

SCHOOLS FORUM

11 DECEMBER 2013

Present: Head Teacher Representatives: Richard Pilgrim, Gill Cocklin, Alison Penny, Nick Stevens, Stuart James, Eileen Hinds.

Governor Representatives: Dan Jacoby, Cynthia Pitteway.

Non- School Representatives: Viv Robinson.

Officers: Alison Alexander, Edmund Bradley, David Scott and David Cook.

PART I

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Isabel Cooke, Helen McHale, Gill Labrum, and Phyllis James.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were received.

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Nick Stevens was elected as vice-chairman of the Schools Forum.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

2014-15 SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA – 31 OCTOBER SUBMISSION TO DFE

Richard Pilgrim, Chairman of the Schools Forum, informed the Forum that the report confirmed the changes made to the RBWM's 2014-15 school funding formula following consultation with schools.

In response to questions the forum was informed that deprivation funding had been increased after being recommended by the Funding Working Group and supported by a majority of schools who responded to the consultation. Additional support was required to support a small cohort of children who required extra support.

It was agreed that there was a need to support these children, however it was noted that not all of them were applying for free school meals and that there was no accountability in place to measure if the additional funding was producing positive outcomes.

The Forum noted that as a result of Capping it had been agreed that those schools that gained would contribute towards those that fared less favourably to ensure that no school was under the minimum funding guarantee.

RESOLVED: That the Forum note the changes to the 2014-15 formula.

TARGETED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR SEN

Richard Pilgrim, Chairman of the Schools Forum, informed the Forum that £150k had been set aside in the High Needs Block of the 2013-14 Schools Budget for the purpose of allocating additional SEN funding to schools. The fund was for schools where, because of a disproportionately high number of pupils with special educational needs, or because of a relatively low numbers of pupils who attract low prior attainment funding, it would be unreasonable to expect the first £6,000 of additional support for their pupils to be provided from their delegated budget share.

The Forum was informed that the new methodology was a two step process that allocated funding to ensure schools received £6,000 for every statemented pupil. The remaining funding would be allocated to schools where the proportion of statemented pupils was higher than the average for their sector.

FOLLOW UP TO ALLOCATION OF DSG SURPLUS AND PROPOSALS FOR CHANGES TO SCHOOL BUDGET BASELINE

Richard Pilgrim, Chairman of the Schools Forum, informed the Forum that previously the schools' delegated budgets and central expenditure budgets had been funded by the annual delegated schools grant allocation and boosted by an allocation from accumulated surplus. Previously the Forum had agreed that using one-off funding to support recurring base budgets was unsustainable. It was proposed to remove this additional funding from the 2014-15 baseline Schools Budget and allocate some of the remaining DSG surplus as a one-off allocation to schools and early years providers.

The Forum was informed that the LA were not allowed to give any future surplus back to schools unless it was via the funding formula. Alternatively any underspend could be used to support central expenditure in the schools block, or transferred to the high needs or early years block. It was recommended that once any future surplus reached a set level then a report would be brought to the Forum to consider how to allocate any underspend.

The Forum discussed how there had been a reduced need to send SEN pupils outside the borough once Manor Green School moved to a new campus, the school was now oversubscribed so a reserve may be required to meet future SEN requirements. The Forum were informed that officers were looking at options to expand SEN capacity within the borough.

With regards to the allocation of the existing reserve the Forum were given two options to consider; the allocation of £4,522 per primary school and £15,022 per secondary school or an option to increase AWPU rates on a per pupil bases as outlined in the report. The Forum recommended that the options be combined so an agreed lump sum was given to schools with a surplus being divided amongst schools on a per pupil basis.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That:

- **£500k be removed from the 2014-15 base budgets as set out in paras 2.3-2.6.**
- **£418k from the remaining £568k DSG Surplus be allocated to schools and early years providers in 2014-15 for one year only, on a combination of per school and per pupil basis.**

2014-15 SCHOOLS BUDGET – PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS

Edmund Bradley, Finance Partner (Children & Schools), informed the Forum that the report presented preliminary proposals for the 2014-15 Schools Budget. It set out the latest estimates of funding available in 2014-15, provided an indication of RBWM's expenditure plans for 2014-15, gave the Forum an opportunity to consider options they would need to vote upon at their January 2014 meeting and provided a summary of the movements between the 2013-14 base budget and the provisional 2014-15 budget.

In response to questions the Forum were informed that it would be possible to produce a tracking report showing one off allocation of funds, that the level of DSG contribution to combined services budgets varied between authorities, that the LEA could hold funds for future class expansion (from 1 form entry to 2) and that some of the funding for high needs pupils was there to help pupils with extra needs settle into schools.

Forum members were asked to consider the draft report in preparation of the January 2014 meeting, and to seek views from primary and secondary head teacher colleagues regarding decisions on de-delegation and central Schools block budgets that Schools Forum will be asked to make in January.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Forum noted the future meeting dates and were informed that the next meeting would now take place at 8am on Monday 20th January 2014.

MEETING

The meeting, which opened at 2.30pm, ended at 4.45pm.