

**Meeting of the Schools Forum**  
**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2015 at 1.30 p.m. at Bedford High School**

**Members:** E. Loftus , F. Quinlivan, D. Winstanley, V. Birchall, G. Hayes, E. Ellis (deputising for S. Bruen), H. Phillips, A. McGlown, A Birchall, R. Halford, A. Isherwood, R. Lewis, A Hardy J. Holland, P. McGhee and A Wells.

**Observers:** Cllr J. Platt (Portfolio Holder – Children and Young Peoples Services)

**LA Officers:**

K. Rufo - Service Manager  
J. McDonald (Strategic Finance Manager)  
C. Myers (Group Finance Manager)  
F. Gore (Clerk)

**1. Appointment of Chairperson**

**It was agreed:** That Mr A. Hardy be appointed Chair of the Forum for 2015-16.

**2. Appointment of Vice-Chairperson**

**It was agreed:** That this item be deferred to the next meeting.

**3. Apologies for absence.**

Apologies for absence were received from K. Pilkington, S. Bruen, T. Warren (members) and S. Wilson, C. Gore and M. Atkins (observers).

**4. Welcome to New Members**

The Chair also extended a warm welcome to E. Loftus (special education), A. McGlown and A Birchall (secondary education) who had been appointed their respective sector representatives.

**5. Items for inclusion under AOB -**

**Funding of the University Technical College  
F40 Group - petition**

**6. Minutes**

**It was agreed:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015 be approved as a true and correct record.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

none

## **7. Minutes of the Forum Funding Sub-Group**

**It was agreed:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Group held on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2015 be approved as a correct record.

### Matters Arising from the Minutes

see minute 8 below.

## **8. School Funding Formula 2016-17**

The Forum received a report (circulated prior to the meeting) seeking agreement to (a) the allocation method of each of the available factors to be used in the 2016/17 schools block funding formula and (b) seeking approval to those services to be de-delegated, centrally retained and contributions to the growth and falling rolls funds. The following information was also appended to the report:

Previously agreed Principles and Guidelines  
An analysis of the 2015-16 Pro Forma Data  
Modelling Data  
Current Pro Forma data for Wigan Schools  
Detailed Ratio Data – 1:1.29 and 1:1.30  
School Pupil Numbers

A copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Forum Funding Sub Group had also been circulated (see minute 7 above) at which school representatives had given their initial views on the funding ratio and information they had asked to be prepared for submission to primary and secondary Headteacher colleagues as part of the consultations on the funding ratio for 2016-17.

Following the above mentioned consultations the primary sector had confirmed that it wished the LA to continue to adopt a primary:secondary funding ratio of 1:1.29; the secondary sector had confirmed it wished to move to a ratio of 1:1.30. The Chair invited the respective representative to explain the basis of their proposal.

The secondary representatives made the following points in support of a move to a ratio of 1:1.30 :

- the change in the funding ratio for 2015-16 (from 1:1.35 to 1:1.29) had been too large a move and had created significant funding problems in a number of secondary schools;
- whilst it had been recognised that the previous balance of funding had been weighted in favour of secondary sector and had required a re-balance, the level of reduction in secondary school funding had been too great;
- the regional average ratio was 1:1.32 and this better reflected local needs and demographic factors than the national average of 1:1.28;
- the suggested move to a ratio of 1:1.30 was a sensible compromise and reflected the mid-point between the national average and the regional average;

- the modest change suggested recognised the demands placed on secondary schools but kept financial turbulence to a minimum and would help protect both the primary and secondary sectors in the longer-term;
- there were significant pressures on the secondary sector and many schools were wholly reliant on the AWPU;
- if the 1:1.30 ratio was adopted the secondary sector would support this as one that could remain in place for some time;
- there was no intention to seek to “chip-away” at the ratio through incremental changes in favour of the secondary sector, if agreed, the 1:1.30 ratio would be supported as a longer-term ratio that would give stability to the funding arrangements in all schools (not withstanding any future significant change in national funding or the introduction of a national funding formula).

The primary representatives made the following points in support of a retention of the 1:1.29 ratio :

- the primary sector recognised the constructive proposals put forward by secondary colleagues however it was important that there was a period of stability in school funding and the 1:1.29 ratio agreed for 2015-16 had been a sensible compromise;
- subject to major changes in national funding the primary sector would continue to support the current ratio;
- historically Wigan had adopted funding ratios that were heavily weighted in favour of the secondary sector, when discussing the ratio to be adopted for 2015-16 the primary sector had wanted to move to the (then) national ratio of 1:1.27 but had recognised the significant impact this would have on secondary schools, accordingly they had supported an initial move to 1:1.29;
- whilst the change in the ration had had a positive impact on primary schools, the pressures on the primary sector remained, with potential increased pressures arising from changes in KS1 and KS2 assessments.

Following a vote by those eligible to vote on the schools funding ratio it was agreed by a majority decision to retain the current ratio of 1:1.29 but that the ratio for 2017-18 be further reviewed in 2016.

