

**WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**27<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2011**  
**MINUTES**

**Present:** R. Longster (Chair)

Schools Group

A. Baird	M. Kophamel
E. Cogan	C. Mann
I. Cubbin	J. Owens
B. Cummings	S. Peach
S. Dainty	C. Penn
P. Dixon	S. Wall
N. Greathead	J. Weise
L. Ireland	G. Zsapka

Non-Schools Group

J. Kenny	S. McNamara
D. McDonald	N. Reilly
B. McGregor	

**In Attendance:** D. Armstrong Cllr. A. McLachlan  
P. Ashcroft M. Parkinson  
S. Ashley A. Roberts  
Cllr. S. Clarke C. Warburton

**Apologies:** K. Frost M.Potter  
M.Mitchell P. Sheridan

**1. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

Richard Longster was re-elected as Chair of the Schools' Forum and Steve Dainty was re-elected as vice chair to serve for the coming 12 months.

**2. MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes from the meeting were accepted as a true record (Dr Cubbin confirmed he attended the meeting.)

The Forum noted the resignation of 2 governor representatives, Betty Renshaw and Margaret Bevan, and wished to record their thanks for the contribution they have made.

**3. MATTERS ARISING**

Minute 6: The DfE has recently confirmed that Hospital Schools are entitled to the Pupil Premium. This means that the amount of £9,890 for the Wirral Hospitals School will be paid directly from the DfE rather than from the contingency budget.

Minute 10: The DfE have indicated that the delegation of budgets for Pupil Referral Units should be postponed to 2013/14, in line with the School Funding Review.

**4. CONSULTATION ON SCHOOL FUNDING REFORM**

Andrew Roberts summarised his report, noting that the DfE have moved away from a national formula for all schools to a national formula with local flexibility. Andrew highlighted some of the questions and issues from the current consultation on school funding reform and suggested responses, as follows:-

### Section 1: National Funding System

There are two options for indicative school funding allocations, a notional amount for each school or a per pupil amount for each authority. A per pupil amount is preferred since a notional amount for each school may be misleading.

### Section 2: The Schools Block - System

This section deals with how the schools block is allocated to schools.

There will be a reduction in the number of permitted formula elements, in local funding formulae (Questions 2 & 3). This will impact the distribution of former standards fund grants (£34m) and may cause some turbulence in the formula.

Question 6 provides options for the Schools Forum to have greater decision making powers, which is supported.

### Section 3: The Schools Block – Formula

The allocation of schools funding to Local Authorities will be made up of 4 blocks. The main one will be the schools block, consisting of a per pupil amount, additional funding for deprived pupils, protection for small schools and an area cost adjustment. Question 9 asks if these are the correct factors.

Currently the Minimum Funding Guarantee is set at -1.5%. If this remains at -1.5% the move to the new funding formula will be slow. If it is reduced further this will cause greater uncertainty for school budgets (question 18).

### Section 4: Central Services

This section questions if some of the central services should be delegated to maintained schools so that schools and academies are dealt with in the same manner. The Schools Forum would be able to decide to hold funding centrally for maintained schools in certain areas (question 19).

### Section 6: Children Requiring High levels of Support

Mainstream schools will continue to meet some of the costs of SEN. The consultation provides four options for funding Special Schools (question 30):-

- Place led funding (as most are presently).
- Pupil led funding
- Place led funding reduced for surplus places
- Base funding of £10k per place with extra pupil led funding

### Section 7: Early Years

As the new funding formula has only been in place since April the local formula should be reviewed before further changes are considered.

### Section 8: Pupil Premium

The Pupil Premium is based on the number of free school meals recorded at January Census. This measure will be broadened to those children who have received free school meals in the last three years (Ever 3) or the last 6 years (Ever 6). The broader the measure, the broader the distribution of resources across authorities. Ever 6 is also likely to benefit secondary schools over primary schools.

### Section 9: Timing for Implementation

The new funding formula will be implemented in 2013-14 or 2015-16.

The Consultation finishes on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2011. A response will be submitted to the DfE on behalf of the School's Forum.

### Resolved:

That the Forum notes the report

## **5. ACADEMIES UPDATE**

Andrew Roberts outlined his report. As at 1<sup>st</sup> September 2011 there are 8 academies in Wirral, with 5 in the process of converting. Approximately £53m of delegated budget, (half of the secondary budget) and £272k of the central budget will transfer to Academies. The local authority's central budget will be top sliced, with a deduction of £800k in 2011-12 and £900k for 2012-13 regardless of the number of academies that convert. Those schools who have become academies are continuing to work with the LA. Mark Parkinson confirmed the importance of establishing what services academies would like and the cost of buying them back. PFI schools will continue to have a relationship with the authority until at least 2031.

Neville Reilly highlighted the issue of possible staffing reductions if the central budgets were cut further.

