

**WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**13<sup>th</sup> November 2013**  
**MINUTES**

**Present:** Richard Longster (Chair)

**Schools Group**

S Allen	A Moore
E Cogan	S Peach
J Devine	C Penn
W Fairman	K Podmore
K Frost	G Pritchard
C Hughes	M Walker
L Ireland	G Zsapka
D Marchant	

**Non-Schools Group**

S Higginson	J Pierce (Nee Kenny)
B McGregor	N Reilly
S McNamara	

**In Attendance:**

D Armstrong	S Dainty
P Arista	J Hassall
P Ashcroft	K Lloyd
S Ashley	C McGowan
J Bevan	A Roberts
Cllr. W Clements	P Sheridan
C Chow	Cllr P A Smith
	S Talbot

**Apologies:**

M Brown	B Jordan
B Cummings	D McDonald
S Davies	J Owens
J Gordon	P Young

**1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

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

Richard Longster welcomed the new members to the Forum.

**2. Minutes from the Meeting Held on 10<sup>th</sup> April**

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

### 3. Matters Arising

- The proposals from the Transport Consultation were reported to Cabinet on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2013 and revised policies are now being implemented
- Letters have been sent to 15 schools with excess balances and a report will be provided to the next meeting.

### 4. Final DSG 2013-14

Andrew Roberts summarised the report highlighting the changes to the DSG due to academy recoupmnt and direct funding of Academy high needs places.

#### Resolved

Forum noted the report and the submission to the DfE

### 5. Budget Savings

Julia Hassall described the Council's Budget Options in respect of the Children and Young Peoples Department for the period 2014-16, some of which may affect schools:-

- Review of Transport (£100,000)  
A saving of £100,000 is proposed within vehicle depot and maintenance costs. The Forum noted that this option does not impact on arrangements for transporting children to schools.
- Accommodation for 16-17 Year Olds (£300,000)  
The Council plans to provide accommodation for 16/17 year olds at risk of being homeless in a council owned property, instead of spot purchasing places. Overall the provision for young people leaving care will be more cost effective whilst providing better support.
- Working in Partnership with Schools (£1,215,000)  
This option involves working with schools to share costs and resources to deliver a number of services:
  - A reduction in the **School Improvement** programme whilst protecting funding for school intervention and support.
  - A statutory core service for **Education Social Welfare** will be provided with a chargeable traded service offering further support to schools. The Forum requested further details on requirements for the statutory service and implications fro schools.
  - A reduction in **early retirement costs** associated with school staff.
  - The introduction of charges for school **crossing patrols**. The Forum discussed the uneven distribution of crossing patrols, some schools share crossings and others have more than one, these factors will make charges complicated. A flat charge for schools was noted as an option (£4,000 - £5,000 pa). Schools with more than one crossing would consider this fairer to stop excessive costs. The LA does have obligations under the Road Traffic Act to provide road safety. The Forum noted that where crossing patrols are not provided a review would be undertaken to consider any road safety issues or additional measures required, such as pelican crossings.

- Early Intervention to Support Families (£2,250,000)  
This option focuses on providing early targeted support for children to reduce the number of those needing specialist support. It will provide support to enable more children to safely leave care earlier, as some children in Wirral remain in care longer than they should.
- Careers Advice and Guidance (£200,000)  
The Merseyside contract for a CEIAG service is being re-tendered. The new service will start in April 2014. CEIAG will target support for vulnerable young people who are at risk of becoming NEET. The Forum were concerned that the support for statemented pupils and LAC will continue.
- Children's Centres (£2,000,000)  
This proposal will restructure Children's Centres so that services are maintained at four centres in Rock Ferry, Seacombe, Pensby and Bromborough, with reduced services at the other centres. Wirral spends above its statistical neighbours in this area. The Forum noted that savings were made in this area last year, and that this additional amount is a significant sum which may impact on those most in need of services.
- Family Parenting and Youth Commissioning (£500,000)  
There will be a reduction in these services which will be focussed on those children and families with the greatest need.
- Reducing Substance abuse and Teenage Pregnancies (£160,000)  
There will be no loss of service in these areas. These programmes will, in future, be funded by Public Health.

