

# Schools Forum Meeting

Held on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020 via Microsoft Teams

## Minutes

*Meeting opened: 1.30pm*

### Members Present:

E.Ellis	Primary Representative
G.Hayes	Primary Representative
C.Williams	Primary Representative
J.Hassan	Primary Representative
F.Quinlivan	Primary Representative
T.Mingaud-Cunningham	Primary Governor
A.Birchall	Secondary Representative
H.Phillips	Secondary Representative
A.McGlown	Secondary Representative
A.Hardy	Secondary Governor
E.Loftus	Special Schools Representative
M.Atkins	Union Representative
P.McGhee	16-19yrs Representative

### Observers:

Cllr J. Bullen	Authorised Observer
M.Wilkinson	Authorised Observer

### In Attendance:

J.McDonald	Wigan Council – Finance
A.Meehan	Wigan Council – Finance
C.Pealing	Wigan Council – Assistant Director Education
M.Larkin	Governor Services – Senior Professional Clerk
A.Wallace	Wigan Council – Acting TESS Manager (item 4 only)
L.Tuersley-Dixon	Wigan Council – Principal Ed. Psychologist (item 4 only)
V.Lowe	Wigan Council – HR (item 9 only)

## 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:

A.Pollard, Chris.Williams and Anne Isherwood

## 2. Urgent Business

The following item was accepted for inclusion under any other business:

- Term Time Calculations Update – confidential item

### 3. Previous Minutes

**It was agreed:** the minutes from the forum meeting held on **9<sup>th</sup> July 2020** be approved as a true and correct record

There were no matters arising.

### 4. TESS Service Offer

L.Tuersley-Dixon and A.Wallace attended the meeting to provide information on the TESS service offer and provide proposals regarding charging arrangements.

A report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and it was highlighted:

- A recent review had taken place of the Targeted Educational Support Service (TESS) and identified anomalies in respect of the funding arrangements for their core service
- All Wigan Schools (Primary, Secondary, Special, Academies and Maintained) currently get 10 sessions of TESS time per year (this includes two RDP visits)
- All Primaries (Maintained and Academy) get additional support with SEMH (The cost of delivering this service was £275,000 last year)
- Maintained Primaries currently pay for TESS through de-delegation
- All secondary schools, academies and special schools were currently not contributing financially towards the core TESS service
- This position was not sustainable for the service over the longer term
- The service had seen a reduction in staffing levels in order to operate within existing budgets
- There was a desire to ensure that charges are fair and equitable across all sectors
- It was proposed that from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, maintained secondary schools would pay for the core service and this would be de-delegated as with the Primary Schools
- Approval was sought from Schools Forum to de-delegate £100,000 from Secondary Schools
- Academies would have the option to commission the same service – an RDP would be provided to all academies annually regardless of commissioning
- TESS would continue to provide additional SEMH support sessions in Maintained Primary schools. These would be capped so that additional SEMH support can be more equitable across Primary schools

Questions and comments were shared from Schools Forum members and it was suggested that within the following four weeks, members consult with their colleagues about the proposed changes. L.Tuersley-Dixon informed members that she would share her direct contact details and welcomed members to put forward suggestions of what they want from TESS.

It was agreed that further discussion would take place at the next Schools Forum meeting.

**Action:** Clerk – agenda item for next meeting

*L.Tuersley-Dixon and A.Wallace left the meeting at 1.50pm*

## 5. De-delegations

A report had been circulated in advance of the meeting, Mr Meehan highlighted:

- De-delegations apply only to maintained schools and no increase had been implemented to the values since 2014-15
- It was proposed the values be increase by 2.75% - this was equivalent to both the upper teacher payscale and the NJC pay award
- The report included a table providing the de-delegation and education function values in 2020/21 and the proposed values for 2021/22 inclusive of the 2.75% uplift where applicable

**It was agreed:** Members noted the information provided and agree the proposed values for existing de-delegations inclusive of a 2.75% inflationary uplift

## 6. Schools Block Funding Formula 2021/22

A report had been circulated in advance of the meeting, Mr Meehan highlighted:

