

WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM

Wednesday, 30 September 2009

Present:

Richard Longster (Chair)

Committee Members	S Dainty	E Renshaw
	M Kophamel	S Wall
	V MacDonald	A Baird
	G Zsapka	P Hogan
	K Frost	J Kenny
	J Weise	D McDonald
	E Cogan	G Peters
	I Cubbin	N Reilly
	B Cummings	M Potter

In attendance:

Councillors	S Clarke	T Smith
-------------	----------	---------

Apologies

Committee Members	N Greathead	J Levenson
	M Bevan	P Sheridan
	I Davies-Foo	S Davies
	A Hardy	S Pierce
	N Dyment	

16 ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR 2009/2010

Mr. Armstrong invited nominations for the position of Chair for the academic year 2009/2010. Mr. Richard Longster was nominated, seconded and unanimously re-elected.

17 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR FOR 2009/2010

Mr. Longster invited nominations for the position of Vice Chair for the position of Vice Chair for the academic year 2009/2010. Mr. Steve Dainty was nominated, seconded and unanimously re-elected.

18 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 June 2009 be accepted as a correct record.

At the last meeting, Mr. K. Frost advised that he had been invited to visit Foxfield School to see how their Inclusion Funding had been spent and he wished to express his appreciation to the Headteacher. He reported that he was very impressed and that it was a big eye opener to him. Mr. Frost felt that it provided a true picture of how well the funding had been spent and, if anything, even more was required.

Mr. Frost requested that this be recorded in the Minutes.

19 MATTERS ARISING

* Final DSG Notification.

The estimated adjustment by DCSF for 2009-10 DSG in respect of pupil numbers was reported at the last meeting of the Forum. The final notification was issued the day afterwards. The DCSF and regulations require that the final notification is reported to and agreed by the Forum prior to 30th September.

The final figure of £188,116,000 was £20,200 less than the budget estimate. It had been agreed previously that any balances under or over would be carried forward until the end of the funding period.

Mr. Armstrong reported briefly on the Council budget position. There were measures in place to make savings in a number of areas.

There were no issues with school budgets apart from School Meals.

Resolved: That the report be agreed and noted.

20 DEPRIVATION FUNDING

Mr. Roberts advised that this report begins the previously approved process of reviewing the schools formula funding in respect of deprivation, introduced in 2008-09. The report describes how the money is spent in schools and indicates potential “narrow the gap” output measures.

Along with other LAs, Wirral was required to review the way in which the funding formula takes account of varying levels of deprivation across the Borough and to consider whether more needed to be done in order to counter the educational impact of deprivation.

The findings of the Schools Forum working group resulted in a number of proposals to change the way deprivation was addressed. A key control factor was to achieve a more accurate reflection through the local formula of the expectations of DCSF deprivation funding. The changes were agreed and implemented in the 2008-09 and subsequent budget allocations.

The operation of the Minimum Funding Guarantee has ensured that no school can actually lose money per pupil as a result of the formula change. Schools benefiting from formula changes by more than £10,000 were written to at the end of last term. The letter asked how they had spent the additional resources during the year and for their initial views on the effectiveness of the formula changes, in tackling issues arising from deprivation and raising standards. Schools were asked for indications of improved outcomes, for example

attainment, attendance and behaviour. The overall increase in funding delivered by the new formula in excess of MFG cost pressures was £3.2m.

Mrs. Cogan made a number of comments in relation to her own school. She accepted that there had been an increase in the school budget due to the Minimum Funding Guarantee but added that, in real terms, this has not resulted in an additional 2.4% of funding available to spend on pupils. The budget statements show that the actual difference in the bottom line budgets for 2008/9 and 2009/10 was £251408. However, the majority of this increase was from the LSC budget which included Teacher Pension income, funding for additional pupils and inflation.

If the MFG was increased by inflation for staff pay and additional pupils, both essential rises, the rest of the increase in the budget would be taken up.

Mrs. Cogan felt that the LA was suggesting that the funding criteria used for the two years were the same but that this was not the case. The school had been in a MFG situation for two years. She felt that the situation had arisen because of the Formula Calculation criteria. The more that the LA used Deprivation figures to calculate budgets, schools with lower FSM numbers would suffer. Mrs. Cogan wondered what would happen if the Government decided that they could not maintain MFG on school budgets and if Standards funds increasingly continued to be calculated based on Deprivation numbers. Her school would not be able to find such a large shortfall and may then be placed in a position of having to cut staff despite rising pupil numbers.

