

DARLINGTON SCHOOLS FORUM

6th March 2018

MINUTES OF DARLINGTON SCHOOL FORUM 16TH JANUARY 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT:

D Judson (Hurworth School) (Chair); P King (The Federation of Mowden Schools); L Hunter (Carmel College); M Butler (Education Village); M Charlton (Whinfield Primary); D Leane (Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle); S Garthwaite (St Aidan's CE Academy); D Vizzard (St George's Academy); K Reid (Polam Hall School); M Taylor (St Bede's RC Primary School); C Large (Diocese of Durham & Newcastle); K Chisholm (Skerne Park Academy); M Mills (Rise Carr College), KA Lyle (Rydal Academy), E Calvert (William House)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

T Murphy (Head of Education); B Nielsen (Finance Manager); E Marshall (School Forum Monitoring and Support Officer); E Sayers (Finance Officer).

APOLOGIES

S Welsh (Whinfield Primary School); J Thompson (Borough Rd Nursery School) ; J Moorhouse (Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle); M Fryer (Hummersknott Academy); Councillor Cyndi Hughes (Lead member Children and Young People), P Ayto (Reid Street Primary), E Hickerson (Rise Carr College), N Gibbon (St Aidan's CE Academy), M Shorten (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 and no matters arising.

2. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes (previously circulated) of the Schools Forum meeting held on 10th October were agreed as a true record.

3. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes (previously circulated) of the Special Schools Forum meeting held on 21st November were agreed as a true record.

4. Budget Update 2017/18

Forum referred to a previously circulated report the purpose of which was to update Forum on the current 2017/18 budget.

Forum discussed the figures within the report as the overspend is now projected to be in excess of £1m, the main points were as follows:

- It is likely that the overspend will increase as all pupils requiring additional support or specialist placements in the autumn and spring terms are not included in the latest projection.
- The majority of the overspend is from high needs budget pressures. This overspend will be carried forward and will impact on the 2018/19 budget.
- Mainstream school top ups projected pressure has increased by £72,000 on that reported in October. The reason for the increase is additional assessments carried out during the autumn term.
- High Needs Contingency expected to be overspent by an additional £137,000. The reason being a number of placements have continued throughout the autumn term which previously were expected to finish earlier in the term.
- LAPP budgets projected to be underspent by £75,000 due to a project not happening this financial year. It was mentioned that there will be calls on this budget during the spring term, hence the projected £75,000 underspend will not fully accrue.

School Forum noted the current budget position.

5. School Forum Officer Work Update

Forum referred to a previously circulated report. The purpose of which was to update Forum on the review of services.

The Schools Forum Officer briefed Forum on the following points,

- The commissioned places at the Resource Base Units at the start of the spring term.
- Applications for resource bases will not be accepted without professional support.
- Service level agreements have been sent out to schools for the Future in Mind Projects. The Future in Mind plan has been updated and available on the Darlington website.
- The Mindful Schools programme has now concluded and schools have been provided with evaluation tools.
- The SF Officer has commenced project management of the high needs review. This includes development of a communications plan and involvement of schools in consultation.

School Forum noted the content of the report.

6. High Needs Update (Verbal)

The Head of Education gave an update to Forum members on the progress that has been made with regard to the review of the high needs/SEN so far. Within the next two Forum meetings a longer term strategy for Darlington will be established. Key points raised/discussed were as follows,

- Identification of SEN at early years level
- Work with schools and other services – 0 to 25
- Partnership training early in life particularly transition points
- Start school age preparation for adulthood (Year 10) to encourage independent travel – working with colleagues
- A robust availability of data – not enough presently
- Identify capital assets we have in town – buildings not been used
- Behaviour and attendance review (to end this month)
- Statutory SEN work
- Panels
- Subject to Ofsted inspection

Actions underway/timetable for delivery/planned outcomes:

- SF Officer to project manage the high needs review.
- An SEN specialist Anne Hayward has been appointed to provide assistance.
- An event is to be held on the 22nd February and representation from all schools will be welcome to share thoughts and look at models.
- Updates will be available at next Forum on the 6th March and it is planned to have a fully costed model for the Forum on the 22nd May. (Consultations from February to May to look at all models)
- Look at out of borough, post 16 costs and look at national comparatives.
- Mapping on individual schools – top ups at primary level and lump sums.
- Involve parents, carers and young people, other sectors
- To have a consistent formula.
- Communication – are schools aware of the complex needs panel at the LA?

7. School Funding Formula 2018/19 & Growth Fund 2018/19

Forum referred to a previously circulated report the purpose of which was to update Forum on the current school funding formula for 2018/19.

The formula had been built based on the agreements at the special November Forum meeting.

A revised appendix 1 was circulated as the formula had been reworked due to incorrect data received from ESFA in the modelling tool. All schools have also been provided with the revised budget figures. Some schools budgets will have changed as

a result of this rework, but this should only be up to £2,000 up or down. A number of schools are unchanged due to capping or protection built into the formula.

It was noted that as a result of the rework that a number of the figures quoted in the paper had now been updated. The AWPU figure in the report has now increased further by £2.90 on those stated.

In paragraph 10 it was noted that one school had a small decrease in funding that “should not make any material changes to the schools financial position”. The Finance Manager highlighted to Forum that this statement was incorrect and that any decrease in funding was significant to the school concerned due to the size of the school.

It was explained that modelling had been undertaken to try and eliminate any decrease in budget for all schools but no solution had been found.

The school concerned requested that Forum consider any possible way to ensure that the school does not have a decrease in budget next year as the funding formula does not do this.

The De-delegation proposals were pointed out which only affect only maintained schools. Those schools concerned did not agree the de-delegation, hence a discussion was to be held outside of the meeting with the relevant headteachers.

Growth Fund – slight changes were pointed out concerning the definitions for growth in one year in comparison to growth over the whole school.

Forum noted the report.

Maintained Primary schools representative did not agree the de-delegation.

Forum approved the growth fund and criteria for 2018/19.

8. Early Years Formula

Forum referred to a previously circulated report the purpose of which was to update Forum on the early year’s formula for 2018/19.

It was noted that the funding received for early years from Government will be the same in 2018/19 as in 2017/18, therefore it is currently proposed that the hourly rates for Darlington will remain the same in 2018/19 as in 2017/18 as per the table in the report.

The SEN inclusion block is overspent and the same allocation will be received for 2018/19. The criteria will be reviewed for accessing this fund.

This budget position will be reviewed during the spring term and the final proposals will be presented to Forum in March.

Forum noted the report.

9. Budget Setting 2018/19

Forum referred to a previously circulated report the purpose of which was to update Forum on budget setting for 2018/19.

The areas of expenditure proposed to be funded under the formula based element of the central school block are the same as in the 2017/18 with the exception of copyright license fees and admission team which have increased slightly due to the increased charge from ESFA and the pay award respectively. The small surplus in funding will be held against pressures.

In line with rules concerning the use of historic commitments, no new areas of expenditure can be made. The budgets are £50,000 less as the contribution towards school transport has ceased. There remains £49,717 unallocated, as the historic commitments budget is subject to review by ESFA this saving is expect to be only available for one year and is proposed that this budget will be held to cover pressures in high needs.

The high needs budget was covered at agenda item 6. This report notes that all the high needs block will be needed for high needs purposes.

Forum noted the budget allocations for 2018/19.

Forum agreed the allocations for the central schools block.

Forum noted the position regarding high needs funding.

Date/Time/Location of next meeting

6th March 2018, 2pm Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Darlington