

Schools Forum

Minutes of the meeting 4-6pm on Wednesday 18 January 2017, Cantell School

Attendees:

Richard Harris – Governor Moorlands Primary School (Meeting Chair)
Cllr Dan Paffey – Cabinet Member Education & Skills
Jo Cassey – Service Lead Education & Early Help
Hilary Brooks – Service Director Children & Families
Lyn Bourne – Headmistress St Anne’s Academy
David Townsend – Interim Head of School Effectiveness
Chris Ode – NASUWT Secretary/TCP Rep
Sean Preston – Head of Finance Hamwic Trust
Alison Parsons – Headteacher Compass
Hayley Garner – Unison Branch Secretary
Anne Downie – Early Years Manager
John Draper – Headteacher Swaythling Primary
Mark Sheehan – Headteacher Mansbridge Primary
Jonty Archibold – Headteacher Regents Park Community College
Martin Brown – Headteacher Sholing Technology College
Toni Sandbrook – Headteacher Woodlands Secondary School
Tammy Marks – SEND Engagement & Development Manager
Simon McKenzie – Service Manager – SEND
Irfan Khan – Principal Accountant
Alan Denford – Service Lead Finance Business Partnering

Observers:

Cllr Ivan White – Interested Ward Councillor
Harry Cutty – Headteacher, Cantell Secondary School

Apologies:

Colin Grant
Sue Thompson – Commissioner
Anna Wright – Paint Pots
David Turner – Vice Chair
Donna Chapman – Health

	Discussion
	The meeting Chair outlined that this was the reconvened meeting from 11/1/2017 to allow fuller discussion over the additional financial papers that had been provided in order for those present to be able to make their informed voting decisions over the proposals and for the High Needs Block including funding for Special Schools, Special Units and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) from April 2017 (item 5 on the previous agenda for the meeting held on the 11/1/2017).
	High Needs Block
	Alan Denford explained the 2 nd paragraph summary regarding the £2.59 million being above the 2017/18 budget allocation. £ 2.91 million was transferred from Schools Block to High Needs Block since 2015/16, has been adjusted in two blocks through a DSG baseline exercise completed by the Department for Education (DfE) earlier in 2016/17 financial year.
	<p>Recommendations in High Needs paper were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the 2016/17 financial pressure of £0.5M. • Note the re-based DSG 2017/18 High Needs block allocation of £21.41M and forecast pressure above allocation of £2.59M. • Agrees that the High Needs block budget for 2017/18 is set at the re-based DSG allocation in recommendation (ii) above, as there is no headroom available in the Schools Block to meet the forecast pressure. • Agrees that a working group consisting of a cross-section of Head Teachers from all phases and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Service is established to consider options / make recommendations to address the ongoing financial pressures and report back to the Schools Forum to ensure the service is not overspent by end of 2017/18 Financial Year.
	Irfan has recirculated by email the additional papers that had been given at last week's meeting regarding the different scenarios available.
	Irfan highlighted the forecast pressure around the £1million in the 16/17 High Need Block. This forecast pressure is expected to be partially offset by some savings against other DSG funded areas, leaving a net of £0.5 million overspend by end of 2016/17.
	Irfan explained the 2017/18 High Needs Scenarios Table. The figures were prepared on re-based 2017/18 DFE allocation against the forecast expenditure for 2017/18. Therefore making a known forecast pressure of £2.59 million above allocation.
	<p>In order to achieve £2.5million savings, the scenarios presented in the table were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 11% pro-rata reduction across the board in all areas. 2. re-distribution of 20 places giving savings of £294,900 with a further £2.29 million still needing to be identified. 3. re-distribution of 40 places giving savings of £589,800 with a further £1.99 million still needing to be identified.
	Chair asked for any comments or questions.

	<p>Anne asked if there would be a pressure increase when the 3 & 4 year olds extra hours intake started and the 30 hours offer. Irfan advised that the pressure would be revisited once the DFE information regarding this was known.</p>
	<p>Discussion then took place over the proposal of redistributing places. Special School Head Teachers stated that they did not know how these places would be realised as there were no unfilled places.</p>
	<p>Jo recognised that the PRU is the City provision and that the inclusion debate was not just a PRU one as the spend for every child is in scope. This is wider than just the need to look at the money saving aspect this is why there is a fundamental need for a working group.</p>
	<p>Cllr Paffey spoke of the same pressures in the LAC framework in that requirement for places were high and if they could not be found the costs on the City if children have to be placed outside are high and this is not a good outcome.</p> <p>The task for the working group is not just financial it is parallel to the Looked After Children (LAC), Step Down etc.</p> <p>We should always look to best practices and outcome for the child to stay in the City provision and share the City's good work.</p>
	<p>There was a query about whether SCC has been putting pressure on the Secretary of State. Cllr Paffey advised that he had been waiting until the conclusion of this meeting and the vote and then he would be writing. He asked for the Head Teachers to all get behind him and add their signature to his letter if they were in agreement.</p>
	<p>The Chair also stated that more signature are a powerful thing and that he had also been writing as an individual and that other present should also write as the would keep the momentum going.</p>
	<p>The Chair re-stated the need to agree to set a balance budget of £21.4 million for 2017/18.</p> <p>ALL AGREED YES</p>
	<p>Point 5 – to deal with the pressure to minimise funding can we agree to form a Working Group. Agree to report back to the March meeting and the June meeting?</p> <p>Can the Working Group consisting of a cross-section of Head Teachers from all phases and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Service is established to consider options / make recommendations to address the ongoing financial pressures and report back to the Schools Forum to ensure the service is not overspent by end of 2017/18 Financial Year, be agreed?</p> <p>ALL AGREED YES</p>
	<p>Jo asked for nominations to Natalie Johnson by the end of next week 27th January. A schedule of the meeting will be sent out in advance and should have cross phase representation. Jo advised that she would consult with the Chairs of Head Teacher Conference tomorrow (Thursday 19th) along with Cllr Paffey. The Working Group should start on the activities in</p>

