

DARLINGTON SCHOOLS FORUM

10th June, 2014

PRESENT - Peter King (Corporation Road Community School) (in the Chair), Craig Alderson (High Coniscliffe Church of England Primary School), Christine Boyce (St Teresa's RC Primary School), Elizabeth Charlton (PVI), Mike Fryer (Hummersknott Academy), Richard Gartland (Education Village) David Hall (Darlington School of Maths and Science), Sam Hirst (West Park Academy), Susan Johnson (Longfield Academy of Sport), Dean Judson (Hurworth Academy), Kay Kelly (Rise Carr College), Lindsay Long (PVI), Lynn Millar (Borough Rd Nursery School), Jennifer Moorhouse (Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle), Maura Regan (Carmel College), Catherine Thompson (West Park Academy), Brian Watkinson (The Federation of Mowden Schools), Shirley Welsh (Whinfield Primary School), Claire Devin (Beaumont Hill Academy)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE - Councillor Cyndi Hughes.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE - Jenni Cooke (Assistant Director – Children, Families and Learning), Brett Nielsen (Finance Manager Resources Group), Elaine Sayers (Finance Officer) and Eleanor Marshall (School Forum Monitoring and Support Officer).

APOLOGIES - Rachel Kershaw (The Head of School and Pupil Support Services), Paul Richardson (16-19 Education), Sue Richardson (Education Village), Paul Wray (West Park Academy)

DS12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

DS13. MINUTES - Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Forum, held on 29th April, 2014.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

DS14. MATTERS ARISING – Pursuant to Minute DS4/Apr/14, it was reported that the decision made regarding the Music Service Remissions, (Durham Music Service), had to be reversed following discussion with the Education Funding Agency (EFA) on the grounds that no further commitments could be funded with underspend under this budget heading.

Discussion ensued on the current position of the Durham Music Service and how the schools could cover this cost from their own individual budgets.

RESOLVED – That the Finance Manager, Resources Group, write to all schools advising them of the process for the funding of the Durham Music Service.

DS15. EARLY YEARS EDUCATION – The Finance Manager, Resources Group gave a verbal update to Members regarding the Early Years Education.

The Forum was advised that work undertaken by the School Forum Monitoring and Support Officer and the Early Years Practitioners was progressing and that areas of focus had included; hourly rate, flexible hours and quality payments.

Discussion ensued on the latest guidance from the EFA and its impact when setting of the funding formula for future years.

RESOLVED – It was agreed that a report be submitted at the October meeting of this Forum.

DS16. BUDGET UPDATE 2013/14 – The Finance Manager, Resources Group submitted a report (previously circulated) updating the Schools Forum on the final 2013/14 budget position.

Discussion ensued on the implications of the EFA's guidelines, the changes to the 2013/14 budget as outlined in the submitted report and the consideration to be given when calculating the next year's funding formula.

RESOLVED – (a) That the final 2013/14 budget position and the regulations concerning distribution of funding, be noted.

(b) That the split of the underspend, as per paragraphs 10, 12, 14 and 16 of the submitted report, be approved.

(c) That the proposed use of an MFG exemption in the 2015/16 funding formula be approved.

DS17. BUDGET UPDATE 2014/15 – The Finance Manager, Resources Group submitted a report (previously circulated) updating the Schools Forum on the 2014/15 Dedicated School Grant position.

The Finance Manager gave an update on the current year's budget as outlined in the submitted report, and highlighted to Members that the funding that had been allocated for the Durham Music Service would now need to go back into the unallocated fund after the decision from the EFA.

Discussion ensued on the high needs contingency for March Bank school and the overall underspend of the 2014/15 budget.

RESOLVED – (a) That approval be given to the previously allocated budget of £14,958 being added back into the unallocated budget.

(b) That approval be given to the £48,000 being moved from the High Needs contingency to cover the budget setting shortfall.

(c) That the distribution of the unallocated brought forward budget, be approved.

(d) That the revised budget, as detailed at appendix 1 of the submitted report, be noted.

DS18. LOW INCIDENCE NEEDS – Members requested that this item be deferred to the October 2014 meeting of this Forum.

RESOLVED – That the item be deferred to the October 2014 meeting of this Forum.

DS19. VOLUNTARY AIDED/TRUST ADMISSIONS CONTINGENCY – Pursuant to Minutes DS34/Jan/14 and DS10/Apr/14, the Principal of Carmel College submitted a report (previously circulated) to review the previously agreed arrangements for the funding of school admissions functions.

The Principal of Carmel College gave an overview of the submitted report and highlighted to Members the benefits of allocating the funds set aside for Education Admission Appeals being given directly to Democratic Services to continue their role with administering the Education Appeals process on behalf of schools.

Discussion ensued on the difficulties faced by schools in relation to the appeals process, the current funding framework, the possibility of outsourcing the appeals process; and the high standard support schools receive from Democratic Services with regards to their appeals.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be noted and the thanks be given to the Principal of Carmel College.

(b) That the proposal, as outlined at paragraph 3 of the submitted report, be approved.

DS11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS – DATES OF MEETINGS – The remaining dates of this Forum for the 2014/15 year are as follows :-

Tuesday, 7th October, 2014;

Tuesday, 13th January, 2015;

Tuesday, 10th March, 2015; and

Tuesday, 19th May, 2015