

CAMBRIDGESHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM: MINUTES

Date: 16th December 2015

Time: 9.30am – 11.15am

Place: Kreis Viersen Room, Shire Hall, Cambridge

Present: P Hodgson (Chairman), S Bainbridge (substituting for K Taylor), S Connell, J Culpin, T Davies, A Day, K Evans, L Murphy, N Jones, D Parfitt, A Rodger (Vice-Chairman), R Waldau and M Woods

Observers

Councillor P Downes	Cambridgeshire County Council
Councillor J Whitehead	Cambridgeshire County Council
G Fewtrell	Teachers' Unions
J Patterson	Ely Diocese Church of England

Officers

K Grimwade, K John, M Moore, M Teasdale and M Wade

Apologies: S Blyth, D Harty, T Jefford, A Kent and S Livesey.

ACTION

114. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th October 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The following matters arising were discussed:

(a) Minute 104 (a) – Schools funding reform:

The Chairman reported that he and the Vice-Chairman had met with Lucy Frazer, MP for South East Cambridgeshire on 27th November 2015. Arising from those discussions, it had been agreed that the Chairman/Vice-Chairman would provide the MP with further detailed information once the consultation on the fairer funding formula had started.

(b) Minute 104 (e) – Special Educational Needs (SEND) Workshop Feedback

It was noted that the SEND Action Plan **would now be included on the agenda for the meeting of the Forum to be held on 15th January 2016.**

**M Teasdale/
J Davies/
Democratic
Services**

It was further noted that the Vice-Chairman had raised a number of questions in relation to SEND funding and **that the Service Director, Strategy and Commissioning, would discuss these**

M Teasdale

with him outside the meeting.

(c) Minute 105 – Composition of Cambridgeshire Schools Forum

The Chairman reported that he, together with the Vice-Chairman, would be meeting with Mark Woods to discuss arrangements for explaining the work of the Forum at a future meeting of Secondary Academy Trust Chairs.

(d) Minute 106 – Schools Budget Setting 2016/17: Update

It was confirmed that the **Strategic Policy and Early Years Operations Manager was developing the all-encompassing form including the information required for pupil premium/free school meals application.**

Sam Surtees

The Strategic Finance Manager (Children's and Schools) reported that he had written to schools to explain the anticipated outlook for schools budgets in 2016/17.

(e) Minute 108 – Behaviour and Attendance Improvement Partnership (BAIP) Devolved Funding Formula

This item would now be **included on the agenda for the Forum's meeting on 15th January 2016.**

**M Wade/
T Jefford/
K John**

(f) Growth Fund and Falling Rolls Criteria 2016/17

The Strategic Finance Manager (Children's and Schools) reported that further detail was awaited about proposals for a new national early years funding formula, as referred to in the report on Schools Budget Setting elsewhere on the agenda.

During discussion, it was noted that the final Department for Environment (DfE) grant allocations and pupil data were not issued until mid-December and therefore were not generally available in time for the Forum's December meeting. It was suggested therefore that consideration could be given in future to holding a meeting in early January rather than having meetings in mid-December and late January. The Forum **agreed that this suggestion would merit further exploration but would be dependent upon the approach to the new fairer funding regime.**

**M Wade/
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Services**

115. SCHOOLS BUDGET SETTING 2016/17: UPDATE

The Strategic Finance Manager (Children's and Schools) presented a summary update on the schools budget setting issues for consideration for 2016/17. It was noted that the figures within the report were based on current estimates and as such would need to be refreshed on receipt

of revised data from the Department for Education expected later in December. Updated figures would be presented to the Schools Forum in January.

The following key areas were highlighted:

(a) Comprehensive Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015

The Strategic Finance Manager summarised the main points from the recent spending review relating to education and schools, details of which were set out in paragraph 2 of the report.

(b) Meeting with Department for Education (DfE)

The Strategic Finance Manager reported verbally that he, together with other representatives of the F40 Group, had recently met with the Head of the Funding Team at the DfE. The issues drawn to the attention of the Forum included:-

- The indication given that the fairer funding consultation would be launched in February 2016, with an announcement expected in the summer of 2016 and implementation in April 2017.
- Whilst the consultation might encompass all school funding, it was possible that there might be a separate consultation on the national early years funding formula.
- Savings of around £600m would be made on the Education Services Grant (ESG). In response to a question, it was reported that DfE had indicated that the main reductions would impact in 2017, with minimal changes to ESG in 2016.
- 30 hours of free childcare for working families with 3 and 4 year olds would be available to parents working more than 16 hours a week from 2017 with incomes of less than £100,000. Forum members commented on their understanding that the £100,000 limit was per parent. Officers reported that no further details were available at this time.
- There was debate around whether there would be a “hard” or “soft” approach to the national funding formula, with the expectation that there might still be some areas for local discretion.
- Pupil premium rates were protected but it was possible that there might be consultation on whether the pupil premium should be incorporated into the wider “pot” or should continue to be separate.
- Officers had expressed concerns around sparsity and rurality and had highlighted growth as a key issue that needed to be addressed for funding purposes.
- Officers had also supported the adoption of a formula based approach to High Needs funding but it appeared that the DfE preferred to retain deprivation and prior attainment indicators as the basis for allocation.

