

Draft minutes Cheshire West and Chester Schools Forum, Queen's Park High School, Chester, 15 January 2018 subject to approval 12 February 2018

Present:

Marie Allen
Cheryl Bullen
David Charlton (Chair)
David Curry
Sarah Curtis
Kate Docherty
Kerry Forrester
Greg Foster
John Freeman
Carol Gahan
Duncan Haworth
Luci Jones
Kath Lloyd
John Murray
Sue Pearson
David Rowlands
Katie Tyrie

Representing:

Academies - Special
Primary headteachers
Secondary headteachers
Secondary headteachers
Primary headteachers
Primary headteachers
Primary headteachers
Unions
Secondary governors
Primary governors
Primary governors
Academies - Primary/Secondary
Primary governors
Academies - Primary/Secondary
Primary governors
Secondary governors
Nursery headteachers

Officers:

Natalie Cole
Charlotte Fenn (Clerk)
Mark Parkinson

Official observers:

Councillor Meardon

Observers/public:

Two attended

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.

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