

WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM

28th March 2012

Minutes

Present

R. Longster (Chair)

Schools Group

I Cubbin	C Mann
S Dainty	S Peach
K Frost	C Penn
J Gordon	J Weise
M Kophamel	

Non-Schools Group

J Kenny	B McGregor
J Bevan (Substitute for N Reilly)	

In Attendance

P Ashcroft	M Lightburn
S Ashley	M Parkinson
S Blevins	A Roberts
	C Warburton

Apologies

D Armstrong	D Kitchin
Cllr S Clarke	S McNamara
E Cogan	J Owens
B Cummings	M Potter
S Davies	N Reilly
P Dixon	S Wall
L Ireland	G Zsapka

1. Apologies

Apologies were received as recorded above.

2. Minutes from Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting were accepted as a true record.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Outcome of Special School Agreements and Surplus Places

Paul Ashcroft outlined the process for managing surplus places in special schools. 4 schools submitted proposals for the use of surplus funding. The Panel agreed to support proposal from Orrets Meadow to convert surplus places to support children without statements for 12 months. The Foxfield and Lyndale plans were declined so their funding

would reduce by 5 places using the trigger mechanism. There would be no change at Hayfield as the census data did not show a downward trend. The projected savings are £156,000

Paul Ashcroft confirmed that the process will be repeated from January 2013.

Resolved:

- (i) That the pilot scheme to convert surplus places at Orrets Meadow into places for non-statemented children with severe literacy difficulties will continue for the academic year September 2012 to August 2013.
- (ii) That budget for places at Foxfield School will reduce from 138 to 133 from September 2012 to April 2013 using trigger funding arrangements.
- (iii) That budget for places at the Lyndale School will reduce from 45 to 40 from September 2012 to April 2013 using trigger funding arrangements.
- (iv) That the total savings of £156,000 will be used to:-
 - a. Fund eight places at Clare Mount Specialist Sports College for young people with Social and communication difficulties.
 - b. Use the balance to fund additional demand for places in over-subscribed special schools and the cost of primary provision in Wirral Hospital School.
- (v) That the process will be evaluated with stakeholders and final policy produced for adoption before the end of the financial year.

5. SEN Action Plan

Paul Ashcroft outlined the ongoing commitments and developments for special educational needs and vulnerable pupils detailed in the tables. Paul Ashcroft and Mark Parkinson confirmed they would look into the Gilbrook Inclusion base which is no longer accepting children.

Resolved:

That Forum noted the use made of funds to develop SEN and Behaviour Support in the Schools Budget

6. Analysis from Consultation on School Funding Reform

Andrew Roberts summarised some of the responses from the DfEs funding formula consultation in October. There did not seem to be a significant consensus view to support the proposals.

Since the forum papers were produced a new consultation paper from the DfE, called "School Funding Reform: next steps towards a fairer system" has been issued. This paper identifies how local funding formulas will be simplified from 2013-14 financial year, as LAs work towards a national formula.

The main areas for change and consultation are

- (i) The MFG will remain at -1.5 for the financial years 13-14 and 14-15.
- (ii) Less formula elements
- (iii) The distribution of former grants will be included with the formula elements

- (iv) Education Funding Agency(EFA) will have a regulatory overview
- (v) High needs pupils will be funded on a Place plus basis.
- (vi) Early years funding formula to be simpler and child led.

A working group will be set up with the following members:-

Jane Gordon
John Weiss
Steve Dainty
Ken Frost
Steve Peach

Members from the previous working party will also be invited to a meeting in May.

Resolved:

That forum noted the report

7. Funding Formula

Carolyn Warburton provided information on the current Wirral formula to inform any future discussions about formula changes. The first two tables identified the amount allocated to each element and percentage of the total budget for both mainstream and special schools. The unit values for each element were stated in the other tables.

The new consultation paper above identifies the following elements that may be changed or removed from the Wirral formula in April 2013:-

Admissions
Meals(FSM)
Deprivation - IMD to change to ADACI
Band schools
SEN prior attainment

Resolved:

That Forum noted the report

8. Academy Update

Andrew Roberts updated members on the current position regarding academies, funding transfers and charging proposals. There are currently 10 secondary academies on Wirral. Provision has been made within the schools budget to transfer ISB and Central budget to the EFA. The DfE have published the new LACSEG rates for the 2012-13 academic year. Recoupment and a top slice in respect of LA Services will continue in 2012-13. The appendix attached identifies services provided by the LA to academies and proposals for charging.

Resolved:

That Forum noted the report

9. Harmonisation Update

Sue Blevins informed Forum that Harmonisation has been implemented. HR are now working on issues relating to additional leave, payback hours, time owed, protected pay and leavers claims. Full time caretakers have challenged the extra hour from 37 to 36 hours. This will have an additional cost. JE scores and Statements of Particulars will be sent out and the appeals process will be completed with the union by the end of the summer term. The cost so far is £4.7m, but these costs may increase through queries and appeals.

10. Traded Services Update

Steve Dainty outlined the minutes of their previous meeting and some concerns about the membership of the group, as there is no representation from Secondary or Special schools. Steve Peach agreed to approach WASH for secondary representation. Ground maintenance is remaining in-house and the service will continue to be offered to schools.

11. School Finance Regulations 2012 – Summary of Changes

Sue Ashley highlighted the main changes of the regulations for 2012

Resolved:

That the Forum noted the report

12. Scheme for Financing Schools - Update

The Scheme for Financing Schools is currently being consulted with schools, however, some directed scheme revisions have been received from the DfE. Sue Ashley highlighted the revisions as follows:-

- The removal of Best Value and FMSiS
- Removal of the General Teaching Council
- Inclusion of Efficiency and Value for Money
- Inclusion of Schools Financial Value Standard
- Inclusion of the responsibility for Redundancy and Early Retirement Costs

Resolved:

The forum agreed the changes for consultation with schools.

13. Workplan Update

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

14. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 3rd July 2012

Tuesday 25th September 2012