

SCHOOLS FORUM

At a meeting of the Schools Forum on Wednesday, 20 March 2019 at Civic Suite - Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillor T. McInerney, Observer
A. McIntyre, Education, Inclusion & Provision, HBC
A. Jones, Financial Management, HBC
A. Jones, Democratic Services, HBC
A. Brown, Nursery Schools Representative
J. O'Connor, PVI Representative
S. Broxton, Primary Governor Representative
N. Hunt, Pupil Referral Unit Representative
J. Wilson, Secondary Governor Representative
E. Haver, Special Academy Representative
A. Sheppard, VA Schools Representative
H. Austin, Community Special Schools Representative
L. Roberts, Small Primary Representative

Action

SCF27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Karl Landrum, Judith McConville, Thalia Bell, Anne Simmons, Ian Critchley and Jackie Coughlan.

SCF28 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

SCF29 FORECAST OUTTURN FOR 2018-19

The Forum was advised that the forecast outturn for 2018-19, as at 28 February 2019, was £755,452. Members were referred to the detailed breakdown of the forecast in Appendix A.

It was reported that all known and expected costs had been built into the forecast but unknown expenditure costs were still likely to be incurred. Members were reminded that a balanced budget was only achieved due to the additional 1% transfer of funding from the Schools Block and Central Services School Block (CSSB) to High Needs, which was for 2019-20.

It was noted that stringent measures and monitoring were in place to minimise overspending and that the Local Authority, Schools and Academies would be working together to achieve this.

RESOLVED: That the report is noted.

SCF30 HEALTH AND SAFETY DE-DELEGATION 2019-20

The Schools Forum received the Health and Safety de-delegation for 2019-20 and was requested to support this.

It was reported that work had been completed to identify the support provided to schools outside of the Service Level Agreement for which DSG funding was sought. It was understood that the Council had statutory duties with regards to health and safety at maintained schools; details of some of these duties were outlined in the report. The Forum was advised that approximately 40% of costs related to support for maintained schools, which equated to £60,000 for 2019-20; the costs per school were listed in Appendix A to the report.

The Forum Members within the maintained school sector discussed the proposal and requested further information in relation to how the calculations were made and what was included within the existing Schools' SLA's for Health and Safety, before supporting the proposals.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) further information be supplied to Schools Forum, as discussed above, so that the Forum can confirm its support for the Health and Safety de-delegation at the June meeting.

Financial
Management,
HBC

SCF31 EARLY YEARS BLOCK FUNDING FOR 2019-20

The Forum received a report explaining the current position on Early Years funding for 2019-20 which was accompanied by the following appendices:

- A: Early Years Block funding formula for 2019-20;
- B: Spring Term 2019 two year old provision; and
- C: Early Years Grant 2019-20.

As reported in January there was an indicative allocation of £9,629,236 for the provision of early years support. The report provided information on how the funding formula for 2019-20 was arrived at for 3 and 4 year olds and 2 year olds. Also, Members were provided with the budgets that were proposed to be retained centrally

(Paragraph 3.3); the Forum was asked to agree these budgets.

The PVI representative informed the Forum that business rates for PVI Early Years providers in Wales and Scotland had been reduced. She queried whether this could be proposed for PVI Early Years providers in England. Officers would look into this.

It was noted that Forum Members had received these budgets in advance of this agenda via email on 28 February 2019. They agreed the proposals for the centrally retained budgets, as described in paragraph 3.3 of the report.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum

- 1) notes the report; and
- 2) agrees the proposed centrally retained budgets.

Operational
Director
Education,
Inclusion and
Provision

SCF32 HIGH NEEDS BLOCK FUNDING FOR 2019-20

The High Needs Block funding was provided to the Forum – a total of £16,770,689 for 2019-20. It was reported that an amount of £2,906,662 would be recouped by the ESFA for commissioned places in special academies and some independent special schools, so a total of £13,864,027 would be paid to Halton Borough Council.

The report also provided Members with information on the following areas:

- Disapplication request – the transfer of 1% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block was approved;
- The current position – more information would be available once the 2018-19 outturn was finalised;
- Resource Base Funding – Members were referred to Appendix A which detailed the top-up rates (unchanged from their 2018-19 level);
- Special Schools and the PRU;
- Centrally retained budgets; and
- Top-up funding.

The Forum was asked to agree the centrally retained budgets, presented in paragraph 3.6 with comparisons to 2018-19. The Forum agreed these.

Forum Members noted that despite a small funding surplus for 2019-20 due to the 1% transfer from Schools

Block and Central Schools Services Block for this year, the High Needs funding gap of £162,977 still needed to be addressed.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum

- 1) note the report; and
- 2) confirms that the centrally retained budgets are agreed.

SCF33 OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL GRANTS FOR 2019-20

The Forum received an overview of the specific grants (excluding DSG) relating to schools for 2019-20. These were:

- Additional Grant to Schools – Primary PE and Sport;
- Universal Infant Free School Meals;
- Pupil Premium;
- Year 7 Catch Up Premium;
- Post 16;
- Free School Meals Supplementary Grant;
- Teachers' Pay Grant;
- Teachers' Pension Grant; and
- Devolved Formula Capital.

Members noted that each grant came with its own conditions, including certification of the amounts devolved by the Local Authority and/or the amounts awarded being spent by a school. It was important that a school fully understood the conditions of the grant to minimise the risk of recovery of funds by the DfE, should these conditions not be met by a school.

RESOLVED: That the Forum notes the report.

SCF34 MEETING DATES FOR 2019-20

Next year's meeting dates were agreed as follows:

- 12 June 2019;
- 16 October 2019;
- 15 January 2020; and
- 26 February 2020.

Meeting ended at 4.55 p.m.