Mr. Armstrong commented that the LA was obliged to implement central Government policy. He reported that some schools had received more than others and those schools receiving more than an additional £10000 had been asked to feedback information on how the additional resources had been spent and how effective the formula changes had been.

The information from primary schools shows that about 85% of the additional resources have been targeted at staffing. Initial indications from secondary schools are that funding has contributed to improvements at GCSE, OFSTED and value added measures. The School Improvement Partner (SIP) will undertake further analysis and review later this term. This information will be included in the next report. Data on school attendance will also be available for the next meeting.

A panel of members from the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee will review deprivation funding in 2009-10.

The report recommended that Deprivation Funding be the subject of a further report to include the evaluation of attainment and attendance data. Mr. Roberts added that feedback from the review from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will also be included.

Resolved: That funding be the subject of a further report to include the evaluation of attainment and attendance data for all schools.

21 MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT - 14 TO 19 YEARS

The report outlined the current position in preparing for the transition of the commissioning and funding of post -16 provision from the Learning and Skills Council to the LA. Full transfer of commissioning and funding of post 16 funding will take place in 2010. Mark Parkinson reported on the progress made to date.

A key driver to many of the changes will be the National Commissioning Framework (NCF). This will set out the core requirements for planning, commissioning, procuring, funding and accountability of the education and training of 16-19 year olds as well as young people up to 25 where a learning difficulty assessment is in place and youth offenders in youth custody. The draft version of the NCF will be published in October and the final version in April 2010. The arrangements described in the NCF will relate to the academic year 2011/12 so the processes will be operational from the latter part of 2010.

Mr. Parkinson advised that there was a very tight timetable in place for consultation and that there were other documents to consider. The matter had been discussed at WASH and also at a recent meeting of the 14-19 Partnership. A further meeting of the 14-19 Partnership would take place in November.

Mr. Parkinson suggested that the Forum could respond to the consultation on the NCF or through the 14 -19 Partnership.

Resolved:

- (i) That the Forum notes the progress made so far with the Machinery of Government changes.
- (ii) That the response to the consultation on the NCF in the context of the 14 -19 Partnership be left to the 14 -19 Partnership
- (iii) That a further progress report be brought back to the Forum at the next meeting.

22 EARLY YEARS FORMULA

Mr. Roberts advised that this was the 4th report on the progress made by the Early Years Working Group and it outlines a proposed new funding formula to be introduced from 1st April 2010.

From 1st April 2010, it is a DCSF requirement that an Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) based on attended hours will be applied across all Early Years settings. The Schools Forum set up an Early Years Working Group to evaluate options from the funding formula. Progress had been reported to the last meeting and covered an assessment of current provider

costs and proposals for formula elements, deprivation, quality and a Headteacher supplement for Nursery Schools. Some outstanding issues were identified with regard to DCSF guidance/legislation, a flexibility supplement, the Minimum Funding Guarantee and transition.

Mr. Roberts briefly talked through the report and touched upon the DCSF Guidance, the Minimum Funding Guarantee, Transition – Formula Floor and Ceiling and other changes. Members were asked to agree the recommendations identified in the report.

A formal consultation process will start with all Early Years providers and primary schools. The proposals will be described and illustrated together with a series of questions.

The consultation period will run from 1st October to 30th November, following which there will be a further report and a final set of proposals for the Forum to approve prior to submission to the Cabinet in February 2010.

Mr. Armstrong placed on record his thanks for the diligent work carried out by the Working Group and Andrew Roberts.

Resolved: (i) 19:0 - That the Forum agrees to the structure of the EYSFF as described.

(ii) 18:1 abstention – That £200,000 of funding for the deprivation element of the Formula be taken from the DSG Reserve.

(iii) That a further report be produced outlining the responses from the consultation paper.

23 SCHOOL FINANCE REGULATIONS

Mr. Longster suggested that this item be brought forward on the agenda so that Mr. Dodd could talk through his report at this point and leave rather than stay for the whole of the meeting.

(a) **Carbon Reduction Commitment.**

Mr. Dodd referred to the DCSF summary document and to his article in this term's Wirral Governor which had also been re-produced with the papers for this meeting. He presented a brief overview of the scheme.

The document is intended to give advance notice of potential changes to the School Finance Regulations in 2011-12 as result of the introduction of carbon trading in 2010-2011.

