

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Cheshire West and Chester Schools Forum

Monday 12 February 2018
4.30pm – 6.30 pm

To be held at

Queen's Park High School
Queen's Park Road
Handbridge
Chester CH4 7AE

Refreshments will be available from 4pm

Schools Forum Clerk
Children and Families
Cheshire West and Chester Council
Telephone 01244 972901



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Cheshire West and Chester Schools Forum

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Agenda for Cheshire West and Chester Schools Forum 12 February 2018

1.	4.30	Introductions and apologies		
2.	4.35	Minutes and matters arising of last meeting 2.1 To agree the minutes from part two of the meeting held 15 January 2018 2.2 Matters arising		Page 4-7
3.	4.50	Early Years funding formula for February submission	Natalie Cole	To follow
4.	5.10	Special Educational Needs (SEN) Funding for Mainstream and Special Schools – Funding from the High Needs Block 2018-2019	Debbie Gittins	Page 8-11
5.	5.40	Central Spend budgets 2018-2019	Natalie Cole	Page 12-16
6.	6.00	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2017-2018 Forecast Third Review	Natalie Cole	Page 17-18
7.	6.20	Any other business		
8.	6.30 Finish	Next meeting: Monday 12 March 2018 Queen's Park High School tbc Schools Forum and finance sub group meeting schedule and forward plan		Page 19

**Cheshire West and Chester
Schools Forum
12 February 2018**

Agenda Item 02

Draft minutes Cheshire West and Chester Schools Forum, Queen's Park High School, Chester, 15 January 2018

Present:	Representing:	Officers:
Marie Allen	Academies - Special	Natalie Cole
Cheryl Bullen	Primary headteachers	Charlotte Fenn (Clerk)
David Charlton (Chair)	Secondary headteachers	Mark Parkinson
David Curry	Secondary headteachers	
Sarah Curtis	Primary headteachers	
Kate Docherty	Primary headteachers	
Kerry Forrester	Primary headteachers	
Greg Foster	Unions	
John Freeman	Secondary governors	Official observers:
Carol Gahan	Primary governors	Councillor Meardon
Duncan Haworth	Primary governors	
Luci Jones	Academies - Primary/Secondary	Observers/public:
Kath Lloyd	Primary governors	Two attended
John Murray	Academies - Primary/Secondary	
Sue Pearson	Primary governors	
David Rowlands	Secondary governors	
Katie Tyrie	Nursery headteachers	

1. Introductions and Apologies

Apologies were received from Paula Adolph, Sue Anderson, Hilary Berry (not reported at meeting), Ian Devereux Roberts, Steve Dool, Francis Kwateng, Sam Myers-Whittaker, Andy Stewart (not reported at meeting), Sarah Worthington, Caroline Vile, Sue Yates and Harry Ziman.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising of Last Meeting

2.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2017 were agreed as a correct record subject to the following correction:

page 8, item 6 Initial Planning for DSG Allocations for 2018-2019 and Budget setting, fourth paragraph, £16k should read as £16m.

2.2 Matters Arising

2.2.1 Item 2.2 Matters Arising 2.2.1 item 5 Schools Forum High Needs Sub Group Report on Special Educational Needs (SEN) Funding for Mainstream and Special Schools

Mark Parkinson, Director of Education, referred to the SEN data circulated to Forum members via email (8 January 2018). The data showed that CWAC had slightly higher numbers of children in specialist SEN provision, but the number of children in Out of Borough SEN provision was significantly lower than the national average.

Officers reported that there was one school still to be audited and therefore a report would not be available for the 19 January High Needs sub group meeting which would be postponed until the end of February.

2.2.2 Item 4 Early Years Funding Formula (EYFF) for 2018-2019

Councillor Meardon confirmed that a letter had been drafted but not sent as, following the recent cabinet reshuffle, a minister for this area not yet been appointed.

3. Budgets and Miscellaneous Expenditure

Mark Parkinson introduced the paper which set out the proposed allocation of the combined budgets element of the DSG for 2018-2019 and proposed expenditure against the miscellaneous budget line for 2018-2019.

It was noted that there was no change to the combined budgets configuration. Forum members' attention was drawn to table 2 which showed the realignment of budgets within the miscellaneous budget line to accommodate the increase to the Fischer Family Trust license charge.

David Curry sought clarification between the two £60k funding streams 'raising the participation age and 14-19 support' and Cheshire West Education Improvement Board (CWEIB). Mark Parkinson confirmed that the raising the participation age funds paid for the 14 – 19 Education Adviser, Bernadette O'Shea, to manage the six priorities in this area. The CWEIB funds paid for the five priorities commissioned by the Board which included the post-16 work carried out by the Teaching School Alliance, mental health audit, teacher recruitment, and SEN.

