

## **CAMBRIDGESHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM: MINUTES**

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016

**Time:** 9.30am – 11.10am

**Place:** Kreis Viersen Room, Shire Hall, Cambridge

**Present:** P Hodgson (Chairman), S Blyth, T Bryden (substitute for S Connell), C Carlisle, N Crawley-Lyons, J Culpin, T Davies, A Day, L Murphy, D Parfitt, A Reeder, A Rodger (Vice-Chairman), K Taylor and M Woods

### Observers

Councillor P Downes	Cambridgeshire County Council
Councillor D Harty	Cambridgeshire County Council
Councillor J Whitehead	Cambridgeshire County Council
G Fewtrell	Teachers' Unions

### Officers

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

**Apologies:** S Connell, K Evans, J Harrison, T Jefford, S Livesey, B Smethurst and R Waldau

## **ACTION**

### **121. INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman noted that there were new members attending their first meeting of the Cambridgeshire Schools Forum and invited members to introduce themselves.

### **122. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the inclusion of K Taylor in the list of apologies recorded for the meeting.

The following matters arising were raised:

#### **(a) Minute 114 (b) – Special Educational Needs (SEND) Workshop Feedback**

It was noted that this item was included later on the agenda.

The Service Director: Strategy and Commissioning reported that **she would be arranging to meet with the Vice-Chairman of the Schools Forum to discuss SEND funding as indicated in the minute.**

**M Teasdale**

**(b) Minute 114 (d) – Schools Budget Setting 2016/17: Update**

The Strategic Finance Manager (Children's and Schools) advised of his understanding 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.**

**S Surtees**

**(c) Minute 104 (e) – Behaviour and Attendance Improvement Partnership (BAIP) Devolved Funding Formula**

The Strategic Finance Manager (Children's and Schools) reported that he would be meeting lead officers for BAIP in early February and **that it was anticipated that a report would be submitted to a subsequent meeting of the Schools Forum.**

**M Wade/  
T Jefford**

**(d) Minute 114 (f) – Growth Fund and Falling Rolls Criteria 2016/17**

With respect to the suggestion in the minute that meeting dates should be reviewed, the Strategic Finance Manager (Children's and Schools) commented **that it would be prudent to await further details regarding the new fairer funding formula before reviewing meeting dates.**

**M Wade/  
Democratic  
Services**

**(e) Minute 115 (c) – Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)**

Officers confirmed that the fuller IDACI data and information on the impact of deprivation measures on early years had been circulated as requested in the minute. The Strategic Finance Manager (Children's and Schools) indicated that **he had yet to discuss the decline in the percentage of primary school pupils registered for free school meals with the Strategic Policy and Early Years Operations Manager.**

**M Wade/  
S Surtees**

The letter had been sent to the Education Minister on behalf of the Schools Forum expressing concerns at the late adjustments to the IDACI data and the lack of transitional arrangements.

**(f) Minute 115 (e) - Next Steps**

The Strategic Finance Manager (Children's and Schools) reported that the latest expectation was that the consultation on the fairer funding formula would be published towards the end of February 2016. The next meeting of the Forum was scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> March 2016 and **it might therefore be appropriate for the fairer funding formula consultation to form the single issue for discussion at that meeting.**

**M Wade/  
Democratic  
Services**

## 123. SCHOOLS BUDGET 2016/17: DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG) UPDATE

The Strategic Finance Manager (Children's and Schools) presented a summary update on the schools budget setting issues for consideration for 2016/17.

### (a) DSG Allocation

The following key areas were highlighted:

- The DSG settlement for 2016/17 was largely as anticipated with the schools block and early years block as previously reported to the Schools Forum.
- There had been an increase of £1m in Department for Environment (DfE) funding for the DSG high needs block which had not been anticipated. It would therefore not be necessary to transfer £0.5m from the schools block for special school places or Further Education college places as previously anticipated and would provide a contingency to support any increase in high needs numbers during 2016/17.
- The total estimated DSG funding was £418,566.732.
- There was uncertainty over the impact of the implementation of the national living wage. Moreover, the funding rates to Early Years Providers would need to be reviewed on receipt of further information from the DfE in respect of the extension to 30 hours of free childcare.
- DfE had agreed to purchase a single copyright licence which meant that local authorities and schools no longer needed to negotiate individual licences. The overall cost had increased by approximately £13k and the final distribution totals had been adjusted accordingly.
- The updated distribution totals for budget setting purposes were shown in Appendix A to the report. Appendix B set out the full list of formula factors and values to be applied in 2016/17.

