

SCHOOLS FORUM

At a meeting of the Schools Forum on Tuesday, 29 January 2013 at Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: E. Cargill, Primary School Representative
Councillor Philbin, Executive Board Member Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People & Families
J Woodroffe, Secondary School Representative - Chairman
L Bowles, Nursery Schools Representative
J Coughlan, Primary School Representative
C Dawes, Primary School Representative
A Keeley, Secondary School Representative
D Stanley, All Through School Representative
L Feakes, Primary School Representative
J. Rigby, Secondary Academy Representative
S Broxton, Primary Representative
H Mullaney, Secondary Academy Representative
S. Clough, Children & Enterprise
A. McIntyre, Children & Enterprise
A Jones, Financial Management
A. Jones, Democratic Services

Action

SCF25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies had been received from Carole Owen, Dianne Moran, Marjorie Constantine and Paul Towey.

SCF26 MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 October 2012 were agreed as a correct record.

SCF27 MEMBERSHIP & ROLE OF SCHOOLS FORUM UPDATE

The Forum was provided with an update on the membership and role of the Schools Forum following the introduction of the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012.

It was explained that each authority was able to determine the size of their Schools Forum provided it allowed full representation for the different types of schools and for representation of non-school members. Schools and Academy members together must number at least two thirds of the total membership of the Schools Forum. The balance between primary, secondary and academies members must be broadly proportionate to the pupils in each category.

The Forum was advised that membership of the Halton School Forum had now been revised and agreed in line with the above requirements and was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

In addition, it was noted that in line with the new regulations, Schools Forum was expected to ensure that the Executive Board were aware of its views on specific issues such as schools budget and individual budget shares. It was agreed therefore, that the Executive Board Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Ged Philbin, be invited to contribute to the Forum. Councillor Philbin was in attendance at the meeting and was welcomed to the Forum by the Chairman on behalf of all members.

It was confirmed that as the Schools Forum was both a consultative and decision making body for certain proposals on the use of public money at a local level, it was now a public meeting and as such all agendas and minutes would be published on the Council website.

For information, a table showing the revised powers and responsibilities of the Schools Forum was attached at Appendix 2.

RESOLVED:

1. The revised membership of the Schools Forum is noted; and
2. The revised role of the Schools Forum is noted.

SCF28 DSG SETTLEMENT 2013-14

The Forum was advised of the final allocation of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlement for 2013-14, following the Department for Education's (DfE) announcement on 19 December 2012.

It was noted that the 2013-14 settlement marked the first step towards a national funding formula and the DfE would continue to refine the arrangements so that the Forum was better placed to move to a new national funding formula during the next spending review period.

It was noted that historically the announcement included the number of pupils, the Guaranteed Unit of Funding per pupil and the total cash value. For 2013-14 however, in line with the new funding regulations, the pupil numbers were split between the Schools Block (16,823) and

Early Years Block (1,185) and the High Needs Block (no pupil numbers). The funding therefore was allocated as follows:

- Schools Block: £81,718,000
- Early Years Block: £ 3,986,000
- High Needs Block: £13,505,000

It was reported that the total DSG settlement for 2013-14 was £101,282,000. This included £2,072,000 for:

- 2 year olds early education places - £1,930,000;
- Transition funding for the ending of the 90% funding floor protection for 3 and 4 year olds - £117,000; and
- Funding for the induction of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT's) - £26,000.

RESOLVED: That School Forum notes the DSG settlement for 2013 -14.

SCF29 SCHOOLS BLOCK: SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA UPDATE

The Forum received the final funding formula for primary and secondary phases for 2013-14.

Further to decisions made at the last Schools Forum meeting regarding how the new school funding requirements would be adopted for Halton's Primary and Secondary maintained schools, academies and free school, the pro forma and supporting spreadsheet were completed and submitted to the Education Funding Agency (EFA).

It was reported that a response was received from them on 15 November 2012 stating that they were happy with the formula after 'reasonableness checks' but wanted further information on the PFI factor, the Pupil Growth Fund and contingency monies not delegated (held for the proposed Pupil Growth Fund). Further information was subsequently submitted and was accepted on 27 November 2012.

