

**Meeting of the Schools Forum
Tuesday 27 January 2015 at 10.00 a.m.
at Hawkley Hall High School Wigan**

Present:

Members: A Hardy (Chair). P Dahlstrom, J. Seddon, M. Ridsdale (deputising for F. Quinlivan), D. Winstanley, D. Hurst (deputising for V. Birchall), G. Hayes, H. Phillips, A. Dawson, A. McGlown (deputising for D. Lythgoe), R. Halford , K. Pilkington, P. McGhee and A Wells.

LA Officers:

K. Nelson (Assistant Director of Education)
J. McDonald (Strategic Finance Manager)
F. Gore (Clerk)

Observers: C. Gore (GMB), T. Warren (Liverpool Archdiocese) Cllr J. Platt (Cabinet Member)

1. Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from R. Lewis, A. Isherwood, J. Holland, V. Birchall, D. Lythgoe, M. Atkins and S. Wilson.

2. Items for inclusion under AOB -

- **Review of Schools Forum Constitution**
- **Mr P. Dahlstrom OBE**

3. Minutes

It was agreed: That the minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2014 be approved as a correct record subject to the North West average ratio of primary;secondary funding being shown as 1:1.32 in minute 8

Matters Arising from the Minutes

None.

4. School Funding Formula (SFF) - 2015-16 – Schools Block Fund - Revised DSG Allocation:

Mr McDonald presented a report (circulated prior to the meeting) informing members of the Dedicated School Grant (DSG) allocation 2015-16 and confirming the approach taken with regard to the submitted funding pro-forma (these were set out in detail at Appendix A to the report).

Due to the increase in pupil numbers Wigan's DSG Schools Block allocation had increased by £1.510m from £190.074m in 2014/15 to £191.584m in 2015/16. This excluded the two non recoupment academies and centrally retained budgets.

The DfE had also re-issued the schools funding proforma with revised pupil numbers for each individual school per factor and the impact of changed pupils numbers was

shown in an Appendix to the report. It was noted that as a consequence of reduced pupil numbers in some schools there would be some reductions in funding in those schools. Reference was made to the secondary sector, which had experienced a significant reduction in numbers over the last few years but was projected to gradually increase overall numbers over the next few years. There were therefore strong reasons to provide transitional relief funding to those schools in this situation. Details of the supplementary funding available that schools could bid for was reported.

In accordance with the decision taken at Minute 8 (4) of the last meeting, the Authority would continue to monitor the national levels of funding between the primary and secondary sectors and report to future meetings of the Forum. The Authority would also monitor 2015-16 funding decisions taken at a national and regional level and report to a future meeting of the Forum.

Recent correspondence with the Education Funding Agency indicated that they remained committed to introducing a national funding formula during the next spending round.

It was agreed: (1) That the report be accepted and the submission of the funding pro-forma as set out at Appendix A be confirmed.

(2) That future reports on the DSG Allocations include information on the variations in spend on a per pupil basis and the respective columns be headed on each page to aid clarity.

(3) That information be circulated to members of the Forum on the AWPU for each Key Stage for the period 2013-15.

(4) That a future report be submitted on 2015-16 funding decisions taken at a national and regional level.

5. School Funding Formula (SFA) - 2015-16 – High Needs Block:

Mr McDonald presented a report (circulated prior to the meeting) informing members that the Department for Education (DfE) had now issued the 2015/16 DSG allocation for the High Needs Block. The allocation for Wigan had been £25.998m, compared to £25.601m in 2014-15. This included Post 16 funding paid direct to institutions.

The increased allocation had been due to an additional £47 million of funding which had been distributed across all Local Authorities, using a methodology based on 2 to 19 year old population data. Wigan have been granted an extra £274,000 for 2015/16.

For 2015/16 the Education Funding Agency (EFA) had rolled forward the published 2014/15 academic year place numbers as the basis for 2015/16. All Authorities had been asked to confirm any exceptional cases to the EFA for an increase to the 2015/16 academic year high needs place numbers and/or to significantly increase hospital education provision. Wigan had requested additional place numbers and Wigan's indicative planned places was 1,057 (compared to 1,035 in 2014/15).

The number of places for Resourced Provision had been set at 52 and for the Pupil Referral Unit at 193. Members were reminded that it was anticipated that the Pupil Referral Unit would convert to Academy status on 1st February 2015.

The Authority was currently reviewing the funding allocations for special schools , including planned numbers and the percentage allocations across the bandings and a report would be presented to the next meeting of the Forum.

