

WIRRAL SCHOOL FORUM
12th APRIL 2011
MINUTES

Present: R. Longster (Chair)

Schools Group

S. Dainty	S. Peach
A. Baird	C. Penn
E. Cogan	E. Renshaw
I. Cubbin	S. Wall
P. Dixon	J. Weise
K. Frost	P. Sheridan
M. Kophamel	G. Zsapka
C. Mann	

Non-Schools Group

J. Kenny	G. Peters
D. McDonald	N. Reilly
S. McNamara	

In Attendance:

D. Armstrong	Cllr. S. Clarke
P. Ashcroft	Cllr. P. Hayes
J. Bevan	Cllr. C. Meaden
S. Blevins	M. Parkinson
	A. Roberts

Apologies:

B. Cummings	L. Ireland
I. Davies-Foo	J. Owens
S. Davies	M. Potter

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received as recorded above.

2. MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from the meeting were accepted as a true record, however, K. Frost and S. Peach had been omitted from the attendance list

3. MATTERS ARISING

All matters arising are agenda items for this meeting.

4. TRADED SERVICES UPDATE – Education Quality (EQ)

Mark Parkinson gave a presentation on the development of the new Service Level Agreement (SLA), EQ, which has replaced the CPD SLA.

He explained why it needed to change, the consultation process, the cost and the next steps. The presentation is attached.



EQ Presentation.ppt

David Armstrong thanked Mark and his team for their work in developing EQ.

5. **TRADED SERVICES – WORKING GROUP UPDATE**

Steve Dainty summarised this report. The following points were highlighted:-

- Take up is generally the same level except for Grounds Maintenance, Metro Catering and Information Technology.
- Grounds Maintenance will no longer be provided directly from 1st January 2012
- Changes to Corporate HR & Organisational Development Service are yet to be defined and any changes to the delivery of the schools SLA will be subject to consultation.
- Hochtief has not renewed its contract with Wirral Community Patrol, so PFI schools requiring a service must buy directly from Community Patrol.

Paula Dixon highlighted the concern PFI schools have for day time security when the service provision changes.

David Armstrong thanked the Traded Services Group for their work in reviewing the SLAs.

6. **SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS – GREEN PAPER**

Paul Ashcroft briefed Forum on the DfE Consultation '*Support and Aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability*'. The consultation aims to overhaul and replace the current framework for identifying and meeting special educational needs and disability. The case for change is longstanding and has widespread support; it is seen as overly bureaucratic and adversarial with widespread variations in identification of needs and provision.

The consultation is proposing a new Education, Health and Social Care plan to replace statements of special educational needs that could apply to young people until they are 25 years of age, the offer of personal budgets by 2014 and greater choice of schools. The consultation is wide ranging with a breadth of questions designed to capture views and ideas that will provide new, long-term arrangements.

The consultation is open to all; schools, settings, parents, young people, voluntary groups, professional groups, etc. A number of these; Wirral Family Forum and Parent Partnership, Wirral Special Headteachers, authority officers, support services, SENCOs, etc. are meeting to discuss the paper and consider a response.

7. **DEPRIVATION UPDATE AND TABLED PAPERS**

Mark Parkinson briefly explained the number of papers attached:-

- Deprivation Funding Impact Report
- Narrowing the Attainment Gap at Key Stage 4 (appendix A)
- Work of the Deprivation Funding Consultation Group (appendix B)
- Comments on the Report on Deprivation Funding Impact
- Response to the comments received on the Report on Deprivation Funding Impact.

Gill Peters referred to 4.10 on the Response to the Comments paper which states:- “The funding change would not be successful if, as a consequence, standards fell in schools that received relatively small increases in their deprivation funding.” In some schools where there is little extra funding the Head teacher is working with children to maintain standards. Elaine Cogan felt that this was also relevant for secondary schools.

The Chair thanked the working party for their work.

8. **SCHOOLS REDUNDANCY UPDATE**

Andrew Roberts introduced Sue Blevins, Strategic Service Manager (Workforce Management), to the group and gave a brief outline of the report.

The table in 3.1 shows that two thirds of secondary schools and handful of primary schools have indicated that redundancies in schools may be necessary in 2011/12, many as a result of falling rolls. It is possible that 64 teachers and 19 support staff may be made redundant which is estimated to cost £1.8m, with resources of only £380k.

Falling rolls, 6th form budgets and reduced staffing levels are long term issues.

There are a number of ways redundancy costs may be met in the future:-

- Current budget of £380k
- Schools closure budget £300k
- Bid for permission to capitalise the statutory costs
- Some costs to be met by the school.

