

SCHOOLS FORUM

TUESDAY, 21 JANUARY 2014

PRESENT: -

School Members:

Steve Colledge, Chair - Academy Headteacher
Paul Boyles, Vice-Chair - Academy Governor
Janet Urban, Primary Headteacher
Rhian Cockwell, Primary Headteacher
Alison Lowe, Primary Headteacher
David Easter, Primary Governor
Ray Williams, Primary Governor
Rachael Matthey, Secondary Headteacher
Julie Tridgell, Secondary Headteacher
Jackie Smith, Special Headteacher
Joanne Brown, Special Governor
Richard Marshall, PRU
Nick Capstick, Academy Headteacher
Andy Hazelton, Academy Governor
Andrew Henstridge, Primary Headteacher

Non-School Members:

Peter Smith, Trade Unions
Ram Thiagarajah, BME

Also Present:

Councillor Fionuala Foley (Cabinet Member for Children's Services).

Apologies for absence were received from Wendy Conaghan (Academy Headteacher), Debbie Waldron (Early Years Representative) and Ruth Lee (Clifton Diocese), Andrew Wild (Bristol Church of England Diocese).

12. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 8th October 2013 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

13. Trade Union Facilities 2014-15

The Head of Commissioning, Economy & Attainment submitted a report for representatives of primary maintained schools to consider the de-delegation of funding for union facilities time for the financial year 2014/15 and for other schools to consider buying into the service on a subscription basis.

Paddy Bradley, Head of Commissioning, Economy & Attainment commented on the report and explained the present funding agreement for Union facilities. Mr Bradley explained that union representatives had a statutory right to take time off to undertake union duties. He referred to the report explaining the proposed funding options from April 2014 that had been circulated to all Headteachers in November 2013 and advised that discussions had been undertaken with Unions and Headteachers' Associations. He commented on funding options that included de-delegation of funding for maintained mainstream schools, the levying of subscription

charges for maintained special schools and the “buy back” option through the Traded Services facilities for academies. .

Peter Smith, Trade Union Representative to the Schools Forum, commented on the work undertaken by Union representatives in and for schools and advised that he was aware of the financial constraints faced by schools. He felt however, that the proposed costs in Swindon were generally low and represented good value for money. Mr Bradley and Mr Smith responded to comments put by members on the following points:

Rachel Matthey, Secondary Headteacher, confirmed that she would agree de-delegation of funding for union facilities time for the financial year 2014/15 at a cost of £1.25 per pupil if this covered all trade unions represented within the school. As the proposal does not do this, de-delegation was not agreed by the maintained secondary representative.

Resolved: (1) That Schools Forum representatives of primary maintained schools agree de-delegation of funding for union facilities time for the financial year 2014/15 at a cost of £1.25 per pupil.

(2) That Schools Forum representatives of maintained special schools and alternative provision settings agree to pay a 2014/15 annual subscription charge equivalent to £1.25 per pupil but using pupil numbers multiplied by 4.

(3) That, it be noted that, the Schools Forum representative of the maintained secondary school does not agree to de-delegation of funding for union facilities time for the financial year 2014/15 at a cost of £1.25 per pupil.

(4) That School Forum representative note that academies will be individually invited to subscribe to Trade Union facilities during 2014/15 at a cost of £1.25 per pupil.

14. Membership and Powers and Responsibilities of the Schools' Forum 2014-15

Paddy Bradley, Head of Commissioning, Economy and Attainment, presented a report advising on Schools Forum' operational and good practice guidance for 2014-15 that had been issued by the Education Funding Agency in October 2013. He referred to the regulations and advised how the School's Forum need to be representative of the school's sector and confirmed that the make-up of non-school group was to be decided at local level. Mr Bradley advised that the number of secondary pupils shown at paragraph 3.5 should have been 18,269 as opposed to 32,758.

Mr Bradley responded to queries regarding the following:

- Clarity on whether schools with 16 to 19 provisions were to be represented under this category.
- The representation of balance between primary maintained and academy schools.
- Frequency of Forum membership rotation.

Resolved: (1) That the content of the operational and good practice guidance for 2014-15 issued by the Education Funding Agency, be noted.

(2) That a working group comprising of Julie Tridgell, Paul Boyles, David Easter and Rachel Matthey together with Local Authority officers be established to review the good practice guidance and that a report be submitted at the Forum's meeting in July 2014 with any recommendations to change current practices.

(3) That the report on the current membership of Schools' Forum and profile of future Forum membership be noted.