Forum members commented on the uncertainty faced by early year's providers pending confirmation of proposals relating to the extension of free childcare. The Strategic Finance Manager commented that it was unclear whether there would be a separate consultation on proposals for early year's funding or whether this would be combined with the fairer funding consultation. **He indicated that he was due to speak with the relevant official at DfE shortly and undertook to try to seek clarification on when proposals relating to early year's funding might be published.**

**Martin Wade**

### (b) Application of IDACI Data

The Strategic Finance Manager (Children's and Schools) reported that, in the light of the discussion at the previous meeting of the Forum, he had made a disapplication request to the DfE for permission to apply the

previous year's Income Deprivation affecting Children Index (IDACI) data in order to provide a smoother transition for those schools most adversely affected by the changes. If approved this would provide some level of protection in 2016/17 and would also mean that those schools where need had increased or schools in new communities which had been assessed for the first time would receive the benefit of the updated information. This was a ministerial decision and there was no guarantee it would be approved but if it was applied there would be an increase in the overall amount allocated through IDACI, albeit that this would be offset by the reduction in the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) requirement. To date no response had been received. (\* see update below)

A detailed discussion took place on the application of the IDACI data. In particular, Forum members were asked to indicate whether they supported the application of the new IDACI data published by the DfE or whether, alternatively, they supported applying the previous year's IDACI data for those schools most adversely impacted by the revisions.

#### During discussion

- Some members expressed a preference to apply the new data, with affected schools being protected through MFG. Officers confirmed that there were no other mechanisms or contingencies through which the most adversely impacted schools could be financially protected.
- Other Forum members, whilst recognising that application of the previous year's IDACI data was not a long term option, expressed support for applying the previous year's data in view of the significant adverse impact for some schools' budgets and the limited time available to them to revise budgets.
- Reference was made to the likelihood that there would be a further period of turbulence when the new fair funding formula was implemented and it was therefore suggested that there was merit in promoting transitional smoothing arrangements in order to minimise further disruption in the coming year.
- The Strategic Finance Manager (Children's and Schools) explained the relative financial implications for the Basic Entitlement of applying the new IDACI data or applying a mix of the previous year's data for those schools most adversely affected and the new data for the remainder. In particular, under the latter option it was noted that all schools would see a slight reduction in the Basic Entitlement.
- In response to a question on which schools would be defined as "most adversely affected", it was explained that the definition used was those schools suffering a loss of more than £50 per pupil on the basis of the new IDACI data.
- Reservation was expressed that the new funding formula would resolve schools funding issues.
- There did not appear to be an appetite for schools to run deficit budgets to cover shortfalls.

Following a vote on the options presented for the use of the IDACI data, **it was resolved:**

**To support, subject to DfE approval, applying the previous year's IDACI data for those schools most adversely impacted by the revisions to the data, with a view to smoothing the transition to the new arrangements.** **M Wade**

(**Note:** On Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> January the Local Authority received notification that the disapplication request to use the 2014/15 IDACI data for those schools most adversely impacted by the data refresh had been approved. Following this approval, officers submitted the final budget data to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) applying the previous year's proportions to a total of 31 schools (where the data changes would have resulted in a reduction in IDACI funding of £50 per pupil or greater). Although this provides some level of protection for the most adversely impacted schools, some schools may still see a reduction in IDACI funding which will result in the receipt of MFG protection. Equally however, schools where deprivation has genuinely increased or schools in new communities where postcodes have been assessed for the first time, will see the benefit of the updated information.)

**(c) De-delegations from Maintained Primary School Budgets**

The Strategic Finance Manager (Children's and Schools) reminded the Schools Forum that, at its meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2015, the Primary School Maintained headteachers had agreed the de-delegations and proposed rates, except for the de-delegation relating to trade union time, as a review of the current funding methodology was underway.

Reference was made to an addendum to the report which had been circulated and which now set out proposals for the Trade Unions Facilities time de-delegation. Following discussions with the Trade Union representatives, it was proposed that this de-delegation remain at £1.10 per pupil. It had been agreed that the main County Council contribution to the Trade Union Facilities budget would be removed, with the County Council instead making a small contribution to cover centrally employed teachers.