Neville Reilly asked if schools were to contribute, would this lead to further cuts and commented that we do not yet know the effect of a national formula on school budgets.

Ken Frost commented that if there were high redundancy costs associated with long term service schools may choose a cheaper option. Sue Blevins confirmed that there was no plan to change the redundancy policy. A skills analysis would be carried out if there were no volunteers. She also suggested that the introduction of an informal redeployment/internal job list would enable schools to reshape their curriculum needs and reduce the amount of redundancies.

Elaine Cogan commented that redundancies will continue as budgets are reduced in 2012/13 and 2013/14.

Morag Kophamel highlighted that a couple of special schools have outreach services attached to their schools and was concerned that the school budget would pick up redundancy costs of the outreach if the service was no longer required or afforded by schools.

Resolved:

- (i) Forum agreed that schools budget is used to match fund costs associated with an approved school deficit recovery plan

Deferred:

- (i) A decision on individual school contributions is deferred until the views of schools are known.

9. SCHOOLS JOB EVALUATION AND PAY HARMONISATION

Andrew Roberts briefly outlined the job evaluation and harmonisation paper and resolution that had been to cabinet recently.

There will be a £1m contribution towards the cost of implementing job evaluation from the local pay reserve along with a loan of £2m from the council to be repaid by 31st March 2015. £450K a year will be put aside to pay for the loan.

Sue Blevins informed the group that the main issue outstanding had been to address the anomaly of TA contracts. The new proposal has been put to Unison, who will hold briefings and a ballot for support staff. A dedicated helpdesk will be provided by HR after the Unison ballot. If the proposal is agreed implementation could be September 2011.

The back pay to staff up to 31st March 2011 will be met centrally. Back pay from 1st April 2011 will be met by schools. £1.1m has been put into the 2011/12 budget, against all formula elements, to meet some of these costs (including an amount for special schools).

Steve Peach commented that school staff are confused about the term time/full time contracts. Sue Blevins confirmed that if the proposal is agreed all TAs will move to a 39 week contract, however, schools will be able to define what they require.

10. **SCHOOLS BUDGET UPDATE**

Andrew Roberts summarised the report. The Dedicated Schools Grant is likely to be reduced by £143,500. The changes are summarised as follows:-

Academy recoupment (Contingency)	£244,700 cr
Early Years (ISB)	£240,000
Schools (ISB)	£283,500 cr
Advanced Skills Teachers (Central budget)	£42,100 cr
Carbon Reduction (Central budget)	£186,800
Total	£143,500 cr

This allows the carbon reduction costs to be met centrally rather than schools budgets being charged individually.

Sixth Form budgets from the YPLA have reduced by £246k, which is less than expected. This is a part year reduction and includes transitional protection.

Resolved:

(i) That Forum notes the report and budget changes.

11. **EXCESS BALANCE MECHANISM**

Andrew Roberts highlighted section 4.2 in the 2011/12 Summary of Scheme changes from the DfE. This recommends that the clawback mechanism for excess balances is removed or relaxed.

Steve Peach commented that with budgets being reduced or not increasing, greater flexibility with balances is required. Elaine Cogan stated that the balances are required at the moment to enable schools to manage cuts over the next few years.

Gill Peters requested that if the balance mechanism was removed Schools Forum would ensure that action would be taken against schools who continued to have very high balances.

Schools Forum agreed unanimously that the Excess Balance mechanism be removed with effect from 2011/12. However, Forum accepted that this should be reviewed if balances remained high.

12. **SCHOOLS FINANCIAL VALUE STANDARD (FMSIS REPLACEMENT)**

Andrew Roberts explained that the Schools Financial Value Standard will replace FMSiS.

The DfE consultation closes on 30th April 2011, if members wish to respond.

13. **SCHOOL FINANCE REGULATIONS 2011 – CHANGES**

The changes to the School Finance regulations 2011 papers are for noting.

14. **LOCAL FUNDING FORMULA CHANGES WORKING PARTY**

Andrew Roberts requested volunteers to review the local funding formula as there are a number of issues that need to be addressed.

The working party members are as follows:-

Elaine Cogan
Steve Dainty

Gill Peters
Steve Peach
Richard Longster
Ken Frost
Chris Mann

This group will also consider any proposals from the DfE to change the National Funding Formula.

15. FORUM WORK PLAN FOR 2011

A proposed workplan was attached for information

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 6th July 2011 at 6pm.