Mark Parkinson agreed to ask Bernadette O'Shea to provide an update to CWASH (Cheshire West and Chester Association of Secondary Headteachers).

Resolved that the Schools Forum agree the allocation and configuration of the combined budgets element of the DSG and the miscellaneous expenditure for the 2018-2019 financial year as set out in the paper [vote: unanimous].

4. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Allocations for 2018-2019 and Budget Setting

Natalie Cole, Finance Manager, introduced the report which confirmed the indicative DSG allocation for 2018-2019 and the draft budget proposals for the next financial year.

Forum members' attention was drawn to paragraph 5 which outlined the reasons for the £7.5m net increase in funding available for 2018-2019.

Forum members were informed that further details regarding high needs and commissioned places would be provided at the February meeting.

Forum members questioned why, following the increase in high needs funding, the amount transferred from the schools block, as per the High Needs sub group recommendations, had not been reduced. Natalie responded that the increase in High Needs block would still be needed as in part it reflected an increase in special school pupil numbers; there was also additional pressure due to the number of excluded pupils placed at The Bridge. It was also noted that the schools block had attracted additional funding of £3.5m due to an increase in the pupil population but the corresponding increase in the 0.5% would not be transferred to High Needs block.

Sue Pearson asked if there were statistics available on exclusions and comparisons with our statistical neighbours.

Mark Parkinson reported that this data was available and would be shared with Forum members. It was noted that exclusions in CWAC were normally lower than our statistical neighbours but they had gone up as had numbers nationally.

Forum members raised concerns as to what impact there would be when more schools hit the de-minims. Officers agreed to model the figures for 2019-2020 and bring them to the next Finance subgroup meeting for consideration.

Resolved that the Schools Forum

- i. approve the draft DSG budget proposals (vote: unanimous); and
- ii. note the next steps for confirming the DSG budget proposals for 2018-2019.

5. Draft of 2018-2019 School Funding Formula for January Submission

Natalie Cole introduced the report which detailed the draft School Funding Formula for 2018-2019 which took into account the decisions taken previously on the implementation of the National Funding Formula (NFF) factors and the October 2017 census data provided by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Forum members' attention was drawn to the revised appendices tabled at the meeting. The appendices had been revised following the re-issuing of the free school meals data by the ESFA on 12 January 2018 after the Forum papers had been circulated. Using the revised dataset had resulted in a slight increase in the basic entitlement.

Resolved that the Schools Forum approve the principles on which the funding formula is based for final submission to the ESFA as set out in the revised appendix C (vote School, Academy and PVI representatives: unanimous).

6. De-delegation – Proposals for 2018-2019

Natalie Cole introduced the report which set out the proposed amounts to be de-delegated by maintained primary and secondary schools for 2018-2019.

Forum members' attention was drawn to paragraph 7 which outlined the proposed rates for de-delegation for primary and secondary; the rates were less than the previous year due to the forecast underspend which would be carried forward.

Resolved that the Schools Forum agree the amounts to be de-delegated to the Local Authority for 2018-2019 as stated in the report. (vote mainstream primary and secondary school representatives: unanimous).

7. Any Other Business

Academy Representative Vacancy (primary/secondary)

It was noted that an email had been sent to academy proprietors seeking nominations for an academy representative. The deadline for responses was Friday 26 January; as yet no nominations had been received.

8. Next meeting

Next Schools Forum meeting Monday 12 February 2018 Queen's Park High School 4.30 - 6.30.

Agenda Item 04

**Special Educational Needs (SEN) Funding for Mainstream and Special Schools
– Funding from the High Needs Block 2018-2019**

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update Schools Forum on proposed changes to allocations from the High Needs Block for 2018-2019 for commissioned places and top up funding.

Recommendations

2. Schools Forum is asked to provide a view on the proposals within the report on financial arrangements for pupils with special educational needs in 2018-2019 for the following:
 - i. Proposed commissioned places in Special schools
 - ii. Commissioned places in other provisions
 - iii. Changes to Resource Provision funding
 - iv. Proposed changes to special school band funding rates

Background

3. At previous meetings of the Schools Forum a number of decisions have already been taken to changes in high needs funding and processes for 2018-2019. This includes the following package of measures recommended by the High Needs Sub Group and endorsed following wider consultation with all schools and academies in the Borough.
 - a) The transfer of 0.5% of funding from the schools block to the high needs block
 - b) A 3% reduction in mainstream funding across all bands
 - c) To apply an efficiency factor reduction to top up funding rates for special schools and academies
 - d) Agree in principle to the allocation of funding to deliver work on inclusion and workforce development in mainstream schools
 - e) Top up funding without a plan agreed prior to 2014 is agreed for two years only. This is in line with the two year top up funding process for requests after 2014 as already implemented.
 - f) Support the audit of SEN funding to be undertaken by internal audit and Associate School Improvement Advisors.
4. This report now details the remaining proposals for commissioned places and top up funding that will form the basis of high needs funding allocations for 2018-2019.

