

WIRRAL SCHOOLS' FORUM

29th April 2015

MINUTES

Present: Richard Longster (Chair)

Schools Group

L Ayling	J Pearson
E Cogan	G Pritchard
K Frost	M Walker
L Ireland	L Wheatley
B Jordan	A Whiteley
S McNamara	P Young
A Moore	G Zsapka
M Morris	A Davies

Non-Schools Group

S Davies	N Prance
I Harris	D Stenhouse
B McGregor	

In Attendance:

S Ashley	C McGowan
J Bevan	I McGrady
C Chow	Cllr B Mooney
Cllr W Clements	T Ramzy
S Dainty	A Roberts
D Fitzpatrick	Cllr P A Smith
S Gibbs	A Turnbull
J Hassall	P Ward

Apologies:

B Cummings	S Duggan
J Devine	K Podmore
C Hughes	J Pierce
D Marchant	S Higginson

1. Minutes from the Meeting held on 14th January 2015

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

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

3. School Traded Services – Verbal Report

Ian McGrady, the Managing Director of the new company for schools traded services in Wirral and Cheshire West and Chester, gave a verbal report about the progress in setting up the company so far.

He stated that the mission of the company will be to support outcomes for children, with a number of core principles including customer focus, innovation and a best value guarantee. Currently all Traded Services (for Wirral this means school meals, school music, outdoor education and EQ) are being reviewed. Meetings are being held with staff transferring over. There will be a company launch event in June, it is expected that services will move into the new company in September.

4. Schools Budget Update

Andrew Roberts updated the Forum on the changes to the Schools Budget for 2015-16 since the last meeting:-

- Primary budget has been reduced to take account of de-delegation and 2 primary academies - £3.9m
- Secondary Schools reduced for de-delegation and for 15 Secondary academies - £64m
- Special School places – an adjustment of £1.1m for 6th form places paid by the EFA.
- Early years increase in 3 and 4yr old funding - £0.3m
- High needs reduction of £0.1m - representing a reduction of places at Birkenhead Park School, places taken at Everton Free School and changes to place funding in Non Maintained Schools.
- The overall school budget has reduced from £243m to £173m.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

5. Schools Budget Monitoring

Andrew Roberts informed the group that there was an anticipated underspend of £400k in School Budgets for the 2014-15 financial year and the main reason for this. Forum members requested further information on what is covered in the trade union facilities time, as follows:-

- what are the costs and what does this cover
- volume of work

Resolved

- Forum noted the report
- Forum members agreed that the £23,300 underspend for trade union facilities time should remain generally within the schools budget.

6. Alternative Provision Consultation with Schools

Phil Ward updated Forum on the outcome of a consultation on Alternative Education Provision (AEP) in Wirral. Three options were considered in this consultation paper. Schools and providers expressed a preference for model A which is now being taken forward. This model will develop the Pupil Referral Unit as a central hub for AP. Discussions will continue with the Sefton Education Trust, two secondary Head teachers and the LA's lead for SEN to develop the Trust's future role as commissioner and provider of AEP for KS3 and KS4.

Resolved

- Forum noted the report
- To consider progress at future meetings.

7. School Admissions

Sally Gibb summarised the work of the Admissions team for admission to primary and secondary schools. There were 7,500 applications for entry in September 2014 and 2,000 in year transfers between schools. The team has seen significant progress in the use of on-line applications, through e-Admissions 62% of applications are processed in this way.

The Admissions team's budget has reduced by £23,600 in 2015-16 to £341,800.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

8. High Needs Funding Review

Phil Ward informed the Forum of the review of the high needs formula during the summer term. A consultant is undertaking a review of funding bands for Special Schools and Bases, Early Years, post 16 and unit value in schools. A number of specific areas would also be examined including the use of double top ups and the LCHI notional budget threshold of 90%.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

9. MEAS Update

Anna Turnbull outlined the MEAS offer to schools for 2014-5. MEAS services include assessment, advice and support for children who are learning English as an additional language (EAL), awareness training by specialist staff and bespoke support for schools. There were a total of 105 schools supported between September 14 and April 15.

Tuyet Ramzy highlighted the MEAS priorities for 2014-15 ranging from supporting pupils at all school stages to developing the skills of the MEAS staff to prepare pupils for modern day Britain. MEAS is funded by de-delegation from primary and secondary maintained schools and buyback from some special schools and academies.

The importance of introducing children and their parent to a wide range of different religions was highlighted.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

10. Special Schools JE Appeals

Andrew Roberts informed the group that the Teaching Assistant appeals following Job Evaluation in special schools have now been settled and paid. Back dated costs will be dealt with as described previously. However schools will need to make provision for ongoing costs.

JE costs in respect of support staff graded scp33 and above are still to be reviewed.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

11. Transfer of Teacher Employment Rights (Referral form JCC)

This paper highlights that there is no contractual provision for teacher's rights, such as maternity and redundancy, to be transferred from academies to maintained schools in the same way as there is for support staff. School and Academy members agreed that this was discriminatory and all staff should be treated the same.

Resolved

Forum agreed to report back to the JCC that they supported a local agreement whereby teachers should also keep their employment rights when they return to a maintained school.

12. Benchmarking of School Funding Formula

Colin Chow advised the forum that in general Wirral's distribution of the Schools Block follows the general trend of other local authorities.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

13. Workplan

The workplan was provided for information.

The date of the next meeting has changed to 15th July 2015.

14. Any Other Business

There was no other business.