

SCHOOLS FORUM

WEDNESDAY, 16 JANUARY 2019

PRESENT: -

School Members: Rhian Cockwell, Primary Headteacher
Lindsey Hull, Pupil Referral Unit Headteacher
Alison Lowe, Primary Headteacher

Non-School Members: Jackie Smith (Chair) , Special Academy
Nick Capstick, Mainstream Academy
Gary Evans, Mainstream Academy
Fiona Godfrey, Mainstream Academy
Emma Lindsay, Diocese of Bristol
Bob Linnegar, Mainstream Academy
James Povoas, Mainstream Academy
Karen Pyman, Mainstream Academy
Peter Smith, Trade Unions
Clive Zimmerman, Mainstream Academy

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

Apologies for absence were received from Mags Clarke, Special School Headteacher, Andrew Henstridge, Clifton Diocese and Jo Morris, Early Years.

18. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 5th December 2018 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

19. Public Question Time

In accordance with Standing Order 28, Mr Alastair Dixon - Patterson of Lydiard Park Academy, Swindon, submitted written questions regarding a) the use of mainstream funding to support Special Resource Provision (SRP), b) the Department for Education /Education and Skills Funding Agency communication around exclusions charging and c) the publication of the SEND inspection letter.

It was noted that written responses had been prepared in respect of Mr Dixon-Patterson's questions and that these had been tabled at the meeting.

Mr Dixon-Patterson was in attendance and sought clarification regarding the financial year being utilised for the exclusions charging. The Finance Manager, Education confirmed that an authority's financial year was being implemented in the calculations. Mr Dixon-Patterson further advised that following the response he received to Question 1, he would be submitting revised questions regarding the allocation of SRP funding.

The Finance Manager, Education, presented a report updating the Forum on the 2019/20 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlement, including (a) estimates of the level of expenditure to be allocated to Early Years, Schools and Academies, High Needs settings and the Central Schools Services centrally retained budgets, (b) proposals to update Primary Behaviour Support charges and the implementation of an Early Help Team around the School pilot consisting of family support workers to work in partnership with schools, (c) the Early Years Consultation and a review of high cost External Placements, (d) the submission of the Authority Proforma Toolkit to the Education Funding Agency, enabling mainstream budgets to be calculated, (e) 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, External Placements, Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools and Other Local Authority Commissioned High Needs, and (f) submission of the Section 251 Budget Statement to the Education Funding Agency by end of April 2019.

The Head of Education explained that other local authorities were experiencing an increase in pressure on the High Needs Budget and this was affecting their DSG balances. The Finance Manager, Education, with the Head of Education guided members through the key points in the report, commenting on the most significant implications. She referred to the Early Help model aimed at supporting schools identifying families they considered would benefit from early help intervention and dedicated support. The Early Help Team wanted to work in partnership with schools to enable families to benefit from early intervention. The Finance Manager, Education also provided an update on the Early Years consultation and the review of external placement costs for member's consideration.

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

- The proposed funding for the "Team Around the School" model was not earmarked to be taken from the High Needs budget.
- The benefit of implementing the "Team Around the School" model across Swindon.
- Concerns and points raised by Swindon Association Primary Headteachers and Swindon Association of Secondary Headteachers regarding the "Team Around the School" model that included:
 - a) Financial constraints schools were working under and how this may affect service provision if funding was agreed to implement the model;
 - b) The ways of monitoring the model to ensure cost effectiveness;
 - c) The source for the additional funding for the model;
 - d) The request to review the Forum's agreement at the last meeting for a 0.5% transfer from the DSG to the High Needs budget following receipt of £524k from the Department for Education (DfE) in December 2018 and a further £524k expected for 2019/20, and
 - (e) Confirmation that this funding would be included in the High Needs budget for 2019/20.
- The Out of Borough Contingency budget was to be used to support the "Team Around the School" model.

- The need to submit a balanced 2019/20 DSG budget taking into consideration contingency funding allocation.
- The balancing of the DSG following receipt of funding from the DfE
- Reserves at the end of 2018/19 was forecasted to be £500k and would offset any budgetary deficit for 2019/20.
- The need to review the Schools Formula funding factors 2019/20 following the Forum's debate to reallocate funding received from the DfE to different blocks.
- Revised proposals required for the High Needs Block.

Resolved – (1) That Schools Forum agrees that:

- An Early Help "Team around the School" would not be set up.
 - The Secretary of State be informed that the Forum has retracted their agreement made at the last meeting to transfer 0.5% of the DSG budget to the High Needs budget.
 - That further to (b) above, £691k be extracted from the High Needs Budget
 - That the remainder pressure of 352k on the High Needs Budget be taken from the Dedicated School Grant reserves.
- (2) That with regards to Early Years Expenditure, the following be agreed:
- That the middle rate funding criteria to allow providers who are open 48 weeks per year or offer 10 hours funded hours per day be able to claim the middle rate (£4.35p/h) for 3 and 4 year olds be amended.
 - Reduce the total number of tasks per term to two, and extend the claim period for each as set out in the consultation proposal.
 - Increase the funding paid at interim task to 75% for 3 and 4 year olds, with the balance of 25% paid at actual task in line with 2 year old funding.
 - Offer monthly payments to those providers who opt in.
 - The 2019/20 Early Years budget as detailed in Table 5 of the report.
 - The offer of monthly payments to those providers who opt into the project would be implemented from the summer term 2019, be noted.
- (3) The following de-delegations for one year from April 2019 be agreed, with the understanding that each phase of maintained schools refer them to their Association for agreement and to advise the Finance Manager, Education, of the decision made by each Association
- Free School Meal administration will be charged at £4.80 per pupil in 2019/20 and would be supported until 31st March 2020.
 - Trade Union release time will be charged at £1.25 per pupil in 2019/20 and is supported until 31st March 2020.
 - Nylands Campus Outreach Team would be charged at £15.40 per primary pupil in 2019/20 for the first 6 referrals and was supported until 31st March 2020.
- (4) A total 2019/20 pupil growth budget of £662k, be agreed.
- (5) That with regards to Central Schools Services Block, the following be agreed:
- The Admissions budget as detailed in paragraph 3.61.4.
 - The Schools Subscriptions and Licences budget as detailed in paragraph 3.61.2.
 - The Schools Forum budget as detailed in paragraph 3.61.3.
 - The Travellers Children budget as detailed in paragraph 3.61.4.
 - The Equal Pay budget as detailed in paragraph 3.61.5.
- (6) With regards to Central Schools Services Block, the Forum noted the value of the Statutory Services for all pupils budget would be £0.547m.

- (7) The Finance Manager, Education, Education be requested to submit a report on the High Needs Budget proposals at the next meeting of the Forum in April 2019.
- (8) That the current position with regards to the external placements for December 2018 and reviewing the External Placements with particular focus on the Top 20 placements be noted.
- (9) That the Finance Manager, Education be requested to reassess the Schools Formula funding factors for 2019/20 and circulate further proposals to Forum members for their agreement.
- (10) That with regard to the Dedicated Schools Grant Funding Settlement 2019/20, it be noted that:
 - (a) The Early Years block 2019/20 DSG settlement would be subject to revisions by the Department for Education ('DfE') in light of Early Years census information in January 2018 and 2019, with the final settlement not being confirmed until July 2019.
 - (b) The estimated DSG balance at the end of 2019/20 was expected to be £0.544m.
 - (c) Swindon was expected to receive a total DSG settlement of £184.666m in 2019/20.
 - (d) The Notional SEN funding budget for 2019/20 at a total of £0.325m.