Commissioned places for 2018-2019

5. Special school commissioned places for 2018-2019
 Commissioned places were last reviewed in March 2017 taking into account planned places for 2017-2018 academic year admissions. Places in the 10 special schools and academies have again been reviewed for the 2018-2019 academic year, allowing for planned admissions, transfers and leavers. Commissioned places are proposed to be amended as detailed below for September 2018. Current places will continue to be funded for the remainder of the academic year.

Table 1 Proposed Commissioned Places in Special Schools

School	Current commissioned places Academic Year 2017-2018	Proposed increase academic Year places Sept 2018	Commissioned places Academic Year 2018-2019
Archers Brook School	75	0	75
Cloughwood Academy	60	0	60
Dee Banks School	110	0	110
Dorin Park School	126	4	130
Greenbank School	101	-2	99
Hebden Green School	112	0	112
Hinderton School	42	0	42
Oaklands School	150	5	155
Rosebank School	45	4	49
The Russet School	113	0	113
Total	934	11	945

6. Commissioned places in other provisions

Planned admissions for resource provision units, further education and sixth form high needs places in the Borough have also been reviewed for the 2018-2019 academic year. There are no changes proposed for commissioned places in the resource provision units but some small changes have been made to post 16 provision where high needs places are no longer required. The institutions have been notified of these changes and in removing the commissioned places an agreement has been made that should a high needs pupil be admitted, element 2 funding will then be made available by the Local Authority where this has not already been funded.

Table 2 Proposed commissioned places in other provisions

School	Current commissioned places Academic Year 2017-2018	Proposed increase academic Year places Sept 2018	Commissioned places Academic Year 2018-2019
Resource Provision			
Barnton Primary	7	0	7
Upton Westlea Primary School	10	0	10
Frodsham Weaver Vale Primary	7	0	7
Darnhall Primary	7	0	7
Acresfield Primary	9	0	9
Dee Point Primary	9	0	9
Lache Primary	9	0	9
The Acorns Primary	7	0	7
Willow Wood Primary	7	0	7
St Nicholas Catholic High	12	0	12
The Catholic High, Chester	15	0	15
Total Resource Provision	99	0	99
School and academy 6th forms			
Christleton High	1	-1	0
Neston High	1	0	1
The Catholic High, Chester	3	0	3
The Whitby High	1	-1	0
Upton by Chester High	1	0	1
Total School and academy 6th forms	7	-2	5
Further Education			
Sir John Deane's College	4	-4	0

Changes to Resource Provision Funding

7. From 2018-2019, pre-16 places at resource provision units occupied by pupils recorded on the October 2017 school census will be funded from the high needs block for element 2 at £6,000 rather than for elements 1 and 2 at £10,000 as in previous years. Pupils in these places will now attract element 1 funding through the mainstream schools block formula instead. Other commissioned places not occupied at the time of the school October 2017 census count will be funded at £10,000 per place.
8. This change in funding mechanism will result in differing levels of element 1 funding across the resource provision units since each school's per pupil funding will differ depending on the demographics and key stage of the school cohort. Previously, all units had been funded at the same level. Local

authorities are therefore permitted to review and adjust top up funding rates to ensure total funding remains sustainable.

9. This technical change has been reviewed by Finance Sub Group and it was agreed that current level of funding should be maintained for these units. However, instead of moving to differentiated top up funding rates for each school a one off annual adjustment would be made to each school's top up funding to realign elements 1 and 2 to £10,000. Therefore schools with average per pupil funding less than £4,000 will receive an additional amount up to that level for the commissioned places, those over the £4,000 will receive a reduction to total funding. These adjustments will be shown in the high needs block funding statements to schools with resource provisions.

Proposed changes to special school band funding rates

10. As part of the package of measures agreed to manage the increasing financial pressures on the high needs budget, the Local Authority applied to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to introduce an efficiency factor into the special school top up rates. Since this necessitated changes for some schools higher than the -1.5% permitted in regulations by the minimum funding guarantee, Secretary of State approval to disapply the regulations was required. The Local Authority have recently received a response from the ESFA and are required to ensure that the agreement of the schools affected is gained and further information is provided to the ESFA on the local consultation held. Whilst both of these points were included in the original disapplication request and Officers have responded to the ESFA, the Local Authority will now take this forward with the special schools affected to implement proposed changes from April 2018.