## 6. **Laces Update**

Phil Sheridan updated the Forum on the Looked After Children's Education Service. The team has been restructured and the report highlights their role and statutory functions. The Pupil Premium for Looked After Children will increase to £1900 from April 2014 whilst eligibility will broaden to include those who are adopted or leave care under special guardianship or residence orders.

### Resolved

Forum noted the report

## 7. **Mainstream School Admissions**

Andrew Roberts summarised the work of the Admissions team for admissions to primary and secondary schools. This year there was approximately 7000 applications, with 10% going to appeal. The progress of e-Admissions is good, but there is still some way to go. Changes to selective testing has saved £20,000.

### Resolved

Forum noted the report

8 **City Learning Centres**

Phil Sheridan updated the Forum on the CLC review. A single management board has now been established which is developing a revised business plan and a new staffing structure.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

9 **School Improvement**

Sue Talbot outlined the funding for School Intervention and the impact on school outcomes. Funding for the primary and secondary consultant heads has been important in helping to achieve positive outcomes.

Resolved

1. Forum agreed that the consultant headteachers will prepare an annual report to review and evaluate work streams.
2. Forum agreed to review the funding for the Consultant Headteacher posts every 2 years to determine whether schools want to continue funding them in this way.
3. Forum noted the report

10. **Home Tuition**

Paul Ashcroft briefed forum on the role of the Home Education Teaching service, which is managed by the LA through the headteacher of the Wirral Hospitals School. The budget for this service is £250k but costs may increase with the raising of the school leaving age.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

11. **Funding High Needs Students**

Paul Arista updated the forum on the continued progress of funding high needs students in 2014-15. Pupil forecasts need to be with the EFA by 23<sup>rd</sup> December, however, this will change next year with a move to 'lagged learner' numbers. The FE representative commented that this change does not help them since they work with the LA in advance of children moving into further education.

Resolved

1. Forum noted the report
2. Forum agreed if the analysis indicates numbers are increasing then the LA will submit a bid for additional funding from the EFA

12. **Outcome of High Needs Consultation**

The recommendations in the report were agreed as detailed below:-

1. The timescales and arrangements for the consultation are accepted.

2. A developmental, staged approach to the high needs funding reforms is accepted.
3. The five band model outlined is adopted for special schools. A contingency fund is set aside from unallocated funds in the High Needs Block budget to financially support specialist SEN provision that may experience financial difficulties whilst future options are considered.
4. Termly payments of top-ups are to be made to special schools with the spring/summer top-up to be double the top-up of the autumn term for extra pupils unless agreed otherwise between the authority and school.
5. The inclusion money that all special schools receive totalling £757,874 should be subject to a review of what the money is for and how it is being used and with recommendations for future action.
6. The sports outreach funding received by Clare Mount is reduced by one-third in April 2014.
7. The Local Authority requests the EFA to increase the place number at Elleray Park from 80 to 90.
8. Orrets Meadow to be funded to make available 16 band 2 places. The additional top-up required of £80,000 to be funded from unallocated budget in the High Needs Block.
9. Hayfield to be funded to make 60 band 1 and 60 band 2 places. The top up required of £20,000 to be funded from unallocated budget High Needs Block.
- 9a. Funds are made available for Clare Mount School to offer 8 band 2 places a year, starting in September 2014 for the next 3 years, and reduce the number of band 1 places by the same number over that time. The top up required of £40,000 to be funded from unallocated budget in the High Needs Block.
10. The 5 band model is adopted for Resourced Provision in mainstream schools.
- 10a. Further changes to the continuum of provision for children with a Social Communication/Autistic Spectrum Condition already referred to in recommendations 8, 9 and 9a are to be considered by the policy review that is underway.
11. Top ups to resourced base provision will be made termly
12. Pupils should attend Speech and Language (SALT) bases full-time with an AWPU transfer continuing and the question about whether pupil should have a statement is re-considered in 12 months time.
13. The Local Authority requests the EFA to reduce the place number at UAB from 40 to 30 from September 2014.
14. The present place numbers at Hilbre (15), Bebington (25), Oldershaw (20) and Wallasey (30) resource provisions are now capped and no further growth on the basis of the model which developed them is to occur.
15. The Local Authority requests the EFA to reduce the place number at Townfield Hearing Base from 12 to 10 from September 2014.
16. The SEN Forum Group lead the developments to consider developing the banded approach.
17. St Michaels and Riverside alternative provision to receive a pro rata payment of the full year AWPU as top up and WASP to continue with part payment of AWPU and a top up.
18. Funding agreements and statements of SEN in mainstream will be on the basis of a number of monetary units for additional support.
19. If a mainstream schools contribution to element two exceeds 90% of its notional delegated budget additional funding will be made from unallocated contingency in the High Needs Block.

