

## **Meeting of the Schools Forum**

### **Thursday 6 May 2014 at 1.30 p.m. at Progress House Wigan**

**Members:** , P Dahlstrom (Vice Chairman, In the Chair), J. Seddon, F. Quinlivan, G Hayes, L Fox, D. Wood, J Shanahan, R Halford, A. Isherwood, R Lewis, J. Holland , P McGhee and A Wells.

**LA Officers:**

K. Nelson (Assistant Director)  
M Rotheram (Strategic Finance Manager)  
F. Gore (Clerk)

**Observers:** M . Atkins (NUT)  
T. Warren (Liverpool Archdiocese)

**1. Apologies for absence.**

Apologies for absence were received from A Hardy (Chair) D. Donaldson, V. Birchall, G Lloyd, K. Pilkington and from S. Wilson, Cllr S. Loudon, A. Goldsmith and C. Gore.

**2. Items for inclusion under AOB**

- **Future Use of Children Looked After (CLA) Pupil Premium Plus.**
- **Resignation of Mr D. Donaldson**

**3. Minutes of the meeting of the Schools Forum held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2014:**

**It was agreed:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Schools Forum held on 13 March 2014 be approved as a correct record.

**3.1 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

**3.1.1 Reward & Recognition Scheme for Schools and Academies (minute 7.2 refers)**

The Clerk reported that further to Minute 7.2 the above mentioned Scheme had been amended to enable Schools and Academies to elect to adopt either or both of the Schemes.

A briefing document had been sent to all Head Teachers and Business Managers within Wigan on the 2nd of April 2014. This provided details about the Scheme and its development together with information about costs and next steps for those Schools and Academies who wished to participate in either or both of the Schemes. Schools and Academies had been asked to provide a response by 15th June 2014.

The briefing document had also been issued as an addendum to the 'Local Authority Items' booklet available to Governors from Governor Services.

**It was agreed:** That the report be noted.

#### **4. Fairer School Funding 2015/16 and Review of 2014/15 Comparative Data:**

Mr Rotheram presented a report (circulated) informing members that the Department for Education (DfE) were presently consulting on a proposal to allocate an additional £350m in 2015/16 to increase the per pupil budgets for the least fairly funded local areas. Appendix 4A to the report detailed how the indicative funding level had been determined for Wigan. Wigan was not due any additional funding via the current Fair Funding proposal because the initial schools block allocation was above the minimum threshold level. Appendix 4B provided a comparison of Wigan's unit of funding against local neighbours.

The EFA had collated the data from the final pro formas submitted by all the Local Authorities with regard to the allocation of the 2014/15 DSG (summarised in Appendix 4C to the report). Wigan's specific value was also shown as well as the position overall for 2014/15 and 2013/14 for comparison purposes.

A member commented that the allocation for basic entitlement at KS4 showed Wigan to be relatively high spender on that element when compared to the national average whereas spend on basic entitlement for primary and at KS3 was lower than the majority of other Authorities. He asked that this disparity between the primary and secondary sectors be recognised in future decisions on the formula factors.

Mr Rotheram asked how the Forum would wish to use such comparative data in future deliberations about formula factors in advance of the introduction of a National Funding Formula.

**It was agreed:** That the report be accepted and further comparative information be presented to future meetings of the Forum to allow a review of the present formula factors.

#### **5. Revised Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Allocation 2014/15 - Implications for High Needs Block:**

Mr Rotheram presented a report (circulated) giving an update on the revised 2014/15 DSG allocation and the consequential impact on the High Needs Block allocations. Appendix 5A to the report gave a detailed breakdown of the DSG 2014-15. The only adjustments from the indicative DSG previously reported to Forum was in relation to the High Needs Block.

There had been a strong indication from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) that for the next financial year the place element of the funding would not be driven by the number of planned places submitted by an Authority but an assessment of actual places occupied within the High Needs establishment.

Indicative budgets for maintained special schools for the 2014/15 financial year had been determined (these were detailed in Appendix 5B to the report).

The 2014/15 financial year budgets for resourced provision had also been determined. An initial budget had been determined for the Pupil Referral Service

was subject to review and would be brought back to a future meeting of Forum as part of a full breakdown of the 2014/15 High Needs allocation.

A question was asked about out of borough pupil placement funding and it was confirmed that this funding would be included in the full breakdown to be presented to a future meeting.

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

## **6. Supplementary Funding Submissions:**

Mr Rotheram presented a report (circulated) giving an update on the outcome of the supplementary funding submissions received and the criteria used for evaluation.

