

Minutes of a Meeting of the Schools Forum

Monday 7th October 2013

Shaw House

Present:	Fiona Bridger-Wilkinson	Headteacher	Victoria Park Nursery School
	Patricia Brims	Governor	Brimpton Primary School
	Sarah Brinkley	Headteacher	John O'Gaunt School
	Fadia Clarke	Deputy Principal	Newbury College
	Jeanette Clifford	Governor	St Bartholomews School
	Jacque Davies (substitute)	Headteacher	Alternative Curriculum
	Paul Dick	Headmaster	Kennet School
	Reverend Mary Harwood	Church of England Representative	Oxford Diocese
	Jon Hewitt	Headteacher	The Castle School
	Peter Hudson	Governor	Mortimer St Johns Infant School
	Brian Jenkins	Early Years PVI Representative	Jubilee Day Nursery
	Kate House	Headteacher	The Ilsleys Primary School
	David Ramsden	Headteacher	Little Heath School
	Clive Rothwell	Governor	John O'Gaunt School
	Graham Spellman	Roman Catholic Representative	Portsmouth Diocese
	John Tyzack	Governor	Falkland Primary School
	Glyn Whiteford	Headteacher	Denefield School
	Charlotte Wilson	Headteacher	Trinity School
	Councillor David Allen	Shadow Portfolio Holder for C&YP	
	Councillor Irene Neill	Executive Portfolio for C&YP	
	Melanie Ellis	Chief Accountant	
	Carolynn Loosen	Schools' Funding Officer	
	Ian Pearson	Head of Education	
	Jane Seymour	SEN Manager	
	Claire White	Schools' Finance Manager	

Action

1. APOLOGIES RECEIVED

Nathan Butler-Broad	Headteacher	Spurcroft Primary School
Catherine Morley	Headteacher	Theale Primary School
Chris Prickett	Headteacher	Streatley Primary School
Keith Watts	Union Representative	

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING DATED 15TH JULY 2013

The minutes of the meeting 15th July incorrectly listed Jeanette Clifford as absent when she had arrived late.

The minutes of the meeting on 15th July were approved subject to the above change.

3. ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Item 3 Shannon Coleman-Slaughter has circulated her response to Stacey

Williams to all Schools Forum members and there were no queries arising from members on this matter.

Item 5 - Membership

The Early Years Steering Group is to discuss who will be the Early Years PVI representative at their next meeting on the 14th October.

ACTION: Brian Jenkins to communicate the decision to the Clerk of the Schools' Forum.

B Jenkins

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Fadia Clarke declared an interest in item 10.

5. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

John Tyzack was elected as Chair for 1 year. There were no nominations for Vice Chair and the appointment will be revisited at the next meeting.

ACTION: Appointment of Vice Chair.

Forum

6. SCHOOL FORMULA PROPOSAL 2014/15

The consultation closed on 20th September and 5 responses were received in relation to sparsity and deprivation. The sparsity and deprivation factors were reviewed again by the Heads Funding Group at their meeting on 27th September.

Claire White presented the analysis and recommendations from the Heads Funding Group on the various options for the school funding formula for 2014/15.

Sparsity Factor

The Sparsity factor is not targeting all small schools just those with an average distance of two miles or more from the next school. Only a few schools would qualify for the funding (by just being over the 2 mile criteria) which would be at the expense of all other schools including the other small schools. It was unanimously agreed that this is not fair or equitable to the small primary schools.

DECISION: The Schools' Forum agreed that the original proposal remain with the sparsity factor for 2014/15 for both primary and secondary schools based on a criterion of 3 miles and a lump sum of £100k.

Deprivation

Comprehensive modelling has been completed using various combinations of IDACI, FSM and Ever6 FSM to establish the most effective combination for targeting funding. It was agreed by the majority that the Ever6 Free School Meals method is preferable to Free School Meals method as it captures those pupils that drift in and out of Free School Meals. There were discussions over the accuracy of IDACI and with the exception of Glyn Whiteford of Denefield it was agreed to stick to the original proposal of reducing the proportion of funding

based on IDACI from 50% TO 25%.

DECISION: The Schools' Forum agreed that the original proposal remain with the method used to allocate deprivation funding in 2014/15 being 25% IDACI 75% Ever6 FSM.

