

CAMBRIDGESHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM: MINUTES

Date: Friday 14 October 2016

Time: 10.00am – 11.50am

Place: Kreis Viersen Room, Shire Hall, Cambridge

Present: P Hodgson (Chairman), Dr A Rodger (Vice Chairman), A Bishop (substituting for D Parfitt), S Blyth, M Carter (substituting for A Hutchinson), S Connell, T Davies, A Goulding (substituting for J Digby), Dr I McEwen (substituting for M Woods), A Matthews, A Reeder, B Smethurst, S Tinsley and R Waldau

Observers

G Fewtrell	Teachers' Union
Councillor P Downes	Cambridgeshire County Council
Councillor J Whitehead	Cambridgeshire County Council

H Allen, MP	Member of Parliament for South Cambridgeshire
P Wade	Advisor to Mrs Allen

Officers

K Grimwade, M Moore, E Sanderson, S Surtees, M Wade and
R Greenhill (Clerk)

Apologies: Forum Members: L Calow, K Coates, J Digby, K Evans, A Hutchinson, J North, D Parfitt, Dr K Taylor and M Woods

Observers: Councillor D Harty

Officers: J Davies, M Teasdale, Dr H Phelan

ACTION

146. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Clerk reported apologies for absence and substitutions as recorded above.

The Chairman welcomed Heidi Allen, the Member of Parliament for South Cambridgeshire, to the meeting as an observer and invited her to join discussion.

147. MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 24 JUNE 2016

The minutes of the meeting on 24 June 2016 were confirmed by those present to be a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The following outcomes of actions arising from previous meetings were noted:

**(a) Minute 132: National Funding Formula Consultation Stage 1:
Draft Response to Question 18**

A copy was circulated to Forum members by email on 10 October 2016.

(b) Minute 139: Maintained Schools and Dedicated Schools

Grant (DSG) Financial Health

- An update on DSG spend had been included as a standing item on the Schools Forum agenda, including a mid-year update on the use of DSG carry forward;
- Confirmation by the Director of Learning that the net local authority budget was not contributing to any surplus revenue balances was emailed to members on 10 October 2016;
- The table at Appendix 1 was revised to show maintained schools' revenue balances as a percentage of the school's overall budget and circulated to members by email on 10 August 2016;
- Updated guidance on managing the cost of redundancies was circulated to members by email on 5 October 2015.

**(c) Minute 141: Composition of Cambridgeshire Schools Forum
– Update**

A further update to be provided at the Forum's December meeting in the light of the expected announcement on the future role and composition of schools forums by central government.

Democratic Services Officer

**(d) Minute 142: Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH):
Update**

Details of positive feedback received from a number of focus groups for the parents of children experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties to be circulated to members for information.

**Service Director,
Strategy and
Commissioning**

148. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) PEER REVIEW

With the Chairman's permission, this item was moved forward from the published agenda to accommodate officer attendance and the Quality Assurance Manager circulated a revised version of the report on the SEND Peer Review (copy attached at Appendix A) which had been updated to reflect information obtained at a meeting with primary headteachers' representatives earlier in the week. The review would take place on the 15-16 November 2016 and would focus on children and young people aged between 5-16 with additional needs who did not have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This group had been chosen as they were known to be vulnerable to under-achievement compared to children with a similar level of need in other parts of the country. Feedback from the

review would be shared with partners and Cambridgeshire County Council's Children and Young People (CYP) Policy and Service Committee in January 2017 and an action plan would be produced.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- Heidi Allen MP said that MPs' Offices received a lot of communication from the parents of children and young people with SEND. **It was agreed that it would be helpful to include MPs' Offices within the groups invited to contribute to the Peer Review;**
- Given the pressures on the High Needs Block the review would be used to help identify any specific resource issues relating to children with SEND, but without a Statement or EHCP;
- It was hoped that over time the Peer Review process would provide useful comparative data across the Eastern region.