Resolved:

That the Forum notes the report

**6. TRANSFER OF SEN POST 16 FUNDING**

Paul Ashcroft summarised his report on the transfer of responsibility and funding from the Young Peoples Learning Agency (YPLA) for those aged between 16 and 25 with special educational needs (SEN). There are currently three funding streams for 16-25 SEN, these are:-

- Additional learner support
- Post 16 SEN allocation for LA's
- Central YPLA high cost provision

There are cost pressures in each area. The YPLA is working towards one funding stream for all high needs learners up to the age of 25.

Resolved:

The Forum notes the government's intention to create a single funding framework and budget for the local authority for post 16 learners up to the age of 25 with SEN/LLDD

The Forum notes the budgetary pressures that are likely to remain.

**7. COMMISSIONING SPECIALIST PLACES FOR PUPILS WITH STATEMENTS**

Paul Ashcroft informed the group that this paper seeks agreement to consult with all secondary schools about commissioning specialist SCD/ASD places at Clare Mount using funding identified in the July meeting of £120,000 from surplus places in special schools. These places can cost up to 3 times as much in the non-maintained sector. If agreed this funding will be included in the budget for Clare Mount from April 2012.

Andre Baird asked if the funding would be met from the place changes at other special schools, which was confirmed.

Resolved:

The Forum agreed unanimously to consult all secondary schools on the proposal that £120,000 be placed in Clare Mount School's budget in April 2012 to secure 8 further places in its resourced provision for SCD/ASD, bringing its total number in the provision to 38.

**8. CHANGES TO LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN'S EDUCATION SERVICE (LACES)**

Mark Parkinson summarised the service provided by the Looked After Children's Education Service and the new arrangements due to be in place by January 2012. The service will:-

- Track, monitor and challenge outcomes
- Assist personal education planning
- Provide training

David Armstrong highlighted the importance of feedback concerning the revised service as the LA is the corporate parent of looked after children.

Resolved:

That Forum notes the changes to the Looked after Children's Education Service.

**9. PROVISION OF INSURANCE SERVICES TO SCHOOLS**

David Armstrong outlined the provision of insurance services to schools. Schools have worked hard to lower risk, which has resulted in reduced claims and reduced insurance premiums. As Schools convert to academies insurance cover is outside in the authority's insurance scheme, which may place upward pressure on charges for the remaining schools. The Risk and Insurance Team continue to support academies through the provision of a brokerage service.

Resolved:

That Forum notes the report.

**10. HARMONISATION AND £250 PAY AWARD UPDATE**

A document on harmonisation and the £250 pay award were included on the agenda for information. This has also been sent out to all governing bodies. Letters have been sent to schools, asking governing bodies to confirm they agree with both proposals.

Shaun McNamara asked about job evaluation, as there are still many jobs with the same titles doing very different tasks. David Armstrong confirmed the department was happy to share what information they had.

Harmonisation back pay will be paid by the department up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011, but schools will pick up salary increases thereafter. Funding has been included within school budgets which will part fund these costs going forward.

**11. SCHOOL REDUNDANCIES UPDATE**

Andrew Roberts updated the current redundancy position to include the music service. The Department of Communities and Local Government has approved the application for capitalisation of statutory redundancy costs. A redeployment scheme is currently being finalised which will enable school vacancies to be advertised in schools downsizing before external adverts are placed.

Sandra Wall highlighted that the cost of harmonisation may increase the number of redundancies as the total amount is greater than the £1.1m allocated to school budgets. David Armstrong clarified that equal pay claims would cost more in the long run if harmonisation was not implemented.

Resolved:

That Forum notes the report and will review in 12 months time.

**12. EARLY YEARS FORMULA REVIEW**

Carolyn Warburton highlighted the need to review the Early Year's Single Funding Formula and its impact on providers. The review will take place this term so that any adjustment can be made in time for the new financial year. The working party will be re-formed.

Resolved:

The Forum agreed to support the review.

**13. DSG FINAL GRANT NOTIFICATION AND CENTRAL LIMIT**

Andrew Roberts summarised the report highlighting that the amount of DSG to be carried forward into 2012/13 was £165,000, and that the central limit was breached in the 2011-12 mainly due to technical changes in the accounting treatment of grants, PFI and PPM.

Resolved:

The Forum agreed that the additional DSG of £165,000 should be carried forward and included in the budget for 2012-13

**14. FORUM MEMBERSHIP**

Sue Ashley summarised the current make up of the schools forum, highlighting:-

- 2 governor vacancies for which nominations have been requested
- Secondary and academy representation which will be referred to WASH.

Resolved:

The Forum notes the report.

**15. FORUM WORKPLAN**

A workplan for the Forum was provided in the meeting papers. The Forum noted the areas of work for future meetings.

**16. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2012  
Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2012  
Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2012  
Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2012