

# WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM

24<sup>TH</sup> January 2012

## Minutes

### Present

R. Longster (Chair)

#### Schools Group

A Baird	D Kitchin
E Cogan	M Kophamel
B Cummings	J Owens
S Dainty	C Penn
P Dixon	L Seargeant (for N Greathead)
K Frost	S Wall
J Gordon	J Weise
L Ireland	G Zsapka

#### Non-Schools Group

S Davies	D McDonald
J Kenny	B McGregor
	N Reilly

### In Attendance

D Armstrong	Cllr S Clarke
P Ashcroft	M Lightburn
S Ashley	M Parkinson
J Bevan	A Roberts
S Blevins	

### Apologies

I Cubbin	S McNamara
B Cummings	M Mitchell
I Davies-Foo	S Peach
Cllr P Hayes	M Potter
C Mann	

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received as recorded above.

### **2. Minutes from Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting were accepted as a true record (Jeff Bevan confirmed he attended the meeting)

### **3. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

#### **4. Outcome of the Local Formula Consultation**

Andrew Roberts outlined the results from the consultation. Although schools supported using Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility deprivation element over the last 3 or 6 years rather than FSM only (question 3), this is no longer recommended as it moves funding from primary to secondary and it provides additional protection over and above that provided by the Minimum Funding Guarantee.

The funding arrangements for WASP and the funding for CLCs will be considered at meetings later in the year.

#### Resolved:

- (i) The Forum noted the responses from schools
- (ii) (1 abstention). The forum agreed the implementation of the views of the majority of schools, with the exception of Question 3.

#### **5. School Budget 2012-13**

Andrew Roberts outlined the report as follows:-

- Overall school funding will remain at £5,028.39 per pupil, so in total DSG will be approximately £230m.
- The grant adjustment for schools converting to academy status is estimated to be £49m.
- There are a number of changes to the ISB including funding for full time provision at the Hospital School and additional places at Claremount School.
- There are no significant changes to the Early Years Single Funding formula.
- SEN budgets will be increased to reflect harmonisation and job evaluation costs.
- The PFI affordability gap will be included in the Schools Budget in future (resourced by the LA) as advised by the DfE.
- PPM will be included in the Schools Budget and will be offset by £200k savings from the closure of Cole Street School.
- There is an uncommitted balance (headroom) of £250k in the Schools Budget.

David Armstrong informed the Forum that Phil Sheridan is working with the City Learning Centres and the schools to consider how the facilities can be managed more cost effectively in the future.

It was suggested that the headroom of £250k should be allocated through the local formula over all schools and early years providers.

#### Resolved:

- (i) That the Schools Forum noted the Schools Budget for 2012-13 and the level of central costs
- (ii) That the contribution to the combined budgets was unanimously agreed.
- (iii) That to fund £200,000 of PPM from the school budget was unanimously agreed.
- (iv) That the headroom of £250k be allocated through the Schools local formula, including Early Years.

- (v) That the Schools Budget and views of the Schools Forum be referred to the budget meeting of Cabinet on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2012.

## **6. Minimum Funding Guarantee Exceptions**

Carolyn Warburton outlined the MFG changes. The first table identified changes to Education Inclusion Bases. The second table identified the reduction of surplus places for 4 special schools. The outcome of the review cannot be confirmed until March after the process is complete.

It was requested that it would be useful to include the old baseline figure in future.

### Resolved:

- (i) The Forum unanimously agreed the changes to the MFG baselines.
- (ii) The Forum unanimously agreed to support an application to the Secretary of State for MFG baseline changes.

## **7. Pupil Premium**

Carolyn Warburton outlined the changes to the Pupil Premium Allocation for 2012-13. The eligibility for Free School Meal (FSM) Pupil Premium will be extended to pupils on roll in January 2012 who have been eligible for free school meals at any point over the last 6 years, known as "Ever 6". This will reduce the impact of the recent reduction in the level of Wirral FSM. This funding will be calculated from a national database, and until finalised, the amount on the Budget Allocations will be estimates.

The amounts for eligible children in 2012/13 are £600 for FSM, £600 for Looked after Children and £250 for Service Children.

In future, Schools will have to publish details of their Pupil Premium and spending plans for the current year and how it was spent and the impact on educational attainment for the previous year.

The Benefits Section, who administers the FSM applications, is encouraging all eligible claimants to apply.

### Resolved:

The report was noted

## **8. Schools Budget Monitoring 2011-12**

Andrew Roberts highlighted the items that make up the estimated £2m net reduction in centrally held school's expenditure. It is proposed that this saving is used to:-

- Fund Schools PPM of £649k from DSG
- Repay the Harmonisation loan in full in the current year
- Create a reserve to fund future harmonisation costs.

### Resolved:

The Forum supported the proposal for the estimated School's Budget underspend 2011-12.

#### **9. Scheme for Financing Schools Update**

Sue Ashley outlined the proposed updates to the Scheme for Financing Schools which will be issued to schools for consultation.

Resolved:

The forum agreed the changes for consultation with schools.

#### **10. Early Years Formula review**

Andrew Roberts outlined the outcomes of the Early Years Single Funding Formula consultation. The consultation highlighted that the new formula is operating as intended, but it is too early to determine if the range of supplements offered provides the right incentives to providers. A further review in 12 months should be undertaken to include the impact of the formula on Nursery Schools. A trigger mechanism for unfunded hours in settings should be introduced to ensure providers are not excessively penalised for accepting children after the headcount dates.

A draft Early Years Funding agreement was attached which sets out the responsibilities of the council and providers, covering a number of areas.

Resolved:-

- (i) The Forum unanimously agreed no change to the structure of the EYSFF
- (ii) The Forum unanimously agreed that a trigger mechanism is introduced to fund pupils arriving after head count dates.
- (iii) The Forum unanimously agreed that a further review is undertaken in 12 months time.
- (iv) The Forum unanimously agreed a Funding Agreement is issued to all providers.

#### **11. Music Hub Report for Schools**

Carolyn Warburton explained the changes to the funding of the Wirral Schools Music Service. From August 2012 the grant will be managed by Arts Council England and any organisation interested in running a music education hub can apply.

Wirral Schools Music service will be applying to be a hub as it already carries out many of the roles required. It is expected that Wirral LA will run the Wirral Music hub, however, if they do not win the bid schools may be required to work with a private organisation.

Resolved:

The Forum noted the report

#### **12. Academy Consultation**

Andrew Roberts outlined the responses made by Wirral to a consultation by the DfE regarding the Local Authority Central Equivalent Grant for Academies.

Resolved:

The Forum noted the report and the response to the DfE

**13. Finance Regulations 2012**

The draft Finance Regulations were provided for information.

**14. Workplan Update**

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

**15. Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2012

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2012

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2012