

Schools Forum Meeting

Held on Thursday 19th November 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
A.Pollard	Academy Representative
A.Isherwood	PRU Representative
R.Lewis	Nursery School Representative

Observers:

M.Wilkinson	Authorised Observer
K.Parkin	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)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:
Cllr Bullen, C.Williams, K.Winnard & P.MGee

2. Urgent Business

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

- High Needs Block Sub-group feedback

3. Previous Minutes

It was agreed: the minutes from the forum meeting held on **15th October 2020** be approved as a true and correct record

There were no matters arising.

4. TESS SERVICE UPDATE

It was noted a detailed report had been shared at the previous meeting, members had been asked to consult with their colleagues and contact L.Tuersley-Dixon with any queries raised.

No queries had been raised.

Mr Meehan explained that a report summarising the final proposals for the TESS service offer and charging arrangements had been circulated in advance of the meeting. As requested at the last meeting consideration of the SEMH buy-back for secondary schools had been reviewed and it was proposed that secondary schools purchasing TESS core services and well as secondary buy-back would receive a 20% reduction on secondary buy-back charges.

It was agreed: Forum members approved the proposed de-delegation for secondary schools in respect of the core TESS service totaling £100,000.

L.Tuersley-Dixon requested to meet with academy colleagues in December regarding comparable charges for academies.

5. THREE TOWERS TOP UP FUNDING

A report providing forum members with information on the agreement with Three Towers for top up funding for the academic year 2021/22 had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Mr Meehan highlighted forum had requested that an agreement be reached on top up funding for 2021/22 onwards by December 2020, a meeting took place in October between the Rowan Learning Trust/TTAPA and LA representatives in order to discuss the top up funding options. It was agreed:

- There would be a top up funding value of £7,224 for 2021/22
- This was agreed for the next two academic years with a minimum baseline of 181 due to the impact of COVID-19 on numbers
- There would be an annual inflationary increase applied to the top up value equivalent to the average schools' block funding increase for secondary schools. In the first year, any increase associated with the Pay and Pension Grants will be removed as this will be paid as a separate element to TTAPA.
- Based 181 places at £7,224 this equates to £1,307,544 per annum, which would be an increase on the current top up value of £168,819.

It was agreed: Forum members noted the information included regarding the agreed top up funding and the additional cost to the High Needs block.

6. SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA 2021/22

A report providing details of the indicative DSG allocations for 2021/22 and proposed formulas for allocating had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Mr Meehan informed forum members that the sub-group meeting had taken place and the group had looked at in detail models presented. It was highlighted:

- In 2021/22 the value previously provided through the pay and pension grants has been rolled into the national funding formula, with a total of £9.8m added to the 2020/21 baselines to reflect this
- The LA would continue to apply the principles of the intended hard national funding formula
- The LA was permitted to transfer up to 0.5% of the schools' block funding allocated to other blocks (i.e. high needs) with the agreement of Schools Forum
- The forum sub-group had been provided with funding models including £0.45m and £0.75m block transfers for consideration. The proposal around a £0.45m contribution to High Needs block had been agreed for recommendation to Schools Forum
- The mandatory minimum per pupil funding levels have been increased for both primary and secondary schools
- The IDACI data had been updated in 2019 and it was the updated data which would be used in 2021/22

Mr Meehan explained the model recommended for approval by schools' forum:

- This model allows for a block transfer of £0.45m (0.20%) from the Schools Block
- Due to the surplus funding outlined, this would leave a surplus at the current time of £180,269 - it was noted the allocations shown were indicative and would change following confirmation of the final funding allocations based on the October 2020 census data
- If in this eventuality after the block transfer, there was still surplus funding it is proposed that this would be allocated through increasing the AWPU proportionately
- If in the eventuality that the surplus funding was insufficient to cover the block transfer, the MFG would be reduced from the maximum

Representatives from the sub-group were asked to consult with schools within their sector on the proposed transfer from the Schools Block for 2021/22, at the meeting it was reported no feedback had been received from information circulated by the representatives.

It was agreed: Forum Members agreed:

(1) to adopt NFF factors and values

(2) if there was surplus funding this would be allocated through increasing the AWPU.

(3) A contribution from the Schools block to the High Needs block of £0.450m

(4) If there was insufficient funding to meet all NFF values after the HNB contribution, MFG would be reduced from the maximum 2% to ensure affordability

The Chair thanked Mr Meehan and Mr McDonald for the background work carried out in producing the detailed models for consideration and to the sub-group members for consulting with their colleagues.

The Chair reminded all Forum Members of the importance of sharing information and requested that minutes of these forum meetings be circulated in timely manner to colleagues.

7. Any Other Urgent Business

The notes from both the Funding Formula and High Needs Block sub-groups had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Mr Meehan highlighted:

- The DfE required the completion of a management plan for any LA which has an overall deficit on its DSG account at the end of the 2019-20 financial year or if its DSG surplus had significantly reduced
- The purpose of the sub-group was to receive a detailed updated of the ongoing work being carried out by the LA, this focused on the HNB and key actions identified
- Detailed information of workstreams and anticipated savings had been shared, these included the increases in resourced provision across the borough, the commissioning of more cost effective SEMH provision, and the introduction of the SEND support panel
- Both unmitigated and mitigated financial plans had been presented to the group for consideration

Feedback from the sub-group was positive, with a recognition of the level of detail being provided and a stronger confidence and understanding of the position of high needs provision across the borough.

Thanks were expressed to K.Turner, C.Pealing, A.Meehan and J.McDonald for their continued hard work.

8. Future Meeting Dates

21st January 2021 - all meetings will commence at 1.30pm

18th March 2021

13th May 2021

24th June 2021

There being no further business to discuss the meeting closed at 2pm