

WIRRAL SCHOOLS' FORUM

6th November 2019

MINUTES

Present: Adrian Whiteley (Chair)

Schools Group

L Ayling	T Kelly
M Bellamy	N Lightwing
R Bridges	M Morris
J Bush	Cllr Norbury
L Davidson	T Taylor
M Forber	N Turner (Deputy)
G Fraser	J Weise
H Johnson	R Wood

Non-Schools Group

S Bennett	N Prance
S Davies	A Ryecroft
G Edwards	

In Attendance:

S Allen	T Ghosh
S Ashley	M Gotts
A Davies	S Talbot

Apologies:

K Brown	E Morris
E Longbone	E Neal
R Mahoney	D Spencer

1. Minutes from the Meeting held on 25th September 2019

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

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. SEND and Inclusion Update

Tarun Ghosh informed Forum that the High Needs working group met with the Premier Advisory Group (PAG) who outlined their report on the SEND review. PAG are running a workshop for elected members on 26th November. They are also trying to meet with parents through the Parent Care Participation Wirral. Forum expressed its' concerns about the quality of the report and about the recommendations that appear to be driven by finance rather than need. Forum members request that a meeting is organised between the report authors and the High Needs working group before the report is discussed with cabinet members, they do not feel that at this time, the report accurately represents the needs of the sector.

Resolved

Forum noted the report.

4. School Funding Formula Consultation

Shaun Allen updated Forum on the process and outcomes of the Schools' funding formula consultation. He met with Primary Heads Group and WASH to explain the consultation, and attendance at these meetings was extended to all headteachers. Due to lack of information from the DfE at the time of completing the census school level information could not be provided. This is the likely cause of the lower response rate as the consultation was sent out to all Headteacher and School Office e-mail addresses, as well as being loaded onto WESCOM, and reminders were sent closer to the closing date.

Some members were concerned that some schools completed the consultation but were not on the list. Some responses came through without a school name and were marked as "other" in the report.

Since the consultation was sent out the DfE have confirmed that the key factors in the National Funding Formula will increase by 4%, including lump sum, but excluding FSM in respect of funding passed to the LA, so for Wirral this is reflected by a 3.4% increase on 19-20 funding.

The outcome and recommendations of the consultation is as follows:-

- Recommendation 1 is to adopt the individual factor rates from the National Funding Formula (NFF) as 74% of consultation feedback supported this option.
- Recommendation 2 is to apply a +0.5% Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) to the formula as 69% of the consultation feedback preferred this option.
- Recommendation 3 is to include headroom in the formula to reduce any capping for NFF option or to increase all formula factors if the Wirral

formula option and any remaining funding be split between a falling roll and a growth fund.

There were no views or comments from Forum members concerning these recommendations.

Resolved

1. Forum noted the report.
2. Forum members agreed favourably with the proposal to adopt option 2, the individual factor rates of the NFF in Wirral's school funding formula in 2021.
3. Forum members agreed favourably with the proposal to include a +0.5% MFG within Wirral's funding formula.
4. Forum members agreed favourably with the proposal to include all funding received in the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant within the funding formula by minimising the cap applied to the highest gaining schools should the NFF option be adopted and that any remaining funding be split between a falling rolls fund and a growth fund to be accessed by schools meeting specific criteria to be agreed.

5. Budget monitoring 2019-20 Update

Shaun Allen updated forum on the Schools budget position, which is a slightly higher overspend than the previous report. The following changes were highlighted: -

- An estimated 60k overspend on special staff costs due to an increase in primary maternity cases. A request to increase de-delegation may be required in January if this continues to spend at the current rate.
- There continues to be a significant overspend on SEN top-ups
- Independent Special Schools deficit continues to rise.

These changes will assume a deficit at the end of the financial year of approximately £1.8m.

Resolved

Forum noted the report.

6. Insurances, Staff Costs and Contingency

Shaun Allen outlined the purpose and use of Contingency, Special Staff costs and Insurance budgets. These budgets are currently de-delegated.

Resolved

Forum noted the report.

7. Schools Forum Membership

Sue Ashley updated Forum on the current membership of the Forum. There are still 2 vacancies that have been vacant for some time. The members whose term of office has finished has agreed to continue until new reps come forward. A full list of the membership was included for reference.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

8. Workplan

The workplan was provided for information.

The dates of the meetings for the 2019-20 academic year, which will be held in Council Chamber at Wallasey Town Hall

Wednesday 15th January 2020

Wednesday 13th May 2020

Wednesday 1st July 2020

An extraordinary High Needs Working Group Meeting will be set up with the Premier Advisory Group so questions and issues can be raised before the meeting with councillors.

9. Any Other Business

The Chair thanked Shaun Allen for his hard work and support over the last couple of years.

There was no other business.