

WIRRAL SCHOOLS' FORUM

11th May 2021

MINUTES

Present: Adrian Whiteley (Chair)

Schools Group

L Ayling	H Johnson
M Bellamy	J Merry
J Bush	E Morris
L Davidson	M Morris
G Edwards	Cllr Norbury
S Elliot	A Ramsden
G Fraser	J Weise
S Goodwin	R Wood
E Johnson (substitute)	

Non-Schools Group

S Davies	A Rycroft
N Prance	G Harris
S Ralph	

In Attendance:

S Ashley	Cllr Cannon
J Backhouse	T Ghosh
Cllr Clements	J Hudson
A Dollard	S Robinson
C Fenlon	C Thomson
K Frost	

Apologies:

D Spencer	S White
K Takashima	M Williams

1. Protocols of the Virtual meeting

- This is a public meeting
- The meeting is recorded for minute taking purposes only
- Remain on mute unless requested to speak
- Raise 'hand' to ask a question, or ask a question in the chat section
- Use Chat to vote as not everyone has the hand symbol.

2. Minutes from the Meeting held on 19th January 2021

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

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Home and Continuing Education Service (HCES) – Review of Charging Policy

Julie Hudson updated the Forum on this alternative provision provided to secondary schools for children who cannot attend school for physical or mental health reasons. Although the pandemic has led to fewer referrals more older pupils are receiving support from the service.

The following changes to the charging policy from April 2021 are required to offset the cost of the service, which overspent in 2020-21:-

- An increase of weekly charge from £80 to £125 (chargeable after first 12 weeks)
- The charge for Yr 11 pupils will remain the same, at the AWPU rate, but where these pupils trigger Pupil Premium, it is requested that schools also transfer this amount to the HCES.

Resolved

Forum noted the report and the increase in charges from 1st April 2021.

5. Early Years Working Group Update

Carol Fenlon briefed Forum on the recent discussions of the Early Years Working Group:-

- The request to carry forward, in principle, underspends in the following areas to 2021-22 financial year:-
 - Central costs of £62,087, due to vacant posts now filled.
 - Early Years Funding element of £182,963 for a number of identified activities to be carried out in 2021-22 (section 3.1)
 - Continue to ringfence Disability Access Fund (DAF) underspend of £45,350 to support discretionary application processes in 2021-22
- Promotion of the 2 year old offer is currently taking place as this sector is taking longer to return to pre-covid levels than the 3&4 year old offer.
- There is an increase in the number of children in need of additional support.
- An additional census in Summer 2021 will be used to calculate the 2021-22 Early Years Funding.

It was noted that there is a great deal of ongoing work within early years to support the increasing number of children with additional needs and SEND. The aim of the Early Years team is to focus on inclusion in mainstream settings, where more staff who have been upskilled to provide support.

Resolved

- Forum members agreed to carry forward underspend of £245,050, in principle, for central costs (section 2.2) and EY funding element (section 3.1)

- Forum members agreed to carry forward, protect and ringfence the DAF underspend of £45,350.
- The report was noted

6. De-delegation – School Improvement / Behaviour Support

This report was brought to this forum meeting to provide members with an update of services provided from the de-delegated funds for School Improvement and Behaviour Support and the impact of each service.

Anna Dollard provided Forum Members with a clear outline of the Inclusion Strategy Manager's (ISM) role funded through de-delegated Behaviour Support, particularly concerning support to schools where pupils are at risk from permanent exclusion. The ISM works with colleagues in schools to reduce the number of exclusions and to support an inclusive ethos in the borough. Early intervention processes have been put in place to ensure poor behaviour is identified and managed at an earlier stage. There has been collaboration with University of Chester to provide a package of support and training to Wirral Schools to support staff in the area of trauma and attachment.

James Backhouse briefed Forum on the School Improvement service. The statutory duties for school improvement and the staff required to carry out those duties are identified in the report, along with how funds should be used to support school Improvement in Maintained Schools provided through the de-delegated funding and the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokerage Grant. The De-delegated funds requested will be used to: -

- Co-ordinate further CDP for all maintained schools, for this and next academic year, as schools recover from Covid-19
- CDP support for maintained secondary schools in problem solving and maths.
- To support maintained schools in a requires improvement category to move into good or outstanding.

