

## **Minutes of the Schools Forum**

**27 January 2020 at 2.30pm  
at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

**Members Present: D Irish (Chair);  
N Toplass (Vice Chair);  
M Arnull, J Bailey, A Burns, G Linford,  
S Ramsay, and P Shone.**

**Apologies: D Barton, L Gillam, L Howard, J Smallman and  
C Walsh.**

**Officers Present: C Ward, J Gill, R Kerr and A Timmins.**

**Observer: R Fisher and J Kellas.**

**1/20 Agenda Item 1 - Apologies**

As above.

**2/20 Agenda Item 2 - Declaration of Interest**

Agenda Item 5 – Pupil Number Growth Funding – A Burns.  
Agenda Item 8 – High Needs Block – N Toplass

**3/20 Agenda Item 3 - To confirm the minutes of the meeting held  
on 11 November 2019**

N Toplass asked for clarification in respect of the places on High Needs Block. J Gill confirmed that the commissioned places would be calculated as in previous years and would be available shortly pending the receipt of key stage transfers. Although places had been agreed at Forum, commissioning would be based on the need as the funding of vacant places would be an issue.

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**Resolved** that the minutes for Schools Forum held on the 16 December 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

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### **Agenda Item 4 – Dedicated School Grant Allocations and Draft School Budgets 2020/21**

Schools Forum received a report advising as to the funding allocations for the Dedicated Schools Grant and the draft school budget information for 2020/21 as voted for at Schools Forum.

The budget information may change, subject to approval from the Department of Education and the decision taken at Cabinet on 22 January 2020.

The report allowed school governing bodies and academy boards to start their financial planning for 2020/21 and to make appropriate structural and educational adjustments to meet the needs of young people within the constraints of their resources.

The 2020/21 Early Years Block allocations were based on Schools, Early Years and Alternative Provision censuses data from January 2019, the allocations would be updated based on 2020 and 2021 census data.

The High Needs Block allocations were provisional figures and would be updated in March 2020. The import/export adjustment would be updated using January 2020 school census and February R06 ILR data. Further adjustments in March 2020 would reflect the outcome of 2020/21 place change notifications and further academy conversions.

The school funding model had been submitted to the Department for Education to meet the final deadline date of 21 January 2020 and the authority was still waiting for confirmation from the Department of Education and would advise schools when received.

**Resolved** that Schools Forum noted the content of the report.

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### **Agenda Item 5 – Pupil Number Growth Funding**

Schools Forum had been notified at the last meeting that the budget had been set at £2.269m and a recoupment adjustment of £0.53m had been received making a total of £2.807m.

The Pupil Number Growth additional needs fund carried forward a balance of £393,620 from 2018/19 with no spend to date in 2019/20.

The increase in pupil numbers had been confirmed via the October 2018 and 2019 census and the following schools had a change in pupil numbers of over 30:-

- Phoenix Collegiate School – based on pupil number growth criteria the school would be entitled to £104,120 based on 83 pupils receiving 50% of secondary Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) rate of £4,301 for the period September 2019 to March 2020.
- Perryfields High School – based on pupil number growth criteria the schools would be entitled to £43,906 based on 35 pupils receiving 50% of secondary AWPU rate of £4,301 for the period September 2019 to March 2020.
- Ormiston Forge Academy – based on pupil number growth criteria the school would be entitled to £76,522 based on 61 pupils receiving 50% of the secondary AWPU rate of £4,301 for the period September 2019 to March 2020.

A vote was held on each of the proposals and the outcomes were as follows:

- Funding for Phoenix Collegiate Schools  
8 in favour, 0 Against, 0 Abstention.
- Funding for Perryfields High School  
8 in favour, 0 Against, 0 Abstention.
- Funding for Ormiston Forge Academy  
7 in favour, 0 Against, 1 Abstention.

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### **Resolved**

- (1) that Phoenix Collegiate School, Perryfields High School and Ormiston Forge Academy had met the criteria for Pupil Number Growth funding and the additional funding;
- (2) that the total funding for each school as set out in the report be approved.

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### **Agenda Item 6 – School Closedown Timetable 2019/20**

Schools Forum was advised that the Government deadline for local authorities to publish their audited accounts was July 2020. It was therefore critical for all stakeholders to work towards this new deadline.

The critical deadlines were 1pm on the following dates:-

- Friday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2020 – Leasing returns;
- Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020 – Provisional Capital return;
- Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020 – Final Capital return.

It should be noted that there had been changes to the definition of leasing and there would no longer be a distinction between an operational lease and a finance lease. Schools that had entered a contract where an asset was mainly or solely used to provide that service would be classified as an embedded lease.

It was asked that schools advise Schools Strategic Finance Unit by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020 of the date that they expected closedown templates to be submitted within the closedown deadlines issued.

