

# Schools Forum Meeting

Held on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2019 at Hawkley Hall High School Training Suite

**Meeting opened: 1.30pm**

**Members Present:**

E.Ellis	Primary Representative
G.Hayes	Primary Representative
T.Mingaul-Cunningham	Primary Governor
A.Birchall	Secondary Representative
H.Phillips	Secondary Representative
A.McGlown	Secondary Representative
E.Loftus	Special Schools Representative
A.Pollard	Academy Representative
M.Atkins	Union Representative
M.Wilkinson	Authorised Observer
K.Parkin	Authorised Observer
Cllr J Bullen	Authorised Observer

**In Attendance:**

J.McDonald	Wigan Council – Finance
A.Meehan	Wigan Council – Finance
N.Fitzgerald	Wigan Council – Finance
C.Pealing	Wigan Council – Assistant Director Education
M.Larkin	Governor Services – Clerk

## MINUTES

Mr Birchall Chaired the meeting

<b>1</b>	<p><b>Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from:</p> <p>A.Hardy      F.Quinlivan K.Ward      T.Warren</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Agreement of Any Other Urgent Business to Be Added to The Agenda</b></p> <p>It was agreed the following items be added to the agenda for this meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High Needs Nation Funding Formula</li> <li>• Briefing Note – A.Meehan</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Previous Minutes</b></p> <p><b>It was agreed:</b> the minutes from the forum meeting held on <b>17<sup>th</sup> October 2019</b> be approved as a true and correct record</p> <p><b>Matters Arising:</b> There were no matters arising</p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Membership Updates</b></p> <p>It was noted: There remained a vacancy for an Early Years PVI Representative</p>

## Schools Formula 2020-21

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting which provided details of the indicative DSG allocations for 2020-21 and proposed formulas for allocating.

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
- The provisional LA allocation for 2020/21 was £208,118,702 this included an amount for the pupils at the now closed Wigan UTC, plus a formulaic allocation for growth. This provisional allocation represents approximately £5.1 million increase on 2019/20 funding
- LA's have the flexibility to set a local minimum funding guarantee (MFG) rate between 0.5% and 1.84% per pupil. With the agreement from Schools Forum the LA are permitted to transfer up to 0.5% (equates to just over £1m) of the schools block funding to other blocks (i.e. high needs). In 2019/20 Schools Forum agreed a block transfer of £0.75m to high needs
- It was reported at the previous meeting due to the current pressures on the high needs block it was forecast there would be a £3m deficit to be carried forward from 2019/20. Based on current predictions it was likely the total DSG overspend would exceed 1% in which case the LA would need to submit a deficit recovery plan to the DfE at year-end
- At the previous meeting it was also noted the LA would again seek approval for a block transfer of £0.75m to the High Needs Block. It subsequently came to light that a recoupment from the DSG would be reduced in 2019-20 due to the closure of Wigan UTC which will result in an underspend of approximately £0.37m, it was discussed at the Schools Forum sub-group meeting that this saving could be used to offset the top slice

Funding models had been circulate prior to the meeting showing £0.5m and £0.45m block transfers for consideration.

A summary of the National Funding Formula factors had been included in the report and Mr Meehan highlighted:

- Mandatory minimum funding levels had been introduced for pupils for 2020/21, it was noted this had been adopted by the LA as an optional factor in 2019/20. The minimum funding levels for 2020/21 were set at Primary £3,750 and Secondary £5,000
- The EAL factor had previously been used for a two-year period within Wigan, it was proposed this be moved to three years in preparation for the introduction of a hard NFF and this had minimal impact when modelling
- Although pupil mobility only applies to a small percentage of the school population within the LA it was proposed this also be brought inline with a three year period allowing for compliance as funding moves to a hard formula again this had minimal impact
- Allocations for growth funding for 2020/21 would be based on the October 2019 census and the final allocation would be shared at the January 2020 forum meeting.
- In regard to the notional SEND it was proposed the same factors and percentages be adopted in 2020/21 as in the previous year.