15. 2013-14 Dedicated Schools Grant Budget Position

The Head of Finance, Education and Innovation provided a report on the latest position of the 2013/14 retained Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget. Steve Haley, Head of Finance, Education and Innovation advised that the report reflected the projected year end position against the 2013/14 retained budgets based upon available information at the end of November 2013.

Mr Haley referred to reasons for the predicted underspend that would be carried forward as a balance to the 2014/15 budget and responded to a query regarding Post 16 funding explaining that, although an underspend was being forecast, this was against the enhanced budget which had been supplemented by £1m of 2 year old nursery funding at the start of the year. The LA was therefore still incurring post 16 costs which were substantially in excess of the level of post 16 funding provided by the Department for Education.

Resolved: That the Schools Forum notes that based on information available at the end of November 2013, an in year underspend of approximately £0.242m was projected against the 2013/14 retained DSG budget.

16. 2014/15 DSG Budget Setting and Consultation Responses

The Head of Finance, Education and Innovation presented a report setting out the latest 2014/15 Dedicated School Grant (DSG) position and other funding available to schools; to secure support for the outstanding elements of the proposed 2014/15 centrally retained budget; and to finalise factors and values to be used to determine 2014/15 mainstream funding allocations relating to schools and academies.

Steve Haley, Head of Finance, Education and Innovation referred to the consultation programme undertaken with Swindon Association of Primary Headteachers (SAPH) and Swindon Association of Secondary Headteachers (SASH) regarding the various mainstream factors that would be used to determine 2014/15 funding. Mr Haley guided members through key points in the report and the tabled annex (which showed how much funding each mainstream school would be receiving next year compared to the current year) commenting on the most significant implications. He outlined the consultation arrangements with each sector and the timeline leading up to the finalisation of the 2014/15 formula funding allocations.

Mr Haley referred to the three funding blocks introduced by the Department for Education for the allocation of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) that had made it harder for the Local Authority to forecast next year's DSG, particularly in the area of High Needs, and confirmed that this funding was not ring-fenced to specific areas.

Paddy Bradley, Head of Commissioning, Economy and Attainment referred to the year on year changes of both pre and post high needs places as submitted in the Local Authority's December 2013 return and advised that clarity had been sought from the Education Funding Agency as to why certain types of pupils were excluded from the Department for Education template.

Steve Haley and Paddy Bradley responded to the following points:

- Work being undertaken by the Looked After Children Education Services (LACES), particularly pertaining to the performance of Looked After Children and the allocation of funding for each pupil.
- Simplifying Free School Meals application forms to ensure a bigger take-up from eligible parents and to prevent any further under registration arising from the introduction of free school meals for all reception and key stage 1 pupils from September 2014.
- Concerns regarding the apparent difficulty of completing on-line school admission forms.
- The need to make best use of the 2 year old Nursery funding including whether the 40p supplement should be repeated and whether DSG revenue funding should be capitalised to invest in expanded provision.
- Funding for nurseries affected by the Ofsted performance rating.
- Current funding for high need outreach and the commissioning of services available to academies.
- At the invitation of the Chair, Mr Walsh, a parent of a pupil at Bishopstone Primary School, addressed the Forum on the effect of the "Sparsity Factor" for Bishopstone School. Mr Haley responded explaining that the Local Authority would consider introduction of the "Sparsity Factor" after the expected Department for Education review and issue of clearer guidance had been undertaken. For 2014/15 Bishopstone would actually receive higher funding via the existing Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) protection scheme than would be payable under the previously modelled sparsity factor calculations.
- Confirmation that the Swindon Association of Secondary Headteachers (SASH) preferred Option 1 of the four options presented by the Local Authority regarding the increase in the Low Prior Attainment (LPA) and English as an Additional Language (EAL) funding options.

Resolved (1) That the outcomes of the consultations be noted and that with regard to **2014/15 Funding Available**

(2) Schools Forum notes:

- a) The total value of 2014/15 DSG was provisionally estimated at £148.666m.
- b) The value of the DSG balance carried forward to 2014/15 was estimated at £1.681m.

(3) That, Schools Forum supports the continued payment of a £54.77 per pupil enhancement to the primary BPPE rate in 2014/15 at a cost of £0.970m, funded from the DSG balance to leave an unallocated total of £0.711m.

(4) That, the School Forum notes the changes to the scope of Swindon's DSG.

(5) That, the School Forum notes the new Pupil Premium rates, the indicative value of funding in 2014/15 and that Department for Education information implies that approximately 1,200 eligible Swindon pupils were not claiming free school meals .

