

SCHOOLS FORUM

WEDNESDAY, 15 JANUARY 2020

Maintained School Members: Alison Lowe, Primary Headteacher
Ray Williams, Primary Governor
Lindsey Hull, Pupil Referral Unit

Academy Members Bob Buckley, Mainstream Academy
Gary Evans, Mainstream Academy
Fiona Godfrey, Mainstream Academy
Emma Leigh-Bennett, Mainstream Academy
Bob Linnegar, Mainstream Academy
Karen Pyman, Mainstream Academy
Jon Young, Mainstream Academy (deputising for James Povoas)
Clive Zimmerman, Mainstream Academy

Non-School Representatives

Officers: Peter Smith, Trade Unions
Anne Mackay, Finance Manager Education
Sally Burnett, Commissioner, Routes to Employment

Apologies for absence were received from Steve Wain (16-19 Partnership), Jackie Smith (Special Schools Headteacher), Jo Morris Golds (Early Years), Andrew Henstridge (Clifton Diocese), Emma Lindsay (Diocese of Bristol), Nick Capstick (Special Academy), Kate Higham (Special Headteacher) and James Povoas (Mainstream Academy).

16. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved – (1) That further to Minute 16, the minutes be updated to state:

- How the 0.5% transfer into the High Needs Block will only review some of the schools (47/78) as the minimum per pupil funding levels are mandatory.

17. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

18. 2020/21 Dedicated Schools Grant Settlement and Budget

The Finance Manager, Education, presented a report updating the Forum on the 2020/21 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, the tool used to enable mainstream 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, and (d) submission of the Section 251 Budget Statement to the Education Funding Agency by end of April 2020.

The Finance Manager, Education, guided members through the key points in the report, commenting on the most significant implications. She referred to the information released by Education and Skills Funding Agency ('ESFA') on 19th December 2019 regarding the Dedicated Schools Grant Settlement for 2020/21 and elaborated on income and expenditure for the period.

Following the introduction of the report, the Finance Manager, Education with the Chair Sally Burnett, Commissioner, Routes to Employment, responded to members' comments and questions in respect of the following matters:

- How and why the current minimum funding guarantee differed from the previous year.
- Factors that may affect the Schools Forum decision when determining the School Funding Formula Options and confirmation of deadlines for a decision to be made by members.
- How the increase in the High Needs Budget expenditure plans related to the increase in demand and complexity of cases of pupils accessing this support but was not met in full by the change in the funding formula.
- How, In 2018/19 Schools Forum approved the transfer of 0.5% of DSG schools block to High Needs block to help to meet demand pressures. No transfer of funding between blocks was agreed for 2019/20. The transfer in 2018/19 equated to £0.659m.
- How the SEND High Needs Round Table meeting held recently discussed improvements to be made by all settings and not just the LA to in regards to spending funds allocated to the Block and how it would be beneficial if all schools were invited to future meetings to enable a debate to be undertaken enabling all schools to support each other through this process. Secondary Schools, special schools and schools with Special Resource Provisions were included in the January invitation.
- Concerns regarding the Admissions Budget and the need to benchmark against other local authorities.
- The pressure on the High Needs budget as Swindon has a higher than national average number of pupils accessing support.
- Further to Table 12, a breakdown of what constituted High Needs Top Ups and whilst activity had increased, the funding allocated had not increased.
- Placements available in Special Resource Provision settings and how this affected funding.
- Further to Table 19, the contributions to the budget from Children Services, Social Care Services and the Health Department towards out of borough education fees and how Joint Funding Placement Meetings were held to review these.
- How funding for out of borough education was processed as this was dependant on the pupil's needs.
- Confirmation that the budget allocations for the Advisory Teacher High Needs Services for 2020/21 had not increased for a number of years.
- The social and behavioural issues of some pupils requiring external support resulting in additional pressures on schools' budgets.
- The need for clarity when providing educational or social care support for pupils as this determined the budget it had to be attributed to but confirmation also provided to representatives that any provision that 'Educates or trains' is funded from the High Needs budget.

- How Social Care Services do not fund schools but contribute to placements for some children based on assessed social care criteria.

Resolved – (1) That with regard to the Dedicated Schools Funding Settlement 2020/21, it be noted that:

- a) The Early Years block 2020/21 DSG settlement will be subject to revisions by the Department for Education ('DfE') in light of Early Years census information in January 2020 and January 2021.
 - b) That further to (a) above, the final settlement will not be confirmed until July 2021.
- (2) That School Forum notes:
- a) The Early Years information and that the 2020/21 rates will be presented to Schools Forum at its meeting on 10th March 2020.
 - b) The estimated DSG balance at the end of 2020/21 was expected to be a deficit of £1.474m.
 - c) Swindon expects to receive a total DSG settlement of £198.022m in 2020/21.
 - d) The Notional SEN funding budget for 2020/21 was a total of £0.326m.
 - e) The value of the Statutory Services for all pupils budget.
 - f) The forecast 2020/21 Overall DSG position.

(3) That School Forum agrees:

- a) To Option B with regard to the School Funding Formula:- All factors are paid at 100% of the National Funding Formula values. The minimum per pupil funding levels (MPFL) have been increased to the mandatory values, £3,750 Primary and £5,000 Secondary. This is nearest to Option 1 from the November consultation and closest to the option chosen previously by Schools Forum but it leaves a residual balance of £1.268m in the Schools Block, before 0.5% transfer to High Needs. Option B is as above with no 0.5% transfer to High Needs Block. The residual funding (£1.268m) would be shared by 54/78 schools as 24 schools receive the same allocation in all options. There is a disapplication request to that which is pending approval by the Secretary of State before individual school budget allocations can be confirmed. Option B is to pay all National Funding Formula factors (except flat rate) at 101.3675%. No transfer to High Needs Block, Schools Block Balanced.
- b) A total 2020/21 pupil growth budget of £0.596m.
- c) The Admissions budget.
- d) The Schools Subscriptions and Licences budget.
- e) The Schools Forum budget.
- f) The Travellers Children budget.
- g) The Equal Pay budget.

(4) That the Swindon Association of Primary Headteachers agree to the following de-delegations for one year from April 2020:

- I. Free School Meal eligibility administration will be charged at £4.80 per pupil in 2020/21 and is supported until 31st March 2021.

- II. Trade Union release time will be charged at £1.25 per pupil in 2020/21 and is supported until 31st March 2021.
 - III. Nylands Campus Outreach Team will be charged at £15.40 per primary pupil in 2020/21 for the first 6 referrals and is supported until 31st March 2021.
- (5) That the Association of Swindon Special Schools Headteachers did not agree to any of the de-delegations.
- (6) That the Finance Manager, Education, be requested to benchmark the Admissions budget with other local authorities and include her findings in her report at the first Schools Forum meeting in the Municipal year.
- (7) That, the Finance Manager, Education, be requested to include information regarding the composition of the High Needs Top Ups in her report to the next meeting of the Forum.
- (8) That the Finance Manager, Education, be requested to liaise with the Chair of Joint Funding Placement Committee to provide an update at a future meeting regarding the contributions to the budget from Social Care Services and the Health Department towards out of borough education fees and how this may be mirrored in Swindon schools.
- (9) That a report be submitted at the next meeting of the Forum in regards to how Social Care, Health and Education Departments may be able to support schools when funding pupils on Education and Health Care Plans.
- .