The Primary Maintained School headteachers present resolved:-

**To agree the Trade Union Facilities time delegation as set out in the addendum report.**

**(d) Next Steps**

Subject to the approval of the Children and Young People Committee at its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and any changes to the Basic Entitlement (due to revised pupil number variations for new/expanding schools; the outcome of the IDACI disapplication and updated rates information), the amounts shown in the table at Appendix B to the report

would be submitted to the Education Funding Agency on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016 and used to calculate individual primary and secondary schools budgets shares.

It was intended to publish illustrative budgets in early February once any outstanding data was available, with budget toolkits for primary schools being issued at the same time. Draft budgets for nursery and special schools would be published in Mid February.

**The Forum noted the report.**

**124. PILOT TO SUPPORT PRIMARY AGED PUPILS WITH SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH (SEMH) DIFFICULTIES: PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Schools Forum received a report providing an update on the progress of the two projects in Cambridge and Wisbech for primary aged children who presented with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties. The report explained that provision was short term and flexible and designed to meet the needs of each individual pupil. A co-ordinated multi agency approach had been adopted to support the child and family as well as staff in the pilots.

It was noted that a key principle of the project was to work closely with mainstream school staff in the child's home school to enhance their knowledge and understanding of SEMH difficulties and effective interventions.

Funding had been secured for one year only and both pilots would run until the end of December 2016. The effectiveness of the project would be evaluated and would include exploration of funding options to enable continuation of the provision.

The initial findings of the project were set out in paragraph 6 of the report.

During discussion, it was noted that there had been no permanent primary exclusions in the period to the end of the Autumn term. In response to a question as to whether this was an indicator of the effectiveness of the pilot, it was confirmed that three children in attendance at the provision would otherwise have been permanently excluded.

A question was raised regarding transition from pilot to wider implementation and particular reference was made to the importance of distilling the learning from the pilot. In response it was confirmed that future work would include reviewing outcomes and developing proposals for implementation of a sustainable model of support for primary aged pupils with SEMH.

**It was resolved to note the report.**

## **125. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEND) ACTION PLAN**

The Forum received a report which provided an update on the Cambridgeshire SEND Action Plan 2016 – 2020. A copy of the Action Plan was attached at Appendix A to the report.

The Head of Service: Commissioning and Enhanced Services introduced the report and responded to a number of questions from Forum members.

**It was agreed that the School Forum should be represented on the task force working on the SEND Action Plan to ensure that risks and resources were reflected in the work. It was suggested that Dr Alan Rodger, Vice-Chairman, should be appointed as the Forum's representative if he was willing to sit on the group. A glossary of the initials used to denote officers' names in the plan also was requested.**

**M Teasdale/  
J Davies**

It was suggested that any further comments on the Action Plan should be submitted directly to Judith Davies, Head of Service: Commissioning Enhanced Services.

During further discussion, reference was made to the reduced resources available for child and adolescent mental health services in Cambridgeshire. In particular, concern was expressed at the increasingly long waiting times for specialist mental health assessments. The Service Director: Strategy and Commissioning acknowledged the pressures facing child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and outlined the work being undertaken by the Joint Commissioning Group, involving health and local authority partners, to address those pressures. It was also reported that both the Children and Young People and Health Committees had expressed their concerns regarding the waiting lists for CAMH services and were receiving monitoring reports on the issue. In the light of the concerns expressed at the Forum, **the Strategic Director agreed to submit an information paper to a future meeting of the Forum outlining the issues facing CAMHS and the action already taking place and planned to address these issues.**

**M Teasdale**

**It was resolved to note the report.**

## **126. FORWARD PLAN**

The forward plan was noted.

## **127. ASSESSMENT FROM SUB-GROUP MEETINGS AND FEEDBACK FROM HEAD TEACHERS' STEERING GROUPS**

There were no updates

## **128. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2016 and not on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March as incorrectly stated on the agenda.

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

- 10 a.m. Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016
- 10 a.m. Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2016
- 10 a.m. Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2016\*
- 10 a.m. Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017\*
- 10 a.m. Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2017
- 10 a.m. Friday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2017

Chairman  
16<sup>th</sup> March 2016