

**DARLINGTON SCHOOLS FORUM**

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**MINUTES OF MEETING THURSDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2017**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

P King (The Federation of Mowden Schools (in the Chair)); M Fryer (Hummersknott); M Shorten (Carmel College); D Judson (Hurworth School); S Pelham (Polam Hall Free School); S Johnson (Longfield Academy); P Ayto (Reid Street Primary); M Butler (Education Village); M McCollom (St Augustines RC Primary School); C Large (St John's Academy); J Thompson (Borough Rd Nursery School); E Hickerson (Rise Carr College); J Steel (Lingfield Education Trust); D Leane (Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle); M Boulton (William House Nursery (PVI)); A Crumpton (Danesmoor House Nursery (PVI)); P Richardson (Head of 16 to 19 Provision); S Welsh (Whinfield School)

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Brett Nielsen (Finance Manager); Eleanor Marshall (School Forum Monitoring and Support Officer); S Lewington (Clerk); Len Brazier (Interim Head of SEN) S Nyakatawa (Interim Head of Education)

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE**

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

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Chris Peacock (Holy Family RC Primary), Jennifer Moorhouse (Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle), Emma Calvert (William House) & Stuart Crowther (Mt Pleasant Primary); Elaine Sayers (Finance).

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

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

**Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest expressed.

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising.**

The minutes (previously circulated) of the schools Forum meeting held 4<sup>th</sup> October were agreed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

### **3. Pupil Growth Fund 2016/17 & 2017/18**

The Forum referred to a previously circulated report.

The paper was discussed in two elements.

It was pointed out that during 2016/17, a school, at the request of the Local Authority has increased its PAN and created 15 new reception places, the school has however only had an uptake of 13 places and therefore has not received anything from the growth fund. It is felt that this is unfair to the school as the school has incurred the cost of creating an additional class.

A revision to the growth fund criteria was therefore requested for 2016/17 which would require a change also to the 2017/18 criteria in order to make a fairer system.

Forum agreed to the recommendations at paragraphs 15 & 16, to amend the 2016/17 criteria and the criteria for 2017/18.

It was brought to Forum's attention that in conjunction with the Local Authority, St George's CE Academy will be expanding by 105 places, this is because of the new housing development within the village of Middleton St George

A discussion took place and it was asked how this decision has already been made when there has been no consultation or business case. It was asked how this is expected to impact on other schools and also how these extra places are going to be phased in.

Forum agreed to the recommendation at paragraph 17, that there is a need for further information and a report is to be brought to Forum detailing the expansion at a future meeting.

### **4. Budget Update 2016/17**

The Forum referred to a previously circulated report.

The Finance Manager went through the report pointing out the main changes in the budget since the October School Forum meeting.

Forum were reminded that the budget at this current time is based on a number of assumptions regarding child numbers and therefore projections were subject to change.

It was noted that the budget has decreased by almost 2 million due to the fact that three maintained schools have now converted into academies.

The high needs budget is projected to overspend and this could be a pressure going forward.

Discussion took place regarding the LAPP budget. The budget position did not reflect the current proposal to use this budget as at the time of writing the report this proposal was not known about.

Forum will be given an update at their next meeting.

Forum noted the current budget position.

## **5. School Funding Formula 2017/18**

The Forum referred to a previously circulated report.

The report detailed the changes that needed to be made because of the revised datasets and modelling tool provided by the EFA.

Largely there has been very little change in the funding formula, however, at primary level the change in the data set for the prior attainment factor has resulted in £90,000 less being distributed, therefore, the unit rate has been increased by £52.60 to lessen the impact.

The figures will be submitted to the EFA by their deadline of 20<sup>th</sup> January.

Paragraphs 14-23 refers to de-delegation whereby the EFA are to stop paying local authorities Education Services Grant for maintained schools from 2017/18, resulting in a big drop in funding. There will be some transitional funding available to run for the period April 17 to August 17 but from September onwards general ESG will cease.

The EFA have amended the regulations to enable local authorities to de-delegate some funding from the budget shares of maintained schools as the local authority will still carry out these duties.

It is proposed that £20 will be de-delegated from maintained schools meaning the Local Authority will lose £29.50 per pupil on the 2016/17 rate.

Forum agreed the proposed formula for 2017/18.

The recommendation in paragraph 25 is to await the decision/vote of the maintained schools representatives.

*Post Forum – Following discussion with all maintained schools the representative for maintained schools agreed to the de-delegation of funding from maintained schools in 2017/18 on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2017.*

## **6. Budget Setting 2017/18**

The Forum referred to a previously circulated report, the purpose of which was to agree the use of the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2017/18.

Paragraph three provided the breakdown of the DSG allocation received on 20<sup>th</sup> December.

The Finance Manager talked Forum through the main points within the report.

The schools block has increased by £722,000, this includes the retained ESG element of £240,000. The remainder of the increase (£482,000) has been included in the school budget share calculation.

It appeared that the high needs block had increased but it was mentioned that this sum included place funding for the special school, the resource bases and for post 16 colleges, which are all paid direct to the schools. The EFA will therefore deduct £3.536 million from the high needs block and pay the place payments direct to the schools. The high needs block has therefore increased by approximately £180,000.

The early years block is to be all allocated only to early years. Early years proposals are included at agenda item 7.

Appendix 2 detailed the continuing historic commitments.

The services within the high needs block are to be reviewed in line with a proposed new strategy for high needs, with possible changes to delivery methods made that will bring the budget back in line.