The DSG settlement allocated £81,718,000 to the Schools Block for Halton which covered the main funding for Primary and Secondary phase establishments. By uplifting the 2012-13 DSG cash value to the 2013-14 pupil numbers, there was a cash total of £38,839,800 available for Primary schools and £40,414,920 available for Secondary schools.

Budgets funded by the Schools Block had now been calculated were presented to Members so the final funding formula cash values could be reviewed and approved. (It was noted that although the final funding formula had to be submitted to the EFA by 22 January 2013, prior to the Schools Forum meeting, it was still subject to Schools Forum approval).

Members agreed to approve the final funding formula cash values. It was noted that once approval had been given by the EFA, the Schools Block budgets would be distributed to primary and secondary schools.

RESOLVED: That

1. Progress in developing the funding formula for primary and secondary phases be noted; and
2. The final funding formula for primary and secondary phases be approved.

SCF30 SCHOOLS BLOCK: PUPIL GROWTH FUND

The Forum received a report informing them of the decisions required for the new Pupil Growth Fund as per the Department of Education (DfE) requirements. Agreement was also sought on the criteria and calculation to be used for 2013-14.

Members were reminded that at the October meeting it was agreed to centrally retain a contingency fund for the purpose of meeting pupil growth. Consideration was now needed of the criteria for such funding and the basis of allocating monies to qualifying schools in accordance with the guidance set out by the DfE.

The report provided information and points for Forum members to take into consideration when reaching their decisions.

During debate the following was noted:

- Clarification was provided over the loss of the funding factor for 'ghost funding' and how the pupil growth fund would be used in its place;
- Pupil admissions resulting from schools appeals were discussed. Members of Appeals Panels would need advising of the changes to funding arrangements;

- Clarification would be sent out to schools on the infant class size exceptions;
- Pupil Growth Funding was available for all types of schools and pupils within the primary and secondary phases;
- Although it was no longer required for schools to declare their excess balances, this would be requested from a school if an application was made to the Pupil Growth Fund;
- It was agreed that applications to the Pupil Growth Fund would be made using a pro forma which would include information such as: the number of pupils; circumstances of the request; and the excess balance of the school.

It was the consensus of the Forum that a Pupil Growth Fund should continue to be supported, subject to a review in 12 months' time and the implementation of the pro forma as mentioned above.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum:

1. Supports the Pupil Growth Fund for the next 12 months in line with the criteria set out in the report;
2. Reviews the Fund in 12 months' time; and
3. Agrees to the implementation of a pro forma to be used for the application process.

SCF31 PUPIL PREMIUM GRANT

A report was presented which informed the Schools Forum of the final allocation of Pupil Premium Grant for 2012-13 and the indicative allocations for 2013-14.

Officers provided a recap of the pupil eligibility and rates payable for 2012-13. The Grant for 2013-14 had been announced at the following rates:

FSM Ever 6	£900
Children Looked After	£900
Service Children Ever 3	£300

It was noted that the final allocations of Pupil Premium Grant for 2013-14 would be based on the January 2013 census and would be verified in the summer.

RESOLVED: That the Schools Forum note the report.

SCF32 FUNDING FOR HIGH NEEDS PUPILS & STUDENTS UPDATE

The Forum was presented with a summary of the progress to date in implementing new assessment and funding models for high needs pupils and students.

A report was presented to the Schools Forum on 16 October 2012 which provided a summary of the changes to funding provision for pupils and students with high needs. It was noted that for schools these changes would take effect from 1 April 2013 and for colleges and academies they would be introduced at the start of the academic year 2013-14. It was reported that task and finish groups had been established to address the different areas within the high needs blocks. Although in many areas further work was still required, a summary of progress to date was detailed in the report. Officers explained the funding model to Forum members, as discussed in paragraph 3.6 of the report. Attached at Appendix 1 was the proposed funding model for special units for 2013-14 which was endorsed by the Forum.

It was agreed that a further report would be brought to the next meeting of the Schools Forum.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum:

1. Notes the progress to date;
2. Requests a further report; and
3. Agrees the funding model for special units for 2013-14.

