

WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM
10th April 2013
MINUTES

Present: R Longster (Chair)

Schools Group

E Cogan	M Kophamel
P Dixon	A Moore
J Gordon	S Peach
C Hughes	C Penn
L Ireland	K Podmore
B Jordan	J Weise
D Kitchin	G Zsapka

Non-Schools Group

S Davies	D McDonald
S Higginson	S McNamara
J Kenny	J Owens
	N Reilly

In Attendance:

D Armstrong	J Hassall
P Ashcroft	C Kerr
S Ashley	M Lightburn
J Bevan	A Roberts
Cllr. W Clements	Phil Sheridan
C Chow	Cllr. S Williams
S Dainty	B Thompson (EFA)
M Ellis	

Apologies:

S Allen	K Frost
M Brown	B McGregor
B Cummings	G Pritchard
	M Walker

1. The chair welcomed Beverley Thompson from the EFA who explained that her role was to observe our meeting.
2. **Training session**
Andrew Roberts and Paul Ashcroft held a training session on SEN Funding for 2013-14
3. **Minutes from the Meeting Held on 23rd January 2013**
The minutes from the meeting were accepted as a true record.

4. Matters Arising

Agenda Paper 12 – a Review of Wirral City Learning Centres (CLCs) was discussed as a matter arising.

Phil Sheridan briefed forum that Secondary Head teachers are concerned that they do not get value for money from the CLCs and have indicated that they would prefer the Secondary School portion of the combined budget delegated from April 2014.

Secondary Schools and Academies have requested a review of the current use of the Wirral City Learning Centres.

Resolved

The Forum agreed that a review of the current use of the Wirral CLCs will be carried out by Phil Sheridan.

5. Adjusted Dedicated Schools Grant 2013-14

Andrew Roberts updated the members on the latest DSG allocation for Wirral which has changed from £234.1m to £175.6m. This amount has been adjusted to take account of

- Academy funding paid directly by the EFA
- An increase in early years funding for 3 and 4 year olds
- Adjustments to the high needs block, such as
 - increased funding for Wirral Hospital School,
 - increased numbers in the pre 16 school base places at Wallasey School and Bebington High School
 - the transfer of funding for resourced base provision at academies
 - the transfer of place funding for non maintained special school to the EFA.

Resolved

The Forum noted the report.

6. Early Years Census

Andrew Roberts informed the Forum that the Early Years Census had taken place. The numbers were 2,936 compared to the budgeted figure of 2936. The funding for early years will not be finalised until after the 2014 census. Additional checks have been put in place to verify early years data before being sent to the DfE.

Resolved

The Forum noted the report.

7. Schools Budget 2013-14 Update

Andrew Roberts updated the Forum on the adjustments to the Schools budgets since the January 2013 meeting. Changes have been made in the following areas and were identified in the table attached to the report:-

- Secondary budget – reduced due to academy schools
- SEN bases - additional SEN places
- Wirral Hospital School – additional funding
- Early Years – funding for Birkenhead Girls High Academy

- Inclusion base places for academies to be funded directly by the EFA
- SEN Top ups for independent schools will now be paid by the LA
- De-delegation of school budgets e.g. contingency and maternity
- 6th form funding allocations
- PFI Affordability Gap - council funded budget increased to take account of December RPI.

An academy representative was concerned that their budget, which had been received from the EFA included a cut of 3.77% and was in excess of and not protected by the MFG.

Resolved

The Forum noted the report

8. Schools Funding Formula

Andrew Roberts provided some comparisons of Wirral funding formula 2013-14 compared to other local authorities (LAs). There was a concern about the Looked after Children amount as it looked low compared to other LAs. It was agreed that this should be taken to the Corporate Parenting Group for further discussion. There was also a request for mobility to be looked at.

The Department's response to the DfE's consultation/review of the 2013-14 was included for information.

Resolved

The Forum noted the report

9. SEN Funding Formula

Paul Ashcroft informed the meeting that the SEN forum working party are developing banding options to fund high needs top ups in schools. These will be discussed at the next Forum before being sent out for consultation.

Resolved

The Forum noted the verbal report

10 Early Years Consultation and Formula

Andrew Roberts reported on an Early Year's Consultation paper from the DfE. Wirral already complies with many of the changes that are being considered. Any further comments can be forwarded to advise in the council's response.

Resolved

The Forum noted the report

11. AST Salary Safeguarding

The AST budget has been delegated to all schools from April 2013. An issue has arisen regarding staff salaries which will have to be protected for 3 years at a cost of £135k. This can be met from AST reserves. AST Staff will return to their

substantive posts. Schools can make arrangements amongst themselves to provide a service using the funding that has now been delegated. The discussion moved to the similarities with Specialist funding.

Resolved

The Forum agreed to use the AST reserve to cover the salary protection costs for the three years from 1st September 2013. However, support would cease where salary protection is no longer required.

12. Traded Services Update

David Armstrong updated the Forum on Traded Services to schools. There are currently 2 groups managing SLAs, the EQ board and the SLA group. The aim is to have one overall group with increased rigour and transparency of funding. Meetings have been held with head teachers to discuss this option and feedback has been positive so far.

Resolved

The verbal report was noted.

13. Draft Consultation for Home to School Transport

A draft copy of the Schools and College Transport Policies paper was briefed by Julia Hassall and Mark Ellis. It describes the three main areas affected by the consultation:-

- Denominational transport
- Children aged 5-16 with special educational needs
- Post 16 transport

The questionnaires will be available online or in paper format.

The Forum agreed that the document was clear. There were queries about the survey being accessible to young people and children in care and signposting it on Team Wirral. There were also a number of concerns about the effect of not providing transport for young people over 16 who have highly complex learning needs and disabilities. Julia was very clear that the questionnaire should reach as many people as possible, particularly the children and young people it affects.

Resolved

The Report was noted.

14. Scheme for Financing Schools

Sue Ashley highlighted the main revisions to the scheme for financing schools which have mainly come about by the recent funding changes. Schools will be consulted prior to approval at the next meeting.

Resolved

The report was noted.

15. Forum Membership Update

Sue Ashley updated the meeting on the current Forum representation, vacancies and future changes.

Resolved

The report was noted

16. Any Other Business

Congratulations to Richard Longster, the chair, who has received a Wirral Award from the Mayor for exceptional contribution made for Services to Education.

Congratulations to Julia Hassall who has been appointed Director of Children's Services.

17. Workplan

The dates of future meetings were noted:-

Wednesday 3rd July 2013

Wednesday 2nd October 2013

January 2014

April 2014