The intended impact would raise attainment in all maintained schools.

Moving forward a clear strategy will be provided for a Behaviour Support and School Improvement offer for maintained schools and how this can be accessed through de-delegated funds. Where academies want access to this service it will be chargeable as they receive this funding directly from the ESFA.

In addition, the service is liaising with school leaders in maintained schools to identify specific needs and support required from the effects of the pandemic. The staffing structures for both services will be reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of the schools.

De-delegated amounts identified in the De-delegation of School budgets Report from the January 2021 Schools Forum meeting:-

	Full 12 months	5/12th de-delegated	7/12th to be charged
Primary Behaviour Support	£107,483	£44,785	£62,698
Primary School Improvement	£122,908	£51,212	£71,696
Secondary Behaviour Support	£31,799	£13,250	£18,549
Secondary School Improvement	£26,690	£11,121	£15,569

If the Forum members agree to contribute the 7/12th of Behaviour Support and School Improvement, schools will be informed of their individual amounts before charges are made against their budgets.

Resolved

- Forum Primary representatives agreed to contribute to the remaining 7/12th funding from school budgets for:
 - Behaviour Support
 - School Improvement
- The Forum Secondary representative agreed to contribute to the remaining 7/12th funding from school budgets for:
 - Behaviour Support
 - School Improvement
- Forum noted the report.

7. DSG Management Plan

James Backhouse updated Forum on the progress of the Dedicated School Grant (DSG) Management Plan to date and how it will move forward. The Co-production part of the plan was delayed to ensure best channels of communication and participation, to be completed by 18th May.

The timetable included in

There is a table of dates within the report (included in Section 20) which highlights the steps of process, with a view to completing the action plan by 9th May.

Resolved

Forum noted the draft DSG Management Plan

8. Schools Budget Provisional Outturn 2020-21

Christine Thomson outlined the year end position for the 2020-21 Schools Budget which is still subject to audit and is therefore provisional.

There is an in year overspend of £414k, with an overall deficit balance of £1.678k to be carried forward to 2021-22 financial year. This is an improvement from the January prediction.

Resolved

Forum noted the report and views from members

9. School Budget Update 2021-22

Christine Thomson outlined the Schools Budget for 2021-22 highlighting the changes since the previous meeting:-

- Academy Recoupment has reduced the Individual Schools Budget and DSG by £112m.
- De-delegation has transferred £1.5m to de-delegated block
- Falling Rolls/Growth Fund of £152,900 has been established after the NFF for 2021-22 has been applied.
- Re-allocation of TPG & TPECG between HCES and Support for SEN.

These changes are identified in appendix 1 the report.

It was noted that the falling rolls/growth fund is significantly lower than last year. It was agreed that a paper should be tabled at the June meeting to review last year's criteria against the 2021-22 fund amount, with alternative applications to be provided for discussion.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

10. School Balances as at 31/03/2021 and Deficit Budgets Review

Sue Ashley confirmed that the school balances as at 31st March 2021 were £13.5m, an increase of £5.6m since last year.

The number of schools ending this financial year with a deficit has reduced from 21 in 2019-20 to 11 this year. The LA will continue to work with schools to reduce deficit balances.

Due to the significant increase in balances a summary of income and expenditure was provided to identify where the main changes had occurred since 2019-20. This identified where changes in income and expenditure were related to Covid, or due to other factors.

Resolved

Forum Noted the Report

11. Changes to Schools Forum Operational and Good Practice Guidance

A copy of the revised Schools Forum Operational and Good Practice Guidance in March 2021 was provided.

The only change to the document was to make a permanent provision to enable Schools Forum meetings to be held remotely.

Forum Members will be written to shortly for their views on how future meetings will be held. The outcome will be presented to the June Meeting.

Resolved

Forum noted the Report

12. Workplan

The workplan was provided for information.

Tuesday 29th June 2021

Dates for the new academic year will be provided at the next meeting

13. Any Other Business

There was no other business.