget and issues arising including; (a) the Alternative Provision and Learning Review, (b) a High Needs Update, (c) and update on Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency, (d) an update on the Oakfield Project, and (e) The SRP Supplementary Funding 2018/19.

Following introduction of the report, the Finance Manager, Education, responded to members' questions and comments in respect of:

- The creation of a town wide inclusion protocol as part of the Alternative Provision review.
- Demand levels for Alternative Provision in both primary and secondary schools and the need to develop inclusive SEMH practice and expertise in mainstream schools and reduce the need for a reduction in demand for Alternative Provision.
- The transfer of £659,000 from the Schools block to the high needs block to address sufficiency for high needs provision.
- Work by the SEND Strategic Board to develop a broad programme of activity to address sufficiency and quality for the local offer for Special Educational Needs And Disability in Swindon.
- The implementation of the high needs review report which will need to address banding methodology and moderation, and the application of guidance regarding decision making at the point where an EHC assessment is being considered.
- The review of the high needs review implementation by the Headteachers Focus Group on 19th April 2018.
- The allocation of £338,333 grants to create an additional 1,277 Early Years places as identified in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment report.
- The historical and current position of the Oakfield Project and in particular the financial implications arising from the projected £60,000 deficit.
- Current work and staffing to ensure the Oakfield Project remained viable.
- Interest from outside the Borough for 30 places in the Oakfield Project and a commitment that Swindon based pupils would receive priority of placements.
- Moves to gradual increase placement costs for the Oakfield project to remove future overspend (£150,000 had been allocated for the 2018/19 Financial Year).
- Current subsidies for pupil places at the Oakfield project.
- The creation of a new supplement of £57,000 for pupils in Special Resource Provision that do not receive the average £4,000 mainstream funding as calculated the Authority Pro-forma Tool.

Resolved – (1) That the significance and continuation of the Alternative Provision Review as detailed in Paragraphs 3.2 - 3.4 of the report be noted.
(2) That the update on the intended actions in 2018-19 to address the issues around sufficiency for high needs provision within the future envelope of the high needs budget allocation be noted.
(3) That the update on bid applications for the Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency Grant, set out in paragraphs 3.12 to 3.16 be noted.

- (4) That the update on the Oakfield Project as set out in Paragraphs. 3.17 to 3.25 of the report be noted.
- (5) That it be noted the projected in year project deficit of £60,000 for the Oakfield Project is expected to be lower than previously reported to this Forum.
- (6) That it be agreed that the project's year-end balance which will include the current in year balance already agreed Oakfield Project and the historic financial deficit be funded by the DSG.
- (7) That it be agreed that commissioned places at the Oakfield Project from September 2018 be charged to Swindon schools and academies at £12,000 per place for the academic 2018/19 year.
- (8) That the Local Authority proposal in relation to the new SRP supplement funding be noted.
- (9) That the calculation of funding due to schools and academies as set out in Appendix A of the report together with the anticipated payment dates to schools be noted.