

SCHOOLS FORUM

THURSDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2019

PRESENT: Sarah Ward, Martin Tinsley, Mike Wallace, Andrew Morrison, Hugh Boulter, Richard Pilgrim, Chris Tomes and Joolz Scarlett

Officers: Mark Beeley, Tracey Anne Nevitt and James Norris

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Isabel Cooke, Sarah Cottle and Amanda Butler.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY; That the minutes of the last meeting held on the 16th July 2019 were approved as a correct and true record, subject to the following amendments:

- To correct the spelling of Chris Tomes' name
- To clarify that the thanks on record was to Alison Penny, and not Penny Francis as previously stated
- Removal of the word 'maintained' from the item referring to the Action Plan

BUDGET MONITORING AND FORECAST 2019/20

James Norris outlined the item and updated members on the current financial year. Overall, the balance position was good, with a potential underspend. The figures that were quoted from the report were still indicative but would be updated once the next report was commissioned.

James Norris also discussed Service Contract underspends and confirmed that schools would be reimbursed any underspend, which ranged from £865 to £14,851 and was based on the number of pupils enrolled.

Members were then informed that the deficit forecast was down to £896,000, but that there were potential risks of up to £500,000. The main goal therefore was to continue to reduce the deficit and try and further improve efficiencies in schools across the borough.

Afterwards, the forum heard from Tracey Nevitt about the details of funding that schools receive. She explained that money being taken out of schools budgets was delegated money. Detail from the relevant bodies was not yet available, so it would have to be based off the main aims given in the statement. She highlighted that 1 in 10 schools have had significant increase in the funding they get over the next two years.

Two of the formula factors had been changed from optional to compulsory; the minimum funding guarantee and minimal funding per pupil. By partaking in these schemes, they would take up most of the available funds.

In terms of the minimum funding guarantee, Tracey Nevitt informed members that it was about the minimum funding for each pupil between years. For RBWM it was -1.5% for each pupil,

but in the new guidance it needs to be +0.5% up to +1.84%. Funding for this would have to come from schools not in protection.

Members queried about how many schools this would apply to. Tracey Nevitt said she wasn't sure on the exact figure, but believed that it was at least six.

Tracey Nevitt then explained to the Forum about the Minimal funding per pupil, this is calculated by all the pupil led formula factors added together which was then divided by the number on roll at the school. Members were told that in the majority of schools in the Royal Borough the minimum funding was at the right levels. However, the new figures had changed to a minimum funding of £4,800 per KS3 pupil and a minimum of £5,300 per KS4 pupil.

Tracey Nevitt had compared the new data against previous years and discovered that only 15 schools within the borough would see a gain with this change. There would be more models produced to discover how much funding would be used by having to comply with the new guidance. She also confirmed that there wouldn't be a block movement in the current year. For the November meeting, there would be consultation with schools and the aim was to implement formula changes in January.

Members asked for more information about the timeline of the events that Tracey Nevitt was looking for. She confirmed that in the November meeting she would aim to discuss with Members which proposal they would like to move forward with. The Chairman agreed and suggested that once more was known, indicative dates could be sent out regarding when the consultation would be.

Members agreed that on the whole there were lots of positives in the update and that these should be noted.

SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP FRAMEWORK

James Norris set out the above titled item, and explained how the membership criteria for the meeting works. As of the day of the meeting, there were 13 members and 4 vacancies for the forum.

Members queried whether Ascot had offered a candidate to fill a vacancy, which the Chairman told members that they had not but an invite would be sent out to them. Although he believed they might be part of their own cluster group.

The Forum agreed to take the meeting into Part II for the remainder of the item before returning to Part I once discussions had concluded.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the remainder of the item whilst discussion takes place on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1-7 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS 2019/20

James Norris introduced the item to members and explained that a few optional changes would be made to the scheme, none of which were fundamental. No responses had been received to the consultation, at which point the Chairman commented that it would be worth prompting schools in order to gauge their response.

The meeting, which began at 2.00 pm, finished at 2.33 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....