**Quality
Assurance
Manager**

It was resolved to:

1. Note the information provided about the forthcoming Peer Review;
2. **Circulate a copy of the paper submitted to the CYP Policy and Service Committee in January 2017 to members of the Forum for information.**

**Democratic
Services
Officer**

149. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG) FINANCIAL POSITION 2016-17

The Strategic Finance Manager (Children and Schools) presented a report providing a summary of the overall 2016-17 DSG financial position as at the end of August 2016. Subject to any further academy conversions the estimated DSG for 2016-17 would be £241k. The majority of these funds would be delegated out, but a smaller element was retained centrally to fund support in specific areas such as high needs and special educational needs.

At the end of August 2016 a total overspend of £1.124m was forecast against the available DSG allocations. This was due mainly to:

- An increase in the number of special school places required;
- Pressures on the High Needs top-up budget, relating mainly to the increasing number of Post 16 students with Statements or EHCPs;
- Pressures on the SEN Placements budget due to the need to fund alternative provision for high needs pupils when no special school places were available within the county.

The overall position was similar to that at the same time in the last financial year. DSG carry-forward of £2.45m would be used to offset

these current pressures and to meet additional commitments described in the report, but this was not sustainable in the long-term. A review of how the High Needs Block was funded was being carried out to see what reductions might be achieved whilst the promotion of previously identified good practice had already reduced unit costs.

The following points were noted in discussion:

- Table 4.3 showed that the number of pupils with a Statement or EHCP in Cambridgeshire was 20% higher than the national average. Members felt that it was vital to obtain evidence of whether this was due to a difference in threshold levels in the county or whether there was a significantly higher proportion of children and young people with the highest levels of needs. **It was agreed that this should be addressed as matter of urgency in advance of the Forum's meeting in December when it would need to consider whether to move a further £1m from the DSG to the High Needs block. The Vice-Chairman said that he would be happy to work with officers to take this forward;**
- Members noted that different funding arrangements and levels of support available to children with additional needs in other local authority areas might lead to a smaller number of applications for EHCPs;
- The role of early support and intervention for children with additional needs was highlighted as a way to attempt to reduce the number requiring an EHCP;
- Officers were aware of other local authorities facing even greater in-year pressures on their DSG budget;
- Whether there was a tendency over time for a degree of 'band creep', with more pupils being assessed as having a higher level of need;
- The high costs associated with placing children and young people with additional needs out of area;
- Early Years access funding was being removed with future supported being routed through the EHCP process;
- Heidi Allen MP acknowledged the difficulty and frustration caused by the delay in announcing the outcome of the funding formula consultation conducted by central government. She had asked a Question on this issue of the Secretary of State for Education in the House of Commons the previous week and she was continuing to voice her concerns at the delay to her Ministerial colleagues and officials;
- There was concern that a move to a funding formula which did not allow any local flexibility in the allocation of funds would have significant implications for the resourcing of the High Needs Block with Cambridgeshire.

Service Director,
Strategy and
Commissioning

It was resolved to:

1. Note and comment on the report as recorded above.

**150. NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA AND SCHOOLS BUDGET SETTING
2017-18 UPDATE**

The Strategic Finance Manager (Children and Schools) introduced a report providing an update on the National Funding Formula and Schools Budget Setting for 2017-18. The Secretary of State for Education had announced in July 2016 that the implementation of the next stage of the national funding formula would be delayed until 2018-19. This had significant implications for the funding available in the next financial year. The following points were noted in discussion:

- The removal of the Education Services Grant (ESG) and re-assignment of £117m nationally from the ESG retained duties budget to the Schools Block (which equated to £1.24m in Cambridgeshire) represented a technical adjustment to the funding blocks rather than the addition of new money;
- On receipt of a definitive list of the former ESG functions and duties to be discharged the required levels of retained funding would be calculated and submitted to the Schools Forum for approval, subject to the approval process being confirmed;
- The funding contained no increases to take account of inflation so the cost of any inflationary uplifts during the period (for example through wage increases) would need to be absorbed;
- To minimise turbulence for individual schools it was proposed to make minimal local changes to the 2017-18 funding formula other than the necessary technical changes;
- Consideration would be required in December about the possible transfer of funds from the Schools Block to accommodate pressures on the High Needs Block and Growth Funding;
- The current value and total estimate for de-delegation for 2016-17 was noted. Discussions would be held with headteachers' groups and revised amounts would be calculated upon receipt of updated pupil data and presented for approval to a future meeting of the Forum;
- There had been an increase of around 9% in rateable values county-wide. Academies received 80% relief on rates;
- The implications of the Apprenticeship Levy on maintained schools was not yet clear. Work on this was in hand;
- The current Cambridgeshire Public Services Network (CPSN) broadband contract would end in 2018. It had not yet been decided whether funding beyond that point would be retained centrally or distributed to individual schools;
- Some members felt that the Schools Admission Service was experiencing difficulty in processing applications quickly and noted the implications for school budgets if pupils were not allocated available places before the census date. **It was agreed**

