

SCHOOLS FORUM

At a meeting of the Schools Forum on Tuesday, 15 October 2013 at the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: E. Cargill, Primary Governor Representative
Councillor Philbin, Observer
S. Clough, Children & Enterprise
J. Coughlan, Primary School Representative
D. Stanley, All Through School Representative
S. Broxton, Primary Representative
A. McIntyre, Children & Enterprise
A. Jones, Democratic Services
J. Wilson, Secondary Governor Representative
M Constantine, Special Schools Representative (Chair)
A Jones, Financial Management
C. Owen, Secondary Community School Representative
A. Brown, Nursery Schools Representative
N. Unsworth, Financial Services

Action

SCF11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from John Rigby, Jamie Jardine, Lesley Feakes, Andrew Keeley, Karl Landrum, Richard Collings and Diane Moran.

It was noted that Jo Galloway had submitted her resignation to the Forum thus creating a vacancy for the PVI sector.

SCF12 MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes from the meeting held on 18 June 2013 were agreed as a correct record subject to amending A Brown to 'Observer' and adding B Thompson as 'EFA Observer'.

Ann McIntyre welcomed two new members to the Forum, although unable to attend today, Karl Landrum and Richard Collings; representing the Voluntary Aided and Primary Schools sectors respectively.

SCF13 EFA FEEDBACK

The Forum was advised of the feedback received following the visit to the last Schools Forum meeting of Bev Thompson, an EFA Observer.

Members noted that she had determined that Halton Schools Forum were complying with the regulations, as discussed in the report.

Forum Members were also presented with the revised Terms of Reference which were agreed.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum:

1. Note the comments made; and
2. Receive the revised Terms of Reference.

SCF14 GROWTH FUNDING

The Forum was provided with a summary of the application of growth funding in 2013-14 and proposed alternative criteria to access this funding from April 2014.

The Forum was reminded that under the new funding arrangements it was left to each local area to determine whether they wished to establish a budget for pupil growth in the primary and secondary sectors. Additionally, the criteria for access to any growth funding needed to be considered. Members were advised that in the North West the picture was mixed, 13 local authorities had a budget for growth funding and 11 had chosen not to.

In Halton it was agreed that a pupil growth contingency budget be allocated for 2013-14. The total budget set aside was £380,000. The report presented details of how this amount was arrived at and the amount allocated to 30 September 2013.

The report explained the current criteria for accessing growth funding in 2013-14, which had proved unaffordable and difficult to administer. It was suggested that to continue with the current method of allocating growth funding would require increased amounts from the primary schools budgets of approximately £400,000. As part of the consultation on revisions to the funding formula for 2014-15 primary headteachers were asked if they would consider changing the pupil growth criteria to only provide additional funding where schools had a significant increase in pupil numbers and not continue to fund ghost pupils. Responses to the consultation had generally been very low but the majority wished to continue the funding of ghost pupils.

It was reported that the per pupil percentage increase had been used by other local authorities as a criteria for growth for North West authorities using a threshold of 8%, as they

considered 10% too high. It was therefore suggested that consideration was given to a percentage increase in pupil numbers as the only methodology for allocating growth funding.

Forum members considered the criteria for pupil growth funding and suggested that a modelling exercise be carried out using last year's figures. They discussed the thresholds and noted the list of excepted children for the Infant Class Size requirements (Children in Care, appeal successes, UK Service personnel, twins and siblings and some categories where the schools named SEN children).

It was agreed that Financial Management would look at a piece of modelling work and once this was ready, it would be circulated to Schools Forum members for consideration. Members also agreed to a primary growth fund of £300,000.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum

1. Agree to £300,000 growth budget for primary;
2. Agree to maintain the £80,000 growth budget for secondary; and
3. Agree that models to be circulated via e-mail on primary growth options including thresholds, cash values and banding.

SCF15 SPLIT SITE ALLOCATION & LUMP SUM

The Forum received a proposal to extend the age range of Fairfield Junior School and close Fairfield Infant School, creating an 'All Through Primary'.

It was reported that consultation was currently being undertaken on the statutory proposal to extend the age range of Fairfield Junior School and close Fairfield Infant School and creating an 'All Through Primary School'; this would close on 16 October 2013. The Executive Board of the Council would then consider the outcome of the statutory consultation on 7 November 2013 and if approved, the 'All Through School' would commence on 1 January 2014. Schools Forum was therefore, requested to consider the funding arrangements at this meeting.

