

Schools Forum Meeting

Held on Thursday 23rd January 2020 at Bedford High School Training Suite

Meeting opened: 1.30pm

Members Present:

G.Hayes	Primary Representative
J.Hassan	Primary Representative
T.Mingaul-Cunningham	Primary Governor
A.Birchall	Secondary Representative
H.Phillips	Secondary Representative
A.McGlown	Secondary Representative
E.Loftus	Special Schools Representative
L.Tipping	16-19 Providers Representative
M.Atkins	Union Representative
M.Wilkinson	Authorised Observer
K.Parkin	Authorised Observer
D.Donaldson	Primary Representative
C.Williams	Primary Representative
A.Hardy (Chair)	Secondary Governor
F.Quinlivan	Primary Representative
R.Lewis	Nursery School Representative

In Attendance:

J.McDonald	Wigan Council – Finance
A.Meehan	Wigan Council – Finance
L.Morgan	Wigan Council – Education Service Manager
M.Larkin	Governor Services – Clerk

MINUTES

1	Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence were received from: T.Warren A.Isherwood A.Pollard Cllr Bullen C.Pealing
2	Agreement of Any Other Urgent Business to Be Added to The Agenda It was agreed the following items be added to the agenda for this meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DfE updates – A.Meehan
3	Previous Minutes It was agreed: the minutes from the forum meeting held on 28th November 2019 be approved as a true and correct record Matters Arising: There were no matters arising
4	Schools Formula 2020-21 A report had been circulated prior to the meeting which provided details of the DSG allocations for 2020-21 and details of the allocations per school.

Mr Meehan highlighted:

- Although the government had highlighted its intention to move to a 'hard' national funding formula (NFF) this was not yet statutory however Schools Forum had agreed in 2018/19 that the local formula should mirror the rates within the national funding formula which had continued in 2019/20
- At the last meeting of the Forum indicative budget figures had been shared, the schools block allocation is expressed as separate per pupil primary and secondary rates for each LA and also includes funding for premises costs (rates) and growth. The total allocation for 2020/21 was £211,893,719 – this was an increase of around £8m
- Forum members agreed at the previous meeting that a block transfer of £0.450m to be made to the High Needs block, along with a £0.300m underspend from DSG recoupment
- Final allocations had been based upon the principles agreed at the previous meeting included in the report
- Indicative budgets had been based upon previous census figures – final data sets had shown a reduction in funding in relation to the number of primary pupils attracting low prior attainment, this had provided some surplus which allowed for an increase in the MFG, set at the maximum of 1.84% and an increase in AWPU by 0.63%
- The subgroup that met in October had discussed the most fair use of any surplus would be to increase the AWPU – increases were shown within the report
- The notional SEN percentages and de-delegation values had been agreed at the last meeting
- There had been an increase in growth funding to £1,404,095 for 2020/21 – a detailed report for growth funding had been shared at a previous meeting in October 2019 and any decisions in respect of unspent growth funding would be brought to Schools Forum for consideration
- The Central Services Block funds LA's for the statutory duties that they hold for both maintained schools and academies this was confirmed as £670,353 for 2020/21
- Reference was made to appendix 1 and members were informed across the borough there had been an increase of 598 secondary pupil places and a decrease of 98 in primary pupil places

Q. Is there any indication of when there will be the increase for the minimum per pupil funding for primary pupils?

A. Mr Meehan reported no new information had been received.

Members considered:

(1) Forum members **agreed** the funding formula and school block allocations as set out in Appendix 1 for 2020/21

(2) Forum members **agreed** the total growth fund for 2020/21

(3) Forum members **agreed** the allocation of the CSSB for LA statutory duties

5 High Needs Budget 2020/21

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting which provided details of the High Needs Block Budget.

Mr McDonald highlighted:

- There was an overall increase in the High Needs Budget for Wigan of £5m

- At the previous meeting it had been reported there would be a projected overspend of £3m in 2019/20 – this had increased to £3.4m due to increased demand across a number of areas
- The report provided explanation of the pressures on the high needs budget and the proposed budget for 2020/21 had been included as an appendix
- There was a projected increase of 5% in the number of EHCP's
- The number of places at Independent Schools had increased significantly due a lack of capacity within the Borough, this cost center now also included hospital education and out of borough placements
- There were proposals to increase places at the Lilford Centre and at Three Towers
- Tutoring costs had increased significantly this year
- Next years projections were based on current pupil numbers resulting in a £3.2m projected overspend
- The SEND transformation and consultancy work commissioned by the LA had taken place and it had been identified the next step was to consider a sharper financial strategy – Forum were invited to be a part of a subgroup for this

Q. Has anyone see the consultants report?

A. A member reported Special School Headteachers had been invited to receive feedback tomorrow

The Chair suggested this report should be shared with Forum members.