Next steps

11. Proposed changes are to be implemented from April 2018 for the 2018-2019 financial year and included in High Needs budget allocation notifications to schools and academies to be distributed after the Forum meeting.

Agenda Item 5

Central Spend budgets 2018-2019

Purpose of the report

1. Following from the agreement of the Dedicated Schools Grant budgets at the January Schools Forum meeting, this report outlines the proposed level of prescribed central spend budgets for 2018-2019 for agreement by the Schools Forum.

Recommendations

2. That the Schools Forum approve the proposed changes to the level of central spend budgets for 2018-2019 for the activities defined in the Section 251 statement.

Background

3. Under the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2018, the Schools Forum have the responsibility for deciding on the budgeted level of funding for a list of central spend activities as defined and reported in the Section 251 budget statement. The relevant extract from the Schools Revenue Funding 2018-2019 Operational Guidance December 2017 which details the approvals required is included in Appendix A. Decisions are required on the budgets for the following activities for 2018-2019 under the section of Central Provision for the Schools Budget.

- 1) Central expenditure on children under 5
- 2) Contribution to combined budgets
- 3) School admissions
- 4) Servicing of schools forums
- 5) Termination of employment costs
- 6) Falling Rolls Fund
- 7) Capital expenditure from revenue (CERA)
- 8) Prudential borrowing costs
- 9) Fees to independent schools without SEN
- 10) Equal pay - back pay
- 11) Pupil growth/ Infant class sizes
- 12) Central provision within schools budget (former ESG retained duties)

Proposed Budgets

4. As outlined in Appendix B below, there are changes proposed to one of the centrally held budgets in 2018-2019 in line with the budget setting agreed with Forum in January 2018. In addition line 1.3.1 for central expenditure on children under 5 shows a net decrease which was not explicit in the budget setting papers

in January and has now been worked through alongside the early years funding formula. The net change of £336k is proposed owing to:

- reduction in funding of early years consultants to meet central spend cap imposed by the new national funding formula
 - savings on the cost of early years provision following the implementation of the 0-19 contract.
5. Some central spend lines are subject to restriction in that the School and Early Years Finance Regulations specify they may not exceed the value committed for 2013-2014 for the purpose for which expenditure has already been committed. In all cases where restrictions apply, the proposed value of the budget has not been increased since 2013-2014.

Next Steps

6. To include the central spend budgets in the 2018-2019 Section 251 Budget statement submission to the DfE for 31 March 2018.

Appendix A

Extract from Schools Revenue Funding 2018-2019 Operational Guidance Dec 2017

Centrally retained service	Approval required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high needs block provision • central licences negotiated by the Secretary of State 	<p>Schools forum approval is not required (although they should be consulted)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funding to enable all schools to meet the infant class size requirement • back pay for equal pay claims • remission of boarding fees at maintained schools and academies • places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils • admissions • servicing of schools forum • contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for all schools • contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for maintained schools (voted on by relevant maintained school members of the forum only) • de-delegated services from the schools block (voted on by the relevant maintained school members of the forum only) 	<p>Schools forum approval is required on a line-by-line basis</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • central early years block provision • any movement of funding out of the schools block • any deficit from the previous funding period that reduces the amount of the schools budget • any brought forward deficit on de-delegated services which is to be met by the overall schools budget 	<p>Schools forum approval is required</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capital expenditure funded from revenue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • projects must have been planned and decided on prior to April 2013; no new projects can be charged • details of the remaining costs should be presented • contribution to combined budgets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where the schools forum agreed prior to April 2013 a contribution from the schools budget to services which would otherwise be funded from other sources • existing termination of employment costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • costs for specific individuals must have been approved prior to April 2013; no new redundancy costs can be charged • prudential borrowing costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the commitment must have been approved prior to April 2013 • details of the remaining costs should be presented 	<p>Schools forum approval is required on a line-by-line basis. The budget cannot exceed the value agreed in the previous funding period, and no new commitments can be entered into.</p> <p>Read establishing local authority DSG baselines for more information.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funding for significant pre-16 pupil growth, including new schools set up to meet basic need, whether maintained or academy • funding for good or outstanding schools with falling rolls where growth in pupil numbers is expected within three years 	<p>Schools forum approval is required on a line-by-line basis, including approval of the criteria for allocating funds to schools</p>
<p>Table 10: Level of approval required for centrally retained services</p>	

Appendix B Central Spend 2018-2019 - Section 251 Lines which require approval from the Schools Forum

