

WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM

23rd January 2013

MINUTES

Present:

R Longster (Chair)

Schools Group

S Allen	M Kophamel
M Brown	A Moore
E Cogan	S Peach
B Cummings	C Penn
P Dixon	K Podmore
C Hughes	G Pritchard
L Ireland	M Walker
B Jordon	J Weise
D Kitchin	G Zsapka

Non-Schools Group

S Davies	D McDonald
S Higginson	B McGregor (training only)
J Kenny	N Reilly

In Attendance:

D Armstrong	S Dainty
P Ashcroft	J Hassall
S Ashley	C Kerr
J Bevan	M Lightburn
S Blevins	A Roberts
C Chow	Cllr. P A Smith
Cllr. W Clements	S Talbot

Apologies:

K Frost	S McNamara
J Gordon	J Owens

- 1. Training session**
Andrew Roberts held a training session on the Schools Budget and Formula Funding before the main meeting.
- 2. Minutes from the Meeting Held on 25th September 2013**
The minutes from the meeting were accepted as a true record.
- 3. Minutes from the Meeting Held on 28th November 2013**
The minutes from the meeting were accepted as a true record after the following amendment was made to the PFI affordability Gap savings proposal:-
The Forum noted that the PFI contract was with the LA and not the schools, therefore it would be wrong to transfer the costs to the schools.

4. Matters Arising

There was one matter arising on the minutes of the 28th November 2012 concerning the PFI Contract. It was brought to the Forums attention that the DfE will not make any contribution to the affordability gap and PFI schools are only liable for the charges as specified in the academy transfer document.

5. School Budget Report

Andrew Roberts outlined the Schools Budget for 2013-14 as follows:-

- The Dedicated Schools Grant continues to be on a spend plus basis, but will be split into 4 blocks in future:-
 - Schools block
 - High Needs
 - Early Years
 - Other
- Pupil Premium will increase to £900 for each child that has been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.
- The Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) rate remains at -1.5%
- There is a statutory requirement for Early Years 2 year education from September 2015, It is expected that 20% of children will be eligible.
- SEN top ups for 2013-14 are in excess on £16.6m. This includes provision for further education, 6th Form College and other providers
- The cost of School Milk and Advanced Skills Teachers, which were originally central costs have been delegated to schools.
- It is proposed that DSG will fund a further £250,000 for Planned and Preventative Maintenance. This reflects the council decision concerning savings options.
- The regulations governing the contribution to combined budgets have changed so that no new commitments or increases in expenditure can occur. There are a number of areas still covered at a total cost of £2,499,600
- An amount of headroom of £333k is available within the budget.
- The PFI Affordability gap continues to be funded by the LA
- An Academy representative commented that academies were paying back the admissions element from their LACSEG, but they could be paying more than allocated. David Armstrong confirmed there were significant costs in this area and would consider how these could be reduced.

Resolved

- Comments were accepted by the Forum.
- The Contribution to the combined budget was agreed
- Forum agreed to fund a further £250,000 of PPM from the Schools Budget.
- Forum agreed the use of headroom totalling £333,400 for schools and to hold a High Needs contingency of £880,200.
- The Schools Budget and the views of the schools forum to be referred to the budget meeting of Cabinet on 18th February 2013.

6. De-delegation of Schools Budgets

Andrew Roberts identified the areas of the funding formula that the DfE requires to be delegated from April 2013. The Schools Forum members, in their relevant phase, can decide if these areas should be de-delegated and taken out of the formula budget before it is allocated to schools.

Resolved

1. The Primary Forum Representatives agreed, unanimously, to de-delegate each of the following budgets for the financial year 2013-14:-
 - Contingency
 - Special Staff Costs
 - School Library Service
 - Insurance
 - MEAS
 - FSM eligibility
 - Behaviour support

2. The Secondary Forum Representatives agreed to de-delegate each of the following budgets for the financial year 2013-14:-
 - Contingency
 - Special Staff Costs
 - FSM eligibility

The Secondary Forum Representatives did not agree to de-delegate the following budgets for the financial year 2013-14:-

 - Insurance
 - MEAS

3. The Secondary Forum Representatives agreed to de-delegate Behaviour Support for 2013-14 subject to this not being repeated in the future.