	advance of the planned March and June meetings.
	Schools Block
	<p>Alan spoke regarding recommendation (iv) in Schools Block paper i.e. to approve a contribution from maintained schools budgets of £1,021,400 to the cost of services identified as being partly funded previously by ESG general funding from September 2017. Alan explained different columns in expanded copy of Appendix 3. The table showed how the one-off transitional grant was being allocated and the funding shortfall of £1.02 million in last column.</p> <p>All were reminded that if the schools did not agree the contribution – SCC would not be able to maintain its statutory duties.</p>
	Jo explained that the Authority had a statutory duty to deliver all services and that the authority could not cherry pick and choose what it wanted to deliver. The statutory duties are set out in the DFE guidelines and are agreed with the Secretary of State.
	There was much discussion over what constituted a statutory service and disagreement over Central Support Services with Statutory services being quoted from various documents and papers from other meetings.
	The Chair advised that the baseline central provisions was provided and the statutory allocation is then topped up through SLA's.
	The Chair, Cllr Paffey, Hilary and Jo acknowledged and assured total transparency and that should any additional funding option become apparent during this timeframe that this would be put back into the pot to prop up any shortfalls.
	Head Teachers were reminded of the £2 million that the SCC has already allocated to schools over and above 2016/17 allocation – which was an increase not a decrease.
	<p>Cllr Paffey concluded that all present today were no strangers to cuts and as part of the transformation programme/budget proposal are out for comment. The Authority and those present today had the commitment to “Give every child the best start in life”</p> <p>Other authorities have outsourced, had services taken away from them, stopped delivering some extent of their statutory commitments.</p>
	Hayley asked if this could be a separate part of the agenda of the School Forum or Working Group. Head Teachers would feel re-assured to find it as a separate agenda item and to receive the papers in good time ahead of the meeting in order to read and progress through. All would welcome a breakdown of the difference between what the maintained schools and academies receive and the SCC budget papers and not DFE requirements etc. The chair acknowledged this.
	The Chair said that he did not want the Authority to be seen as being non-viable if it had to go to the Secretary of State.

	<p>Irfan suggested that an extra December meeting should be put in the diary to ensure to allow some time for initial discussion before actual budget meeting in January. He stressed this is even more important for 2018/19 because it will be first year for the new Schools and High Needs funding formula.</p>
	<p>Jonty asked if there could be a 5 minute adjournment so that all could consider and discuss.</p>
	<p>Jo advised that this was unnecessary due to the extensive discussion that had taken place and that further information had already been provided over a week ago since the last meeting that should have already helped to evoke a decision. They should all be able to make an informed decision and Jo would like to be able to discuss the outcome tomorrow with the Chairs of Conference.</p>
	<p>Mark and Jonty both stated that although they had discussed they also had to think about the steer that they had received from other Head Teacher that could not be present today to make the right decisions. They were representative for them not delegates, but that they had to be comfortable with the vote they were making.</p>
	<p>Hayley advised that agreement should be possible as there had been agreement for fair transparent reporting into any money spent.</p>
	<p>The questioned was asked over who was taking part in the vote. The Chair confirmed the vote was for the maintained schools only.</p>
	<p>Could there be a compromise – can we take out the school improvement and registration lines in the proposal? Jo confirmed that there had already been commitment to more details as soon as available. Education Welfare Services is not simply about checking registers it is way above and beyond that.</p>
	<p>Chair – can I have your vote to approve the contribution from maintained schools for 1.02 million?</p> <p>In favour 7 Against 1</p> <p>VOTE IN FAVOUR CARRIED</p>
	<p>Primary School only – De-delegation of Trade Union duties Irfan provided a verbal update on 2015/16 and 2016/17 financial position against this budget.</p> <p>2015/16 total de-delegated budget was £70,000 with a total spend of £55,000.</p> <p>2016/17 total budget is £49,000 (this includes £46,000 de-delegated by primary schools, £3,000 through buy back from 1 secondary and 2 special schools). Actual to date is only £15,000.</p> <p>For 2017/18 – Primary Schools (only) are asked to agree to de-delegate £48,900. All Secondary and Special maintained schools plus academies SLAs will be issued by HR to give them opportunity if they want to buy back. HR will be co-ordinating the whole process and all relevant parties will be communicated about the outcome.</p>

	Primary Schools vote – if not used will the money go back into the pot?
	Hayley advised that this had been raised last week – no Unison allocation figures. Hayley advised that she will clarify and that a Facilities Agreement is being drafted.
	There was discussion that the amount of money was not for the payment of a shop steward etc it was for the cover/backfill cost for a supply teacher etc to cover the rep going.
	To approve the de-delegation of budgets listed in para 22. Trade Union Duties (£48,900) (Primary Schools only). In favour 3 Against 1 VOTE IN FAVOUR CARRIED
	Next Meeting – 8 th March 2017