(c) Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)

The Strategic Finance Manager (Children's and Schools) referred to an addendum to the report which had been circulated following receipt of the revised Authority Proforma Tool (APT) on 10th December 2015. The APT contained pre-populated school-level data, based on the October 2015 census, which would be used in the allocation of the 2016/17 Schools Block. The most significant change had been in respect of IDACI. The IDACI data had been updated nationally in September 2015 and this refreshed data had been used in the APT. Appendix B to the addendum report indicated that the refresh of the IDACI data had resulted in a reduction of pupils in Bands 3 to 6 and a significant increase in the number of pupils in Bands 1 and 2. Although there had been an increase of nearly 1,200 pupils qualifying for IDACI funding, due to the movement between the bands, there had been a reduction of approximately £175,000 when compared to the 2015/16 allocations. There was a significant impact at individual school level, with a number of schools who previously received funding for pupils in Bands 1 to 6 now receiving reduced funding as pupils had moved into lower funded bands or in some cases into Band 0 and therefore attracting no funding at all. However there were also some postcodes which had moved pupils into higher bandings attracting additional funding when compared to 2015/16. Appendix C showed the changes in the numbers in each band at individual school level

Where schools received reduced funding through the IDACI changes, they were likely to be in receipt of Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) protection. This would add an additional estimate of approximately £1m to the overall cost of the Schools block over 2015/16 levels. It was noted that there were limited options to lessen the impact for individual schools that would experience a reduction in funding, owing to the way in which the refreshed data had affected different postcodes and IDACI score. The Strategic Finance Manager explained that initial modelling had shown that there was little impact overall from changes in unit values of the bands.

The Strategic Finance Manager reported that he had written to the DfE to request that an alternative approach be adopted to IDACI data for 2016/17 and had urged that, in view of the short notice and the significant impact of the use of the refreshed data at individual school level, the previous IDACI data be used for the coming year to allow some stability during a transitional stage, particularly in the light of the further anticipated changes arising from implementation of the fair funding formula.

During discussion:

- **It was requested that officers provide fuller IDACI data including overall pupil numbers and numbers in each band, as opposed to just the changes.**
- Noting that nursery schools were not included in the list of

**M Wade/
M Moore**

schools at Appendix C, the Strategic Finance Manager explained the position with nursery schools and **undertook to provide further information of the impact of changes around deprivation measures on early years to the early years representatives on the Forum.**

M Moore

- Following concerns expressed at the implications of the introduction of the living wage for the early years sector, it was noted that the Government had announced that investment of £300m would be made to increase the average hourly rate childcare providers received but no further details were available at this stage.

- It was noted, with reference to Appendix B, that there was a decline in the percentage of primary schools pupils registered for Free School meals compared to the previous year. **The Strategic Finance Manager undertook to raise this issue with the Strategic Policy and Early Years Operations Manager.**

M Wade

- Forum members commented on the impact of the changes for their individual schools, with one member noting that for his school there would be a reduction of £69,000 and less than 3 months to adjust the budget to manage the reduction. However some Forum members acknowledged that the refreshed data did appear to reflect the changed deprivation profiles in their areas.

- With reference to Appendix B, officers responded to a Forum member's comments regarding the reduction in the overall amount for pupils not achieving KS2 level 4 in English and Maths. **The Strategic Finance Manager agreed to review this figure further with a view to reporting back to the Forum's meeting in January with a proposal to recycle the reduction by raising the amount to £420 per secondary pupil.**

M Wade

- The Vice-Chairman expressed concern at the late adjustments to the IDACI data and the lack of transitional arrangements to allow affected schools to prepare for the financial impact. He also pointed out that there would be a further period of turbulence when the new fair funding formula was implemented. **It was agreed that a letter should be sent to the Education Minister, on behalf of the Schools Forum, expressing the Forum's concerns.**

**Chairman/
Vice-
Chairman/
M Wade**

(d) De-Delegations

Details of the proposed approach to de-delegations were set out in paragraph 5 of the report. It was explained that Cambridgeshire Primary Heads Group (CPH) had agreed a revised de-delegation methodology for Cambridgeshire Race Equality Advisory Service (CREDS) to be applied in 2016/17. This would offer a reduced level of funding overall allowing CREDS to maintain a reasonable core service, with additional services being purchased by schools on a "pay as you go" basis, subject to capacity. Following comments by a Forum member, it was confirmed that there would be sufficient capacity in the remaining CREDS service to enable schools to purchase additional services over and above the core offer.

The Forum additionally noted that a review of the current funding methodology was underway for the de-delegation relating to trade union time and a final proposal would be presented to the meeting in January. Final de-delegations would be updated on receipt of revised data from the DfE and would be submitted to the Forum's meeting in January.