7. Advanced Skills Teachers

Andrew Roberts briefed the proposal to retain the AST Service until the end of the academic year 2012-13 using the budget underspend from the 2012-13 financial year. The AST funding has been delegated to schools for 2013-14.

Resolved

The Forum agreed the use of the underspend to retain the AST Service until August 2013.

A member of the Forum raised the issue of 3 year ASTs salary protection. His view was that this was an LA cost since some posts were appointed by the LA to provide outreach to other schools. Andrew Roberts confirmed that there is no financial provision going forward.

8. Pupil Premium

Sue Ashley identified the changes to Pupil Premium in 2012-13. FSM and LAC PP increased in year to £623, Service Children change to “ever 2”, Summer School funding and Year 7 catch up were introduced.

In 2013-14 FSM “ever 6” and LAC Pupil Premium will increase to £900, Service children will move to “ever 3”. The total Pupil Premium for Wirral is estimated at £13,181,100.

Resolved

Forum noted the report.

9. Funding Formula Template

Andrew Roberts provided Forum with a summary of Wirral's School Funding Formula submitted to the EFA on 22nd January 2013. The appendices identified the differences between the October and January submissions.

Resolved

Forum noted the report.

10 Delegation and Changes to School Milk Arrangements

Steve Dainty briefed the Forum on the changes to the milk arrangements from April 2013 as the funding will be delegated to schools. The options available for a buyback service with the LA continuing to provide a service or to hand the administration to a company called Cool Milk who can offer schools support at no cost.

Resolved

Forum agreed for a paper to be presented to Cabinet recommending the appointment of Cool Milk.

Forum agreed to inform schools of the options available to them

11. Reform of Funding for Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Paul Ashcroft updated Forum on the progress made on the reform of High Needs funding so far. Detailed consultations have been held with all schools and academies and since September the following progress has been made:-

- The LA has worked with the DfE concerning the number of pupils affected.
- Draft budgets have been discussed with Special School Headteachers.
- The delegated amount for statements will increase to £6,000, which will reduce the unit value of support exceeding £6,000.
- An SEN steering group has been set up to assist the review.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

12. Early Years Census Error

The letter from the Chair of the Forum to the DfE and the response received was reported for information and noted.

13. Schools Budget Monitoring Report

Andrew Roberts highlighted the underspends in the centrally held schools budgets for 2012-13. The underspend identified will offset the grant reduction arising from Early Years Census error.

Resolved

The Forum noted the report.

14. Early Years Update

Andrew Roberts updated the Forum on the Early Years Single Funding Formulas follows:-

- There is a significant increase of funding for disadvantaged 2 year olds, early years provision.
- There will be a further increase in 2014-15.
- The suggested hourly rate to pay providers is and equates to the rate used in 2012-13.
- In line with decisions the nursery school grant element should be removed from the EYSFF and replaced by an increased lump sum.
- Protection for Nursery schools should be maintained at 85% of their 2010-11 budget.

Resolved

- Forum agreed that 2 year old funding should be set at £4.85
- Forum agreed to change the grant element of the EYSFF formula to a lump sum element.
- Forum agreed to maintain the protection for nursery schools at 85% of their 2010-11 budgets.
- The Forum working group will review the EYSFF and report at a future meeting.

15. Forum Working Group Updates

Steve Dainty reported that the Traded Services Working Party is reviewing SLAs prior to the current 3 year contract period ending in March 2014. Currently both parties can give one terms notice to end a contract. Steve explained that a number of services are considering offering their service under the EQ umbrella, as additional services, whilst taking the opportunity to adopt the good practices they have in place.

16. Harmonisation and Job Evaluation Update

All support staff in schools have now received a letter concerning the changes to terms and conditions as part of the LAs budget savings options. The main changes affecting schools are to the overtime rates which may affect caretakers. The Job Evaluation for support staff on point 34 and above has been paused and is being considered as part of the council's budget for 2013-14.

4. Workplan

The dates of future meetings were noted:-

Wednesday 10th April 2013

Wednesday 3rd July 2013

Wednesday 2nd October 2013