

SCHOOLS FORUM

TUESDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2018

PRESENT: Hugh Boulter, Isabel Cooke, Sarah Cottle, Amanda Dean, Anne Entwistle, Jo Haswell, Richard Pilgrim, Joolz Scarlett, Nick Stevens, Martin Tinsley (Chairman), Chris Tomes, Michael Wallace

Officers: Kevin McDaniel, James Norris, Tracey Anne- Nevitt and Nabihah Hassan-Farooq

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received by Jo Haswell. Members of the forum were informed that Jo Haswell had resigned and that Steve McCormack would be in attendance moving forward.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on the 27th September be approved.

Actions from previous minutes:

ACTION- That James Norris, Head of Finance (AfC) recirculate details of the updated membership list Schools Forum to members.

ACTION- That Kevin McDaniel update the Forum on the progress of the Rolls Fund in Windsor and provide an update on Consultation Options- Braywick.

ACTION- That Kevin McDaniel chase the response to the letter sent to the Department for Education on behalf of the Schools Forum

WELLBEING TEAM AND BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT TEAM FUTURE PLANNING

Rebecca Askew, Senior Educational Psychologist outlined the above titled item. The purpose of the report was to provide the Schools Forum with the forecasted costs and income for the Behaviour Support Team and Wellbeing Team 2018/19; to provide a SWOT analysis to compare and contrast options for the future directions of the Behaviour Support Team to include retain both the Wellbeing Team and Behaviour Support Team; retain the Wellbeing Team and Nurture Programme; retain the Wellbeing Team; cease both the Wellbeing Team and Behaviour Support Team.

The Wellbeing Team had been set up in response to increased concerns regarding mental health and wellbeing of children and young people (C&YP) and was specifically identified by school audits as an area of need. Members were told that the team had been set up as a three year programme to focus on C & YP mental health and wellbeing. The forum were told that the Wellbeing Team produced an annual evaluation report which outlined the year's outputs, positive impact and feedback received in relation to individuals, groups and whole school interventions. The forum were informed that the running costs of the Wellbeing team was £135,000 per annum including £15,000 per annum from social care for the delivery of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for 0.4 FTE. The Forum were told that the Behaviour Support Team costs £105,097 per annum to run equivalent to 3.2 FTE.

The SWOT analysis looked at retention of both teams and how the nurture team could be run independently by psychology psychiatrists. There had been 158 individual referrals last year and 54 early help hub referrals. 39 schools had been supported and the Behaviour Support Team was currently active in 31 schools. The largest number of interventions fell under the nurture category, and ten new schools had engaged in the nurture programme. There had been a slight reduction in the buy in for support packages, however there had been an increase in the number of private schools who had approached the service wishing to sign up. Options for both retaining the service and ceasing the services were outlined (full details as outlined in the report).

Members of the forum were reminded that other local authorities had different structures and that there were different funding pressures nationally. It was highlighted that there was a high demand for the Behavioural Support Team and Wellbeing Team within RBWM and it was noted that there was some limitation to the scope of interventions due to the demand. The services had seen a high number of referrals and the small teams had to work creatively and innovatively to provide the best outcomes. Some of the creative solutions included group work, staff training and parent training. Members were informed that bids for additional work could be prepared but that there would be limited success as innovation beyond daily provisions would need to be evidence based.

Currently the Wellbeing and Nurture Champions were in the early phases of planning and would be rolled out across the borough once developed. There was future potential to sell this to other Boroughs. There had been good multi agency work through the Andy Clinic via the CCG and CBT work around depression. Threats were outlined and included financial pressures, similar intervention offerings by other providers, quicker interventions and delays with intervention work commencing. Strengths were outlined to include that the service was highly regarded and valued, evidence based practice and good collation of data. It was highlighted that anxiety was the most ticked risk factor, with 420 ticks for anxiety compared to 36 for alcohol misuse and peer difficulties.

Nurture UK worked closely with the services and provided training and support, however they did not provide localised networking opportunities. It was outlined that a robust programme was offered and that the cost of external training and online product from Nurture UK was £2,000. Members discussed the long referral waiting times for C &YP and it was confirmed that this was due to there being 1 therapist dedicated to play, creative arts and DP therapies. Members were told that there were alternative therapies available such as Lego and play therapy, but that these were not as effective as Nurture based therapies. Schools were not currently offering DDT therapies and the borough was at an advantage by being able to provide this service; members were advised that this may be advanced in the green paper which would be available over the upcoming months. At the conclusion of the presentation, members discussed a range of issues. Members thanked Rebecca and her team for their ongoing hard work and commitment. It was highlighted that work around exam anxiety had been done and that it would be useful to see the tangible recommendations of the report conducted.

ACTION- That the final report upon exam anxiety be circulated to members of the Forum.

