

WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM
25th SEPTEMBER 2012
MINUTES

Present:

R. Longster (Chair)

Schools Group

A. Baird

B. Cummings

P. Dixon

K. Frost

J. Gordon

C. Hughes

L. Ireland

D. Kitchin

M. Kophamel

J. McCallum (substitute)

A. Moore

S. Peach

C. Penn

K. Podmore

G. Pritchard

D. Stenhouse

M. Walker

J. Weise

Non-Schools Group

J. Kenny

D. McDonald

B. McGregor

J. Owens

N. Reilly

In Attendance:

D. Armstrong

P. Ashcroft

S. Ashley

J. Bevan

S. Blevins

C. Chow

Cllr. W Clements

S. Dainty

J. Hassall

A. Houghton

M. Lightburn

A. Roberts

Cllr. P. A. Smith

C. Warburton

S. Allen

Apologies:

M. Brown

E. Cogan

S Davies

S. McNamara

P. Roberts

G. Zsapka

1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Richard Longster was re-elected as Chair of the Schools' Forum and Morag Kophamel was 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 (Jane Gordon confirmed she attended the meeting.)

3. Matters Arising

All matters arising are covered in the agenda.

4. **Final DSG Calculation 2012-13**

Andrew Roberts summarised the report highlighting that the grant for 2012-13 is £227m. This is £1.4m less than expected due to an error in the submission of the Early Years census data. Children and Young Peoples Department (CYPD) has been involved in lengthy correspondence with the Department for Education (DfE) and the Education Funding Agency (EFA). Their view is that mistakes cannot subsequently be corrected.

Discussion is ongoing with the DfE/EFA and the Forum will be informed of the outcome.

Resolved

Forum members noted the report and agreed that the Richard Longster, the Chair, should write to the DfE/EFA on behalf of the Wirral Schools' Forum.

5. **Mainstream School Funding Consultation**

Andrew Roberts presented the responses from the consultation on changes to the local formula for 2013-14.

The Forum supported the following changes to go to Cabinet on 18th October:-

- to use 6 IDACI bands to allocate funding that was previously based on IMD data
- to transfer equivalent funding for scores below 0.2 into Pupil Entitlement
- To use the existing Primary lump sum within the formula for all schools
- To redistribute the remaining secondary lump sum funding over secondary pupil entitlement
- to allocate the historic grant funding in a way that mirrors the current formula, whilst maintaining primary / secondary totals
- to set the MFG for 2013-14 at minus 1.5%
- to include additional funding in the formula using the elements outlined for Advanced Skills Teachers, School Library Service, Insurances, School Milk and Meals, FSM Eligibility, Special Staff Costs (Maternity etc), Schools Contingency, Licences and Subscriptions, Minority Ethnic Achievement, Behaviour Support.
- not to delegate funding for City learning Centres
- an additional formula element for the rent for Church Drive (the building is owned by the diocese)
- a Primary school reception uplift to account for average increases in reception pupil numbers between the October and January census.
- to cap the formula gains (above the MFG) to cover formula issues elsewhere
- not to include a 6th form element in respect of amounts previously distributed through grants.

The decision to delegate/de-delegate additional services to schools was deferred until the January 2013 meeting.

6. **Funding for Pupils with High Needs Consultation**

Paul Ashcroft summarised the responses of the consultation for the funding arrangements for pupils and students with high needs. There will be transitional arrangements for April 2013 with the new funding arrangements taking full effect from April 2014.

The Forum Agreed

- to adopt the principles and approach outlined in the School Funding Reform paper of funding pupils with high needs.
- that the current arrangements for inclusion monies are retained subject to a future review of current projects and initiatives.
- that a working party is set up to develop a local banding model for top-up funding for pupils with high needs.
- that the MFG would be used to construct budgets for specialist provision for the transitional year.
- that local protection may be considered for individual special schools affected by significant turbulence for a number of reasons, e.g. empty places.
- that additional pupils in specialist provision is funded on the basis of high need pupil top-up (rather than the trigger).
- that the current local arrangements for reviewing surplus places are amended to keep all places under review and integrated with EFA arrangements.
- that the exceptional needs budget is placed in the high needs block to honour existing agreements, and in future the monies will be used to fund top-ups.
- that the planned changes to reduce places by five each at Foxfield Secondary Special School and the Lyndale primary Special school should proceed.
- that the Authority move ahead with the increase to the number of places at Gilbrook Primary Special School from 50 to 55 by April 2013.
- that the Authority move ahead with the closure of the Education Inclusion Base at Rock Ferry Primary at the end of the 2013 academic year.
- that the Authority increase the place number at Elleray Park to 80 from April 2013.
- That the sum of £250,000 is delegated to mainstream schools so that Wirral's five units of individually assigned support is increased in value from £5,665 to £6,000.

