

DARLINGTON SCHOOLS FORUM
16th January 2018

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING TUESDAY 21ST NOVEMBER 2017

MEMBERS PRESENT:

D Judson (Hurworth School) (Chair); P King (The Federation of Mowden Schools); M Shorten (Carmel College); P Ayto (Reid Street Primary); M Butler (Education Village); M Charlton (Whinfield Primary); J Moorhouse (Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle); M Fryer (Federation of Abbey Schools); N Gibbon (St Aidan's CE Academy); K A Lyle (The Rydal Academy); D Vizzard (St George's Academy); K Reid (Polam Hall School); S Crowther (Mt Pleasant Primary school); M Taylor (St Bede's RC Primary School); C Large (Diocese of Durham & Newcastle); Paul Richardson (Head of 16-19)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Cyndi Hughes (Lead Member Children and Young People).

APOLOGIES

E Calvert (William House); S Walsh (Whinfield Primary School); Julia Thompson (Borough Rd Nursery School) & E Hickerson (Rise Carr 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.

The Chair put on record a thank you from the group to Pete King for his chairing of the Forum over the last few years.

2. School Funding Formula

Forum referred to the previously circulated paper that updated on the consultation and the proposed funding formula for 2018/19.

The Finance Manager outlined the results of the recently completed consultation on the formula proposals and the resulting proposals for the formula for 2018/19.

Discussion took place within the group and the following points were asked to be minuted,

- Only 19 responses were received from schools, it was felt that this was disappointing response to a key aspect of school funding.
- It was mentioned that the secondary schools had debated the proposals at the secondary heads meeting and had agreed a common response.
- The changes to welfare will have impacts on families which puts pressure on school funds.(Consultation from DFE on funding changes <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/consultation-on-disadvantaged-entitlements-under-universal-credit>).
- The transfer of funding from the schools block to the high needs block is a short term solution that removes money from the majority of pupils and hence puts pressure on schools budgets. There needs to be a solution found to the high needs budget pressures.

A number of individual concerns from members of the Forum were also noted as follows,

- There are concerns that the formula does not make provision for the traveller community, this is something that could be raised through national forums.
- It was raised by a member that the LAC factor should be kept as this gives an opportunity during the “soft” formula period to target funding at the most vulnerable pupils.
- It was raised that the move to a phased implementation of the national formula meant that Darlington had missed an opportunity to try and target funding to the areas where there is most need.

The Head of Education gave an update to Forum members on the progress that is being made with regard to the review of high needs/SEN and how this will inform future strategies. There will be input from all stakeholders and schools will be actively encourage to take part in the build of the new SEN strategy.

In line with the discussions during Forum and the feedback from the consultation Forum agreed,

- To transfer 0.5% of the schools block allocation to the high needs budget in 2018/19 (approximately £320,000).
- To use the MFG to allow all schools to have a gain/no loss on a per pupil basis in the 2018/19 formula.
- To remove the LAC factor from the 2018/19 formula.
- To continue to use all other factors currently used in the 2017/18 formula in 2018/19.
- To move to the National Funding Formula unit rates on a phased basis.

Date/Time/Location of next meeting

16th January 2018, 2pm Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Darlington