Liz Loftus, Rachel Lewis, Andy McGlown and Gary Hayes **agreed** to partake in the subgroup

Discussion took place around a need for adequate levels of provision to be provided within the Borough to reduce costs and the need for investment to support changes.

Mr McDonald explained he was aware some recommendations from the consultant's report were based around resourced provision.

A member shared their experience of involvement in discussions held with the consultant, it had been acknowledged schools receive funding for resourced places even if no children are accessing this provision, suggestions had been made to consider a base rate to be paid to schools to keep places open.

Q. Why has the budget for Independent School provision has increased by £2m?

A. JM: There are no places, all special schools are full

Q. What is Lilford?

A. This is to expand the provision around SEMH

Suggestions were shared that based on the past few years there was a need to plan for additional provision throughout secondary to anticipate increases in demand opposed to reacting to it year on year.

Q. Would there be a balanced budget for 2020/21 if the deficit was not paid?

A. JM: This proposal shows the deficit paid back in full there is a possibility a phased repayment could be looked at over a number of years

ACTIONS:

- (1) Request SEND Consultant report to be circulated
- (2) Further information to be provided about Lilford
- (3) Information to be shared as to where the Hospital Education provision sat previously
- (4) Request made for detailed analysis of Independent Provision costs

<p>6</p>	<p>Early Years Budget 2020/21</p> <p>A report had been circulated prior to the meeting which provided details of the Early Years Funding Formula 2020/21.</p> <p>Mr McDonald highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The early years national funding formula for 3 and 4 years olds consists of a universal base rate including factors for additional needs, using measures of free school meals, disability living allowance and English as an additional language • The hourly rate for 2019/20 had been £4.30 – for 2020/21 this has been increased by 8p per hour an increase of £0.3m • There were no changes to the early years pupil premium funding • The LA were required to pass-through 95% of the funding from government • It was proposed the increase to the base rate would be 6p and the 2p would be retained to support early years SEND demand • Currently 10p top slice was taken from the 2 year old funding it was proposed this rate would continue • Maintained nursery schools were protected until March 2021 <p>Mr McDonald reported the information within this report had been shared with early years representatives across the Borough</p> <p>Q. What is the 10p top slice from 2-year-old funding used for?</p> <p>A. To support the increasing early years SEND demand</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Mr Meehan shared the following DfE updates with the Forum:</p> <p><u>Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) Consultation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DfE were extending the RPA to LA maintained schools • The RPA was a fund to cover risk, this was held by central government and was an alternative to commercial insurers • This would be a voluntary option • The DfE would like LA's to enter their schools en-masse through de-delegation <p>The LA insurance team had been asked to provide a report to Schools Forum</p> <p><u>Teachers Pay 2020/21 Academic Year</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DfE proposals had been put forward to the School Teacher Review Body (STRB) • Three models had been put forward, all resulting in an average increase of 3% • The proposals had been structured to provide higher increases to those lower in the mainscale and lower increases for those higher up the scale – with a view to achieving the £30k starting salary by 2022/23 • There would be no increase to the Teachers Pay Grant to reflect the average 3% increase, therefore would need to be funded through school budgets <p><u>3 year budgets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained schools had been asked to submit 3 year budgets prior to Christmas, 75% had been received • Submissions were being looked at and feedback was being provided • From the submissions reviewed to date the overall position was a concern with significant deficits being forecast, particularly in primary schools as pupil numbers were reducing over the coming years • A full report will be provided to Schools Forum at a future meeting

	<p>Schools Forum were in agreement for academies to be approached to submit their 3 year projected budgets in order for a reflection of the full position across the Borough.</p> <p>The Chair raised consideration for the Forum to write to the government with regards over future funding once the 3 year position had been presented.</p> <p>Q. A question was raised about any further information from HR with regard to recalculations of support staff holiday pay</p> <p>A. Mr Meehan reported that HR had run an engagement session with schools and communications would be shared with school shortly.</p> <p>ACTION: Clarification to be shared with Schools Forum members</p>
8	<p>Future Meeting Dates</p> <p>5th March 2020 – Bedford Training Suite</p> <p>7th May 2020 – Bedford Training Suite</p> <p>18th June 2020 – Hawkley Hall Suite</p>

There being no further business to discuss the meeting closed at 2.20pm