SCF33 FUNDING FOR EARLY EDUCATION FOR 2 YEAR OLDS FROM LOWER INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

The Forum received a report informing them of the expansion of the free entitlement to Early Education for eligible two year olds and the decisions required to allow the local authority to meet its statutory duty.

The Forum was advised that currently Halton provided funding from the Early Intervention Grant (EIG) to provide a free entitlement to Early Education to approximately 125 children for up to 10 hours per week.

It was announced in May 2012, that funding for early education for two year olds would form part of the DSG from 2013-14. This reflected the fact that early education would become a statutory entitlement for around 20% of eligible two year olds from September 2013, in the same way as it was for three and four year olds.

The report went on to discuss the allocation of the funding in three separately identified strands: Statutory Place Funding, Trajectory funding and Capital Funding. Further it discussed how the allocations were calculated to achieve an average rate.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum:

1. Notes the report;
2. Agrees funding to allow the local authority to meet its statutory duty in line with DSG regulations; and
3. Agrees to pay flat rate of £4.95 per hour.

SCF34 EARLY YEARS UPDATE

The Schools Forum was informed of the new School Funding Formula requirements under the new funding arrangements, which affected the Early Years provision for 2013-14. The Early Years formula was based upon the agreed formula for Primary Schools.

It was explained that the basis of the allocation for each element was identified and mapped to the new funding factors as mentioned in the report. The funding had been mapped and the total cash value for each element retained within that element. The elements being used were outlined by officers and were:

- Basic Per Pupil Element;
- Deprivation Element;
- Lump Sum; and
- LA rates.

It was noted that consultation events had been set up for Tuesday 5 February for Nursery Schools / Nursery Units and Thursday 7 February for PVI providers.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

SCF35 CONTINGENCY UPDATE

The Forum received an update on the value of the contingencies for 2012-13.

The total general contingency was £605,139 which included £166,248 carried forward from 2011-12. The Forum was reminded that the following budget adjustments to this contingency budget had been agreed:

Staffing reductions:	£300,000
Carbon reduction commitments:	£80,809
Contribution to IWIST staffing:	£50,000
Delegated former Standard Fund:	£267,957
Infant Class Size funding:	£57,705
Pupil growth The Bankfield:	£33,619

It was noted that this was £189,951 above budget but this could be covered by the balance from the staffing reduction and NQT budgets. Further information on the budget adjustments were explained in detail in the report. It was noted that the revised balance on the general school contingency (paragraph 3.4) should read £26,180, **not** £29,180 as mentioned in the report.

Schools Forum was asked to note that following a brief consultation by the DfE on the Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant (LACSEG) from 2012-13, any school converting to an academy would take a proportion of the school contingency budget. This funding would be recouped from the budget in year.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum note the current balance for the contingency.

SCF36 FINANCE SLA'S

The Forum was informed of two proposals for new Service Level Agreements (SLA's) to be offered from April 2013 and was requested to agree the proposals so that they could be costed and worked up for the next meeting.

The Financial Management Division currently operated a Maternity Scheme whereby schools that opted into the scheme shared the cost of maternity leave between them on a pro-rata basis of their total LMS budgets. It was agreed to explore continuing with the scheme if sufficient numbers of schools opted in. There were currently six schools that had opted out of the scheme for 2012-13. The more that opted out the higher the charge would be for the

remaining schools. The Forum was advised that the cost of servicing this scheme would be explored; however the estimates were that this may work out at less than £10 per school for the year.

The Financial Management Division were also willing to offer SLA's to schools from April 2013 to act as a recoupment body to calculate and invoice other LA's for income and to pass monies to schools on a termly basis. Halton were also considering operating recoupment on a similar basis as the Early Years Single Funding Formula.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum:

1. Note the report; and
2. Agrees to the proposals for the SLA's to be costed and worked up.

SCF37 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Forum Members wished to express their thanks to Ann McIntyre and Anne Jones for their support during the School Funding Reform process.

Meeting ended at 7.12 p.m.