- Following the Government spending review in 2019 it was confirmed the DSG funding would be increased by £2.2 billion in 2021/22 - £730 million of this would be used to increase High Needs Funding
- There had been two changes to the NFF for 2021-22 – with teachers' pay and pension grants being added to the allocations and following an update to the IDACI to ensure deprivation funding allocated through the formulae is based on more recent data
- Other key points included the changes to the Minimum funding levels (MFL) per pupil:
  - Primary School MFL's increased to £4,180 per pupil (£180 reflects changes to Pay and Pension Grant), from £3,750 in 2020/21.
  - Secondary School MFL's have changed to £5,415 (£265 Pay and Pension Grants), from £5,000 in 2020/21.

It was proposed that a subgroup meeting be convened to review initial modelling of the school's allocations for 2021/22. The proposed date for this meeting was 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

The following Schools Forum members agreed to be a part of the subgroup:

A.McGlown

G.Hayes

A.Birchall

A.Hardy

## **7. High Needs Block update**

A report had been circulated in advance of the meeting, the sub-group had met on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

It was noted the provisional allocation for Wigan was £39.5m (before any deductions by the ESFA in respect of academies and FE institutions). This was an increase of £4.6m from 20/21 (13% increase). Incorporated within this increase, was the pay and pension grant allocations for special schools and AP, when removed this reduced the increase to circa £4m. Figures were provisional at this stage.

Other Local Authorities within GM also experienced pressures against their DSG and was most acute in high needs budgets for which Local Authorities are directly responsible.

It was reported there was a significant cumulative high needs deficit carry forward of £2.915m brought forward in to 2020/21, current projections were showing that this deficit would increase further by around £0.665m to £3.580m despite significant additional funding in 2020/21.

It was noted significant pressure areas included:

- Independent Schools where expenditure continued to be well in excess of the budget in this area and it was projected to be higher than in 2019/20
- The demand for special school places had increased and work was ongoing to increase capacity for resourced provision within mainstream schools across the Borough
- There had been a 7% increase in the number of EHCP's in comparison with the previous year

Mr Meehan explained although it was not mandatory the DfE had published a template DSG Management Plan which had been considered by the sub-group and it had been agreed this would be completed. A draft would be shared with the sub-group at their next meeting in November and presented to Forum at the January 2021 meeting.

## **8. AP KS2 places charges**

A report circulated in advance of the meeting provided proposals on the value of potential charges for KS2 Alternative Provision Places at Three Towers.

Agreement had been made in principle to the proposals at a previous Forum meeting, the value proposed at this time was £6,025 per annum which would be pro-rated to reflect the length of the placement. This was the value of the per place top up funding provided to Three Towers and aligned with the charges levied for Key Stage 1 places which were commissioned directly by schools.

The primary concern was in relation to how this value compared with the cost of permanent exclusions. Further options had been considered and detailed within the report.

Discussion took place and comments were shared, with the majority of attendees in agreement with option 3:

**£6,025 per annum** – *As per the original proposal this aligns with the top up value currently levied by three towers (notwithstanding the lump sum funding agreed at the last forum meeting). The cost to a school of a 12 week placement would be £1,903 (£6,025/38 weeks x 12 weeks). This would not be amended year on year but would remain constant until such time as it was felt that further review was appropriate which would be completed in consultation with Schools Forum.*

It was proposed that this is introduced for any new Key Stage 2 placements from the beginning of the Spring Term 2021.

*JM left the meeting at 2.15pm*

**It was agreed:** Forum Members agreed to the implementation of option 3 from Spring 2021

*JB, MW and MA left the meeting at 2.15pm*

## **9. Any Other Urgent Business**

### Term Time Calculations Update

A confidential update to the considerations of the term time calculations was shared with members of the Forum.

## **10. Future Meeting Dates**

**It was agreed:** Forum Members in attendance agreed to move the next meeting from 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020 to **19<sup>th</sup> November 2020** to allow for the sub-group meetings to take place and feedback prepared.

**There being no further business to discuss the meeting closed at 2.35pm**