The report outlined the proposed arrangements for the allocation of the lump sum factor and sought permission to provide a split site allocation.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum:

1. approve the principle of allocating a split site allowance;
2. approve the proposed criteria and the suggested basis for calculating the split site allocation; and
3. approve the proposed allocation of 85% of the lump sum for merging schools.

SCF16 SCHOOL FUNDING REFORM 2014-15

The Forum was advised of the decisions required for the new School Funding Formula as per the Department for Education requirements.

Agreement was sought from them on the funding factors to be used in the budget allocation process for 2014-15. It was noted that a consultation had taken place during September with: secondary Head Teachers and/or secondary business managers; with primary head teachers at the finance SLA training sessions; and a separate primary chequebook school head teacher/finance administration session. A consultation questionnaire was circulated to all primary head teachers with a short deadline for responses to ensure all views could be collated and fed into the report. A summary of responses was attached to the report at Appendix A.

It was determined that no changes would be required to the Funding Formula for next year and the Forum agreed to the recommendations listed below for 2014-15.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum:

1. agree the use of seven funding factors;
2. agree that funding is kept as much as possible within that funding factor;
3. agree the continuation of the Basic Per Pupil factor at a cash value as close as possible to the value for 2013-14 adjusted only to keep within the overall Primary and Secondary schools total budgets;
4. agree that for the deprivation funding factor we continue to target funding using Free School Meals Ever 6 and IDACI on a 50/50 split;
5. agree that we set a proportion of 13.23% of delegated School Block funding to be allocated through the Deprivation factor;
6. agree to the continued use of the Prior Attainment funding factor;
7. agree that for the above funding factor, we continue to use the EYFSP threshold set at 73 points and below alongside the new profile of a Good Level of

- Development;
8. recognise that the continuing use of this factor would result in a reduced amount payable per pupil due to the changes in the number of eligible pupils;
 9. agree to continue to use the Looked After Children funding factor;
 10. agree to review the cash value of the Looked After Children Factor in January 2014 once the number of eligible pupils was known;
 11. agree to continue to use the Lump Sum funding factor;
 12. agree that the value of the lump sum remains at the same level for Primary schools;
 13. agree that the value of the lump sum remained at the same level for secondary schools;
 14. agree that the method of re-distributing any cash balance is taken in January 2014 once the decision regarding the merger has been announced;
 15. agree that funding for LA Rates continue on the same basis as for 2013-14;
 16. agree that PFI continues to be funded at the same level as 2013-14;
 17. agree that we continue to not use English as an Additional Language funding factor;
 18. agree that we continue to not use the Pupil Mobility funding factor;
 19. agree that we use the Split Sites funding factor;
 20. recognises that we are unable to use the new Sparsity funding factor;
 21. recognised that we are unable to use the London Fringe and Post 16 funding factors; and
 22. agree that Notional SEN was identified at 5% for each funding factor used.

SCF17 FINAL DSG ALLOCATION 2013-14

The Forum was advised of the final Dedicated Schools Grant allocation for 2013-14 and the variance from the initial allocation was identified.

It was noted that local authorities were given indicative DSG allocations in December 2012 rather than having to calculate individually, and that the Schools Block funding for Primary and Secondary schools was based on the October 2012 school census. The **indicative** DSG allocation for 2013-14 was £101,282,000 based on the funding figures explained in the report.

It was reported that the **final** DSG allocation for Halton after taking into consideration the increases and

decreased explained in the report was £101,570,000, made up of:

Schools Block	£81,718,000
Early Years Block	£3,865,000
High Needs Block	£13,888,000
Two year old free entitlement	£1,930,000
Transition funding for 3 & 4 year old protection	£117,000
Induction for newly qualified teacher funding	£26,000
Share of £7m previously paid to NMSS	£27,000

Halton Borough Council was receiving a total of £83,093,000. The difference between this figure and the total DSG for Halton was the amount payable to the Academies in Halton (£18,237,000) and the per place allowance for commissioned places in Independent Special Schools (£240,000).

RESOLVED: That the revised DSG allocation of £101,570,000 (before academy recoupment) was confirmed and the variation noted by the School Forum.

SCF18 CONTINGENCY UPDATE

Carole Owen and Jim Wilson declared an interest in the following item: Carole Owen was a Governor at Ditton Primary School and Jim Wilson was a personal friend of Andrew Buckley, the Headteacher at Ditton Primary. To avoid any allegation of bias they did not participate in the debate and abstained from voting on the matter.

Ann McIntyre provided the Forum with the contingency update and introduced a request for additional growth funding made by Ditton Primary School.

