

SCHOOLS FORUM

28 JANUARY 2013

Present: Mark Eynon (Chairman & Furze Platt Senior Governor), Gill Cocklin (South Ascot Primary Head Teacher), Isabel Cooke (White Waltham Head teacher), Clive Haines (Wessex Governor), Ania Hildrey (Manor Green School), Dan Jacoby (Governor Desborough), Gina Kendall (PVI Rep), Helen McHale (Maidenhead Nursery), Alison Penny (Woodlands Park Primary Head Teacher), Richard Pilgrim (Charters Head Teacher), Cynthia Pitteway (Knowl Hill Primary) and Nick Stevens (Wessex Primary Head Teacher)

Officers: Dominic Asater, Edmund Bradley, Sandy Brown, Sarah Edwards, Rhidian Jones, Angela Wellings and Simon Wright.

PART I

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Phill Bicknell, Gaynor Goodman, Kathleen Higgins, Phyllis James, Gill Labrum, and Gillian May

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were received.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2012 were agreed as a correct record subject to the inclusion of an apology for absence from Gina Kendall.

Matter arising from the minutes:

- a) Gill Cocklin asked if there was any progress in respect of the appointment of substitute members. Nick Stevens reported that two substitutes had been nominated for the primary school representatives. It was agreed that the names be forwarded to the Clerk. The Chairman suggested it was important that substitutes attended meetings to gain an understanding of how the Forum operated. In respect of substitutes for secondary schools there was a meeting on 7th February at which it was hoped nominations could be made.

CENTRAL SCHOOLS BUDGET 2012/2013 – UPDATE ON PROJECTED YEAR AND OUTTURN

Edmund Bradley introduced the report and explained that underspend totalled £1,052k which was an increase on previous figures. The main changes since the last report were outlined and in particular the underspend relating to central SEN, including SEN recoupment, out-borough special school placements and allocations for exceptional need. It was reported that other new variances related to staffing underspend in the PRU, costs of respite, where the continued closure of the Manor Green Respite Unit has resulted in underspend on the DSG's 'contribution to respite' budget. The new variances had increased the overall

projected underspend beyond the anticipated figure reported in December. The allocation of funding to schools was clarified in respect of current and future financial years.

The Chairman highlighted the increased underspend and that if this was repeated the forum would need to discuss allocation for future years.

In response to queries from Forum members it was clarified that the surplus was £1,025k as at 31 March 2012. £317k had been allocated as part of the 2012-13 base budget, and confirmation was given that £500k had been allocated to schools in January 2013 as a one-off allocation in the current financial year as agreed at the December 2012 School Forum meeting. The remaining £208k of the brought forward surplus would be added to the projected 2012-13 underspend of £1,052k referred to in the paper making a combined projected 2012-13 surplus of £1,260k. Of this amount, it was planned to allocate £500k in the base budget for 2013-14 and £500k in 2014-15, as set out in the DSG budget paper discussed at the December 2012 meeting and repeated in the paper for item 6 on the agenda. It was then proposed that the remaining £260k would be allocated to schools and PVI providers before 31 March 2013 as a further one-off in-year allocation. It was indicated that more detailed information was included in the following report on the DSG Settlement and draft Schools Budget.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

To note that the estimated 2012-13 year end outturn projection for the central Schools Block Budget of £9.3 million, reported to Cabinet in January, is an underspend of £1,052k.

2013-14 DSG SETTLEMENT AND DRAFT 2013-14 SCHOOLS BUDGET

Members of the Forum considered an updated report in respect of the draft budget for the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2013/2014. Dominic Asater introduced the report and outlined the key changes since the December Forum meeting. The DSG settlement released on 19 December was explained and the Forum noted that a number of DSG adjustments were still awaited so the budget figures were not finalised.

The Forum then discussed in detail the main headings of funding, expenditure and savings & growth shown in the report.

Funding

It was noted that the following aspects were covered in the report:

- The updates in the report that reflected the decisions taken at the December 2012 Forum meeting.
- The variances since the December report as shown in Paragraph 4.4 of the report.
- Draft Pupil Premium figures based on the January census outcomes.
- That no adjustment was needed on funding for post 16 pupils.

The Forum considered options for allocation of funding. Concern was expressed about sustainability of the budget and allocations being made in future budgets for what were one-off allocations. It was acknowledged that it would be possible to remove the allocations and then decide on the distribution by discussing individual projects. Discussion ensued on whether to retain an additional £260k for allocation in 2014/2015 or allocate it in 2013/2014. The Chairman suggested that earlier allocation would assist in schools meeting funding guarantee criteria and increase the capping levels.

The Forum acknowledged recent surpluses that had been achieved but had to be cognisant that deficits were also possible and budget allocations needed to reflect this. A Forum representative suggested that schools would face serious funding decisions in 2015/2016 when the DSG balances would have been used up. The concern was noted but it was emphasised that schools had built up surpluses, funding should be spent on children currently at school and bursars were aware of the situation. It was noted that a new national funding formula would be in place post 2015.

Dominic Asater highlighted the 22 January submission of the RBWM formula pro forma to EFA had been based on decisions at the December forum meeting. The Forum accepted officer advice to retain the allocation of £500k in the base in 2013/2014 and instead make a one-off allocation of £260k in the current financial year.