The high needs budget for 2017/18 is £229,672 over the high needs allocation. It is proposed that £131,679 is moved from the Schools block to use as a contingency for high needs 2017/18.

Forum agreed the recommendations in paragraphs 41 to 44, agreeing to the budget allocation for DSG and the movement of £131,679 from the schools to high needs block.

## **7. Early Years National Funding Formula 2017/18**

The Forum referred to a previously circulated report which provided a summary of the Department for Education's response to the consultation.

The consultation response confirmed the criteria to be used in constructing the local formula for 2017/18. There were few changes in the consultation response from the original consultation with regard to how the early year's formula would operate.

## Agenda Item 2

As mentioned in the October meeting the national funding formula will allocate funding for the three and four year old entitlement for the existing universal 15 hour entitlement from April and the new 30 hour entitlement for working parents as from September.

It is proposed that all funding received for 2 year olds will be passed onto providers and the rate for all providers for 2017/18 will be £5.20 per hour (subject to final confirmation of funding from the DfE).

Early Years Pupil Premium will continue to be funded at £0.53p per hour for each qualifying child.

The indicative funding rate for Darlington for 3 & 4 year olds is £4.44 per hour, however providers will not receive this amount as this covers the supplements, inclusion funding and any retained elements.

Paragraph 56 proposes three options for the deprivation factor.

Paragraph 57 shows the changes and how each option would impact on the hourly rate paid to providers.

There are no decisions to be made today and some briefing sessions are to be held with providers before a final decision at the March Forum meeting.

It was pointed out that ultimately it is the Local Authority's decision to set the early years formula, but consultations will be held with providers before decisions are made.

Forum noted the content of the report.

### **8. School Forum Officer Work Update**

The Forum referred to a previously circulated report, the purpose of which was to update the School Forum on the review of the high needs services and related activity.

There were no substantial changes for Forum to be made aware of at this time.

The School Forum Officer updated Forum on the workshop held with four Resource Base Managers hosted by Heathfield Primary School. It was agreed that the greatest challenge is how difficult it is to analyse results against national indicators and also the problems in comparing performance across different types of resource bases. The workshop was very well received and another is to be held before the end of the Academic Year.

It was mentioned that children who use radio aids support should be allowed to take them home and if there are any problems or worries the School Forum Officer should be contacted.

## Agenda Item 2

The School Forum Officer has been supporting Public Health in the implementation of the Future in Mind projects, a grant of £151,000 has been put into schools in order to fund training for staff and the delivery of courses to students. Work around healthy lifestyles is also making use of the funding.

34 different schools are participating in the programmes currently. Only 5 schools, all primary, have not participated in any programme to date however this may change with the new programme proposed to support implementation of the Healthy Lifestyle Survey Actions in schools (e-safety peer support project).

The Interim Head of SEN wished for it to be put on record the high quality work that has been undertaken by the School Forum Officer. School Forum agreed that the impact of the Future in Mind projects in schools has been highly regarded.

The Lead Member for Children and Young People commented that the projects are outlined in the Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2016, and encouraged all members to read this report.

Forum noted the content of the report.

### **9. Accessibility Strategy Consultation**

The School Forum Officer updated Forum on the Accessibility Strategy development. All Schools have been aware of the activity to develop a Strategy previously a paper was sent out to governing bodies and the consultation documentation was sent to all schools prior to Christmas. The School Forum Officer also extended an invite to meet the parents and carers of disabled children who attend maintained settings.

Although the statutory scope for the strategy is for maintained schools, the Council would like to offer support to Academies, and a traded service is being developed. A number of twilight sessions are to be held of 2.5 hours for maintained schools. It was noted that some Academy schools have already expressed interest in training.

Forum noted the content of the report, the time lines and actions required.

### **10. School National Funding Formula (Second Consultation) – Verbal Report**

The Forum were given a brief paper providing an overview of key issues relating to the National Schools and High Needs Funding Formula. The second phase of the consultations and responses to the first phase consultation were released on 14<sup>th</sup> December. It was noted that this consultation runs until 22<sup>nd</sup> March and the DfE are requesting as many responses as possible. The consultation can be accessed by visiting the DfE website.

The Finance Manager went through the paper highlighting some of the main points.

**The Schools Block-:**

The formula will start in April 2018.

Schools block funding will be ring fenced to schools.

2018/19 – Soft National Formula

2019/20 – Hard National Formula

Darlington schools will see increased funding overall but there will be winners and losers amongst Darlington schools.

**The High Needs Block-:**

The formula will start in April 2018.

The formula will be based on nine different factors.

Local Authorities will decide how this block is allocated/spent.

Funding will be guaranteed at least at the current cash amount. It is expected that Darlington will fall into this category and hence there will be no increase in funding. The reality is there will be less funding as there will be no increase for inflation or growth. This will therefore mean the high needs budget is under pressure going forward.

**Central Schools Block-:**

The formula will start in April 2018.

The formula will be based on a per pupil rate.

Local Authorities will decide how this block is allocated/spent.

Historic commitments will be recognised but will be expected to decrease.

There will be a School Improvement Grant as from September 2017.

Forum discussed the opportunity to put in a response to the consultation from the Forum as a whole.

Forum were asked to note the contents of the paper and were encouraged look through the full consultation and respond as necessary.

**11. Any Other Business**

The Interim Head of SEN informed Forum that a strategy for high needs is currently being put together, that will inform future years provision.

Agenda Item 2

All high needs expenditure will be reviewed during 2017/18 with a view to implementing changes from April 2018.

**Date/Time/Location of next meeting**

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2pm, Committee Room 1, Town Hall.