(6) That, further to 3.29 of the report, the Head of Commissioning, Economy and Attainment is requested to submit a further report to SASH regarding the educational progress made by individual Looked After Children as the continued Local Authority retention of this element of Pupil Premium funding was not agreed for 2014/15.

(7) That the School Forum notes the Department for Education would be providing capital and revenue funding to meet the costs of providing free school meals for all reception and years 1 and 2 pupils from September 2014 and that further details would be provided to schools in due course.

(8) That the School Forum notes Sport England would be providing funding to create more sports spaces in primary schools and further details would be provided in due course.

Centrally Retained Budget Proposals 2014/15

(9) That Schools Forum supports the allocation of infrastructure set-up cost funding of £35,000 per expansion class (in schools that are expanding at the request of the LA) and notes that additional costs of £70,000 would be payable.

(10) That Schools Forum supports the payment of set up costs to Even Swindon (£92,500) and Orchid Vale (£81,000) in the current year funded from the existing DSG balance leaving a 2014/15 budget requirement of £139,500.

(11) That Schools Forum

- a) Supports the payment of trigger funding, effective from 2013/14, which is based on actual pupils in each expansion class but with break-even funding provided where the number of reception age pupils is lower than 21 (Option 2A).
- b) Notes that current year trigger funding costs can, under the revised policy, be contained within the existing budget.
- c) Agrees to the central retention of a 2014/15 trigger funding budget based on meeting the costs of option 2A of £0.515m as set out in Appendix 1.

(12) That Schools Forum agrees the overall 2014/15 centrally retained pre 16 high needs budgets totalling £5.207m as set out in Appendix 2.

Early Years Proposed Budgets 2014/15

(13) That Schools Forum notes the 2014/15 disadvantaged 2 year old position and agrees that at the Forum's meeting in March 2014, members are to consider the budget of £2.628m subject to a potential reduction or redirection of £0.176m pending consideration of the affordability and priority of the £0.40 per hour supplement.

(14) That the Schools Forum notes the 2014/15 3 and 4 year old funding position and agrees a 2014/15 budget of allocation of £7.823m.

High Needs Specialist Settings – Pre 16

(15) That Schools Forum notes that the Local Authority was seeking to establish 2014/15 pre 16 specialist setting funding within an assumed envelope of £18.1m subject to a review of the overall DSG high need budget position at the March 2014 Schools Forum.

16) That Schools Forum approves the 2014/15 top up rates for Riverside at £7,500 and Stratton £10,700.

17) That Schools Forum considers the Local Authority's proposals regarding high needs top-up funding and

- a) Supports the principle of providing higher supplements for Special Resource Provision (SRP)'s
- b) Supports the review of higher funded settings by the task group during 2014 to ensure value for money was being provided

(18) Schools Forum notes the 2014/15 funding position relating to pre 16 specialist setting funding and to challenge/support the LAs approach.

High Needs Specialist Settings – Post 16

(19) That Schools Forum notes:

- a) The provisional estimates of 2014/15 academic year post 16 costs are £5.923m, including a contingency of £0.723m.
- b) That an update on the post 16 position would be reported at the Forum in March 2014 when the High Need Block DSG position was clarified.

Mainstream Settings

(20) That Schools Forum notes the increased delegation of £337,500 via a secondary BPPE enhancement of £32 per pupil to 2014/15 so that schools had sufficient funding to pay top up fees for emotionally vulnerable pupils.

(21) That the Schools Forum secondary sector representatives favoured maintaining existing rates and did not support;

- a) An increased secondary Low Prior Attainment (LPA) rate in 2014/15 of £1,000 to be funded by reducing secondary BPPE funding by approximately 3.8%.
- b) An increased secondary English as an Additional Language (EAL) funding rate of £700 in 2014/15 funded by reducing secondary BPPE rates by approximately 0.08%.

(22) That Schools Forum notes that:

- a) The Local Authority would be unable to centralise PFI Affordability Gap funding in 2014/15 but would attempt to do so in 2015/16.
- b) The Local Authority would not be establishing a reception uplift factor whilst calculating 2014/15 school funding allocations but will keep the matter under review.
- c) The Local Authority would not be establishing a Sparsity Factor whilst calculating 2014/15 school funding allocations but would keep the matter under review.
- d) That the estimated mainstream funding position summary for 2014/15 subject to Department for Education verification, be noted as illustrated on Annex A which was tabled at the meeting and showed an analysis of each mainstream schools pupil and funding changes between 2013/14 and 2014/15.

DSG and School Funding Prospects 2015/16

(23) That Schools Forum notes the potential implications for school funding in 2015/16.