7. **School Redundancy Numbers and Costs**

Sue Blevins updated the Forum on School redundancies for the academic year 2011-12. The cost of redundancies has reduced compared to the previous academic year. There has been a significant increase in the number of support staff subject to voluntary or compulsory redundancies, whilst there has been a decrease in the number of teachers.

It is anticipated that redundancy costs will rise in the future due to the continued falling rolls in secondary schools, changes to the funding formula for mainstream and 6th forms, flat budgets and changes to curriculum requirements.

Resolved

The forum noted the contents of the report.

8. **School Intervention Budget**

Paul Ashcroft outlined the expenditure and impact of the schools Intervention and School Improvement budgets. The majority of the Primary Intervention budget is

used to support vulnerable schools identified in the LA School Improvement Strategy. Secondary school intervention is split into three streams school improvement support, '100 club' project and raising attainment.

Resolved

The Forum noted the report

9. **Laces Update**

Paul Ashcroft informed the Schools Forum of the statutory duty of the Wirral Looked After Children's Education Service (LACES) to promote the educational achievement of children in care. The educational progress of looked after children is reviewed termly and is updated in the child's Personal Education Plan.

Resolved

The Forum noted the report

10. **Home Education Service**

Paul Ashcroft outlined the service provided by the Home Tutor Service, highlighting the statutory change of provision from 16 to 17 years. He also commented on the changing profile over the years, particularly the increase in students suffering from severe anxiety, depression and chronic fatigue.

Resolved

The Forum noted the report

11. **Funding High Needs Students aged 16-24 Update**

Paul Ashcroft updated the Forum on the changes to funding High Needs students aged 16 – 24 years. Budget pressures will remain in this area when the funds transfer to the LA in 2013-14. The LA is required to provide baseline learner data to the EFA to ensure the final allocation for 2013-14 is accurate for high needs students.

Resolved

The Forum noted the report

12. **Provision of Insurance Services to Schools**

Andrew Roberts summarised the insurance and ancillary services available to schools, highlighting that the overall insurance costs have reduced over the last 3 years as a result of better procurement and claim experience.

The centrally held budget for VA school's governor liability will be delegated to all schools as part of the Funding Formula changes. The representatives on the Forum can agree to de-delegate this budget.

Resolved

The Forum noted the report

13. **Breach of Central Expenditure Limit 2012-13**
Andrew Roberts explained that mainly as a result of academy transfers the central expenditure limit has been breached. The Schools Budget has reduced by 18% and Central Expenditure by 3.1%.

Resolved

The Forum agreed to approve the increase in the Central Expenditure Limit.

14. **Forum Membership Update**
Sue Ashley updated the Forum on the current membership. Four members have been re-elected and there are 6 new members.

Resolved

The Forum noted the changes to the membership.

15. **Forum Training**
Andrew Roberts has agreed to provide two training sessions for Forum members. The first to cover the role of the forum and the second to cover the schools budget and funding formula. Members will be contacted with venue, dates and times shortly.

16. **School Forum Regulations 2012 and Guidance**
These regulations are included for information.

17. **School Finance Regulations 2013**
A summary of the new features in the School Finance Regulations was circulated.

18. **EFA Letter to Forums with Contact Details**
The letter to School Forums identifies our contacts as Liz Butcher and Gavin Monument. Richard Longster, Forum Chair, will invite them to a future meeting.

19. **Workplan**
The dates of future meetings were noted:-
Wednesday 23rd January 2013
Wednesday 10th April 2013
Wednesday 3rd July 2013
Wednesday 2nd October 2013

There is also a reserve meeting for 28th November if required.