Mr McDonald reminded the Forum that it was the responsibility of Local Authorities to take the final decisions on the formula. However agreement was required from Forum on those services to be de-delegated and centrally retained. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People Services confirmed that she had heard the respective points made and they would take those into consideration when making the final decision on the funding ratio,

**It was agreed:** (1) That no change be made to the allowable factors from those agreed for 2015-16.

(2) That all gains by schools as a result of the formula, be scaled back by a percentage to meet the MFG target for schools that have lost by more than 1.5%.

(3) That the primary:secondary spending ratio of 1:1.29 be retained for 2016-17 but that a further review of the ratio be undertaken in 2016.

(4) That the allocation of £250,000 to the growth fund as agreed for 2015-16 be maintain for 2016/17.

(5) That the allocation of £100,000 to the fund to support schools with falling rolls be maintain for 2016/17.

(6) That approval be given to the following de-delegated services in 2016-17:

<b>De-Delegated Service based on estimated NOR Sept 15</b>	<b>Budget 2015/16 £</b>	<b>Proposed Budget 2016/17 £</b>	<b>£ per pupil</b>
<b>Contingencies (including schools in financial difficulties and deficits of closing schools)</b>	300,000	300,000	8.55
<b>Behaviour Support Services Primary Only</b>	665,650	665,650	29.01
<b>Support to underperforming ethnic groups &amp; bilingual learners</b>	455,817	455,817	12.98
<b>FSM eligibility</b>	16,803	16,803	0.48
<b>Insurance</b>	6,095	6,095	0.17
<b>Staff Costs - Trade Union Public Duties</b>	271,349	271,349	7.73
	<b>1,715,714</b>	<b>1,715,714</b>	

(7) That with regard to centrally retained services the following provisions be made in 2016-17 (same as 2015-16):

- a. Co-ordinated admissions £0.138m
- b. Servicing of the Schools Forum £0.036m

(8) That with regard to supplementary funding, the funds be operated in the same manner as in 2015-16; an allocation of £600,000 be made from the reserve for 2016-17 and the deadline for application be moved to 15 April 2016; and that approval be given to review the use of the reserve fund as any potential need arises.

(9) That in light of (3) above the previously agreed pragmatic guideline to keep the existing sector splits constant for the time being be removed from the agreed list of guiding principles.

## **9 High Needs Block Budget Allocation Update**

The Forum received a report (circulated prior to the meeting) giving an update on the current position as stated by the Department for Education regarding funding for the High Needs Block. The guidance indicated that there would be no additional funding for 2016/17. The Department was not in a position to commit any funding growth due to the Spending Review (25<sup>th</sup> of November). The full year 2016/17 allocation would therefore be based on the 2015/16 academic year place numbers, and for the remainder of the high needs allocation there would be no change to what was allocated for 2015/16

In the summer of 2014, the DfE commissioned research into SEN funding arrangements and practices and the Key findings and proposals were set out in the report. The DfE had stated that they would not take any further steps until after the spending review later this year

The pressure on this block of funding had been recognised nationally as an area that is underfunded and the outcome of the spending review, research and the ongoing discussion around a National Funding Formula would determine the future of this block of funding.

In addition the LA would review some of budget allocations across the block to try and address the projected adverse variation for 2015/16. A working group had been established with LA representation from a number of different areas SEN, Education, Post 16 and Independent Provision to look how to address these issues.

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

## **10 Any Other Business:**

### **10.1 Funding of the University Technical College**

Reference was made to high level of funding to be allocated to the University Technical College in 2016-17 through the schools funding formula (see minute 8 above) and clarification was sought on why the UTC was eligible for such a level of funding?

Mr McDonald explained that the UTC did have some pupils in the 11-16 age range and therefore the DfE Regulations required funding to be provided, including the lump sum figure, which significantly increased the amount of funding per pupil. It was also reported that the UTC did plan to admit Y10 pupils from 2016-17.

A member asked if this was additional money that schools received? Mr McDonald confirmed that the UTC received a funding allocation through the formula like any other school.

### **10.2 F40 Group - petition**

Reference was made to a petition by the F40 Group (an organisation whose aim was to influence a significant change in the way the government allocated funding to Local Authorities and schools) with the intention of seeking support for a national funding formula. A request was made that the petition be made available on-line.

Cllr Platt agreed to look at this and confirmed that representations had been made to the local Members of Parliament on this issue. Mr McDonald confirmed that as yet no detailed analysis had been undertaken of the impact of the proposed changes on funding for Wigan schools.

**12 Date of Future Meetings:**

**It was agreed:** That the times of future meetings of the Forum for 2015-16 be reviewed to ensure they did not clash with other meetings within the respective sectors and the LA and where a clash does occur that meetings commence at an earlier time on the days previously agreed (see below):

3 December 2015 at Hawkley Hall High School  
28 January 2016 at Hawkley Hall High School  
10 March 2016 at Bedford High School  
12 May 2016 at Hawkley Hall High School  
7 July 2016 at Bedford High School

meeting closed at 2.15 p.m.