

SCHOOLS FORUM

TUESDAY, 20 JANUARY 2015

PRESENT: -

School Members: Steve Colledge, Chair - Academy Headteacher
Janet Urban, Vice-Chair - Primary Headteacher
Rhian Cockwell, Primary Headteacher
Jackie Smith, Special Headteacher
Lauren Connor, Academy Headteacher
Wendy Conaghan, Academy Headteacher
Ben Slater, EOTAS
Sue Banks, Secondary Headteacher
Jane Wheatley, Primary Headteacher
David Bell, Chair of Governors

Non-School Members: Peter Smith, Trade Unions

Also Present: Councillor Fionuala Foley (Cabinet Member for Children's Services)
Bev Pennekett, Education Funding Agency

Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Henstridge (Primary Headteacher), Ray Williams (Primary Governor), Ruth Lee (Diocese of Clifton), Andrew Miller (16-19 Partnership), Ram Thiagarajah (BME), Sharon Kirwan (Academy Headteacher), Andrew Wild (Diocese - Bristol) and Charles Law (Special Governor).

18. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th October 2014 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

19. 2014-15 Dedicated Schools Grant Budget Position

The Head of Finance, Education, provided a report on the latest position of the 2014/15 retained Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget. Ian Burbidge, Head of Finance, Education advised that the report reflected the projected year end position against the 2014/15 retained budgets based upon available information at the end of December 2014.

Mr Burbidge referred to reasons for the predicted underspend that would be carried forward as a balance to the 2015/16 budget. Mr Paddy Bradley, Head of Economy, Skills and Property Development, responded to a query regarding the potential use of the forecast underspend to top up the high needs funding.

In response to a query on the possibility of allocating the underspend during the 2014/15 financial year based on the 2014/15 pupil numbers, Mrs Bev Pennekett, Education Funding Agency, confirmed that the regulations did not permit underspends to be allocated during the current financial year and that whilst it could be used to support high need pressures, it could only be distribute within the formula.

Resolved: That the Schools Forum notes that based on the information available at the end of December 2015, an in-year underspend of £0.441m is projected against the 2014/15 retained Dedicated Schools Grant budget.

20. 2015-16 Dedicated Schools Grant Settlement and Budget

The Forum considered a report by Ian Burbidge, Head of Finance, Education seeking the Forum's approval of the Locality Authority's proposals for local formula and funding issues for 2015/16. The report also asked the Forum to consider proposals on the level of expenditure that would be allocated to Early Years, Schools, Academies, High Needs setting and centrally retained budgets and to note the impact of these decisions on individual settings.

Mr Paddy Bradley, Head of Economy, Skills and Property Development referred to the new format of presenting the Dedicated Schools Grant Settlement and Budget report and introduced Mr Ian Burbidge who guided members through key points in the report and commented on the significant applications. He commented on the Dedicated Schools Grant Settlement for 2015 comprising of Early Years, Schools and High Needs blocks and explained that the first part of the report attempted to provide information on future settlements yet to be determined. The Forum considered each recommendation in turn and voted on each element of the funding formula and proposals.

Mr Bradley, Mr Burbidge and Ms Pennekett responded to questions and observations on the following issues:

- Further to 3.16 of the report, evidence would be submitted by the Local Authority to the Minister for Schools on how SEN funding apportioned and utilised.
- Reason for the difference between Education Funding Agency and Local Authority 2014/15 funding allocation figures for academies. It was noted the profile was defined by the local formula and that some schools were adversely affected more than others.
- A modelling exercise to be undertaken determining if any actions would need to be taken prior to funding allocation.
- Confirmation that de-delegation items had to be voted on annually.
- Confirmation that maintained schools were able to vote collectively on de-delegation but academies had to vote individually.

Resolved: That, with regards to the **2015/16 Dedicated Schools Grant Settlement**, Schools Forum notes that:

(1) Swindon expects to receive a total Dedicated Schools Grant settlement of £161.003m in 2015/16.

(2) The Education Funding Agency would fund £0.510m for Uplands Post 16 places.

(3) The estimated Dedicated Schools Grant balance at the end of 2014/15 was £1.154m

(4) In total, £162.667m of Dedicated Schools Grant/ Education Funding Agency funding was available and next year's spending proposals would need to be contained within this figure.

(5) The early years block 2015/16 DSG settlement would be subject to revisions by Department for Education in light of Early Years census information in January 2016.

2015/16 Dedicated Schools Grant Funded Budget

That Schools Forum:

(6) Agrees to the proposed 2015/16 early years funding rates as shown in Table 6 of the report that will take effect from 1st April 2015.

(7) Approves a 2015/16 early years budget of £10.986m as shown in Table 6 of the report.

(8) Notes the 2015/16 mainstream school funding allocations as shown at Annex A of £122.520m, supporting 29,303 pre 16 pupils.

(9) Notes the Notional SEN funding top ups payable in 2015/16 (Shown in Annex B) at a total estimated cost of £0.350m.

(10) Notes the Individual schools average pupil led funding (shown at Annex A), which would be used by the LA to claw back funding for excluded pupils during 2015/16.

(11) Agree the following de-delegations and proposed length of agreement:

a) Free School Meal eligibility administration will be charged at £4.80 per pupil in 2015/16 and is supported until 31st March 2016.

b) Trade Union release time will be charged at £1.25 per pupil in 2015/16 and is supported until 31st March 2016.

c) Notes that further to (b) above, the Secondary Association of Swindon Headteachers voted against this resolution.

d) Nylands Campus Outreach Team would be charged at £12.33 per primary pupil in 2015/16 and was supported until 31st March 2016.

(12) Approves a total 2015/16 pupil growth budget of £0.281m, as shown at Annex C.

(13) Approves the use of £0.465m from the National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) reserve to reduce central equal pay liability.

(14) Agrees a total budget for Centrally Retained Services of £0.943m in 2015/16 as shown in Table 9.

(15) Notes the funding changes to Special School and Special Resourced Provision budgets as described in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the report and which have been consulted on with the High Needs Task and Finish Group as shown in the minutes attached at Annex E.

(16) Notes the proposed Special School and Special Resourced Provision budgets shown at Annex D, subject to the agreement regarding Therapy Supplements.

(17) Agrees a increase in funding by £124,075 to augment the Therapy supplement in 2015/16.

(18) Notes the impact of the Minimum Funding Guarantee on Special Schools and SRPs as shown at Annex D.

(19) Agrees to the Local Authority's proposals for High Needs Budgets as described in paragraphs 12 to 18 of this report, summarised in Table 23 and listed below:

- a) Alternative Provision
- b) Commissioned High Needs Services
- c) Post 16 High Needs Budgets
- d) Mainstream School Top Up Funding
- e) External Placements (Pre 16)
- f) High Needs Contingency
- g) Other Centrally Retained High Needs Services

(20) Notes the under allocation of Dedicated Schools Grant of £0.278m.

(21) That further to (20) above, the Head of Finance, Education be requested to submit proposals for how this funding should be allocated to the Schools Forum in March 2015.

(22) Agrees to the proposed use of £0.080m of DSG balances in 2014/15 as described in paragraph 21.2 of this report.