The Headteacher Mr Andrew Buckley then presented the details of the application to the Forum. A copy of the application was appended to the report which provided details of the increases in pupil numbers since September 2012, which was expected to continue up to September 2014.

He asked the Forum to consider their request and determine whether it was appropriate for them to receive additional support in 2013-14.

The application was discussed taking into

consideration the extent of growth being experienced at the school. It was noted however that the school had already received some additional funding for 2013-14, and therefore it was deemed inappropriate to award the full amount requested.

It was agreed that the amount already received would be taken from the £100,000 requested, and the remaining balance would be paid to the school. Financial Services would make the calculation and advise members accordingly, so that the funding could be provided.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum would pay the amount remaining from the £100,000 requested, after the amount already paid has been subtracted.

SCF19 PRIMARY PE & SPORTS GRANT

A report was presented to the Forum which updated them on the Primary PE and Sports Grant for the academic year 2013-14.

The Forum was reminded that in March 2013 the Department for Education announced a new grant under the Additional Grant to School's for Primary school sport funding. This announcement stated that each school with 17 pupils or more would receive a lump sum of £8,000 plus £5.00 per primary aged pupil. Schools with less than 17 pupils would receive no lump sum but £500 per pupil for primary aged pupils. Based on this information it was estimated that Halton primary schools and schools with primary aged pupils would receive £465,419 for 2013-14.

At the time of publishing the agenda report the Council had been notified (in September 2013) of the allocations by the DfE but these were significantly different to the March announcement. They stated that:

- schools with 17 or more pupils were now receiving a lump sum of £7,534 plus £5.00 per pupil where pupils are aged 5 to 11; however pupils in reception classes irrespective of age appear to be excluded. Smaller schools with less than 17 pupils would receive £475 per pupil where pupils were aged 5 to 11.
- 65% of the grant would be paid to local authorities on 1 October 2013, and the final 35% would be paid on 30 April 2014; this was different from the original advice where it was stated that it would be paid by beginning of October 2013. This meant that schools

would now receive a total of £431,375 within the academic year with £278,956 payable in October and the remaining £152,419 payable next year. It was noted that no funding had been announced for The Grange All Through School.

Officers advised however that since writing this report, there had been a further update to the above announcement; the DfE had now come back to say that they were made in error, it was hoped therefore that they would revert to the original figures and details, those announced in March 2013.

RESOLVED: That the report and update be noted.

SCF20 CAPITAL UPDATE

The Forum was provided with a summary and progress update of the Capital Programme 2013-14 for the Children and Enterprise Directorate.

In March 2013 the Department of Education (DfE) announced the schools capital grant allocations for 2013-14. The Executive Board approved the implementation of the capital programme at its meeting on 28 March 2013.

Details of the funding received was tabled in the report, together with the key capital programmes and projects information this funding was supporting, with a progress update for each element of the programme; this was attached as appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Capital Repairs Programme 2013-14
- Appendix 2 – Planned Maintenance Programme 2013-14 – VA Schools
- Appendix 3 – School Modernisation Projects 2013-14
- Appendix 4 – Access Initiative Programme 2013-14

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum approve the report.

SCF21 ACADEMY UPDATE

The Forum was presented with a report which summarised the academy conversion process, outlined the implications for the local authority and the schools it maintained and introduced a fee from schools to cover the

costs incurred by the Councils.

It was noted that in Halton a number of schools had converted to academy status. The Council had worked with each school to try and secure a smooth conversion, however, it was evident that each conversion was different and all had been both complex and time consuming, particularly for the staff within the Council. The timeline for conversions so far had varied depending on the complexity of the conversion.

The Forum was advised that in recognition of the additional advice and support schools required, the DfE provided a one off lump sum of £25,000 to the school towards the costs of conversion. However, no additional funding was provided by the DfE to cover the additional costs incurred by the Council during the process. It was noted that Council services such as Legal, Human Resources, Financial, Property Services, Estates, Health and Safety, Audit, Insurance and School Improvement and Children's Organisation and Provision Officers were all involved in the conversion process. Further, for community and controlled schools there were also employment issues involved including TUPE.

It was proposed therefore; that to ensure a contribution towards the costs the Council incurred during conversions and to ensure that support to other maintained schools was not compromised; to introduce a fee of £5,000 for each academy conversion. Details were provided in the report of the Education Building Development Officers Group survey and results in relation to cost recovery.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum approve the introduction of a fee of £5,000 for schools converting to academy status.

Meeting ended at 6.30 p.m.