

## SCHOOLS FORUM

*At a meeting of the Schools Forum on Wednesday, 11 October 2017 at Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillor T. McInerney (Observer)  
A. Jones, Financial Management, HBC  
A. Jones, Democratic Services, HBC  
N. Unsworth, Financial Management, HBC  
M. Vasic, Strategic Director, People  
E. Wright, Secondary Academy Representative  
K. Albiston, PVI Representative  
A. Brown, Nursery Schools Representative  
J. O'Connor, PVI Representative  
J. Coughlan, Primary Representative - Infant School  
N. Hunt, Pupil Referral Unit Representative  
J. Wilson, Secondary Governor Representative  
K. Landrum, Primary Representative - VA School (In the Chair)  
J. Vincent, All Through Schools Representative  
S. Evans, Secondary Academy (Observer)

*Action*

### SCF10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Richard Collings, Marjorie Constantine, Lesley Davies and Elaine Haver.

### SCF11 MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The Forum was requested to nominate a Chairperson as the previous Chair had now retired. The current Vice Chair, Karl Landrum, nominated himself; this was seconded and agreed by the Forum. As the Vice Chair role was now vacant, the Forum was asked for a volunteer to carry out this role. Jim Wilson nominated himself; this was seconded and agreed by the Forum.

The Forum was advised that four existing Members' terms were up for review in June / July 2017. Following consultation with the relevant school groups, it was agreed that the following Members' terms be extended to 2021:

- Amanda Brown – Nursery School Sector;
- Richard Collings – Community Primary Sector;
- Karl Landrum – VA Primary Sector; and
- Jim Wilson – VA Secondary Sector.

The Forum also received updates on the recent canvassing carried out to recruit for representation for the following groups:

- Primary School with a Nursery; and
- Small Primary School.

It was noted that no nominations had been received for either group so the representation for these remained vacant.

The Chair suggested that in order to stimulate interest from another group, he swaps his 'VA Primary' representation for the 'Primary School with a Nursery School' group (as his School has a nursery), so that a representative for 'VA Primary' could be canvassed for instead. The Clerk would canvass the VA Primary group and revert to the Forum.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum

- 1) agree that Karl Landrum be designated as Chair;
- 2) agree that Jim Wilson be designated as Vice Chair; and
- 3) the updates and actions be noted.

*The Vice Chair continued the meeting as the newly appointed Chair.*

## SCF12 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

### SCF6 – Schools Block Funding – Former Education Services Grant (ESG)

Further to the Schools Forum Sub Group (Task and Finish Group) that took place on 14 September 2017 to discuss this, Officers advised of the following outcomes:

- Financial Management – agreed;
- Capital Development – agreed with £5k contribution from the Early Years Block;
- Health and Safety – agreed;
- Dismissals budget – agreed – already de-delegated this financial year;
- Internal Audit – not approved;
- Education Welfare – not approved; and
- Premature retirement costs – deferred.

It was noted that colleagues involved with the task and finish group on behalf of the Forum had to make difficult decisions that may be disappointing to Members and this

was regrettable. Funding for the current EAL provision was discussed at the same Schools Forum Sub-Group and it was agreed that the shortfall in funding between the SLA income from schools and the cost to St Chad's to provide the service this financial year, be funded from contingency. It was suggested that further information be provided regarding the Premature Retirement costs at the special meeting being held on 8 November 2017 to discuss the National Funding Formula.

#### SCF9 – United Utilities Update

The maintained nursery and PVI representatives queried the status of charges for their settings. They were advised that the officer from Sefton MBC who took the lead on this issue did not attend the last North West LMS Finance Officers meeting so they were unable to raise the issue. The question of the status of Early Years settings would be followed up.

#### SCF13 EARLY YEARS QUALITY SUPPORT

The Forum received a summary of the Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) and an outline of the proposal to model and to introduce a new Quality Supplement from April 2018.

It was noted that the Early Years Funding Formula (EYFF) required local authorities to establish a base rate per hour (the basic per pupil element) and an additional mandatory supplement for deprivation. In addition there were a number of discretionary supplements: Rurality / Sparsity; Flexibility; Quality; and English as an additional language.

