

**Meeting of the Schools Forum  
Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2016 at 1.30 p.m.  
at Bedford High School**

**Members:** A.P. Hardy (Chair) S. Bruen, F. Quinlivan, D. Hurst (deputising for V. Birchall), H. Phillips, A. Birchall, A. McGlown, R. Halford, A. Isherwood, P. McGhee, J. Holland and A Wells.

**Observers:** Cllr J. Platt, M. Atkins, M. Wilkinson.

**LA Officers:** A. Lindsay (Assistant Director) J. McDonald (Strategic Finance Manager) and F. Gore (Clerk)

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from E. Loftus , G. Hayes, D. Winstanley, V. Birchall, K. Pilkington, R. Lewis, and T. Warren (members) and K. Winnard (observer).

**2. Items for inclusion under AOB**

**None.**

**3. Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 12 May 2016:**

**It was agreed:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2016 be approved as a true and correct record.

**Matters Arising:**

The Forum noted the comments made at Minute 4 (3) regarding the impact on academies in particular of retrospective funding for additional pupils.

**4. System Leadership for School Improvement – Proposed Model:**

Mr Lindsay (Assistant Director) gave a presentation on a proposed revised model for a systems approach to collaborative working between schools and other key stakeholders in order to support continuous school improvement.

The proposals, which continued to be the subject of discussion and consultation, reflected the changed relationship between Local Authorities (LA) and schools and the changed role of the LA with regard to school improvement.

The proposed model sought to build on the existing systems led approach and the existing school improvement fora within the Borough and at Regional level. The model sought to develop clear strategic objectives led by a strategic system wide partnership.

Members discussed the proposed model as it currently stood and the planned timeline for implementation. Mr Lindsay asked for volunteers to work on the detail of

the model with a view to consultations on more detailed proposals in autumn 2016/spring 2017 and the new system being in place from summer 2017.

**It was agreed:** (1) That Mr Lindsay be thanked for his presentation and volunteers be sought from the Forum and elsewhere to take forward the plans as reported.

(2) That updates be presented to future meetings of the Forum.

## 5. Growth Funding 2016-17:

Mr McDonald (Strategic Finance Manager) presented a report (circulated prior to the meeting) reminding members that Local authorities may top slice the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) in order to create a Growth Fund to support schools which were required to provide extra places in order to meet basic need within the Authority. In 2016/17 Wigan allocated £0.250m to this growth fund from the DSG before the allocation to schools. Schools Forum also agreed to utilise the closed schools reserve to support this fund over the next three years.

The funding available for growth was under considerable pressure due to the requests to increase numbers in schools and the nature of the projects required to meet the need.

It was therefore proposed to use a further £0.147m of the closed schools reserve to meet the extra costs. The LA had a commitment to support schools until 2020 (see table below). In view of this he asked that consideration be given to an increase to the level of contribution from the DSG in 2017/18.

<b>Growth Fund Evaluation</b>	<b>Additional Pupils</b>	<b>Committed</b>	<b>One off Expenditure</b>	<b>Total</b>
2016/17	172	438,489	208,456	646,945
2017/18	202	488,112	-	488,112
2018/19	202	488,112	-	488,112
2019/20	202	488,112	-	488,112
		<b>1,902,825</b>	<b>208,456</b>	<b>2,111,281</b>

Members discussed the nature of the “one-off” costs required to allow additional pupil numbers e.g. costs relating to additional equipment. One member explained the time lag between the requirement to have the new buildings and facilities available for use and the time when the increased admissions had impacted in all school years. Failure to provide funding of the “one –off costs” would mean the school would be required to fund these costs to the detriment of existing pupils.

There was a discussion on what elements of any planned work could be included as a capital cost and where funding could be sought to meet additional need, both in the maintained sector and by academy schools. Mr McDonald suggested this be an area for discussion in planned meetings with Headteachers to discuss the funding of growth through capital and revenue spend.

A member commented that the top-slicing of DSG to fund growth in individual schools had the effect of reducing overall funding available for pupils across the Borough. School with falling roles faced the most significant budget pressures and it could therefore be argued that top-slicing of the DSG to fund growth should stop.

There was also a discussion over provision planning and the plans by the LA to build in more capacity than was actually required to reflect parental preference and local need. Mr Lindsay reported that the Strategic Plan would be refreshed in consultation with schools and would reflect the increased demand for places in the secondary sector. The Plan would also consider how best to utilise the limited amount of capital spend available to schools. Mr Lindsay offered to provide an update on this at the next meeting following discussions on secondary provision with WASCL.

A member reminded the LA that when Governing Bodies were formally requested to agree to an increase in their admission numbers to meet additional demand then the LA need be very clear about the funding that would be made available to fund those places. The LA also needed to be clear about the financial expectations on schools over time of agreeing to such requests.

**It was agreed:** That report be noted and a further report be made to the next meeting of the Forum following discussions with WASCL.

## **6. National Funding Formula - Update:**

Mr McDonald reported that there had been no further information given on the progress of the consultations by the government on the introduction of a National Funding Formula. When information was available arrangements would be made to call an early meeting of the Forum to discuss the proposals.

**It was agreed:** That report be accepted.

## **7. Dates and Times of Meetings 2016-17:**

**It was agreed:** That the following dates and times of meetings be adopted for 2016-17; meetings to commence at 1.30 p.m. and to be held at Hawkley Hall High School and Bedford High School respectively:

6 October 2016  
1 December 2016  
26 January 2017  
9 March 2017  
11 May 2017  
6 July 2017

meeting closed at 2.20 p.m.