

**Meeting of the Schools Forum
Thursday 14th May 2015 at 1.30 p.m.
at Hawkley Hall High School Wigan**

Present:

Members: A. Hardy (Chair) P. Dahlstrom , F. Quinlivan, D. Winstanley, G. Hayes, H. Phillips, A.R. Birchall (deputising for A. Dawson), Mr A. McGlown (deputising for D. Lythgoe) R. Halford, A. Isherwood and P. McGhee.

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

LA Officers:

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

1. Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from J. Seddon, V. Birchall, A. Dawson, D. Lythgoe, K. Pilkington, R. Lewis, J. Holland and A. Wells; and from C. Gore (GMB), Cllr J. Platt (Cabinet Member) and S. Wilson (NAS/UWT)

2. Items for inclusion under AOB -

- **SEN Recoupment Arrangements**
- **Early Years Funding.**

3. Minutes

It was agreed: That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th March 2015 be approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

None.

4. Bids by Schools for Supplementary Funding:

Mr McDonald presented a report (circulated prior to the meeting) giving details of the outcome of the bids by schools to the Supplementary Fund 2015/16

Schools had been required to submit a business case detailing the amount of funding required and the how the required funding would deliver a sustainable budget. In considering each application the LA had taken account of the following factors:

- a) The year on year budget reduction as an absolute value and as a percentage
- b) The current level of balances held by the school
- c) The demographic projections specific to the area involved
- d) The sustainability of the proposal

The fund covered the following areas.

- growth
- falling rolls
- disproportionate SEN
- contingency
- redundancy

There had been a total of £2.442m bids against a total fund of £1.930m. The approved allocations were set out in Appendix 1 to the report and totaled £1.783m. This left a small contingency of £146k. Further bids would be considered throughout the year under exceptional circumstances only.

A member asked did the redundancy/enhanced pension costs relate to added years for the staff concerned? Mr McDonald confirmed it did not; he believed it related to the capital costs of redundancy for teaching and support staff but would clarify and inform members of the detail of the support provided.

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

(2) That further information be reported to members of the Forum on the support provided to schools in respect of redundancy costs.

5. National Data on LA Funding Pro-forma Submission to the DfE:

Mr McDonald presented a report (circulated prior to the meeting) informing members of details of the 2015/16 School Funding comparative data submitted to the Education Funding Agency by all Local Authorities.

An appendix to the report gave details the lowest, highest and average values across all 152 authorities across the different factors. The following summarised the position in relation to the ratio of funding across local authorities for 2015/16.

	Highest Ratio	Lowest Ratio	Average Ratio	Median Ratio	Wigan Value
National	1.60	1.18	1.28	1.29	1.29
Regional	1.40	1.21	1.32	1.32	1.29
AGMA	1.40	1.21	1.32	1.30	1.29

Members noted the potential need to increase provision for future essential growth.

Members also commented that they would have concerns if there were future proposals to change the ratio of spending because of the potential impact on a number of schools and that they continued to support a review of the funding factors.

Ms Nelson reported that she believed the Cabinet in 2014-15 had agreed that the option to review both the ratio of spend and the individual factors should be left open.

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

(2) That the decision of Cabinet on future funding reviews be reported to members.

(3) That the Primary and Secondary Funding Groups meet in early September 2015 and make recommendations to the Forum on School Funding 2016-17 and the LA be asked to submit alternative funding models to the meeting(s) of those Groups.

6. Review of Forum Constitution and Working Practices:

The Clerk presented a report (circulated prior to the meeting) on a review of the Constitution of the Forum and areas for consideration in relation to present working practices so that they met the DfE Good Practice Guidance. In accordance with the decision taken at the last meeting information was provided on current pupil/student numbers.

It was agreed: (1) The Forum constitution be as follows with effect from September 2015:

Schools Representation: (Total of 14)

- Nursery Sector representative – 1
- Primary School Headteacher Representatives – 5
- Primary School Governor Representative - 1
- Secondary School Headteacher Representatives – 3
- Secondary School Governor Representative - 1
- Special School Headteacher representatives - 1
- Academy School Headteacher representative (all sectors, including academies, Free Schools and UTC) – 1
- Pupil Referral Unit representative - 1

Non - Schools Representation: (Total of 4)

- Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) nursery providers - 1
- 16-19 Partnership (including FE Colleges and Sixth Form Colleges) - 1
- A recognised representative of the Headteacher; teacher associations or support unions (currently Wigan ATL) - 1
- A Diocesan Representative (currently Liverpool RC Archdiocese) - 1

Nominated Observers: (Total of 5)

- NASUWT – 1
- NUT – 1
- UNISON 1
- Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

(2) That representatives continue to be authorised to nominate substitute representatives and they be given voting rights.