The revised proposal is shown in the table below:

Summary of DSG Balances and usage					
Current proposal as per December Forum					
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Opening Balance		-1.025	-1.008	-0.508	-0.008
Base		0.317	0.500	0.500	
One Off Allocation to schools (January 2013)		0.500			
In Year DSG Surplus / Deficit		-0.800			
Closing Balance	-1.025	-1.008	-0.508	-0.008	-0.008
Revised Proposal based on January Forum					
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Opening Balance		-1.025	-1.000	-0.500	0.000
Base		0.317	0.500	0.500	
One Off Allocation to schools (January 2013)		0.500			
One Off Allocation to schools (31 March 2013)		0.260			
In Year DSG Surplus / Deficit		-1.052			
Closing Balance	-1.025	-1.000	-0.500	0.000	0.000
Note: Highlighted figures for one off allocation to schools at 31st march 2013 will change depending on the year end outturn position.					

Expenditure

It was noted that the following aspects were covered in the report:

- Changes in funding formula to schools discussed at recent meetings.
- Details of changes to the ISB approved in December 2012 and shown in Table 5 in the report.
- Changed arrangements for central management of Copyright Licences
- Reduced need for SEN funding and revised SEN unit rate calculations shown in Table 7.
- The impacts of changes in the National Non Domestic Rates legislation could release extra funding of £250k.
- The transfer of Post 16 SEN funding for FE/Sixth Form and top up funding for non-maintained Special School providers.
- Changes in funding for Early Years provision particularly for 2 year olds.
- Savings in respect of historic commitments and statutory services.

Clarification was given of the SEN unit rate increase as a result of funding being released as a result of a reduction in the percentage of pupils underachieving allowing reallocation of funds.

The Forum acknowledged issues regarding the low uptake in respect of free entitlement for 2 year olds and ongoing discussions to improve the situation. There was concern however at plans to allocate £187k to headroom for distribution amongst various DSG budget headings. Forum members suggested that it was difficult to predict uptake and the impact of changes in universal credit and other benefits and a strategic approach was required to maintain service levels. Officer acknowledged the assumptions made in the budget and this was considered sufficient to meet demand. It was noted that only a third of funding for 3/4 year olds was for publicly maintained nurseries with the rest going to private sector providers.

In regard to Education Psychology services confirmation was given that services were available for Academies on the same basis as for maintained schools. The contribution from DSG towards psychology services would remain in place for the coming year.

In respect of the Pupil Number Growth Fund it was questioned as to whether the allocation of £302k was sufficient as concerns had been raised by schools. Officers confirmed there had been consultation and was fully funded from next year. It was noted that Cabinet would be considering a longer term strategy in March but there was land issues with providing new accommodation. The Chairman highlighted concerns at 'short term' fixes and the level of funding for schools taking on extra pupils. Discussion ensued on alternative funding formulas.

Savings and Growth

- An analysis of structural under spends in existing budgets and proposals for using released funding in support of the Schools Budget.
- The allocation of funding as shown in Table 28 of the report.

In response to a question it was clarified that speech and language services now needed to be financed from DSG from 2013/2014. The costs of speech and language provision were a legitimate cost to the central Schools Budget where such provision was specified in SEN statements, although it was acknowledged as a 'grey' area. The Principal Education Officer outlined the costs of the service and proposed reductions of £20k. It was advised that the service had been re-rendered with the provision of more classroom based delivery. It was emphasised that it was a small number of children accessing the service.

The Chairman then summed up the debate and outlined the recommendations contained in the report.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

- 1) To approve the budgets as set out in resolutions 2) to 4) below as required by Regulations.
- 2) To approve specific centrally held budgets totalling £851,980 as set out in paragraph 30 and Table 20 of the report and shown in summary below;

Centrally Held Budget	Proposed 2013/14 budget
Admissions	£306,020
Schools Forum	£51,230
Carbon Reduction Commitment	£100,000
Capital Expenditure from Revenue	£96,000
Contribution to combined budgets	£298,730
TOTAL CENTRALLY HELD AND SCHOOLS FORUM APPROVED BUDGETS	£851,980

- 3) To approve a central budget for Significant Pupil Number Growth as described in paragraph 25 of the report and Annex A. RBWM is proposing a budget of £301,940 in 2013/14; and
- 4) To approve the budgets for Early Years Expenditure as set out in Paragraphs 23 and 30 of the report and shown in summary below;

	Proposed 2013/14 Budgets
Funding for 3 / 4 year olds	
Maintained Nursery Schools	£980,522
Nursery Classes in Maintained Schools	£1,257,964
Private, Voluntary and Independent providers of Nursery Education	£4,162,661
Subtotal Free Education for 3 & 4 year olds	£6,401,147
Funding for 2 year olds	
Existing budget for direct provision of 2 year old free entitlement	£270,000
Extension of the 2 year old free entitlement	£376,380
Staff Budgets in support of cross borough Early Years provision	£80,000

Subtotal 2 Year Old Free Entitlement	£696,380
Other Central Early Years Budgets	
The Early Years elements of the following budgets which have been delegated to mainstream schools; Free School Meals, Maternity Cover and Union Representation, Licenses, Behaviour Support	£62,000
Subtotal Other Centrally Held Early Years Budgets	£62,000

RBWM SCHOOL FUNDING PRO FORMA SUBMITTED TO EFA 22 JANUARY 2013

The Forum received and noted for information, a pro forma submitted to EFA on 22 January 2013.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of business raised by Forum members.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates of the future meetings were noted as follows:

- 5 March 2013 – Ascot/Bray, Town Hall, Maidenhead.

It was noted that dates for further meetings would be agreed with the Chairman and circulated to Forum members.

MEETING

The meeting, which opened at 3.30pm, ended at 5.55pm.