It was noted that prior to April 2017, in agreement with Schools Forum, it was decided that the Halton EYFF would consist of only the base rate and the deprivation supplement to keep the formula as simple as possible and to prevent significant amounts of monies being moved from one provider to another due to the change in formula, rather than on the basis of need.

It was reported that since the introduction of the new funding regulations in April 2017, Halton had faced a significant reduction in funding for maintained nursery schools. Although it was possible to significantly increase the rate per hour to PVI providers, this could not be at the loss of the maintained sector so a middle ground was required. It was agreed by Schools Forum to use the quality

supplement to support the additional costs of employing a QTS on teacher's pay and conditions as a solution.

The report presented information on the EYNFF; the consultation undertaken with nursery settings; and the intention to audit the PVI providers, so that the new quality supplement model can be used.

It was noted that following a consultation with all stakeholders in the Autumn term, a report would come to the Schools Forum in January 2018 for a decision.

Officers advised that the Early Years guidance was not due to be released until December so no work would take place on the Early Years Funding Formula for 2018-19 until this was received.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum agrees to the introduction of the proposed Quality Supplement in the EYNFF.

Operational Director -  
Education, Inclusion  
and Provision

#### SCF14 NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA 2018-19 UPDATE

The Forum received the National Funding Formula (NFF) proposals for 2018-19.

It was reported that following the Department for Education (DfE) consultations earlier this year, the schools revenue operational guide and NFF for schools and high needs policy document were issued on 4 August and 14 September respectively. These documents set out the requirements for the 2018-19 funding formula for primary and secondary schools and academies, including the cash values for the funding factors within the NFF; these were attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The Forum was advised that further information had been released on 28 September 2017 which included the technical notes supporting the above documents, whilst the indicative school allocations using the NFF based on the October 2016 census was now due to be released in early October.

Officers advised the Forum that the consultation documents for the proposals would be sent out by Friday 13 October 2017; with a response deadline a week later on 20 October 2017. Members complained of the short timeframe given to read such a detailed technical document; comments such as these would be included in the responses and it was noted that the LA had already raised the short timeframe

with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

It was noted that for the first time in many years, the decision on how the schools funding formula would look rested with the Local Authority rather than Schools Forum. A special Schools Forum meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 8 November 2017 to discuss the consultation responses and proposals for the funding formula.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

#### SCF15 HIGH NEEDS UPDATE 2018-19

The Forum received the High Needs Block Funding proposals for 2018-19.

The Department for Education issued a Stage One consultation on High Needs Funding in March 2016 with proposals on how allocations to local authorities would be calculated from April 2018. This was followed up by a Stage Two consultation beginning in December 2016 which closed in March 2017. Following this, further guidance regarding high needs funding for 2018-19 was released in September 2017.

The basis of allocation to each LA was explained in the report and presented in figure 6.

The report advised of the situation with placements in Out of Borough provision and the costs related to this. The Forum heard the suggestion regarding the employment of a Commissioner at Grade HBC 11, who would undertake certain tasks as discussed in the report, with the aim of driving down costs and the number of pupils being placed outside the Borough. The Forum discussed this suggestion and the consensus was that they would support the proposal.

The Forum was also advised that to address the rising cost of SEND support in the Borough, it was agreed that an All Age Review of SEND be undertaken. This would be commissioned externally and would explore demand, the causes of demand and how we could better meet the needs of children and young people in a more sustainable way in future years.

In addition to this the Authority was working with the other 5 Liverpool City Region (LCR) Authorities to look to review SEN sufficiency, so the review would look at the current provision and demand across the LCR.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

#### SCF16 CARRY FORWARD BALANCES

The Forum received the level of school balances brought forward from 2015-16 used to set budgets in 2016-17; and the balances brought forward from 2016-17 used to set budgets in 2017-18.

It was noted that following the June report on schools end of financial year balances, Schools Forum requested that the level of school balances be looked at in order to set the budget. For this purpose the information had been gathered over the past two years and this was attached to the report at Appendix A.

In summary the overall carry forward balances for 2016-17 had reduced by 28.5% and the proportion used in order to set budgets had reduced by 26.7%. It was noted that it had not been possible to include the proportion used to set budgets for all schools (marked *unknown* in Appendix A) as they had not responded to the request for the information or had not responded in time, for the exercise to be completed.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

*Meeting ended at 5.05 p.m.*