- (3) That every effort be made to balance the aided/maintained and voluntary controlled school representation on the Forum in accordance with the proportion of pupils attending those schools.
- (4) That the present arrangements for the nomination of representatives be continued and no restriction be placed on the length of their respective terms of office.
- (5) That the Chair be elected from amongst the voting members of the Forum. Nominees to be proposed and seconded and voting by show of hands. The term of office is for one year, commencing from the first meeting of the new academic year.
- (6) A meeting will be quorate if 40% of the total membership or more (excluding vacancies and observers) is in attendance.
- (7) Decisions will be a majority vote of those present. Where there are an equal number of votes the Chair will have the casting vote.
- (8) That information on the planned annual cycle of meetings and the agendas for those meetings be placed on the Forum website and meetings be open to the public to attend.
- (9) That reports considered at the Forum be made available to the public by placement on the Forum website; all reports containing confidential information relating to schools and pupils will be referred to the appropriate Sub-Group meetings for consideration and recommendation to the Forum.
- (10) That the following officers of the LA be authorised to attend and speak at meetings of the Forum:
 - The Director of Children's Services – or their representative.
 - The Chief Financial Officer – or their representative.
 - Any officer invited by the Forum to provide advice
 - Any officer presenting a report (attendance limited to that item only)
 - The Clerk
- (11) That a cycle of 6 meetings per annum be agreed (one each half term) and that a schedule of meetings be agreed for the year and made available to the public via the website. Additional meetings may be convened, together with any meetings of an appointed Working Group. Membership of a Working Group is at the discretion of the Forum.
- (12) Where there is a need, an urgent meeting may be called at the discretion of the Chair. Alternatively the views of members may be sought (most usually by e-mail) to a specific proposal by a set date. The responses made and any subsequent action taken to be then reported to the next meeting for information or confirmation.
- (13) That the current communication arrangements, including the placing of the draft minutes on the website as soon as possible after the meeting (clearly marked as "draft") be approved.

7. Any Other Business:

7.1 SEN Recoupment Arrangements

The Clerk reported that the NAHT had asked the Forum to consider questions concerning SEN funding recoupment arrangements and any future revised arrangements to ensure schools received prompt payment from other Local Authorities with pupils placed in those schools.

Mr McDonald reported that the LA presently pursued SEN recoupment on behalf of SEN schools only and that mainstream schools were currently required to seek payments on an individual basis. There was therefore no centrally held information on the level of recoupment received by or owed to schools.

It was agreed: That the LA be asked to investigate this issue and seek information from schools on their experience of SEN recoupment from other Local Authorities and subject to the responses received consideration be given to the LA taking on the responsibility on behalf of all schools for SEN recoupment.

7.2 Early Years Funding.

The Clerk reported that the PVI representative had been unable to attend the meeting but had asked that consideration be given to a request from an early years PVI provider that an Early Years Sub-Group be established to discuss potential problems concerning the funding formula for 2-4 year olds.

Ms Nelson reported that a PVI Network was already in existence which regularly met and discussed funding issues. Meetings of Sub-Groups were also called where necessary to discuss particular funding issues with the LA. The Network could bring issues to the Forum via their PVI representative, as was the practice in other sectors represented on the Forum.

It was agreed: That the request be refused on the basis that a PVI Network currently provides opportunities for discussion of early years funding and for items to be reported to the Forum by their nominated representative where required.

8. Ms Kirston Nelson:

The Chair reminded members that this would be the last meeting of the Forum that Ms Kirston Nelson (Assistant Director Education) would be attending prior to her taking up a new appointment at Coventry City Council. On behalf of the Forum he thanked Ms Nelson for her contribution to the work of the Forum and to education in general in Wigan and wished her well in her future career.

9. Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 2nd July 2015 at 1.30 p.m. at Hawkley Hall High School. (Members to note venue).

Meeting closed at 2.30 p.m.