Appendix 6A to the report attached the supplementary form sent out to all schools. Applications for supplementary funding had been received from 20 schools (13 Primary and 7 Secondary). These were as follows:

### **Growth Funding**

Five applications for growth funding had been received and the outcome of the evaluation were as follows.

Growth Fund Bids				
Number	Value of Bids	Value Approved	Funding Available	Shortfall
5	£236,847	£215,708	£100,000	£115,708

Mr Rotheram reported that Wigan top-sliced only a small percentage of total school block funding to a growth fund. The national average was 0.49% top-slicing, which would equate to a growth fund allocation in Wigan of £924,805 (compared to an allocation of £100,000 in 2014-15).

Ms Nelson recommended that in 2015-16 a significantly increased fund be established to meet essential growth elements as it was clear that in 2014-15 a number of school would require investment and support in order for them to admit increased numbers of pupils to meet a shortfall in places in those areas. This position would be replicated in the secondary sector in due course as pupil numbers rose in areas of the Borough.

### **Contingency / Falling Roll / Other**

Schools Forum had previously agreed to set aside £0.600m from the 2012/13 underspend on centrally retained expenditure to add to the £0.300m contingency pot already de-delegated. When added to the Local Authority's general fund redundancy provision for schools of £0.407m this resulted in the total funding available to be allocated being £1.307m.

Fifteen applications for this funding were received and the outcome of the evaluation were as follows.

Contingency / Falling Roll / Other						
Number	Redundancy / lump sum pension	Other	Value of Bids	Value Approved	Funding Available	Residual Funding
15	£728,210	£639,913	£1,368,123	£1,159,040	£1,307,040	£148,000

The residual funding of £0.148m would be required to be set aside in order to meet any further redundancy commitments in the current financial year

### **Disproportionate SEN**

Five applications for disproportionate SEN funding had been received and the outcome of the evaluation had been as follows :

Disproportionate SEN Bids				
Number	Value of Bids	Value Approved	Funding Available	Residual Funding
5	£85,000	£31,576	£300,000	-£268,424

Of the 5 bids, 3 did not meet the qualifying criteria and so were not eligible for funding.

A member asked that information be made available to the Forum on the applications submitted by schools and the outcome of those individual applications.

A Member asked if nursery schools had been invited to apply for supplementary funding? Ms Nelson reported that the supplementary funding had been targeted at the Schools Block to address specific funding issues previously reported to the Forum. Therefore at this stage applications had not been invited from nursery schools (funded from the Early Years Block) or special schools (funded from the High Needs Block).

Subject to the decision of the Forum on additional funding a letter would be sent out to all schools who submitted a bid detailing the outcome of their bid.

Ms Nelson reminded members that a significant amount of the underspend achieved in 2013-14 that had contributed to the fund now available to provide supplementary funding bids, had accrued from savings achieved in new Pupil Referral Unit provision. She planned to report to the next meeting of the Forum on a request for funding for transitional support to aid the establishment and smooth running of the new PRU.

**It was agreed:** (1) That the report be accepted.

(2) That agreement be given to the funding of the £0.166m shortfall on the growth fund from the 2012/13 underspend on centrally retained expenditure.

(3) That any underspend on the Disproportionate SEN allocation be returned to the High Needs Block.

(4) That a report be circulated to the next meeting on the applications submitted by schools and the outcome of those individual applications.

(5) That the above mentioned report on support for the revised PRU provision be awaited.

## **7. AOB**

### **7.1 Future Use of Children Looked After (CLA) Pupil Premium Plus.**

Further to the decision made at the last meeting regarding the use of CLA Pupil Premium Plus funding (Minute 7.1 refers) a member asked why the proposal had been reported to a meeting of school business managers prior to the Forum and why the CLA “champions” had not been involved in the discussions on the proposal?

Ms Nelson reported that she had not been aware of the consultation process or reports given in advance of the Forum. She reminded members that the decision on the use of this funding rested with the Local Authority and that the item had been reported to the Forum as part of a consultation process. She had subsequently been invited to attend a meeting, involving the CLA champions to explain in greater detail how the Authority planned to use the additional funding and the outcomes to be achieved.

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

### **7.2 Resignation of Mr D. Donaldson.**

The Clerk reported notification from Damon Donaldson that due to increased commitments at school he could no longer serve as a primary sector representative on the Forum and he had therefore resigned his appointment.

**It was agreed:** That the resignation be accepted and Mr Donaldson be thanked for his contribution to the work of the Forum

(2) That the Primary Heads Executive be asked to appoint a replacement representatives and the Executive be asked to seek nominations from a locality not currently represented.

**8. Date and time of next meeting** – Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2014 at 1.30 p.m. at Progress House Wigan