DECISION: The Schools' Forum agreed to the formula proposal as set out in the report and to recommend it to the Council's Executive for approval.

C White

7. DE-DELEGATIONS / BUY BACKS 2014/15

Ian Pearson presented a report on the proposed arrangements for 2014-15.

For 2014-15 funding for the support element for schools in financial difficulty continues to be delegated to schools but there is no option to pool; the service will be included as part of the Schools Accountancy buy-back.

The Primary and Secondary school representatives on the Schools' Forum are required to make the pooling decision for their own school phase. The vote for each service was taken by the relevant representatives present as follows:

Behavioural Support

Includes support for class teachers for individual pupils or groups, and training.

Primary: pool funding 4 for 0 against

Secondary: pool funding 3 for 0 against

Ethnic Minority Support

Includes assessment, advice, and support for pupils who speak English as an additional language and those from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller heritage.

Primary: pool funding 4 for 0 against

Secondary: pool funding 3 for 0 against

Trade Union local representation

This pays for release of staff as TU representatives, including provision of advice to individual members. Discussion took place on whether the unions should pay for this, or whether schools should just rely on regional or national representatives.

Primary: pool funding 4 for 0 against

Secondary: pool funding 3 for 0 against

Contingency for schools in financial difficulty

The provision of financial support to schools over and above their formula funding.

Primary: pool funding 4 for 0 against

Secondary: not to be pooled 3 for 0 against

DECISION: The Schools' Forum unanimously agreed the proposal for the de-delegations 2014-15.

8. RETAINED FUNDING PROPOSALS

Claire White presented a report on the criteria to be used for 2014/15 for the Growth Fund and Falling Rolls Fund and the sums to be top sliced from the DSG. West Berkshire currently operates a growth fund, but more detailed guidelines have been produced by the DfE for 2014/15 which necessitates a revision of the current scheme. The falling rolls fund is a new optional fund for 2014/15.

Growth Fund

New School

Funding payable to cover pre-opening costs, such as the Headteacher and other staff, recruitment costs prior to opening and an initial equipping allowance where the school is opening in response to basic need in the area.

Funding will be actual cost of the Headteacher prior to the school opening for up to one full term, plus a fixed lump sum of £25,000

Extending Age Range

Funding payable to a school which has extended its age range in agreement with the authority in response to basic need in the area.

Funding will be total AWPU per additional pupil in the new class (pro rata for the remainder of the financial year) plus a fixed lump sum of £10,000 per new class for set up costs

Provision of an Extra Class

Funding will be total AWPU per additional pupil in the new class up to a maximum of £50,000 per class (approx. 17 pupils in primary, 11 pupils in secondary) pro rata for the remainder of the financial year. £50,000 will pay for a full time teacher at MS3, a term time only Teaching Assistant, and approximately £9,000 for other costs.

Increase in Pupil Admission Number (PAN)

Funding payable where a school has increased its admission number by 5 or more pupils in agreement with the authority, but this has not necessitated an additional class, or is not in response to basic need for a bulge class or general pupil number growth in the area.

Funding will be 50% of the AWPU per additional pupil up to a maximum of

£25,000 (approx. 17 pupils in primary, 11 pupils in secondary) pro rata for the remainder of the financial year.

Infant Class Size

This is payable to a school with infant classes which is required to set up an additional class in the Autumn term as required by infant class size regulations, and the school cannot accommodate all its additional reception and Key Stage 1 pupils in classes of 30 or less i.e. the total number of pupils in the 3 year groups exceeds a multiple of 30.

In order to qualify for the additional funding, the school must have set up an additional class and employed an additional teacher, and must not have exceeded its admission number unless requested to by the LA.

Funding will be a fixed sum of £40,000 for each new class (to pay for a mid grade TMS teacher plus a teaching assistant), pro rata for the remainder of the financial year.

DECISION: The Schools' Forum unanimously agreed the criteria for the Growth Fund and to top slice £250,000 from the DSG for this fund.

Falling Rolls Fund

Funding payable where a school has agreed with the LA to provide an extra class in order to meet basic need (either as a bulge class or as an ongoing commitment). From 2014/15, local authorities may top slice the DSG in order to create a small fund to support good schools with falling rolls. This is for where a population bulge is expected in the future but where a good and necessary school or academy currently has surplus places and faces an unmanageable funding shortfall in the short term.

