

**Cheshire West and Chester Schools Forum, Queen's Park High School, Chester, 8 October 2018 - subject to final approval at 10 December meeting.**

**Present:**

Marie Allen  
Sue Anderson  
Hilary Berry  
Cheryl Bullen  
David Curry  
Sarah Curtis  
Ian Devereux Roberts  
John Dowler (sub for Sue Yates)  
John Freeman  
Kerry Forrester (sub for Kate Docherty)  
Carol Gahan  
Amanda Harrison  
Duncan Haworth  
Jason Lowe  
Mike McCann  
John Murray (Chair)  
David Rowlands  
Andy Stewart  
Sarah Worthington  
Katie Tyrie

**Representing:**

Academies - Special  
PVI  
CWAPH Chair  
Primary headteachers  
Secondary headteachers  
Primary headteachers  
Primary headteachers  
Secondary headteachers  
Secondary governors  
Primary headteacher  
  
Primary governors  
Academies - Primary/Secondary  
Primary governors  
Academies - Primary/Secondary  
Special headteachers  
Academies - Primary/Secondary  
Secondary governors  
PRU  
Primary headteachers  
Nursery headteacher

**Officers:**

Natalie Cole  
Charlotte Fenn (Clerk)  
Janet Hewitt  
Sue Lawson  
Mark Parkinson

**Official observers:**

**Observers/public:**

**1. Introductions and Apologies**

John Murray was welcomed as the new Chair of the Schools Forum. It was noted that the position of Vice –Chair was still vacant, following Harry Ziman's recent resignation from the role. Forum members interested in filling the vacancy were asked to contact the Clerk.

Apologies were received from Kate Docherty, Steve Dool, Francis Kwateng, Luci Jones, Kath Lloyd and Councillor Meardon.

John Murray reported that Sue Pearson was no longer a primary governor and therefore not eligible to continue as a primary governor representative and Francis Kwateng would not be standing for re-election when his term of office ended in January 2019. It was noted that the Clerk would be seeking nominations for both vacancies and holding elections where necessary.

Amanda Harrison, The Winsford Academy Principal, was welcomed to the meeting as the new Primary/secondary Academies representative.

**2. Financial Training – brief overview**

Natalie Cole, Finance Manager, presented a short finance briefing providing Forum with an overview of the various school funding blocks and the role of the Schools Forum.

Forum members commented that the briefing had been very informative and thought the Heads associations would also find it useful. Natalie agreed to circulate the presentation to all Forum members.

### **3. Minutes and Matters Arising of Last Meeting**

#### **3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2018 were agreed as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

Item 8 Annual review of Schools Forum membership, constitution and terms of reference – including sub group membership, page 11- the changes/additions to the High Needs sub group membership should include Andy Stewart.

#### **3.2 Matters Arising**

##### **3.2.1 Item 3 SIMS framework/contract update**

Mark Parkinson reported that officers were still awaiting confirmation that the current SIMS contract could be extended for a further year through the Hertfordshire framework. Carolyn Davis had circulated an email seeking additional members for the task and finish group.

##### **3.2.3 Item 4 Reducing Inequalities – Improving Self-Regulation and Academic Resilience in Early Years**

Katie Tyrie recapped on the issues raised at the last Schools Forum regarding the proposal to fund a dedicated person to implement the Leuven scales.

It was noted that the proposal had been taken to the Early Years Strategy group to seek their views. Katie and Sue Anderson had also met separately with Sarah Lister to discuss their reservations about the methodology and concerns regarding whether the money was being directed to the right place. Sarah Lister had reassured them that, in addition to the Leuven proposal, better SEN support would be in place by January 2019. The Early Years Strategy group were in support of the Leuven proposal, as were Katie & Sue, with the proviso that a report be presented to Schools Forum in a year's time to review progress.

The Chair put the amended proposals to the vote.

Resolved that the Schools Forum

- i. approve an increase to the centrally retained budget for the Early Years Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant to appoint a 0.5 FTE Grade 11 Early Years Consultant for four years to implement the Leuven scales; and
- ii. a report be presented to Schools Forum in a year's time to review progress (Vote: unanimous).

### **4. Basic Needs Capital programme**

Janet Hewitt, Children's Service Liaison Manager, took Forum members through the paper which provided an update on the Education Basic Need Capital programme.

Janet referred Forum members to a hard copy of the basic need scorecard embedded in the report. A copy of the scorecard would be re circulated due to issues with opening the embedded version. Forum was informed that the scorecard provided national comparison data for local authorities on school places and explanatory notes on how to interpret the data. It was noted that CWAC had performed well, having provided school places at a lower cost than the national average for 2018-2019.

Schools Forum members' attention was drawn to table 1.1 which listed the education capital programme activity as at September 2018. Two corrections under Committed Schemes Feasibility were noted:

Upton Heath CE PS (Ph1 with PSBP2) the delivery date should read September 2019

Upton Heath CE PS (Ph2 to follow PSBP2) the delivery date should read September 2020.

It was noted that no data was available under concept schemes as the schemes were currently going through the necessary processes via the Capital Board prior to approval by Cabinet.

David Curry questioned why the recent Bishop Heber scheme was not included on the education capital programme activity list. Janet was unable to provide a response and agreed to seek further clarification.

**Resolved that the Schools Forum note the paper.**

## **5. Early Years Single Funding Formula 2019-2020 consultation**

Natalie Cole referred Forum members to the consultation document circulated with the papers.

