

DARLINGTON SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF MEETING TUESDAY 6TH MARCH 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT:

D Judson (Swift Academies (In the Chair)) P King (The Federation of Mowden Schools); P Ayto (Reid Street Primary); M Butler (Education Village); M Charlton (Whinfield Primary); J Moorhouse (Carmel College); E Hickerson (Rise Carr College); M Fryer (Hummersknott Academy); P Stephenson (St Aidans CE Academy); K A Lyle (Rydal Academy); K Reid (Polam Hall School); C Large (St Johns CE Diocese); A Williams (St Georges C of E Academy); P Richardson (Head of 16-19); E Calvert (William House)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

B Nielsen (Finance Manager); T Murphy (Head of Education & Inclusion); E Marshall (School Forum Monitoring and Support Officer); E Sayers (Finance Officer); S Lewington (Clerk)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Hughes (Lead Member Children and Young People);

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

D. Vizzard (St George's Academy); S Crowther (Mt Pleasant Primary); M Regan (Carmel College); M Shorton (Carmel College)

1. Welcome, Introduction & Apologies **Register/Declaration of business interests**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and a round of introductions took place.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes (previously circulated) of the Schools Forum meeting held 16th January 2018 were agreed as a true record.

It was mentioned that the school funding formula that had been submitted on 26th January has been approved.

Further to the January meeting the budget reduction at High Coniscliffe School had been investigated but no solution had been found within the regulations to allocate additional funding.

Further to the January meeting, discussion had been held with maintained schools regarding de-delegation for Local Authority services. The result of this was that no funding will be de-delegated from mainstream schools in 2018/19.

3. School Forum Membership

Forum members were reminded that each position can have a nominated substitute that can attend and vote in their absence. There are a number of vacancies in the formal School Forum membership for deputies at present. Members were asked to send through their nominated deputy to update the Forum membership.

Councillor Hughes reminded Forum that as a councillor is not eligible to cast a vote but provides a reporting communication back to Cabinet from Schools Forum.

4. Budget Update 2017/18

Forum referred to a previously circulated report.

The Budget Manager confirmed that as expected there has been a further deterioration in the budget since Forum's last update in January.

Pressures on the high needs budget has resulted in a further increase in overspend of £229K. This increase reflects the additional pupils placed during the autumn term.

High needs pressures will be ongoing in 2018/19.

It's expected that there will be underspend in the Early Years budget at the year end, however, it is estimated that around £200K will be recouped by ESFA, therefore the true underspend will be nearer £80k.

Forum noted the contents of the report.

5. Transforming Children & Young People's Health Provisions – Green Paper Consultation

Forum referred to a previously circulated paper.

The School's Forum Officer pointed out that the joint consultation between the Department for Health and the Department for Education has now closed. The findings of the consultation will be published in due course. The SF Officer and CCG commissioning lead worked on a joint response to the consultation and the key points for this response are noted within the paper. The SF Officer was able to present this response for schools comment at the 11-19 Executive partnership, however, as the Primary Forum meeting was cancelled the consultation response was circulated via Base Camp.

The key points from the consultation were:

- It is expected that all schools and colleges will identify and train a designated lead for mental health. It is envisaged that this will prove to be a positive role and can make a big difference to the lives of young people. The local area response was for this role to be made a statutory role for schools.
- It is recognised that the Designated Leaders undertaking these positions will need to up-skill and will require high quality training
- The authority would like to become a trailblazer in 2020 for this rollout.

It was asked if this is just going to be another pressure on schools without the backing of extra funding to cover the duties. This was covered in the local area joint response.

6. High Needs Update (Verbal)

Forum were provided with a verbal update and discussed the high needs review. The main points brought up were:-

There are 21 separate bands of funding. This system needs to be simplified and reduced to a more manageable number (10 bands being more acceptable).

Work is ongoing to define element ranges around need, these will identify the levels of need, working in partnership with schools about how needs are supported.

In the next couple of weeks the current plans will be matched to the new ranges to provide a baseline for the proposed ranges system.

There are going to be a number of moderation exercises undertaken during March which should provide data to show the impacts of the ranges system by the end of March.

A follow up high needs session will be held 28th March to which all schools will be invited. It is proposed that at this session colleagues will be presented with the financial impact on a school by school basis.

Work has also been ongoing with regard to transport, which is significantly impacted by high needs provision. There has already been internal briefings on transport but as yet this work is not yet ready to be shared with Forum. Forum will be updated as soon as this work is complete.

All services funded by the high needs budget are being reviewed. All high needs work is being communicated to ensure it is transparent.

Forum members fed back that they need to be able to see hard figures by the end of March to assist schools with budget planning.

7. Proposed Early Years Funding Formula 2018/19

Forum referred to a previously circulated report.

The Finance Manager referred to paragraph 3 confirming that there has been no change in the funding rates from Government, therefore the rates for 2018/19 will remain the same as reported to Forum in January.

Currently the budget position is around £80K in underspend but this is based on estimates so at this stage it is prudent not to increase to the hourly rates in 2018/19.

The SEN inclusion fund is projected to be overspent in 2017/18. No additional funding will be allocated to this fund in 2018/19 as this would have required a reduction in hourly rates. The criteria with regard to the SEN inclusion fund will be reviewed for 2018/19.

Forum noted the contents of the report.

8. Union Facilities Time

Forum were notified that the current procedures with regard to union facility time had not been reviewed for many years. A tidy up of the current procedures had therefore been undertaken and was presented to Forum.

Forum members fed back that there needs to be more detailed clarification of what can and can't be claimed for.

Forum agreed to the recommendation at paragraph 11.

9. Any Other Business

The Council were thanked for reinstating the early notification phone call system during bad weather and were told it worked brilliantly.

Date/Time/Location of next meeting

22nd May 2018, 2pm Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Darlington