

DARLINGTON SCHOOLS FORUM
4th October 2016

MINUTES OF MEETING TUESDAY 17TH MAY

MEMBERS PRESENT:

P King (Federation of Mowden Schools (in the Chair)); R Gartland (Education Village); C Thompson (West Park Academy); S Welsh (Whinfield Primary); M Shorten (Carmel College); J Moorhouse (Carmel College); C Peacock (Holy Family RC Primary School); C Large (St John's C of E Academy); S Pelham (Polam Hall Free School); C Alderson (High Coniscliffe C of E Primary School); S Johnson (Longfield Academy); M Fryer (Hummersknott); E Calvert (William House Nursery (PVI)); A Crumpton (Danesmoor House Nursery (PVI)); K Lofthouse (Rise Carr College); C Devine (Beaumont Hill Academy)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Brett Nielsen (Finance Manager); Chris Archer (Head of Early Years); (Eleanor Marshall (School Forum Monitoring and Support Officer); R Kershaw (Head of School and Pupil Support); Elaine Sayers (Finance Officer); S Lewington (Clerk)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Cyndi Hughes (Lead Member Children and Young People); P Richardson (Head of 16-19); K Kelly (Rise Carr College); P Ayto (Reid Street Primary); Dean Judson (Hurworth School); Maura Regan (Carmel College).

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 8th March 2016 were agreed as a true record.

The Forum referred to item 3 (paragraphs 3 & 4) of the minutes from 8th March 2017. It was asked if the early years regulations could be checked to see if it is possible to release some 2 year old funding to fund vacant places. The Head of Early Years confirmed that this had been looked into and there was nothing in the documents that said yes or no regarding the funding of empty places.

It was also pointed out that at this time there is little or no support for the funding of empty places and the emphasis should be towards attracting fee paying parents.

3. Budget Update 2015/16

The Forum referred to a previously circulated report.

The Finance Manager updated the Forum on the changes in the 2015/16 budget since the meeting held in March. The Forum were also talked through the recommendations being made within the report.

All recommendations (paragraphs 13-17) were agreed.

4. Resource Base Provision

The Forum referred to a previously circulated report. At the meeting of the Forum held on 8th March, the School Forum Officer was requested to review high needs placements in resource bases, this paper responded to that request.

The School Forum Officer updated Forum on the work that has taken place regarding the review of places at resource bases, detailing the expected numbers at resource bases for the Autumn Term 2016/17.

Going forward, bases will be expected to self-evaluate.

It was recommended that Forum note the ongoing activity and specifically the position of the speech and language base.

5. National School Funding Formula Consultation

The Forum referred to a previously circulated report.

Stage one of consultations undertaken by DfE on the changes to Education funding finished on 17th April.

The Finance Manager explained to Forum that the new funding formula is to be introduced from 2017/18. There will be a transitional phase known as the soft

formula for the years 2017/18 and 2018/19, with the hard formula coming into operation from 2019/20. It is expected that the Schools Forum will then cease to exist.

Paragraphs 26 onwards provided details on what the changes may mean for Darlington. As the second consultation is not due until later in the year, where it is expected monetary values will be provided, it is not yet clear how these changes will affect individual schools.

Some of the points highlighted were:-

There is not a great deal of change to the formula currently used in Darlington, other than the removal of a factor for Looked After Children factor (which is within the formula currently).

It is expected that some schools budgets will go up and others will go down, resulting in some schools being winners and some losers.

It will not be possible to move funding between the blocks, providing much less flexibility. Therefore, the high needs budget can no longer be subsidised from other places.

It is expected that the funding allocated to the central schools block will be significantly reduced, meaning a number of the services currently funded centrally will no longer be and schools will have to make their own arrangements.

It's hoped that more will be known later in the year when details of the second round of the consultation are released and the results of the Early Years consultation are available.

It was recommended that Forum note the content of the report.

6. High Needs Funding Consultation

Forum referred to the previously circulated report. It was mentioned to Forum that this report follows on from item 5 as there will be overlap with the changes to the schools formula proposals.

The Finance Manager pointed out that currently the high needs funding is based on historic information but as from 2017/18 it will be based on formula.

It is not yet known how this will impact on Darlington as the unit rates within the proposed formula are unknown and we have no indication how much funding will be available.

The consultation noted that any reduction in budget can have a disruptive effect on pupils therefore it is proposed that DfE will try to reduce this impact over the first five years through a form of budget protection. It is not yet known how this will be done but is expected to include an element of current spend. The funding amounts may not be finalised until the week before Christmas.

As mentioned in item 5, if there is a shortfall in the high needs block there will no longer be an option to move funding over from the schools block.

Schools with resource bases that currently have place funding of £10,000 per year will have this reduced to £6,000 per year.

It was asked if there has been any information from the consultation about capital funding yet. It was confirmed that there are no details yet.

Forum noted the content of the report and will be given a further update at their October meeting.

7. Any Other Business

Forum were notified about a project that is taking place within another authority through a group known as 'The Heartstone Project'. This is for young people aged between 8 and 18 and it is to promote positive tolerance and awareness of race equality. This is done through drama and dance workshops.

There is a possibility that Darlington could be asked if a similar project can be funded here. Although the project was notified that funding would be unavailable through Forum, they could possibly bring further information to Forum at a later date.

Dates and Times of Meetings for the next Academic Year

Tuesday 04/10/2013 2pm Committee Room 1

Tuesday 10/01/2017 2pm Committee Room 1—*Changed to Thursday 12/01/2017 2pm*

Tuesday 07/03/2017 2pm Committee Room 1

Tuesday 16/05/2017 2pm Committee Room 1