It was noted that the Early Years reference group had drafted the consultation which was open until Friday 12 October. An extra Schools Forum finance subgroup meeting had provisionally been arranged for Tuesday 16 October; Schools Forum approval was sought to delegate responsibility to the subgroup to review the responses and make recommendations to Cabinet.

Forum members were given the opportunity to discuss and feedback comments on the consultation.

Sue Anderson asked who would cover the costs of administering monthly payments. Mark Parkinson, Director of Education, responded that the costs would fall on the Council however this would be an issue as currently there were no extra resources to cover this. Sue Anderson raised concerns that there would also be administration costs for providers and felt that the current payment system was preferable.

Duncan Haworth declared an interest as he was a governor at a school with a nursery. Duncan raised concerns regarding the proposed removal of the quality supplement; schools were required to employ qualified staff.

Concerns were also noted that removing the quality supplement would have an impact on recruitment and retention of staff and the quality of provision.

Sue Lawson stated that removing the quality supplement would spread funding across providers and improve outcomes. Forum members were unclear as to how this proposal could improve

outcomes.

**Resolved that the Schools Forum** task the Finance subgroup to

- i. review the responses to the Early Years Single Funding Formula 2019-2020 Consultation; and
- ii. put forward recommendations for Cabinet approval in November.

## **6. Final allocation of the Dedicated Schools Grant 2018-2019**

Natalie Cole introduced the paper which reported on the final allocation of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2018-2019.

Natalie referred Forum members to table 1 which summarised the changes from the draft allocation and took them through the details outlined in table 2. It was noted that the main changes related to the Early Years block.

Natalie explained the methodology behind the £0.402 million reduction in the High Needs block. Funding had not been rebased to reflect pupils from other authorities since 2013. This year a new mechanism had been included to realign funding for FE colleges to reflect actual pupils. Following the recent mergers of FE colleges CWAC no longer housed any colleges and this was reflected in the funding. However Natalie raised concerns that the methodology appeared to be flawed; the reduction in funding appeared to also reflect pupils that had been funded by other authorities. Natalie was currently in discussion with FE colleges and the SEN team and was proposing that should colleges go over number they approach the authority in which they sit for extra funding and not CWAC.

It was noted that this import/export adjustment for high needs places had been unexpected and despite the concerns over the methodology it was unlikely that the authority would get any funding back.

**Resolved that the Schools Forum** note the amendments to the DSG allocation for the high needs and early years funding blocks and the adjustments to centrally held budgets for 2018-2019.

## **7. Dedicated Schools Grant 2018-2019 Forecast Outturn at First Review**

Natalie Cole took Forum members through the report and the key variances outlined in paragraph 3 which contributed to the forecast net overspend of £0.4 million.

**Resolved that the Schools Forum** note the First Review position on the DSG.

## **8. School Funding Arrangements 2019-2020**

Natalie Cole introduced the report which provided Schools Forum with details on the school funding arrangements for 2019-2020. It was noted as expected there were not many changes, however the implementation of national hard formula had been pushed back to 2021-2022.

Natalie took Forum through the key changes outlined in the paper.

It was noted that an update on growth funding would be presented to Forum in December as the authority was awaiting a further announcement from the DfE.

The DfE were consulting in the autumn on the proposed changes to hospital education funding; this consultation would be brought to Forum to seek their views.

It was noted that Local authorities were again permitted to transfer 0.5 percent between the School and High Needs blocks with Forum approval.

The DfE were proposing that local authorities with an overall DSG deficit of more than one percent would be accountable to the DfE. It was noted that CWAC did not currently have a deficit balance and the DfE were to consult in the autumn as to how the new rules were to be implemented.

From 2020-2021 the DfE were expecting local authorities to reduce the historic commitments within the Central School Services block.

It was noted that the minimum funding guarantee (MFG) would continue but could be set between minus 1.5 percent and plus 0.5 percent.

Natalie made reference to the 2019-2020 school funding formula consultation and drew Forum members attention to appendix B (tabled) which summarised the consultation responses.

John Murray took Forum members through the consultation questions and responses and sought their views. The responses showed a clear majority which was reflected in Forums' recommendations following a vote on each element consulted upon.

A question was raised as to the impact should Forum not approve the 0.5 percent transfer between the School and High Needs blocks. Mark Parkinson responded that top up funding would have to be cut.

### **Resolved that the Schools Forum**

- i. note the report, in particular the steps that had been taken by the Finance Sub Group to commence consultation with schools; and
- ii. approve the following recommendations having considered the consultation responses:

**MFG** - continue with current minus 1.5 percent MFG (vote: unanimous)

**Minimum per pupil factor** - funding to be allocated to the schools eligible for minimum per pupil funding (vote: unanimous)

**Transfer to high needs block** – maintain the current 0.5 percent transfer of funding from the schools block (vote: unanimous)

**De-delegation of funding for maintained schools** – continue with de-delegation as follows:

Primary (vote: unanimous):

- Contingencies to cover suspensions and tribunals
- Free school meals eligibility assessment
- Licences (SIMS and CLEAPPS)
- Staff costs- supply cover for maternity

- Staff costs - trade union facilities

Secondary (vote: unanimous):

- Contingencies to cover suspensions and tribunals
- Free school meals eligibility assessment
- Licences (SIMS and CLEAPPS)
- Staff costs - trade union facilities

## **9. Any Other Business**

None to report

## **10. Next meeting**

Next meeting 10 December 2018.

DRAFT