It was discussed that early years interventions must be time limited and provide value for money and to improve on standardised measures to evaluate outcomes. The Forum discussed creative ways to acquire funding and ways in which the service could be kept. It was reported that there were 17 schools and there had been a decline in the number of signed up schools. The Forum were reminded that the services did not exist two years ago and that there had been a dramatic shift away from children's centres and that the new model had been adopted. There had been smaller net costs of £15,276 (which were reported at a recent meeting with finance), and that for 2019/2020 the Wellbeing Team service would need £120,000 to continue and it was confirmed that this was not part of de-delegation. The Wellbeing Team were 100% funded by the DSG but that there was no further funds to support

this for 2019/2020. Members discussed funding outside of the DSG and it was confirmed that there were limited funding opportunities for the Wellbeing Team, but that opportunities existed for the Behaviour Support Team through the CCG and smaller project funding sources. The Forum were reminded that both services had been a three year project and whether another piece of work should be commissioned to look at the high levels of demand and any shortfalls in service. Members were concerned with the expected increase of complex needs cases and increased waiting lists for interventions. Kevin McDaniel stated that there were opportunities within East Berkshire of up to £1m for mental health and wellbeing services for children. Members were minded to retain the services for a year and to then review progress. Members were told that the CCG for East Berkshire were looking to pool resources and that if this was acquired that there would be a need to re-assess the position as there could be potential to double the value.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY; That the Wellbeing Team and Behaviour Support Team services continue to be funded for the period of 1 year.

RECOMMENDED ACTION- That the evaluation reports be updated on the online portal.

BUDGET MONITORING AND FORECAST 2018/19

James Norris, Head of Finance (AFC), outlined the above titled report. The purpose of the report was to provide the Forum with details of the projected financial position for 2018/19 with associated schedule of risks & opportunities; projected reserve balance (as at 31st March 2019) and an understanding of the financial pressures. Members were told that the current DSG budget for 2018/19 is £62,686,000 which reflected the following in year budget adjustments totalling a net reduction of £502,000. The adjustments included the Early Years Block 3 & 4 year old reduced allocation of £779,000 and the High Needs Block additional allocation of £277,000. The current projected net in year deficit was calculated at £391,000 with a net adverse movement of £26,000 to the previously reported position. The Forum were told that the material in year variances consisted of the following:

- High Needs top-up funding- £436,000
- Special School top up and place funding- increase of £352,000
- Early Years 2017/18 unallocated PVI and maintained provider funding of (£258,000)
- Contingency provision greater challenge resulting in reduced allocations of (£97,000)
- Inclusion Fund first term lower take up (£45,000)
- Sensory Consortium Service (£20,000)
- Other minor variances (£23,000)(net)

It was outlined that the net overspend would be an added pressure on the dedicated schools grant reserve; which as at 31st March 2018 there was a deficit of £1,212,000; the revised projected deficit as at 31st March 2019 had increased by £391,000 to £1,603,000. This figure of £1,603,000 excluded the risk and opportunities register net balance of £303,000 overspend, there the projected reserve balance as at 31st March 2019 could increase to £1,906,000. Members discussed the call for bids and it was noted that the deadline would be January 2019 and that bids could take some time to come through. Members were keen to hear finer details in relation to the cost reduction programme and it was noted that an update would be provided at the April 2019 meeting. The Forum were informed that targeted interventions would mitigate future cost implications.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY; That the Forum noted the contents of the report which included the reported variance, schedule of Risks & Opportunities and the projected deficit balance carried forward as at 31st March 2019.

CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO EARLY YEARS DEPRIVATION FUNDING

2019/20

Clive Haines, Schools Leadership Development Manager outlined the above titled report. It was stated that the department provided local authorities with six relevant funding streams which formed the Early Years Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Members of the Forum were told that for the past two years that the Early Years Block had been underspent due to fewer children attending placements compared to the 100% forecast level of grant. This had resulted in a clawback by the Department for Education. For the same period, there had been a further underspend of £192,000 and £258,000 respectively, driven by the formula allocations via the supplements to providers. Members were told that in order to give Early Years providers the maximum available funding, there was a proposed consultation to look at changing the formula allocation on the early years universal entitlement for three and four years (one of the six funding streams). It was highlighted that consulted options focussed on; introducing category 3 from the ACORN data and increasing the deprivation rate by 18% or increasing the base hourly rate by 0.82%. The Forum were informed that the changes to the formula would result in an additional allocation of £200,000 to settings and schools. The revised model would allow for an increased allocation to be implemented in 2019/2020. The deprivation budget would increase from £158,600 to £358,600. Current methodology for allocated funding through ACORN bands 4&5 targets 67% of all settings and 26% of all pupils.

Members discussed the time period for consultation and it was confirmed that the consultation would conclude in early January 2019.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY; That the Schools Forum approved the consultation as set out in Appendix A of the Consultation on Changes to Early Years Deprivation Funding 2019-2020.

