

SCHOOLS FORUM

At a meeting of the Schools Forum on Wednesday, 16 January 2019 at Boardroom - Municipal Building, Widnes

Present: Councillor T. McInerney, Observer
A. McIntyre, Education, Inclusion & Provision, HBC
A. Jones, Financial Management, HBC
A. Jones, Democratic Services, HBC
R. Sprigings, Financial Management, HBC
E. Wright, Secondary Academy Representative
K. Albiston, PVI Representative
A. Brown, Nursery Schools Representative
J. O'Connor, PVI Representative
T. Bell, 16-19 Provision Representative
J. Coughlan, Primary Representative - Infant School
S. Broxton, Primary Governor Representative
N. Hunt, Pupil Referral Unit Representative
J. Wilson (In the Chair), Secondary Governor Representative
E. Haver, Special Academy Representative
A. Sheppard, VA Schools Representative
A. Simmons, Community Primary Representative
J. McConville, Secondary Academy Representative
H. Austin, Community Special Schools Representative
I. Critchley, All Through Schools Representative

Action

SCF18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Simon Corner and Karl Landrum.

SCF19 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

SCF20 HALTON SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

It was reported that as The Grange Academy was the only provider within the *All Through Group* of Schools, the Principal Mr Ian Critchley had been appointed as representative for this Group.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

SCF21 FORECAST OUTTURN 2018-19

The Forum received a report informing of the forecast outturn position, as at 20 December 2018.

Members were advised that the detailed monitoring of the Dedicated Schools Grant was continuing to enable a forecast outturn position to be identified. It was noted that as at 20 December, an overspend of £753,787 was expected at the end of March 2019.

The report provided detailed commentary and figures (appendix A) on each Budget Block and the final amounts are summarised below:

Schools Block	£0
CSSB	£189,025
Early Years Block	(£502,634)
High Needs Block	(£622,027)
DSG cfwd Balance	£181,848
TOTAL	(£753,787)

It was noted that all known and expected costs were built in and Officers were monitoring expenditure on a month by month basis. It was acknowledged by Members that further costs could be incurred that were currently unknown.

The Forum was advised that an overspend against the Dedicated Schools Grant in excess of the carried forward balance would result in the overspend having first call against the grant allocation for 2019-20; so next year's grant would effectively be reduced by the level of this year's overspend.

RESOLVED: That the report is noted.

SCF22 SCHOOLS BLOCK FUNDING FOR 2019-20

The Forum received a report outlining the Schools Block Funding for 2019-20.

Information and updates were provided on Grant Settlement; Pupil Numbers; Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG); Growth Funding; PFI Funding and the current position.

The Forum was advised that the outcome of the disapplication request for the 1% transfer to High Needs was still unknown, due to the announcement of the additional High Needs funding by the ESFA in December.

Officers therefore tabled the Schools Block budgets recommending a minus 1.5% MFG; but using the 1% and 0.5% transfer scenarios:

- (a) MFG minus 1.5% and 1% transfer; and
- (b) MFG minus 1.5% and 0.5% transfer

It was hoped that the 1% would be approved so that (a) could be used; the Schools Forum agreed with this.

In the meantime, Officers advised that they hoped to email the indicative budgets to Schools on Monday (with the exception of Early Years and High Needs).

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum

- 1) note the report; and
- 2) agree that the level of MFG to be applied to the Schools Block funding Formula for 2019-20 be -1.5%.

SCF23 HIGH NEEDS BLOCK FUNDING FOR 2019-20

The Schools Forum received a report outlining the High Needs Block Funding for 2019-20. The report discussed the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlement; disapplication request; the current position; additional high needs funding; the funding gap; and DSG balances.

It was noted that further savings and reducing overspends were essential to getting back to a balanced DSG position and should the 1% transfer of Schools Block Funding be refused, the overall deficit position would double to roughly £865,626.

