

SCHOOLS FORUM

At a meeting of the Schools Forum on Wednesday, 21 January 2015 at The Board Room - Municipal Building, Widnes

Present: J. Rigby (Chairman)
Councillor Philbin - Observer
L. Fox, Secondary Academy Representative
N. Hunt, Pupil Referral Unit Representative
J. Coughlan, Primary School Representative
S. Broxton, Primary Governor Representative
A. McIntyre, Children's Organisation & Provision, HBC
A. Jones, Democratic Services
J. Wilson, Secondary Governor Representative
L. Feakes, Primary School with Nursery Unit
A. Jones, Financial Services, HBC
K. Landrum, Primary School Representative - VA School
A. Brown, Nursery Schools Representative
N. Unsworth, Financial Services, HBC
L. Rhodes, Riverside College – 16 – 19 Provision Representative
A. Hough – Primary Academy Representative (substitute for D Moran)

Action

SCF24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from David Stanley, Richard Collings, Marjorie Constantine and Jill Berry.

SCF25 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING & MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record.

(SCF19) United Utilities Surface Water and Highways Drainage Charges – Officers advised that United Utilities had held a meeting recently with schools and Local Authority representatives at The Brindley in Runcorn. Officers had not received the invitation to attend in time, so they would try to obtain the minutes to share with the Forum.

SCF26 MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Ann McIntyre advised members of the following vacancies on the Forum:

- Secondary Academy Representative;
- Small Schools Governor Representative;
- Secondary Representative (School with a 6th Form);
and

- Early Years Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector.

The Forum was advised that Andrew Keeley (Secondary with 6th Form) had now retired and the vacancy would be filled by Deborah Burke, Head of School at St Chads; and Jill Berry (PVI) had submitted her resignation from the Forum on the day of this meeting. Recruitment would take place for the PVI replacement and the first two vacancies mentioned above.

RESOLVED: That the update is noted.

SCF27 EAL FUNDING 2015-16

The Forum received a report on the EAL Service delivered by St Chad's Catholic and Church of England Joint Faith Voluntary Aided High School.

It was reported that the EAL team continued to be hosted by St Chad's High School and worked with new arrivals to Halton LA schools across Key Stages 1 to 5. The EAL team aimed to ensure equality of opportunity, access and inclusion for pupils with EAL needs. The team worked in collaboration with schools in supporting their language work with EAL pupils and encouraged a raised awareness and understanding of cultural diversity. The service also provided information, training, advice and resources regarding cultural and religious matters. School, home and community links were supported by the provision of translated school information in Polish, Russian, Bulgarian, Chinese, French, Spanish and German. Further, attendance and translation at Parent Pupil Review meetings was also available. It was noted that multi-agency work (EWO, speech and Language, Social Services, Police) was also undertaken where there was a need for communicating in the home language.

The Forum was provided with a summary of EAL service delivery and performance in 2013-14 and provided information on the current EAL provision for its 251 pupils in Key Stages 1 – 4. Monitoring reports for 2013-14 and 2014-15 were appended to the report.

Members praised and noted the importance of the EAL service to schools and agreed that the service was good value for money, and that it should be continued.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum:

1. notes the report and attached additional monitoring information; and
2. agrees that the EAL funding continues to be provided to St Chad's in 2015-16.

SCF28 CONTINGENCY UPDATE

The Forum received an update on the value of the Dedicated School Grant contingencies for 2014-15 as follows:

- General Schools Contingency for 2014-15 was £351,454 and that to date there was a balance of £61,778, after the agreed support had been made, as detailed in the report;
- Pupil Growth Contingency for 2014-15 was £180,000.
- High Needs Contingency budget for 2014-15 was £1,226,420; the carry forward balance for 2013-14 was £2,120,56 giving a total budget of £3,347,276. It was noted that the estimated High Needs Allocation to date would give a deficit of £7,400. A more detailed paper would be submitted to a future Schools Forum meeting explaining this.
- Early Years Contingency Budget for 2014-15 was £730 and a carry forward budget of £821,813. After the deduction of the Early Years Enhanced budget of £80,000 and the support to Ditton Nursery of £54,427 there was a balance of £688,116; and
- Central Contingency carry forward from 2013-14 was £1,170,059. The balance was £810,448 after the allocation of the budgets mentioned in the report.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum note the current balance on each of the contingencies.

SCF29 ACADEMY BALANCES

The Forum was advised that further to members' requests at previous meetings to know the academy balances, these would be sought via the relevant academy websites, as it was public information.