- There were changes in the de-delegated services and a slight reduction due to charges associated with Insurance and the FSM eligibility checking now be purchased on a buy back basis by schools

Mr Meehan moved on to outlining the models presented:

- Model 1 had been based upon the full NFF and three-year EAL and mobility funding and showed a surplus of £334,142, the MFG had been set at the maximum 1.84% and had been presented to show the factor changes
- Model 2 showed the AWPU values had been increased to ensure all funding was allocated, resulting in the AWPU of 0.75% for primaries, KS3 and KS4
- Model 3 allowed for a block transfer of £0.5m from the Schools Block, MFG had been reduced from 1.84% to 1.68%, resulting in a reduction in funding for most schools in comparison with Model 2, the exceptions being those that had triggered minimum funding levels
- Model 4 allowed for a block transfer of £0.45m, MFG had been reduced from 1.84% to 1.73%, this resulted in a reduction in funding for most schools compared with Model 2, again the exceptions being those that triggered minimum funding levels
- The LA recommended the principles in Model 4 be adopted with the underspend previously mentioned for 2019-20 to support the High Needs Block

Members considered:

(1) Forum members agreed Model 1 showed minimal differences

(2) There had been healthy discussions at the sub-group around the Models presented and it was noted the underspend in DSG for 2019-20 had relieved some pressure, the original model showing a £0.75m transfer would have seen a bigger impact for some colleagues. It was noted due to minimum funding levels some schools would not be making a contribution.

**Q.** Will some schools be paying significantly more than others?

**A.** it was discussed most schools would be in single thousand figures, whilst some schools with higher pupil numbers may be paying a high contribution through model 4 bringing the AWPU down in relation to the MFG.

(3) it was acknowledged the demand in high needs was continuing to increase

(4) in relation to de-delegations a question was raised about inflation being included. Ms Peeling requested Forum consider some flexibility around de-delegations and although Forum may agree to remain with the presented allocation for 2020-21 there may be an increase in future years.

Thanks, were expressed to Mr Meehan and Mr McDonald for clarity of the information provided to the sub-group and at this meeting.

**It was agreed:**

- (1) Forum approved Model 4 as presented including the block transfer for 2020-21
- (2) Forum approved the de-delegation of services for 2020-21
- (3) It was noted growth funding allocations would be available in December 2019

6

**Any Other Urgent Business**

**High Needs National Funding Formula**

	<p>Mr McDonald explained this report was for information, indicative funding notifications would be shared, and schools would be requested to put forward 3-year budget predications prior to the end of the term. Special schools had requested training for Governors around high needs funding formulas – this would be held early next year.</p> <p><b>Briefing Note</b></p> <p>Mr Meehan explained confirmation of additional funding for the full financial year for maintained nurseries had been receive, there was an increase in hourly rate funding for 2,3 and 4-year old provision, a meeting would take place with the Early Years Forum representative once final DSG allocation was received.</p> <p>It was also noted that the supplementary funding for Maintained Nursery Schools was to continue for the 2020/21 financial year.</p> <p>A number of recent DfE consultations which have now closed were also highlighted to forum members covering the application of the minimum funding levels, changes to the terms and conditions of grant for the DSG to clarify that this is a ring fenced grant, school financial transparency and Risk Protection Arrangements for schools.</p> <p>Mr Meehan also highlighted some free training which was being made available by the DfE for school leaders and business managers in relation to Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning. A summary was then provided on the sessions attended at the recent National Fair Funding Conference.</p>
7	<p><b>Future Meeting Dates</b></p> <p>23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020 – Bedford Training Suite</p> <p>5<sup>th</sup> March 2020 – Bedford Training Suite</p> <p>7<sup>th</sup> May 2020 – Bedford Training Suite</p> <p>18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 – Hawkley Hall Suite</p>

**There being no further business to discuss the meeting closed at 2.10pm**