S251 Line	S251 Line Description	Restriction to previous year's expenditure	2017-2018 £000	2018-2019 £000	Change £000	Reason for Change
1.3.1	Central expenditure on children under 5	No	1,112	776	-336	Reduction in funding of early years consultants and early years workers to meet central spend cap.
1.4.1	Contribution to combined budgets	Yes	720	720	0	No change proposed as agreed at January 2017 Schools Forum.
1.4.2	School admissions	No	628	628	0	No change proposed
1.4.3	Servicing of schools forums	No	48	48	0	No change proposed
1.4.4	Termination of employment costs	Yes	0	0	0	No expenditure
1.4.5	Falling rolls fund	No	250	200	-50	Reduction for second year of capped allocation as agreed at January 2017 Schools Forum
1.4.6	Capital expenditure from revenue (CERA)	Yes	0	0	0	No expenditure
1.4.7	Prudential borrowing costs	Yes	430	430	0	No change proposed
1.4.8	Fees to independent schools without SEN	No	120	120	0	No change proposed. Please note that this is a nominal budget should such places be required and this budget will be used flexibly for high needs places with SEN.
1.4.9	Equal pay - back pay	No	0	0	0	No expenditure
1.4.10	Pupil growth/ Infant class sizes	No	307	307	0	No change proposed
1.5.1 to 1.5.3	Central provision within schools budget	No	709	709	0	Retained funding for services previously funded from the ESG retained duties rate applicable from April 2017. No change proposed.
1.6.2 to 1.6.4	Central provision within schools budget	No	0	0	0	Retained funding for services previously funded from the ESG general duties rate applicable from April 2017. No change proposed.

Agenda Item 6

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2017-2018 Forecast Third Review

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the financial forecast outturn position for 2017-2018 for centrally held DSG as reported at the Third Review. This is based on the position at November 2017.

Recommendations

2. The Forum is asked to note the Third Review position on the DSG.

Forecast Outturn

3. The Third Review forecast outturn position for the centrally held DSG is a balanced position, which reflects a net increase in expenditure of £0.1m from the Mid Year forecast. The position includes a number of key variances as summarised below:-
 - There is a forecast overspend of £0.323m on high needs budgets. This is mainly due to the increase in demand for Independent and Non Maintained School placement fees (£0.477m) though this is partially offset by fewer children placed in other Authority's schools (forecast underspend of £ 0.110m). There is a further underspend of £0.1m anticipated on the budget for non-SEN independent school places which have not been required in year.
 - The early years block is forecast to overspend by £0.254m due to the expected increase in take up of three and four year old entitlement. This has arisen following the in-year reduction in DSG based on the January census point and subsequent increase in take up of free entitlement.
 - Current year rates rebates accounts for a forecast underspend of £0.188m. An underspend of £0.094m is also forecast from staff savings arising from vacancy management. Further part year savings of £0.053m have also been achieved on the early years block from the implementation of the 0-19 contract.
 - The de-delegated schools budget, which is ring-fenced to maintained schools, is forecast to underspend by £0.180m. This is a slight decrease from Mid-Year which was reporting an underspend of £0.242m. This is primarily due to an increasing call on the maternity cover contingency in primary schools over recent months.
4. On the agreement that the de-delegated balances are earmarked carry forwards for 2018-2019, the underlying net overspend for 2017-2018 is £0.180m (down from £0.323m). Schools Forum should note that, in the first instance, this overspend will be

met from DSG reserves carried forward from 2016-2017. Ongoing budget pressures have been factored into the 2018-2019 budget.

Next Steps

5. To report the final outturn to Schools Forum when finalised.

**Cheshire West and Chester
Schools Forum
12 February 2018**

Agenda item 8

Schedule of meetings

Schools Forum – all meetings 4.30pm – 6.30pm (refreshments at 4pm) unless otherwise stated

Date	Venue	Proposed key agenda
Monday 19 March 2018	Queen's Park High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tbc
Monday 9 July 2018	Queen's Park High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School funding arrangements –national data comparison 2018-2019 • School funding arrangements for 2019-2020 • Directed revisions to schemes for financing schools • DSG 2017-2018 outturn • Financial year 2017-2018 analysis of schools balances (including Academies) • Basic needs capital programme • Annual review of Schools Forum membership, constitution and terms of reference

Schools Forum finance sub group – all meetings 2pm – 4pm unless otherwise stated, venue to be confirmed.

Tuesday 27 February 2018 – venue tbc
 Tuesday 19 June 2018 – venue tbc
 Tuesday 17 July 2018 – venue tbc

Schools Forum High Needs sub group
 15 February provisional tbc