The Primary School Maintained School headteachers present
resolved:-

To agree to the continuation of the de-delegations and proposed rates set out in paragraph 5 of the submitted report, subject to final confirmation in respect of trade union facilities time.

(e) Next Steps

The Forum was advised of the key dates in the budget setting process. The Strategic Finance Manager commented on the expectation that draft budgets would be issued to individual schools and that illustrative allocations would be issued to academies by the end of January.

With reference to the anticipated consultation on the fairer funding formula, it was suggested that it might be necessary to hold an extraordinary meeting of the Forum in April 2016.

**M Wade/
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Services**

It was resolved to note the Schools Budget Setting 2016/17 update report, together with the addendum report relating to IDACI.

116. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUSINESS PLANNING PROPOSALS FOR 2016/17 TO 2020/21

The report of the Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults Services was submitted which provided the Forum with an update on the Business Planning Proposals for Children, Families and Adults Services (CFA) for 2016/17 to 2020/21.

The Forum also received a presentation on the key issues for school partners and which highlighted the key areas of savings proposed for CFA.

During discussion:

- The extent of the savings and the anticipated impact on the services affected were acknowledged. Reference was made to the opportunity for partners to respond to consultations in respect of the impacted services.
- Concerns were expressed at the severity of the cuts and the potential increase in risk.
- It was noted that following the Autumn Statement, local authorities would have the flexibility to raise council tax by up to 2% above the existing threshold, with the funding being ring

fenced exclusively for spending on adult social care. The level of council tax would be the subject of political debate, with the Council setting the council tax in February 2016. In response to a question, it was reported that every additional 1% rise in council tax equated to £2.4m.

- Following a question on the ability to deliver the savings set out in the Looked After Children Strategy, the Service Director, Strategy and Commissioning, whilst acknowledging the extent of the challenge, indicated that the Council had a strong track record in delivering savings and that mechanisms were in place to monitor and review progress against the savings targets.
- It was confirmed that the proposals for children's centres would not be implemented until 2017 and that this would allow time for consultation with partners on exploring alternative ways of working and the scope for greater alignment and integration.
- The Forum was advised that public consultation would need to take place on the local authority's proposal to cease to provide any form of financial subsidy for mainstream post-16 students commencing a new course of study with effect from 1 September 2016. The Chairwoman of the Children and Young People Committee pointed out that Committee members had discussed which services they would like to protect in the event of additional funding becoming available and that home to school transport had been one of the areas identified.
- Following a comment, it was confirmed that Community Impact Assessments in respect of the services affected by the savings had been presented to the Children and Young People Committee and were available on the Council's website.

It was resolved to note the report.

117. COMPOSITION OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM: UPDATE

The Schools Forum was reminded that, at its meeting held on 16th October 2015, it had received a report on the need to review its composition in order to comply with the requirements of the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 and the Schools Forum and Operational Good Practice Guide. The report of the Clerk was now submitted which provided an update on developments since the last meeting.

It was reported verbally that the academy proprietors of the alternative provision school had now been contacted with a view to them appointing a representative. Additionally, it was noted that the election of academies members had been discussed in a primary academy trust group meeting which had indicated a wish to see primary academies represented separately. The Governor Advisory Group had likewise indicated a view that governors should continue to be included amongst the academies members. Members were reminded that under the Regulations the Forum could not specify who the representatives of the academies should be as this was a matter for the academy proprietors.

However the Forum might, at the appropriate time, wish to consider whether to encourage academies to include representation of various groups and phases amongst their membership, and to reflect pupil proportions across all academies when electing their representatives.

During discussion, a Forum member pointed out, for clarification, that the meeting of academy trust chairs referred to in paragraph 2.4 of the report was a meeting of secondary academy trust chairs and did not include primary academy chairs.

It was resolved to note the report and the verbal update.

118. FORWARD PLAN

The forward plan was noted.

119. ASSESSMENT FROM SUB-GROUP MEETINGS AND FEEDBACK FROM HEAD TEACHERS' STEERING GROUPS

There were no updates

120. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting would be held on Friday 15th January 2016.

The agreed dates for future meetings of the Forum beyond January were as follows:

- 10 a.m. Friday 15th January 2016
- 10 a.m. Wednesday 16th March 2016
- 10 a.m. Friday 24th June 2016.

Dates for meetings beyond June 2016 were noted as follows:

- 10 a.m. Friday 14th October 2016
- 10 a.m. Wednesday 14th December 2016*
- 10 a.m. Friday 27th January 2017*
- 10 a.m. Friday 17th March 2017
- 10 a.m. Friday 7th July 2017

NB:

- (a) * Dates may be subject to change if a meeting is held in early January 2017 as proposed in minute 114 (f) above in place of the existing December 2016 and January 2017 dates; and
- (b) An extraordinary meeting may be convened in April to discuss fairer funding formula (minute 115 (e) above refers).

Chairman
15th January 2016