

## SCHOOLS FORUM

*At a meeting of the Schools Forum on Wednesday, 26 February 2020 at Civic Suite - Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: K. Landrum (Chair), Primary School with a Nursery Representative  
A. Jones, Democratic Services, HBC  
A. McIntyre, Education, Inclusion & Provision, HBC  
A. Jones, Financial Management, HBC  
N Shafiq, Financial Management, HBC  
R. Springs, Financial Management, HBC  
A. Brown, Nursery Schools Representative  
J. O'Connor, PVI Representative  
N. Hunt, Pupil Referral Unit Representative  
J. Wilson, Secondary Governor Representative  
A. Sheppard, VA Schools Representative  
J. McConville, Secondary Academy Representative  
I. Critchley, All Through Schools Representative

*Action*

### SCF24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Thalia Bell, Kathryn Albiston, Jackie Coughlan, Lyn Roberts and Heather Austin.

### SCF25 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

### SCF26 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG) FORECAST OUTTURN 2019-20

The Forum received the DSG forecast outturn for 2019-20 as at 11 February 2020.

Members were referred to the detailed breakdown for all four blocks attached at Appendix A: Schools Block; Central School Services Block; Early Years Block; and High Needs Block and the report provided commentary on the calculation of each.

It was reported that a forecast outturn of £338,824 under budget for 2019-20 was expected after building in all known and expected costs. This equated to 0.30% of the overall DSG allocation to Halton.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

SCF27 EARLY YEARS BLOCK FUNDING FOR 2020-21

The Forum received the current position on Early Years funding for 2020-21.

It was reported that an initial allocation of £9,981,564 for the provision of Early Years support had been received. The January 2020 headcount had been used to calculate indicative budgets for providers which were tabled at the meeting and explained in the report.

The reasoning behind the ring-fencing of the underspend from this year's early years budget being transferred into next year's budget was noted.

Members also received the proposals for the Centrally Retained budgets, presented with a comparison to 2019-20 and were asked to approve these.

One Member requested to know what the pupil projections were for the next couple of years. This information was available and would be sent following the meeting.

On behalf of the Schools Forum, the Chair passed on their thanks to the Financial Management Team for their hard work and support.

RESOLVED: That the Forum

- 1) note the report; and
- 2) agree the centrally retained budgets as proposed.

Operational  
Director -  
Education,  
Inclusion and  
Provision

SCF28 HIGH NEEDS BLOCK FUNDING FOR 2020-21

The Forum received the High Needs Block funding for 2020-21 and was requested to agree the Centrally Retained budgets.

It was reported that the Dedicated Schools Grant settlement was a total of £19,063,244 for 2020-21 which was an increase of £2,292,555 from the previous year. However from this figure, £2,906,662 was being recouped by the ESFA for commissioned places in special academies and some independent special schools. This left £16,156,582 High Needs Block that would be paid to Halton Borough Council.

Officers tabled the Special Unit Calculations for 2020-

21 and the Special Schools and PRU top-up rates for 2020-21. The report provided commentary on the current position, Resource Base funding, Special Schools, the PRU, Top-up funding and the Centrally Retained budgets. The Centrally Retained budgets were agreed by the Forum.

One Member requested information on the High Needs contingency, these would be sent after the meeting.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum

- 1) note the report; and
- 2) agrees the Centrally Retained budgets.

Financial  
Management,  
HBC

SCF29 CENTRAL SCHOOLS SERVICES BLOCK (CSSB)  
FUNDING FOR 2020-21

The Forum received the Central School Services Block (CSSB) funding for 2020-21.

It was noted that the CSSB was now a separate block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. For 2020-21 the grant allocation was £665,440 and approval was requested from Schools Forum for the budgets funded from this block.

The budgets were presented in the report with explanations and shown against the comparisons to 2019-20. The Forum discussed the budgets and the contribution to the Safeguarding post was highlighted. It was agreed that Nigel Hunt (PRU) would contact the secondary headteachers to seek their views on the future funding of this role, as the funding was reducing year on year. Officers would contact the primaries in this regard.

The Forum agreed the following centrally retained budgets from the CSSB as follows:

	<u>2020-21</u>
Contribution to Safeguarding post	£37,680
Teacher's Panel	£19,460
Licences	£104,480
Premature Retirements	£100,000

The former Education Services Grant retained element funding now part of the CSSB allocation was agreed as follows:

Staffing	£192,800
Central Recharges	£109,860

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum

- 1) note the report; and
- 2) agrees the CSSB budgets.

Operational  
Director -  
Education,  
Inclusion and  
Provision

#### SCF30 HIGH NEEDS - PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

The Forum received a report which set out the proposed changes to the operating model of the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and sought the Forum's support for the revised funding arrangements.

The Forum recognised that in recent years the high levels of secondary exclusions had been restricting the ability of the PRU to provide preventative placements and use their expertise to provide outreach support to schools. The PRU had also seen an increasing number of pupils requiring assessment for an EHCP and very few students on engagement placements successfully returned to their mainstream schools.

It was reported that this was identified as a key priority in the High Needs Review and one of the recommendations was to change the operating model of PRU and its relationships to schools, so that it could maximise the integration of pupils back into mainstream schools. A Task and Finish Group, facilitated by *Peopletoo* and with stakeholder representatives, had now developed a plan which would allow the PRU to work differently with schools.

This new approach and new arrangements were discussed in the report as well as the revised instrument of governance. The proposals for the allocation of two inclusion places per term for up to 12 weeks for each secondary school funded from the High Needs Budget was welcomed, and it was noted that these places would be contingent on the schools' commitment to reintegrate these students back into their mainstream secondary school.

The proposals for the Outreach Service (led by the PRU) and funding arrangements from the High Needs budget were presented to Members; this was discussed and supported.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum

- 1) supports the proposed changes to the operating

model of the PRU and the funding from the High Needs budget of two inclusion places per school per annum; and

- 2) supports the contribution from the High Needs budget of £100,000 for the provision of a PRU Outreach Service.

*Meeting ended at 5.07 p.m.*