

WIRRAL SCHOOLS' FORUM

3RD DECEMBER 2014

MINUTES

Present: Richard Longster (Chair)

Schools Group

Councillor W Clements	M Morris
K Frost	M Walker
C Hughes	G Zsapka
L Ireland	M Jackson
D Marchant	K O'Neill-Edwards
B Jordan	A Moore
J Pierce	K Podmore
J Devine	S Davies

Non-Schools Group

Ian Harris

In Attendance:

S Dainty	A Roberts
J Hassall	P Ward
D Armstrong	

Apologies:

C McGowan	B McGregor
J Pearson	D McDonald
P Young	G Pritchard
A Whiteley	E Cogan
S Duggan	B Cummings
S Peach	S McNamara
Cllr P A Smith	

1. Minutes from the Meeting Held on 8th October 2014

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

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

3. PFI and Central Budget Review

Members were updated on proposals to reduce central school budgets by £2.3m following a decision by the council to reduce its contribution to School PFI costs w.e.f 1.4.2015.

Since the last report a working group of the Forum met to consider this item, taking account of comments from Service Managers for School Intervention, City Learning Centres (CLCs), Planned Programmed Maintenance and High Needs. Members have since met in Headteacher Cluster groups and again on 27th November. Whilst there was some agreement to proposals at this meeting, there was also discussion about any other alternatives and the use of reserves. There was, however, no clear view in the group about any alternative proposals.

The Forum's view on each item proposed in the report was as follows:

Admissions £23,600 – no comment

School Closure/Retirement £200,000 – no comment

School Sports Co-ordinator £25,000 – Members would like further details describing how this money is currently spent.

School Intervention £180,000 – this is a service valued by all school representatives on the Forum. Members requested that school intervention is not cut any further, commenting that other areas should be considered instead.

CLCs £120,000 – the secondary representative commented that the CLCs should close, whilst primary members supported giving the CLCs another year to restructure. The proposal to transfer £120,000 funding into the Capital Programme was agreed.

LACES £45,000 – no comment.

Clinical waste £11,600 and swimming baths £19,800 – no comment.

PPM £200,000 – no comment.

Insurance £25,000 – no comment.

SEN Top Ups £600,000 – The Special Schools' Member commented that there were serious concerns regarding this proposal, that the current budgets in special schools were insufficient to meet the needs of the SEN population and top up rates fall below neighbouring authorities. This contingency should be used for the purposes intended and to meet the growing pressure from increasing costs and complexity of pupils.

Members subsequently discussed the overall level of the High Needs Budget in relation to funding received from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and the background to the High Needs contingency. It was agreed that this area would be reconsidered alongside any alternatives.

Resolved

The Forum Working Party would reconvene prior to the main budget meeting to consider proposals and any alternatives for:

School Intervention
School Sports Co-ordination
SEN Top Ups

4. Consultation in the Local Funding Formula

Schools have been consulted on some minor changes to the Local Funding Formula:-

- To increase funding for Looked After Children
- To cap increases in the unit rate used for deprivation
- To amend the Top Up funding for Alternative Provision

The consultation ran for 4 weeks and closed on 21st November. There has been only a limited response.

Resolved

That the consultation is extended until the end of term and reported to the next meeting.

5. Any other Business

No other business was reported. The meeting closed.

The Forum Working Party will meet on 6th January 2015 at 1.30 pm at Birkenhead Town Hall.

The Schools' Forum Budget meeting is on 14th January 2015 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Wallasey Town Hall