20. The new element three funding will be paid from the beginning of the financial year for maintained schools and from the beginning of the academic year for academies.
21. Further consultation and development work is needed between FE and 6<sup>th</sup> form colleges in the region and the local authority to agree a way forward for the future.
22. The LA will continue to recoup monies until April 2014 and an offer of a recoupment service is to be developed as part of traded services.
23. The funding and delivery of this service should be reviewed by the local authority and stakeholders the end of the summer term 2014 with a report to Forum for the start of the next academic year.
- 24a. The Forum Finance group's remit is extended to lead on the development of funding bands.
- 24b. The principle of service level agreements with resourced base provisions is adopted.
- 24c. The Assessment Framework for High Needs SEN is reviewed and revised over the academic year.
- 24d. The views and comments of educating institutions in this report together with the agreed recommendations are referred to Cabinet.

During the consultation the EFA confirmed the requirement for an MFG for 2014-15. This was not part of the original consultation, but it will affect the move to a banded structure. Further information was provided to schools asking for comments on 3 options:-

Option 1 – No MFG (requesting an exemption from EFA)

Option 2 – An average MFG

Option 3 – Apply MFG (no exemption)

Most responses support an application to the EFA for exemption from the MFG. The following recommendation was agreed:-

That Forum supports an application to the EFA for an exemption from the requirement to use MFG (option 1) on top ups for 2014-15, and failing that Forum request the EFA agree the use of an average MFG (option 2).

### 13 **Outcome of Early Years Funding Consultation**

Andrew Roberts outlined the responses from the consultation which gave broad support for the recommendations. However, from the 20 responses it was clear that there are issues with settings and providers understanding the formula.

#### Resolved

The recommendations were agreed as detailed below:-

1. There are no changes to the supplements for Deprivation, Flexibility or quality
2. The 3 bands used for deprivation funding will remain
3. The formula cap will cease from 2014-15
4. The nursery school base rate to change from April 2014 to £5.00 with a lump sum of £100,000 per annum
5. The formula is to be reviewed again over the period 2014-16

**14 Outcome of Mainstream Funding Consultation**

Andrew updated the Forum on Cabinet's agreement to change the Local Funding Formula. This was made in accordance with DfE timescales and outcome of the consultation with schools during September. Discussions will continue with schools to clarify their views on proposals to increase the amount allocated to Looked After Children through the formula. In 2014-15 the amount allocated to FSM children in schools will be between £3,300 and £3,700 compared to £2,500 for Looked After Children. (These figures are based on the school funding formula and the pupil premium.

The Forum noted the report.

**15 Draft School Finance Regulations**

The Draft School and Early Years Finance Regulations were included for information. The regulations highlighted a number of changes including an earlier date (28<sup>th</sup> February) for informing mainstream primary and secondary schools of their delegated budget.

**16 Schools Forum: Operational and Good Practice Guide**

This document was provided for information.

**17. Workplan**

The dates of future meetings were noted:-

22<sup>nd</sup> January 2014

2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014

2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014