

WIRRAL SCHOOLS' FORUM

28th September 2021

MINUTES

Present: Adrian Whiteley (Chair)

Schools Group

L Ayling	J McDonald
M Bellamy	J Merry
J Bush	M Morris
L Davidson	S Ralph
G Fraser	A Ramsden
S Goodwin	C Scott
E Johnson	J Weise
H Johnson	R Wood
M Loftus	

Non-Schools Group

S Davies	B McGregor
G Harris	N Prance
	A Rycroft

In Attendance:

S Ashley	C Fenlon
J Backhouse	K Frost
K Bird	S Robinson
S Blevins	C Thomson
CLlr Clements	S White

Apologies:

None	
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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. Election of Chair

Adrian Whitely was elected as Chair for the 2021-22 academic year. The vice chair will be appointed at the November meeting.

3. Minutes from the Meeting held on 29th June 2021

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

4. Matters Arising

Meeting dates have changed as follows: -

- 23rd November 2021 meeting has been moved to 30th November 2021.
- 31st May 2022 meeting has moved to 14th June 2022.

5. Early Years Working Group Update

Carol Fenlon updated Forum on the Early Years Working Group and service updates. The main points are: -

- The DfE will provide more information to identify eligible 2 year olds to improve uptake
- There is not a sufficiency issue in Wirral for places.
- Early identification of SEND pupils in early year settings is putting pressure on the Inclusive Practice Fund. This is being closely monitored.
- Recruitment and retention of staff in the Early Years Sector is an issue, and the Early Years Team are keen to work with secondary schools to promote Early Years as a career. A link will be provided for schools to register their interest.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

6. High Needs Places

James Backhouse briefed the Forum on place change requests from Clare Mount Specialist Sports College and Elleray Park School. They have taken in pupils over their Pupil admission numbers (PAN) for several years. This report requests the increase of their PAN as follows: -

- Clare Mount Specialist Sports College from 226 to 249
- Elleray Park school from 151 to 187

These increased places have been budgeted for in this financial year and future years and are considered to be a substantive change to each schools' PAN.

There will also be a wider piece of work around SEND sufficiency in Wirral, to take account of early identification in Early Years settings, with those pupils moving through the school system. Work has already started on this with a paper being presented to Forum later in the academic year.

Resolved

- Forum members agreed to increase Clare Mount Specialist Sports College places from 226 to 249, from September 2021
- Forum members agreed to increase Elleray Park School places from 151 to 187, from September 2021
- Forum notes that the additional places will be included in the High Needs place change notification process in November 2021.

7. Budget Monitoring 2021-22 Quarter 2 Update

Christine Thomson informed Forum that the final Early Years position for 2020-21 has still not been confirmed by the DfE, so the Early Years underspend cannot yet be finalised. The 2021-22 budget forecast position is an overspend of £1.7m mainly in the high needs area. This has increased by £500k since the June 21 meeting.

Resolved

Forum noted the report and the forecast financial position of the Schools Budget for 2021-22 and the action to communicate the 2020-21 final Early Years allocation by e-mail.

8. Funding Allocations and Formula Consultation for 2022-23

Christine Thomson updated Forum on the provisional funding for 2022-23 and the National Funding Formula Funding (NFF) factor increases.

The Schools block has an overall increase of 2.57% and as Wirral have adopted the NFF the consultation on the formula will only ask for views on: -

- 3 levels of MFG between the DfE parameters of +0.5% and +2%.
- Views on the usage of any funding left after the MFG has been applied.

As part of the consultation schools will receive indicative school level information concerning the impact of each MFG level. It will run from 1st October to 22nd October 2021 and the outcome will be reported at the November Schools' Forum.

The High Needs block has an increase of 7.43%, but this does not keep pace with the increase in spend over the last 5 years.

The central services block will reduce by 1.64% due to a reduction in funding in respect of historic commitments.

Consideration needs to be given to modelling budgets for more than one year future years to provide some stability and guidance. This would be based on assumptions as funding information is not provided for future years.

Resolved

- Forum noted the report and the plan to report the outcome of the consultation at the November Meeting.
- Forum notes the change of the timing of the development plans for the falling rolls and growth fund.

9. School Balances Update

Sue Ashley updated Forum on the balances and projections based on budget setting. The projections at this time tend to be pessimistic, so the expectation is that they will improve as we move through the Financial Year. Table 1 shows that the balances will continue to reduce if no action is taken, but the position is better than previously projected due to the increase in balances as at 31st March

2021. School staff continue to monitor budgets closely to ensure they are robust with support from the LA.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

10. Schools Forum Membership Update

Sue Ashley informed the group of the current Forum Membership and changes since the last meeting. There continues to be academy vacancies and further requests for members will be sent out. The PVI vacancy has been filled since the meeting.

Resolved

Forum noted the report

11. Workplan

The workplan was provided for information, and the date changes are for the next academic year are as follows, taking account of the changes noted in matters arising: -

Tuesday 30th November 2021 – (Virtual Meeting)

Tuesday 18th January 2022

Tuesday 14th June 2022

Venues for face to face meetings will be identified and brought to the next meeting for consideration.

A High Needs Working Group meeting will be held before the next Forum Meeting.

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business.