

MINUTES OF THE WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON 20TH JANUARY 2010

In attendance: Richard Longster (Chair); Steve Dainty; Morag Kophamel; Vanessa MacDonald; Paula Dixon; Jan Levenson; Phil Sheridan; Brian Cummings; Betty Renshaw; Andre Baird; Neville Reilly; Julie Kenny; Gill Peters; Mike Potter; Denise McDonald

Observers/Officers: Cllr Sheila Clarke; Cllr Frank Doyle; Cllr Tony Smith; Cllr Phil Davies; Howard Cooper; Mark Parkinson; Evelyn Epton; Jeff Bevan; Andrew Roberts; Sue Ashley; Carolyn Warburton; Nick Nicklin; Mary Mitchell; John Bulmer.

1. Apologies

Gill Zsapka; Margaret Bevan; Irene Davies-Foo; Ken Frost; Simon Davies

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 30th September 2009

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting. Agreed that all matters arising were agenda items.

3. School Budget

Andrew Roberts gave an outline of the 2010/11 indicative budget. The 2010/11 per pupil increase is 4.4% including 1.3% for government priorities. In this final year of the 2008/11 funding period the headroom element of the 2010/11 budget is calculated as £3,836,000 of which £3,666,000 for Narrowing the Gap and £170,000 for an Increase in the Statement value. Details of the Dedicated School Grant, the Individual Schools Budget, the Minimum Funding Guarantee, Other grants, Area Based Grants and other budget factors as set out in the report were outlined.

The Director provided further background on the impact of school closures on future budgets and the SEN funding issues in the report. Discussion took place on the contingency issues and the Narrowing the Gap funding. Concerns were expressed on 2010/11 funding levels for schools on the Minimum Funding Guarantee.

Resolved:

- (i) That the Schools Forum noted the Schools Budget for 2010/11 and the level of central costs.
- (ii) That £268,000 un-allocated DSG is held in Schools Specific Contingency budget and carried forward to the next funding period.
- (iii) The Schools Budget and views of the Schools Forum be referred to the budget meeting of Cabinet on 22nd February 2010.

4. Machinery of Government Update

Mark Parkinson updated the Forum of changes to the responsibilities and activities of the LSC, following its demise from the end of 2009/10 and the new bodies, structures and arrangements in place from April 2010.

Six LSC posts will TUPE to the CYPD along with former LSC responsibilities and functions in respect of 14 – 19.

Previously the Schools Forum agreed that the 14 – 19 Partnership respond to the consultation on the Forum's behalf. The deadline for responses to the consultation is 5th February 2010.

Discussion took place on the potential complexities of future arrangements.

Resolved:

- (i) That the Schools Forum notes the National Commissioning Framework and the opportunity to respond to the consultation.

5. Early Years Funding Formula Update

Andrew Roberts updated the Forum on the local and national position in respect of the DCSF Early Years Funding Formula proposals. Mary Mitchell, Head of Leasowe Early Years and Adult Learning Centre gave additional background to the position of the three Nursery Schools and welcomed the recommendation to defer implementation.

Resolved:

- (i) That the Forum notes that the Early Years Funding Formula is deferred until April 2010.
- (ii) That the Forum Working Group continues for the next twelve months.
- (iii) That the payments to providers who extend their free offer continue at the PVI hourly rate in 2011/12.
- (iv) That the flexibility element of the formula is introduced in September 2010.

6. Gilbrook Outreach Update

John Bulmer updated the Forum on the Gilbrook Outreach Service to schools. The tabled report is based upon the Forum Working Group set up in June 2009 to examine the funding and issues in respect of the Outreach service from Gilbrook School. It is intended that a further review of the service takes place in 2010, with the funding set out in the recommendation to allow the service to continue.

Discussion took place on funding the proposal from the reserves.

Resolved:

- (i) That the Schools Forum agrees to the allocation of £65,000 of its reserves to Gilbrook School to maintain its Outreach Service during the period April 2010 to March 2011.
- (ii) That the Schools Forum approve the carrying out of a consultation exercise to determine the longer term future and funding of the Gilbrook Outreach Service.

7. School Balances

Andrew Roberts gave an update on School Balances, both the 2008/09 Wirral School balances and the DCSF guidance, recently issued to Local Authorities.

No changes on how Wirral School balances are treated are proposed.

Resolved:

- (i) That the Forum notes the report.

8. Deprivation Update

The Director and Mark Parkinson gave a verbal update on the context and progress in review the impact of the Deprivation funding distributed in the formula used for the 2008/2011 Individual Schools Budgets.

The proposed review of Deprivation Funding by the CYPD Overview and Scrutiny Committee was confirmed.

Resolved:

- (i) That a Working Group of Headteachers be established to consider the issue of Deprivation funding further, membership to be agreed by WASH and the Primary Heads Consultation Group.

9. MFG Baseline Changes for Schools with changed circumstances

Carolyn Warburton outlined the changed circumstances of five schools which require changes to the baseline for the calculation of the Minimum Funding Guarantee.

Resolved:

- (i) That the Forum agrees the changes to the Minimum Funding Guarantee as set out in the report.
(Ms J Levenson, Headteacher at Hilbre High declared an interest.)

10. Forum Membership

It is proposed increase the membership of the Schools Forum to include an Academy representative and a maintained Nursery representative to take account of the draft

Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2009. It is also proposed that the Chair of the Wirral Governors Forum be added as a member of the Forum.

Resolved:

- (i) The Director is asked to seek nominations from the current single Academy and the Nursery schools and report back to the next Forum.
- (ii) That a decision on the addition of the Chair of the Wirral Governors Forum be made at the next meeting.

11. Any other business

An update was given on the report agreed by the Council's Cabinet on 14th January 2010 about school energy costs for 2010/11 and 2011/12 and proposals that automatic metering be funded in schools from the savings resulting from the lower costs in the renewed contracts. Automatic metering is a key "early win" in the Council's and schools meeting carbon reduction requirements and commitments.

- (i) Agreed that the fitting of AMR meters in schools be an agenda item at the next meeting.

12. Dates of next meetings:

23rd June 2010

29th September 2010

8th December 2010