It was noted that the next set of accounts would be published on 31 January 2015, so officers would collate the information for distribution to the Forum shortly after this. In

the meantime the academy representatives present at the meeting shared their current balances with the Forum.

Anne Jones

RESOLVED: That the information is noted.

SCF30 PUPIL GROWTH FUNDING 2014

The Forum received a report which presented the options available for the Pupil Growth Contingency for 2014-15.

It was noted that the Primary Pupil Growth contingency budget for 2014-15 was set at £100,000 while the Secondary Pupil Growth contingency budget was set at £80,000.

It was reported that within the Primary sector there had been an increase of over 700 pupils from October 2013 to October 2014. In recent years this had been prepared for by increasing the PAN in a number of schools to meet Basic Need.

The Department for Education (DfE) confirmed October 2014 census data was used to compare the pupil numbers with the DfE confirmed October 2013 census data and identified the schools that met the qualifying criteria for Pupil Growth Funding; these were listed in the report.

Officers advised that to make maximum use of the £100,000 budget available, they proposed to fund at £1,754.38 per pupil for the 15th pupil and above. The Forum agreed with this proposal.

With regards to the secondary sector, the Forum noted a reduction in the number of pupils by 497 from October 2013 to October 2014. There was sufficient capacity within the secondary schools for pupil numbers and so pupil growth monies would not be offered to the secondary sector.

The Forum agreed therefore, that the unspent Secondary Pupil Growth Contingency budget of £80,000 be carried forward into 2015-16 and the £80,000 that would have been allocated to Secondary pupil growth for 2015-16 be devolved to secondary schools as part of the schools block allocations.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum notes the report and:

- 1) agree that the allocations for primary schools as detailed be approved; and
- 2) agree that the allocations for secondary schools as detailed be approved.

SCF31 NOTIONAL SEN FUNDING

The Forum was advised of the Additional Notional SEN funding criteria and allocations for 2014-15.

It was noted that under the new School Funding Regulations local authorities could provide additional targeted support to schools where it would be unreasonable to expect the first £6,000 of additional support for all high needs pupils to be provided due to an exceptional number of such pupils on roll. Local authorities were required to state the qualifying criteria and method of allocation on the School Block Pro-Forma to be submitted to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) by 20 January 2015.

Halton's adopted criteria for Primary and Secondary schools and academies was explained in the report, supported by examples. Schools that met the qualifying criteria for additional notional SEN for 2014-15 were then listed in the report. The Forum discussed the funding in question and the allocations of enhanced provision for schools that had applied. Members agreed that the additional funding for the schools listed be approved.

It was suggested that the allocation policy should be reviewed, as was done in the past, through a working group. In the meantime the Forum requested a detailed analysis of the allocation of SEN across the Board.

Ann McIntyre

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum:

- 1) Notes the report; and
- 2) Agrees that the additional funding for the schools listed be approved.

SCF32 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT 2015-16

Forum members were advised of the indicative allocation of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlement for 2015-16.

It was reported that the DSG settlement was split between three notional blocks: Schools Block, High Needs Block and Early Years Block. Details of the allocations for each block were provided in the report. It was noted that

provision for two year olds was not expected until July 2015.

The total DSG settlement for 2015-16 was £102,634,112 which was an increase from the 2013-14 settlement of £101,774,000. It was noted however, that the increased DSG settlement included funding for Sandymoor Free School, for which the DSG had increased by £1,043,223. Therefore, the net position was actually an overall reduction of £143,111. *(Noted that paragraph 3.8 contained typing errors).*

RESOLVED: That the Schools Forum note the DSG settlement for 2015-16.

SCF33 CENTRAL DSG BUDGET

The Forum was updated on the centrally held Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Budgets for 2015-16.

Members were advised that the DSG budgets held centrally for 2015-16 were again being scrutinised. Centrally held budgets funded from the Schools Block of the DSG were very tightly restricted whilst the High Needs and Early Years elements were less so.

The report presented updates on the Schools Block; Early Years Block; Two Year Old Funding and High Needs Block. Officers also tabled more detailed information as follows:

- Schools Block – Central DSG budgets totalled £1,356,900 in 2014-15 and this would be reduced by £311,831 to £1,045,069 for 2015–16 to help keep within the overall DSG figure. The changes made were noted.
- Early Years Block – The centrally retained Early Years block for 3 and 4 year olds totalled £2,600,570 in 2014-15 and was increasing by £325,439 to £2,926,009 for 2015-16. The main changes were noted.
- High Needs Block – The centrally retained High Needs Block for 2014-15 totalled £5,994,288 and was reducing by £747,000 to £5,247,170 in order to balance the DSG budget. The main changes were noted.
- Two Year Old funding – Announcement not expected until July 2015.

