

Minutes of the Schools Forum

**11 November 2019 at 2.30pm
at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

**Members Present: D Irish (Chair),
M Arnull, J Bailey, D Barton, A Burns, L
Howard, G Linford, B Patel, S Ramsey, P
Shone, J Smallman, N Toplass and C
Walsh.**

**Officers Present: C Ward, S Lilley, A Timmins and M
Tallents.**

Observer: J Kellas and R Fisher.

Apologies: L Gillam, R Kerr and J Gill.

46/19 **Agenda Item 1 – Apologies**

As above

47/19 **Agenda Item 2 – Declaration of Interest**

None

48/19 **Agenda Item 3 - To confirm the minutes of the meeting held
on 23 September 2019**

Resolved that the minutes for the forum held on the 23
September 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

49/19 **Agenda Item 4 – Provisional National Funding Formula
Allocations 2020/21**

Schools Forum received a report in respect of provisional
allocations for the Dedicated Schools Grant 2020/21.

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The provisional allocations for 2020/21 was displayed in a table on the report and excluded growth funding, notification of this funding would be received in December.

- Schools Block – Funding £265.477 based on October 2018 census of 53,601 pupils.
- High Needs Block – Funding £49.496 a 16.93% increase on 2019.20 allocations.
- Central schools services Block £1.984 based on 53,601 pupils and historic commitment of £0.228m.

The Local Authority had sent a letter to the Secretary of State in respect of High Needs Block funding along with many other authorities and it was reassuring that an increase in this funding had been undertaken.

Resolved that Schools Forum noted the report.

50/19

Agenda Item 5 - De – Delegated, Education Functions and Centrally Retained Outturn 2018/19

Schools Forum received a report advising on how de-delegated and centrally retained budget had been used in 2018-19.

Schools had requested more detailed information be presented to Schools Forum in respect to the use of de delegated and centrally retained budgets.

The Union representative questioned the underspend in respect of union facilities and it was considered that this was due to vacancies and A Timmins would investigate and report back.

A Burns queried if allocation of funding was correct due to the overspends and underspends, this would be considered for future funding allocations.

It was suggested that the identified overspend in respect of Health and Safety was due to a double payment in the same financial year for one of the Health and Safety support programmes.

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It was recommended that the under spend be used to reduce any over spend in de-delegated or Education functions in 2019/20.

Resolved that Schools Forum agree that the underspend be used to reduce any over spend in the de-delegated or Education functions in 2019/20.

51/19

Agenda Item 6 - Schools revenue funding 2020/21 Consultation

The Schools revenue funding consultation was presented to Schools Forum to get approval in order that the document could be issued to schools and academies.

It was pointed out that the Department for Education had made some other changes to local formulae.

The authority had found that whilst undertaking the modelling for the different options that there may be instances where it would need greater flexibility on the Minimum Funding Guarantee potentially ranging from -1.5% to + 2.5%. The authority therefore intended to submit an application as a failsafe to cover any formula option which may be agreed.

The authority continued to believe that schools with Building for the Future contracts should be treated on the same basis as those with PFI premises factor and the Department for Education should therefore also uplift their costs in line with Retail Price Index excluding mortgages.

The authority's intention was to continue to press for recognition of Facility Management costs in order to attract RPIX funding. St Michael's High School is a PFI school and the authority intended to include the schools contribution within the schools funding model.

Members asked if Westminster School would be included in the above arrangement as it was on the same site as St Michael's School. It was confirmed that, although it was funded in a different way, the position of Westminster School would be considered.

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Resolved that schools forum members approve:-

- (1) that Schools Funding 2020/21 consultation document be issued to schools and academies and other interested stakeholders;
- (2) the submission of Disapplication request to the Department for Education asking for an increase in the flexibility of the Minimum Funding Guarantee to range from -1.5% to + 2.5% in order to cover the range of formula funding options that were being consulted on;
- (3) that the authority works with the Department for Education to enable St Michael's High School facility management contribution's to be included as a PFI factor within the schools funding model and make any technical adjustments necessary to remain cost neutral initially and be eligible to attract RPIX on their contribution.

52/19

Agenda Item 7 – Attendance at the National Fair Funding Conference.

Schools Forum was advised that there would be a National Fair Funding Conference on Tuesday 19 November 2019 in Reading, Berkshire.

Members were asked to nominate a member to attend the conference. The Principal Accountant for Schools would be attending the Conference on behalf of the Local Authority.

Resolved that nominations be forwarded to the meeting secretary.

53/19

Agenda Item 8 – School in Financial Difficulties

The sub committee had considered an application for financial assistance from the School Forum support fund. It was considered that sufficient steps had not yet been made in respect of savings. The sub committee recommended that funding

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should not be provided as the submission did not meet the recommended criteria. However, if the school remodels budget expenditure then a second application will be considered.

Resolved that Schools Forum approve the decision of the sub committee that no funding from the school's support fund be provided, however the school was able to submit a further application.

54/19

Agenda Item 9 – Any Other Business

The Chair suggested that a briefing document be sent out to members prior to the Schools Forum in future. The Chair and Vice Chair would meet with the Principal Accountant for Schools two weeks prior to Schools Forum.

Schools Forum was advised that a lot of the challenge in respect of the reports happened in the sub group and should be fed back to this group.

Members requested that the Terms of Reference for the group be distributed along with the forward plan.

Resolved that members be provided with Terms of Reference and the forward plan.

(Meeting ended at 3.05pm)

Contact Officer: Shane Parkes Democratic Services Unit 0121 569 3190
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