<p>that it would be useful to know how the level of expenditure on the Admissions Service for maintained schools in Cambridgeshire compared with that of other similar local authorities;</p>	<p>Strategic Finance Manager</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members asked for clarification of whether Section 106 money could include children who crossed county borders to attend school. Heidi Allen MP said that the Planning Officer at South Cambridgeshire District Council would be happy to discuss any relevant issues with County Council officers. Dr Ian McEwen said that he would like the opportunity to contribute to any such discussions; • The Vice Chairman highlighted the numerous and varied pressures on schools funding including but not limited to growth, pensions and inflation, changes to the Education Services Grant, increasing levels of demand for High Needs block support, rateable values and the apprenticeship levy. In the light of these unprecedented pressures he asked whether the Education Select Committee might consider holding a one day emergency data collection session to raise the profile of this issue. Heidi Allen MP noted that Lucy Frazer, the Member of Parliament for South East Cambridgeshire, was a member of the Education Select Committee and offered to raise this matter with her. It was agreed that the Vice Chairman would draft a letter on this subject in consultation with the Chairman and the Strategic Finance Manager for Children and Schools to be sent to the Chairman of the Education Select Committee by the Chairman of the Schools Forum. Councillor Downes said that he would welcome the opportunity to contribute to this work if invited; • Councillor Downes questioned the mechanism for the future distribution of the National Funding Formula and the implications for the existence and role of schools forums which he felt had significant implications with regard to fairness and oversight. 	<p>Director of Learning</p> <p>Chairman, Vice Chairman and the Strategic Finance Manager.</p>

It was resolved to:

1. Note and comment of the report, including the timetable for decisions required by the Schools Forum.

151. EARLY YEARS NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA UPDATE

The Learning/ Schools Funding Accountant presented a report providing an update on the Early Years National Funding Formula. The Department for Education (DfE) published a consultation on the Early Years National Funding Formula on 11 August 2016 with a deadline for submissions of 22 September 2016. The Government's response was expected to be published in early November 2016 and officers would then consult with local Early Years providers.

The proposed transition funding would mitigate the impact on Early Years providers for two years, but beyond that period the reduction in

funding was of the order of around 40% making maintained nursery schools financially unviable. This was a national issue across the sector, but the situation was exacerbated in Cambridgeshire due to low baseline funds.

The following points were made in discussion of the report:

- There appeared to be an expectation that parents' contributions would be increased to help reduce the shortfall, but many maintained nursery schools were located in areas of economic deprivation;
- A high percentage of pupils in maintained nursery schools had an identified additional need in terms of having English as an Additional Language (EAL);
- Since the introduction of free school meals (FSM) for all pupils in Reception and Key Stage 1 it has become more difficult to identify pupils who would qualify for FSM by right until Key Stage 2. Officers were working with schools in Fenlands and East Cambridgeshire to try to obtain this information via standard data collection. The Early Years Pupil Premium meant that some children within this group could be identified as they entered school, but not all parents chose to identify themselves as eligible;
- Heidi Allen MP said that she was proposing that in future the children of families eligible for Universal Credit would automatically be provided with FSM to increase take-up;
- Nursery schools were not permitted to obtain academy status;
- The Early Years Reference Group representative highlighted additional concerns about the impact of the increase in business rates and the introduction of the National Living Wage. Early Years representatives felt that the proposed changes were contrary to the principle of universal access to education for all;
- Councillor Whitehead noted that all children aged between three and four and some two year olds were entitled to some free Early Years education, but that the County Council did not have the funds to meet the shortfall in funding which was being described.

