

SCHOOLS FORUM

TUESDAY, 2 OCTOBER 2018

School Members: Rhian Cockwell, Primary Headteacher
Fiona Godfrey, Mainstream Academy
Emma Leigh-Bennett, Mainstream Academy
Bob Linnegar, Mainstream Academy
Alison Lowe, Primary Headteacher
Karen Pyman, Primary Headteacher
Jackie Smith, Special Schools Headteacher
Clive Zimmerman, Mainstream Academy

Non-School Members: Peter Smith, Trade Unions

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mary Martin and Emma Lindsay (Diocese of Bristol), Jo Morris (Early Years), James Povoas (Mainstream Academy), Ben Slater (Pupil Referral Unit Headteacher), Steve Wain (16-19 Partnership), and Ray Williams (Primary Governor).

8. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th July 2018 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

9. Election of Chair

The Head of Education advised that Uplands Special School had become an Academy and as such, the make-up of the Committee had to be reviewed. Jackie Smith stepped down as Chair and in the absence of a Vice Chair (James Povoas), Rhian Cockwell took the Chair for Agenda Item 2. Following discussions of Agenda item 2 (please note Minute 11 below), Rhian Cockwell agreed to step down as Chair and Jackie Smith re-took the Chairmanship.

10. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

11. Schools Forum Membership

The Head of Education and the Finance manager (Education) updated the Forum on Membership matters. They advised that a short review of current membership had been undertaken to ensure that the current membership was appropriate in the light of the evolving balance of schools in Swindon.

Resolved – (1) That School Forum agrees that:

(a) The number of Maintained School Mainstream members be reduced from

five to four due to there no longer being the need for a secondary maintained school representative.

(b) The Academy Special school representation was increased to two representatives with the maintained special school representation being one representative following the conversion to academy status of three maintained special schools.

(2) That it be noted that there was a vacancy for a Black and Minority Ethnic ("BME") representative and nominations were being sought through Swindon Borough Council's Change Lead for Equality and Diversity.

12. 2018-19 High Needs Review Group Terms of Reference

The Finance Manager, Education submitted a report regarding the High Needs Review Group Terms of Reference for 2018/20. She explained that at the Schools Forum meeting on 18th July 2018, members approved the establishment of a High Needs subgroup for a period of two years. She explained that the remit of the group included acting in the best interests of children and young people with special educational needs and disability and children and young people requiring alternative provision. The Schools Forum noted that meetings will be held weekly during term times and updates from these meetings will be presented periodically at Schools Forum.

Resolved – (1) That the establishment of the High Needs Sub-group, with the remit and arrangements outlined in the terms of reference, be approved.

(2) That the Chair of the Group submit updates as and when required to School Forum to ensure members be given the opportunity to debate topics raised at the High Needs Review Group.

(3) That the Parent Carer Group be represented on the High Needs Review Group.

13. 2018-19 Dedicated Schools Grant Budget Position

The Finance Manager, Education, submitted a report advising the Forum on the latest projected 2018/19 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) retained budget position and on the projected year end position against the 2018/ 19 retained budgets based upon available information at the end of August 2018. She introduced the report, commenting on the changes that had taken place since the last report, and advised that, to the end of August, the projected out-turn position was forecast to be £0.662m above the overall budget. This deficit was the result of adverse movement of £0.329 when compared to the previous position in July 2018 of £0.333m and this value of unallocated DSG balance will need to be mitigated. The increase in take-up of 30 hour places by 3 and 4 year olds also increased DSG funding. Additionally, the High needs Top-ups forecast had increased due to the additional demand, complexity of needs of some pupils and the decision to allocate personal budgets for two pupils instead of funding external placements.

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

- The use of the High Needs Contingency Budget to mitigate the DSG budget.
- The allocation of surplus funding following the return of two pupils from out of borough placements.

- The pressure on the High Needs Budget, particularly relating to out of borough placements, at other Local Authorities.
- Funding received by Swindon Local Authority for out of borough placements requested by other local authorities.

Resolved - That it be noted that:

(a) The latest projection on the 2018/19 retained budget was £0.662m above budget.

(b) Following the projected out-turn position, the unallocated Dedicated School Grant balance will be a pressure of £0.003m that has to be mitigated.

14. 2018/19 Dedicated Schools Grant October update

The Forum considered a report by the Finance Manager, Education providing an update on the latest position of the 2018/19 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlements and budget. She explained that the report included updates on (a) the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS), (b) the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Capital, (c) Primary Alternative Provision, (d) Primary Pupil Growth Policy 2018, (e) Advisory Services and Options Appraisal, (f) Notional SEN, (g) 2019/20 Provisional DSG allocations, and (h) the consultation on the 2019/20 Local Funding Formula for Schools and Academies.

Following her presentation of the report, the Finance Manager, Education, with the Head of Education, responded to the members' questions and comments in respect of the following matters:

- The premium pupil growth policy 2018 and how future funding support for new and growing schools would be allocated.
- Swindon's Free School set up and funding.
- Recognising that the growth of Swindon was creating additional need for SEN places at schools and that this was affecting primary schools.
- How a new Special Educational Needs school could be funded.
- The expansion of Swindon's Eastern Villages and the need for new schools in that area.
- The various options for the 2019/20 Local Funding Formula for schools and academies and how financial pressures will adversely effect Swindon schools.
- How post 16 and early years were funded and confirmation that the High Needs budget did not fund these services.
- How statutory advisory services would be funded directly from the High Needs Budget and non-statutory services could be covered by the Schools Block DSG and requested through traded services as and when needed.
- The pros and cons of the various options relating to the advisory services funding.

Resolved – (1) That the following updates be noted:

(a) The SENDIASS service.

(b) The Primary Alternative provision.

(2) That the following be noted:

(a) A consultation on phase 2 of the SEND Capital Investment Fund will be launched on 5th November.

(b) The ESFA guidance on the treatment for new and growing schools.

(c) The proposal to continue to fund the Advisory Services at the same rate

from April 2019.

(d) The provisional 2019/20 DSG allocations.

(e) That the Local Authority will arrange a consultation event for all schools and academies on 20th November.

(f) That an Extraordinary Schools Forum meeting will be held on Wednesday 5th December to agree the principles of the new formula for 2019/20.

(g) Note that the indicative autumn census numbers will be requested in early October.

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

(a) the review of LA expansion situations will be conducted annually and managed through potential changes to admission numbers or one off allocation of trigger funding depending on the circumstances of the school

(b) further to (a) above, information would be divided into staffing and infrastructure.

(c) That additional funds would be made available for 1 form of entry school with a large cohort.

(d) that Option 2 of the 2019/20 Local Funding Formula for schools and academies be taken to the High Needs Sub Group for them to discuss and take forward for April 2020

(e) Further to (d) above, the Chair of the High Needs Sub Group be requested to coming back with plans to the July and October 2019 School Forum meetings.

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