Members noted that it had become increasingly difficult to set the DSG budgets for both schools and the required central budgets and still balance to the funding given due to the increase in pupil numbers and the net decrease in grant received. The High Needs and Early Years budgets (approx. £18.7M) were indicative allocations and would be adjusted in line with the January census. It was reported that this census was also used to set the Early Years and High Needs budgets for schools so estimates had to be used when setting the Schools Block budgets to ensure that it was kept within the overall expected grant.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

SCF34 SCHOOLS BLOCK FUNDING FORMULA

The Forum received the final funding formula for Primary and Secondary schools for 2015-16.

Members were reminded that at the October Schools Forum meeting decisions were taken on how the funding formula should be adopted for Halton's Primary and Secondary maintained schools, Academies and Free School. Work was underway to calculate the case value for each element of the schools block funding formula for 2015-16.

The report presented the following information:

- Budget availability for Primary and Secondary Schools;
- Budget availability for Looked After Children (LAC);
- De-delegated Budgets; and
- Early Years and High Needs Funding.

Officers tabled a paper containing further information on the Schools Block Funding Formula for 2015-16. After reviewing this, the Forum was asked to make a decision regarding the LAC cash value to be used for 2015-16. It was agreed that this would be kept at the same level as 2014-15, however, the Forum requested to see the comparison of the funding factors from 2014-15 to 2015-16. This would be distributed to Members.

Anne Jones

Members were also asked to make a decision regarding the amount of funding to be de-delegated to the Local Authority for Schools Contingency, Free School Meal eligibility and staff responsibility; the Forum agreed with the proposals in the report. The Forum also agreed that the cash value per pupil of the de-delegated items for 2015-16

would remain at the same level as for 2014-15, as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum:

- 1) note the report;
- 2) agree that the LAC cash value to be used for 2015-16 continue at £1,517.25
- 3) agree that the amount of funding to be de-delegated to the Local Authority for Schools Contingency, Free School Meal eligibility and staff responsibility is £207,966, £26,632 and £7,491 respectively.

SCF35 PUPIL PREMIUM GRANT 2015-16

The Forum received an update on the final levels of Pupil Premium funding for 2014-15; and funding levels for 2015-16 as follows:

2014-15 Funding levels were:	£
FSM Ever 6 (Primary)	1,300 per pupil
FSM Ever 6 (Secondary)	935 per pupil
Service Children Ever 3	300 per pupil
Post – Looked After Children	1,900 per pupil
Looked After Children	Up to 1,900 per pupil

2015-16 Funding levels were:	£
FSM Ever 6 (Primary)	1,320 per pupil
FSM Ever 6 (Secondary)	935 per pupil
Service Children Ever 3	300 per pupil
Post – Looked After Children	1,900 per pupil

It was noted that no information had been provided with regards to LAC.

Members were referred to Appendix A which provided information from the DfE website relating to funding for the financial year 2015-16.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

SCF36 CAPITAL UPDATE

The Forum was advised that the Council had not received any updates with regards to Capital spend? If available in time for the next meeting, this information will be provided at the March.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

SCF37 RECRUITMENT OF SCHOOL ADMISSION AND EXCLUSION APPEAL PANEL MEMBERS

The Forum received a report which provided information on the process involved in carrying out Independent School Admission Appeals and advised of the recruitment drive for additional volunteer Panel Members.

It was noted that the Council was seeking nominations for volunteer members to sit on such panels from one of two categories:

- 1) Lay Persons – those without experience in the management of any school or the provision of education; and
- 2) Persons with experience in education such as a School Governor, Teacher or Head Teacher (past or present). This would also include parents with a child registered and attending a Halton school.

A brief explanation of the role and training provided was stated in the report and that further information from interested parties could be obtained from Angela Scott – Independent School Admissions Appeals Team Manager on 0151 511 8670 or email: angela.scott@halton.gov.uk

RESOLVED: That members of the Forum consider the request for the nomination of volunteers for Halton's Independent School Admission Appeals Panel.

Meeting ended at 5.50 p.m.