In the light of the various competing pressures on the limited funds available it was resolved to:

1. Defer the decision on whether to approve the planned centrally retained amounts for 2017-18 set out in Section 2.7 of the report until the December meeting when this could be considered as part of the wider financial position.

152. GROWTH FUND AND FALLING ROLLS CRITERIA 2017-18

The Strategic Finance Manager (Children and Schools) presented a report setting out the current position on both the Growth Fund and Falling Rolls Fund and seeking approval to (i) increase the Growth Fund from £2m to £2.5m in 2017-18 and (ii) approve the criteria to be applied

for accessing growth funding from April 2017, subject to Education Funding Agency approval.

Total commitments to date from the Growth Fund for 2016-17 were £2.01m and following the outcome of the October 2016 census further allocations were anticipated, with the final in-year overspend being met from the one-off Dedicated Support Grant (DSG) carry forward. There were two primary schools, one secondary school and one special school due to open in September 2017 which would cause significant additional expenditure on growth funding during the next financial year. It was proposed to take the same approach to the criteria for accessing growth funding as in the current financial year.

It was resolved to:

1. Defer the decision about whether to increase the Growth Fund from £2m to £2.5m in 2017-18 until the December meeting when it could be considered as part of the wider financial position;
2. Approve the criteria to be applied for accessing growth funding from April 2017, subject to Education Funding Agency approval.

153. NEW SCHOOLS FUNDING CRITERIA 2017-18

The Strategic Finance Manager (Children and Schools) introduced a report setting out the proposed approach for revenue funding for new schools for 2017-18 in the light of guidance provided by the Education Funding Agency (EFA). The local authority remained responsible for meeting pre-opening costs for new schools and for providing sites for these schools. Both the pre-opening revenue costs and the post-opening diseconomies funding were met from the centrally retained Growth Fund. Once open, the schools would be funded by the EFA on the same basis as other academies and free schools in the same local authority area.

It was resolved to:

1. Approve the proposed approach to funding pre-opening costs for new schools as set out in Appendix A to the report and to post-opening diseconomies funding as set out in Appendix B to the report in 2017-18.

154. FORWARD AGENDA PLAN

Members noted that an additional meeting might need to be arranged before December when the Government's full response to the first stage of the schools and high needs consultation process and proposals for the second stage of the consultation were published. It was otherwise resolved to:

1. Note the Forward Agenda Plan.
- 155. FEEDBACK FROM HEADTEACHERS' STEERING GROUPS AND SUB-GROUP MEETINGS**

Heidi Allen told members about a teacher training recruitment fair being held on 17 November 2016 which would be followed up by a further teacher recruitment event to be held at Anglia Ruskin University in February 2017 and asked that they circulate the details through their professional networks.

- 156. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next planned meeting would be held on Wednesday 14 December 2016 at 10.00am in the Kreis Viersen Room, Shire Hall, Cambridge.

Chairman

Appendix A

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) PEER REVIEW NOVEMBER 2016 **(Revised version tabled at the meeting on 14 October 2016)**

To: **Cambridgeshire Schools Forum**

Date: **14 October 2016**

From: **Meredith Teasdale, Service Director, Strategy and Commissioning**

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform Schools Forum of the Council's participation in a pilot Peer Review based on a new SEND Framework developed with regional colleagues. The Peer Review will focus on outcomes for children and young people with SEND and this paper outlines the format of the Peer Review and the involvement of schools and partners.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 All local authorities in the Eastern region were involved in developing a model for peer review focusing on SEND. The SEND Peer Review is part of the Eastern Region's work on improving outcomes for all pupils. It focuses on the provision and outcomes for pupils with SEN and disabilities as well as the implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014. The pilot Peer Review will target children and young people aged 5-16 (Reception to Year 11) who are at the 'SEN support' level i.e. those with additional special educational needs to their peers who do not require an Education, Health and Care (EHC) assessment or plan and who do not have a statement of special educational needs. The proposed key theme is 'improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND'. The four subsidiary questions will be:

1. Are children identified at the right time?
2. What has the greatest impact for improving outcomes for pupils receiving pupil premium and SEN support?
3. What are the barriers for schools in adopting best practice?
4. What is the role of other agencies in supporting and challenging schools to improve?