SCHOOL FUNDING 2018/19 CONSULTATION RESULTS

James Norris, Head of Finance (AFC) outlined the above titled report. Members were reminded that at the Schools Forum meeting held on the 27th September 2018 that it was agreed that a consultation would be undertaken on the principles relating to a number of formula factors that would impact on the Schools Budget allocation, funding formula for 2019/2020 and migration towards the National Funding Formula. It had been agreed that consultation with schools would strive for minimum volatility for the financial year 2019/2020. Members were informed that model 1 was focussed on targeting funding towards local priorities of deprivation whilst model 2 prioritised continued migration towards NFF rates. Key points of the consultation results were outlined as follows:

- Strong support for the principle of reduced volatility in funding by not migrating fully to NFF unit rates in 2019-2020, (78% of schools shared this viewpoint and had 63% weighted pupils).
- Clear support for the principle of targeting funding to the local priorities of Deprivation and Inclusion. The targeted approach was supported by 72% of schools (74% weighted pupils)
- Responses had shown continued support for the current level of funding through the primary low prior attainment being maintained in order to minimise volatility with 83% of schools (78% weighted pupils)
- Model 2 had been the preferred model of choice by 61% of schools, all of which were in the primary sector, representing 38% of pupils. One primary and all six secondary schools preference was for model 1 (62% weighted pupils)
- The majority of schools 89% (72% weighted pupils) agreed that the minimum per pupil factors be retained at the 2018-19 level in order to protect volatility and distribute the funding direct to the main formula factors.

It was outlined that comments from schools (outlined in the written report) indicated a preference for Model 1 which allocated resources in line with deprivation and inclusion measures. It was highlighted however that more schools had chosen model 2 as their preference which appeared to be related to the lump sum factor. There had also been a split

response to whether any “headroom” funding resulted from the final settlement to be allocated to Low Prior attainment. There had been 44% responses in favour of this treatment of “headroom” and 44% against (35% and 57% weighted pupils respectively). It was reported that by sector primary schools responded with 50% in favour compared with 33% of secondary schools. There had been a similar mixed response to whether an amount of “headroom” funding resulting from the final settlement should be allocated to AWPU. There had been 56% responses in favour of this treatment of “headroom” and 39% against (62% and 35% weighted pupils respectively)

After extensive debate about the different options, Forum voted on the models and a majority supported Model 1 – the principle based model. The Director of Children’s Services indicated that the local authority would follow this guidance from the Forum when making their decision.

At the conclusion of the discussion, members of the forum discussed whether the data sets shown could positively identify the school or provide further details for the schools to self-identify. It was noted that schools should be directed by principle as opposed to naming individual schools.

RESOLVED; That the forum noted the recommendation to adopt model 2 and guided the LA that model 1 is preferred. The forum noted and supported the proposal that any headroom would be distributed equally between Low Prior attainment and AWPU and approved the annual growth Fund allocation.

It was recommended by the Director of Children’s Services and the Head of Finance (AFC) that an element of the Growth Fund headroom be used to support the significant financial pressures currently being experienced by Cheapside Church of England Primary School following their recent school expansion. Members were informed that the school had to expand from 16 to 30 places across all year groups simultaneously thus increasing the school’s capacity from four vertically grouped classes to a 7 class single year group primary one phase. The school had worked proactively and had been fully staffed from September 2017 with all seven classes in place to meet the incremental demand of places. The forum were told that pupil numbers had been much higher than expected, beginning with 108 at the end of July 2017 and that currently they were at 190 with 20 spaces present. It was outlined that the current deficit position of the school was £210,000 for 2018/19. It was highlighted that based on the current and indicative future pupils number projections the school had forecasted that the total deficit could rise to £250,000 before the school numbers stabilised and when budgets were balanced. It was reported that the deficit balance was a risk to the school’s block and that it was recommended that the headroom in the growth fund be used to create a ring fenced reserve for the Cheapside expansion which could be used to make negate the elements of deficit which related directly to the unusual and sudden expansion of the school. It was noted that the funding would be ring fenced for up to five years with an agreed contribution between the school, their governing body and the Local Authority on an annual basis.

Members were informed that the Growth fund of £426,000 was good news and that the total potential of the growth fund was approximately £800,000. Members had sympathy for the school and the amounting pressures and were supportive of the recommendation to approve the funding to be delegated as managed budget to Cheapside Primary School.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY; That the forum approved the allocation of a reserved fund to support Cheapside school’s “all at once” expansion.

AOB

ACTION- That the number of falling rolls in Windsor be added to the next meeting’s agenda.

Kevin McDaniel, Director of Children's services outlined that the September Cabinet report outlining the falling roll projections estimated that there would be a further implication on future roll numbers and that the increased provision of housing developments that excess pressure would be placed upon schools. The future impact to all schools and the deficit with budget pressures was noted by all.

The meeting, which began at 2.00 pm, finished at 3.44 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....