The DfE had issued a consultation paper “SEND Funding: longer-term changes – Call for Evidence” with a response date by 27 February 2015. Any proposed changes to SEND funding would only likely come into effect from 2017/18. The Authority would prepare a response to the questions outlined in the paper and had invited views from interested parties.

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

(2) That a report will be submitted at the next meeting on the outcome of the review of funding for special schools together with detailed allocations for the High Needs Block.

6. School Funding Formula (SFA) - 2015-16 – Early Years Block:

Mr McDonald presented a report (circulated prior to the meeting) informing members that the Department for Education (DfE) had issued the (DSG) allocations for the Early Needs Block.

The allocation for Wigan with regard to the Early Years Block (with a comparison with the 2014/15 allocation) was as follows :

Early Years Funding	2014/15	2015/16
Unit of Funding	£3,386	£3,386
FTE Numbers	2,843	2,914
Pupil Number Funding 3 & 4 years old as per DfE	£9,626,227	£9,866,629
Estimate for Increase in numbers	£0	£375,840
Total Estimated Funding 3 & 4 years old	£9,626,227	£10,242,469
Funding for early education places for 2 year olds from lower income households	£4,615,000	
Pupil Premium (3 & 4 yrs olds)	£0	£273,525
Total Early Years Block	£14,241,227	£10,515,994

The unit of funding awarded by the DfE per pupil for the early years free entitlement remained the same as for 2014/2015 at £3,386. The method of allocating funding to Local Authorities for 2 year olds had been revised for 2015/16 and onwards. From 2015/16 the funding would be allocated on a participation basis. The DfE would offer Local Authorities an opportunity in the Autumn Term of 2015 to report any significant increase in participation since January 2015 via a voluntary data collection. From 2015/16 the DfE planned to introduce an Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) which was additional funding for early years settings to improve the provision

which disadvantaged 3 and 4 year olds received. The mandatory deprivation supplement in the Early Years Single Funding Formula would be retained.

The School Finance (England) Regulations 2012 set out how Local Authorities were required to operate their early years single funding formula (EYSFF). Each year the Authority was required to review the rates based on guidance from the DfE. The current Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) provider rates were set at a rate that did not cover the full cost of that provision. Accordingly the Authority had modeled 4 options for consideration, the details of which were set out in the report and the financial impact was set out in Appendix A to the report.

It was noted that performance by children in the Early Years phase was currently below national average and a significant number of children were not “school ready” on leaving Early Years provision. It was possible to provide additional funding through a transfer of some of the additional money provided in the High Needs Block (see minute 5 above) this would require the transfer of £228,000 to the Early Years Block and have the effect of raising the rate per session from £3.18 to £3.32 w.e.f 1st April 2015. Members suggested that whilst Option 3 was affordable if the transfer of funding was adopted, should further funding become available in future years Option 2 would be the longer term aspiration.

Reference was made to a proposal by the LA to review Early Years funding during 2015-16 and the Chair suggested that the views of the PVI Sector could be sought as part of that review process.

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

(2) That approval be given to the transfer of £228,000 from the High Needs Block to the Early Years Block in order to increase the rate per session within the PVI Sector from £3.18 to £3.32 w.e.f 1st April 2015

(3) That the outcome of the review of Early years funding be reported to a future meeting of the Forum.

7. Any Other Business:

7.1 Review of Schools Forum Constitution

The Chair referred to the requirements on the Forum with regard to providing the public with an opportunity to attend meetings of the Forum and access to the information considered. He referred to the confidential nature of some of the information presented to members of the Forum, often at an early stage, in order to allow the Authority to have an open and transparent dialogue with schools and other providers.

It was recommended that it would be helpful to review the current constitution and working protocols to ensure the requirements of The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 continued to be met. Members commented that it was important that the Forum operated in accordance with the Operational and Good Practice Guide 2012 issued by the Department for Education; whilst at the same time it continued to work in a way that enhanced the relationship between the Authority and the sectors represented on the Forum.

It was agreed: That the report be accepted and a report be presented to the next meeting.

7.2 Mr P. Dahlstrom OBE

The Chair referred to the recent award of the Order of the British Empire medal to Mr Peter Dahlstrom, Vice Chair of the Forum. The award had been made in recognition of Mr Dahlstrom's long and distinguished services to education. All present congratulated MR Dahlstrom on his well earned and deserved award.

8 Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 10 March 2015 at 1.30 p.m. at Bedford High School. (members to note venue).

meeting closed at 10.40 a.m.