With effect from 1 April 2010, the Government will be introducing a carbon trading scheme for large users of energy, including Local Authorities. Participants will have to purchase allowances for their energy-related emissions and will be reimbursed according to their relative position in a league table based on the extent to which emissions have been reduced. Participants who reduce their emissions by more than average will gain

money through the recycling process and those who reduce by less average will lose money. The first sale of allowances will take place in April 2011 and all revenue raised from this sale will be recycled to participants in October 2011.

All maintained schools will be included with their maintaining authorities for the purposes of the scheme. Academies will also be included.

Schools have an important part to play as models of good practice for their pupils and the communities in which they live. Around 15% of public sector carbon emissions arise from activities in the English school system and about one third of this from the energy use in school buildings. The Government wants all schools to be sustainable schools by 2020 - not just promoting sustainable development through teaching but also through their management and engagement with the local communities. Schools participation in the LA carbon reduction commitment is an opportunity to work together for mutual benefit. LAs will support schools to achieve greater energy efficiency. Sustainable schools create a healthier school environment and influence the behaviour of pupils and their families.

In order to incentivise schools to reduce energy consumption, the Government proposes to amend the regulations in 2011-2012 to enable LAs to charge any loss attributable to schools to the Schools Budget. Authorities will be able to treat this sum as centrally held expenditure but will be allowed to use a formula factor to apportion the loss among schools according to their individual performance. Similarly, if schools have contributed to the authority gaining money through the scheme, LAs will be encouraged to ensure that the gain due to schools should be added to the Schools Budget and perhaps used to help schools which made the greater savings. The money gained would be outside the Dedicated Schools Grant so the distribution would be a matter for local decision and agreement.

Resolved: (i) That Mr. Dodd be thanked for his report.
(ii) That the report be noted.

(b) **Early Years**

Mr. Roberts advised that The Schools Finance (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 will make changes to the rules that LAs must work to when funding maintained schools. The regulations amend the School Finance (England) Regulations 2008 which relate to financial years 2008-9, 2009-10 and 2010-2011. The proposed amending regulations principally cover the requirement for all LAs to implement from 1 April 2010 a single funding formula ; to fund, using the same principles, all providers of the free entitlement to nursery education for three and four year olds.

In addition, changes are also proposed to:

- require LAs to publish schemes of financial management on a public website showing the dates of revision and coming into force and
- consider that the regulations require LAs, where pupils are attending two schools to undertake diplomas, to fund both schools as if the pupil attends

each full time. The regulations are amended to allow LAs to discount the secondary registration of pupils in KS 4 where they are undertaking diplomas if that is the only reason they attend the secondary school.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

24 **SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP**

Mr. Armstrong advised that Mr. Neil Dymont had resigned as a Secondary Headteacher from membership of the Forum. His replacement would be considered by WASH (the Wirral Association of Headteachers).

25 **FEEDBACK FROM TRADED SERVICES WORKING PARTY**

(a) **Gilbrook.**

Mr. Edmondson updated members on the situation regarding Gilbrook School.

Members were reminded that Gilbrook had operated an Outreach Service to a number of mainstream primary schools who choose to buy in. The service is well regarded by those who receive it but was experiencing difficulty in terms of financial viability. The subgroup established to review the funding model had met twice and had agreed that the service was good value for money but that there were issues regarding charges and long term viability. There were no conclusions at this stage but the group would be meeting again to consider the options available and the outcome would be reported back to this forum.

Mr. Armstrong reported that a report regarding the re-location of Gilbrook to the former Arrowe Hill Primary School site had been prepared for Cabinet on 1st October. It was hoped that this would be agreed so that the formal consultation process could be completed. Some modest refurbishment work would need to be carried out but it was hoped that the re-location could take place at Easter 2010.

(b) **Traded Services.**

Mr. Armstrong reported that Traded Services Working Party had met once. All existing services had been extended for an additional year. Services were being reviewed two at a time and the next two being looked at were Insurance and Building Maintenance.

All managers from the various services, including those from other Departments, would be expected to attend the meetings.

Irene Davies-Foo had asked if she could join the Working Party. This was agreed.

Resolved: That Mr. Armstrong be thanked for his report.

26 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING(S)**

Resolved: That the next meeting take place on Wednesday, 20th January 2010,
at Wallasey Town Hall