The school must have been judged good or outstanding at their last OFSTED inspection.

Surplus capacity exceeds 10% of the published total school capacity.

Local planning data shows a requirement for at least 50% of the surplus places within the next 3 years

Without additional funding, the school will need to reorganise (reduce the number of classes) and make redundancies in order to avoid going into deficit and contain spending within its formula budget allocation based on the current pupil numbers and the staffing structure that this supports. This will need to be visible in the school's forward budget plan.

Where a school meets the above criteria, funding will be provided equivalent to the staffing cost of continuing to run the additional class at a fixed sum of £40,000 per class. This will be pro rata for the remainder of the financial year.

DECISION: The Schools' Forum unanimously agreed the criteria for the Falling Rolls Fund and to top slice £120,000 from the DSG for this fund.

9. ADDITIONAL SEN FUNDING PROPOSAL

Claire White presented a report on proposed methodology for dealing with schools with disproportionately large SEN costs. Three options were discussed:

Option 1 – A payment to schools where the actual number of high needs pupils is significantly above the average.

Where the actual number of high needs pupils per school is above 2% primary (1 high needs pupil in every 50) or 4% secondary (1 high needs pupil in every 100), rounded up, each additional pupil will attract the first £6,000 as additional funding alongside the top up.

Option 2 – A payment to schools where the actual number of high needs pupils is significantly above the average.

The actual number of high needs pupils per school is expressed as a percentage of the total number of pupils. Where the percentage is greater than 0.75% above the average (2.35% primary, 3.09% secondary), the school receives a payment of £6,000 per percentage point above that.

Option 3 - A payment to schools where the total cost of their high needs pupils is above the average notional SEN budget allocation.

Of the total delegated budget allocation, 5% is the total notional SEN budget. If 1.5% is allowed for non stated needs below £6k, this leaves 3.5% of the allocation for the first £6k of high needs pupils. For schools where the cost of the first £6k of its high needs pupils cannot be met from 3.5% of their total budget allocation, the difference is paid (if allowed by DfE rules) or a calculated amount.

DECISION: The Schools' Forum unanimously agreed option 1 for funding schools with disproportionate SEN costs in 2014/15.

10. FUNDING OF HIGH NEEDS STUDENTS IN FE COLLEGES

Jane Seymour presented a report on Funding on High Needs Students in FE Colleges which the EFA funded up until 31st July but is the LA's responsibility from 1st August. There is also a change in the eligible age of SEN students from 22-25.

There is a significant shortfall in the funding added to the DSG in order to pay for this commitment – approximately £183k received against current estimated cost of £893k (these are part year costs).

The overall shortfall includes a shortfall in the EFA element 2 funding of approximately £375k and a shortfall in the element 3 funding where the EFA formula assumes the average top up is £4k. The situation is a national issue which has been raised with the DfE and EFA.

Discussion:

Peter Hudson – What is the risk of the contingency fund being depleted?

Based on current students the contingency funding should be sufficient.

In general any overspend would be first call on next years DSG allocation.

Graham Spellman – The average cost is very high in Independent Specialist Placements.

These are students with very complex needs. The strategy is to reduce cost where feasible.

Davis Ramsden – Value for money monitoring is essential.

Monitoring and assessing value for money is an on going process.

DECISION: The Schools' Forum agreed that the shortfall of £709,320 be vired from the DSG High Needs contingency.

S Coleman-Slaughter

11. DSG BUDGET MONITORING MONTH 5

Ian Pearson reported on the DSG monitoring report as at 31st August 2013.

He tabled a revised format of the appendix to show budgets in their different funding blocks, which the members agreed was a helpful presentation.

The current DSG forecast variance is £554k overspend, which is mostly made up of predicted overspends in the High Needs Block for Independent Special School and Further Education Top Up Funding.

12. BENCHMARKING DATA 2013/14

Carolynn Loosen provided benchmarking data at LA level for planned budget 2013/14 against both statistical neighbours and other unitary authorities.

ACTION: Benchmarking was requested for guaranteed unit of funding and individual school budget data against pupil attainment data for both statistical neighbours and other unitary authorities.

C Loosen

ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

There was no other business

Meeting closed 6:30 p.m.

Date of next meeting: Monday 9th December 2013

Time: 5pm

Venue: Shaw House