The Forum discussed the funding situation for high needs in depth and the following points were noted:

- The additional funding for high needs announced by the Department for Education (DfE) on 16 December had been included in the calculations;
- The Placements Team was now in place reviewing existing arrangements for out of Borough placements and if possible with the support of parents, look for opportunities where children could be supported in the Borough;
- A brief update was given regarding the proposal for the acquisition of a site for a new school for children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs in the Borough. An official announcement was expected by the end of January 2019;
- It was important to focus on having the right specialist resources in the Borough for SEND provision and this would now be prioritised; and

- The charging for LA out of Borough placements was reciprocated with other authorities.

Officers advised that a further update on High Needs would be brought to the March meeting of the Forum.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Financial
Management,
HBC

SCF24 EARLY YEARS FUNDING FOR 2019-20

The Forum was advised of the current position on Early Years Block Funding for 2019-20.

Members were advised that the Early Years National Funding Formula (NFF) Operational Guidance was released at the end of November with no major changes to the NFF requirements.

It was reported that the Early Years Grant Allocation for 2019-20, as of 17 December 2018 was a total indicative allocation of £9,629,236, as shown in the table in paragraph 3.3 of the report. It was noted that the hourly rate for 2019-20 was reducing to £5.12 per hour. Officers advised that once the January headcount data was received, work could commence on calculating the likely grant allocation and the cash values for funding factors for 2019-20. Officers would submit an update report to the Forum in March.

The Forum discussed the difficulties experienced with receiving the budgets so late at the end of March and the potential repercussions to the PVI sector of a further reduction in the hourly rate.

RESOLVED: That the report is noted.

Financial
Management,
HBC

SCF25 CENTRAL SCHOOL SERVICES BLOCK 2019-20

The Schools Forum received the Central School Services Block (CSSB) for 2019-20.

The report provided Members with the figures for the centrally retained budgets which were presented in paragraph 3.2 with supporting commentary. These were discussed and agreed by Members.

With regards to de-delegated budgets, maintained schools were requested to decide which items they wished to fund for 2019-20 and were referred to Appendix A, which detailed each budget with the amount per pupil for primary and secondary pupils and showed a comparison with the

2018-19 budgets. Members agreed the budgets but requested more information on the Health and Safety costs amounting to £124,220. Officers would clarify this with the Health and Safety Department and would bring the information to the March meeting. In the meantime the budgets were agreed.

RESOLVED: That the Schools Forum

- 1) notes the information provided in the report;
- 2) agrees the budgets presented in the report in paragraph 3.2; and
- 3) agrees that the de-delegated budgets presented in Appendix A be agreed, subject to clarification of the Health and Safety amount of £124,220.

Financial
Management,
HBC

SCF26 CAPITAL PROGRAMME - 2019/20

Members were provided with a summary of the capital programmes for 2019-20 for the People Directorate.

It was reported that the Department for Education (DfE) had not yet announced the Capital Grant Allocation for 2019-20, however due to the timescales for some of the proposed capital projects, it was necessary to present the report at this meeting. The report therefore, was based on the 2018-19 allocation which was £1,007,078 and it was noted that this allocation could be reduced for 2019-20 for the reasons stated in the report.

Further to the announcement in 2017 of the Special Provision Capital Funding for local authorities to invest in provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) aged 0-25; it was confirmed in May 2018 that Halton would receive an additional amount of £116,279, taking the total funding of the Special Provision Capital Funding allocation to £616,279. This additional funding was required to meet the costs of the Foundation / Key Stage 1 SEMH provision.

Forum Members were referred to the table in paragraph 3.4 of the report which presented the funding available to support capital projects across the schools estate. Paragraph 4 of the report provided details of how the Schools Condition Allocation funding would be utilised.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum

- 1) notes the position regarding capital funding from the DfE for 2019-20;

- 2) supports and notes the proposals to be funded from the Schools Condition Capital Allocation; and
- 3) agrees that the capital allocations are put forward for inclusion in the Executive Board Budget report on 17 January 2018 and then to full Council.

Meeting ended at 5.20 p.m.