2.2 The target group has been chosen as the primary area of the review because we know that outcomes for this group in Cambridgeshire are poor compared to other areas, whereas outcomes for children and young people with an EHC plan are often better than other areas. The lead SEND Ofsted/CQC inspector, Mary Raynor, has also indicated in briefing and preparation sessions that she will be particularly focusing on this area in inspections. The age range has been limited from the 0-25 age range that is the subject of the SEND reforms to 5-16 to allow the peer reviewers to look at services and outcomes for the target group in depth.

3.0 OVERVIEW OF PEER REVIEW PROCESS

3.1 Prior to the peer review, Council officers from SEND Specialist Services will be making contact with a small group of schools to conduct an in depth survey regarding their arrangements for pupils receiving SEN support. The criteria for schools being asked to take part in this survey are based on KS2 2016 information and KS4 2015 information where more than 50% of pupils receiving SEN support have achieved the expected levels. There will also be a criteria taking into account the progress made for children with SEN support. These criteria do not take into account all of the nuances of the picture for SEN support in Cambridgeshire, but provide consistent criteria to sample schools for the survey. The information from this survey will be collated, anonymised and shared with the peer review team.
SEND Specialist Services will also organise 3 groups for children/young people across the age range to gather their views and experiences. As with the survey, this information will be collated, anonymised and shared with the peer review team.
The third piece of work prior to the Peer Review is a selection of case file audits. SEND Specialist Services will be auditing 10 case files, some of which will have multi-agency involvement. Individual schools may be contacted as part of this process.

3.2 The Review will take place on Tuesday 15 and Wednesday 16 November. The team will be based at council offices, and will conduct interviews, focus groups and review evidence on both days. There will be several focus groups including schools, the full list of focus groups is below:

- Headteachers of schools where outcomes for pupils with SEN support are good (mixed primary and secondary)
- Headteachers of schools where outcomes for pupils with SEN support is a concern (primary)
- Headteachers of schools where outcomes for pupils with SEN support is a concern (secondary)
- Parents and Carers of SEN supported pupils (to include SEN/FSM if possible)
- SENCos (mixed primary and secondary)
- Local Area Officers/Practitioners
- Health Commissioning Officers

Invitations to focus groups will be sent out to schools over the next few weeks.

- 3.3 The peer review team will aim to identify the barriers that other schools have faced when attempting to deliver good outcomes for pupils with SEN support and determine how the local authority and other local area partners can support and challenge schools to find ways around those barriers.
- 3.4 The Peer team will base their findings on:
- Documentation provided including from case audits, surveys and outcomes from children and young people's groups
 - Interviews with officers and leaders from relevant teams
 - Interviews with other officers as necessary, e.g. from Data
 - Interviews with Members
 - Focus groups with children and young people and parents/carers
 - Focus groups with Headteachers and SEN Coordinators from a variety of schools
 - The results of a survey conducted with some schools to inform the review
- 3.5 After the end of the review, the Education Consultant will send a written feedback report within a week. The structure of the report will cover:
- Current outcomes context
 - The focus of the review, key questions, review methodology
 - Strategies for SEN support identified by successful schools
 - Findings against the key questions including areas of strength and areas for development
 - Recommendations
 - Offers of support from other Local Areas
- As this peer review is a pilot for the framework, feedback on the process and results will also be taken to the regional SEND network meeting and the Assistant Director regional network. Update reports will also be provided for the sector led improvement newsletter and for the termly DCS meeting. This report will be shared with partners, particularly those who were involved in the review.
- 3.6 The Coordinator for the review is Emily Sanderson, Quality Assurance Manager. If there is any further information needed, please do not hesitate to contact her at emily.sanderson@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 The Forum is requested to note the information regarding the upcoming SEND Peer Review.