Failure to meet the deadline may require setting an earlier closedown deadline in future.

Schools were requested that over the Easter Break they should ensure that their budget officer be given access (physical or remotely) to be able to meet the submission deadline and to also be contactable to answer queries, a reminder message would be sent to schools informing them to this request.

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**Resolved** that Schools Forum noted the content of the report.

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### **Agenda Item 7 – Early Years Funding Allocations and Rates 2020/21**

Schools Forum received a report to inform on 2020-21 funding rates available to the local authority introduced by the Education and Skills Funding agency.

The Department for Education provided local authorities with six relevant funding streams which formed the early years block of the dedicated schools grant as follows:-

1. the 15 hours entitlement for disadvantaged 2-year-olds;
2. the universal 15 hours entitlement for all 3 and 4-year-olds;
3. the additional 15 hours entitlement for eligible working parents of 3 and 4-year-olds;
4. the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP);
5. the Disability Access Fund (DAF);
6. Maintained Nursery School (MNS) supplementary funding;

The main changes from the requirements for the 2019/20 financial year were:-

- clarification of the continuation of supplementary funding for MNS for the whole of the 2020/21 financial year. This was not applicable to Sandwell;
- amendments to the requirements for the distribution of the DAF, following a change in DAF funding methodology;
- clarification of the eligibility criteria and payment for the EYPP.

Unlike 3 and 4-year-olds, there was no regulatory requirement to pass through a set amount of the funding to providers for delivery of the 2 years-old entitlements and the ESFA had stated that they expect this to continue.

Members enquired about the numbers taking up the funding and if the level of funding was adequate.

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Officers commented that the take up for 2-year-olds was good and in line with other similar local authorities

3 and 4-year-old uptake was increasing approximately 75% of those eligible, however some parents chose to keep their children at home, similar to other areas.

Schools forum was asked to approve the funding rates for provider for 2020/21 as set in the report .

**Resolved** that Schools Forum approved the funding rates for providers for 2020/21 as set out below.

- The funding rate for early years pupil premium was 53 pence per eligible child per hour.
- The funding rate for the Disability Access Fund is £615 per eligible child per year.
- Table 1 Provider funding rates below details the proposed 2020-21 early years rates for providers for 2 Year olds and 3 & 4 Year Olds.

Description	Rate
2-Year old Basic Hourly rate	£5.30
2 & 4-Year old – Basic Hourly rate	£4.00
Flexibility – per hour	£0.30
<b>Deprivation – (% in 15% lowest SOA's</b>	<b>Funding per Hour</b>
10% - 30%	£0.05
31% - 70%	£0.10
71% - 90%	£0.20
Above 90%	£0.25

Note SOA – Super Output Area

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### Agenda Item 8 - High Needs Block period 9 monitoring report 2019/20

Schools Forum received a report in respect to the High Needs Block monitoring as at 31 December 2019 projected to 31 March 2020 and the commissioned places and occupancy data in specialist provisions.

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The current HNB grant for 2019/20 was £40.883m after deductions.


The anticipated in year deficit as at 30 November 2019 projected to 31 March 2020 was £1.549m. Following completion of the December 2019 monitoring this deficit had increased to £1.850m. The balance brought forward as at 1 April 2019 was £90K surplus. The final deficit would be carried forward and funded from the additional High Needs Block which had been announced recently.

The main variances since the last report were as follows:-

- Pupil top up and place funding – increased anticipated overspend of £779K – additional overspend of £111K for Maintained and Academy mainstream provision, Focus Provisions and Special Schools following new in year admissions, new assessments, and an increase in the number of pupils staying on into post 16 placements in mainstream and special schools.
- Alternative Provision overspend anticipated overspend of £879K – additional overspend £187K was for pupils missing education, international new arrivals and hard to place pupils. International new arrivals in NYC11 were still being considered for placement in an Alternative Provision setting, and the estimated cost included in the overspend figure. Approximately 18 international new arrivals were placed during November/December 2019.

The occupancy across all four special schools was running over capacity and an additional 18 places would be funded in year and had been included in the figures in the report.

As at December 2019 Primrose was full, Sandwell Community School was showing 21 vacancies, however the data needed to be validated, and Albright was five over occupancy.

 Members asked for clarification around international new arrivals year 11 students and asked if they could be placed in mainstream school that had a sixth form. Currently they were offered places at Sandwell Valley school. There was also a potential for Sandwell College to take these students. Further discussion in respect to the best way to deliver preparation for 6<sup>th</sup> form education was needed at other Forums.

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**Resolved** that Schools Forum noted the content of the report.

### **Agenda Item 9 – Minimum per pupil consultation – Government response**

School Forum received the Government consultation response in respect of implementing mandatory minimum per pupil funding levels.

Local authorities had the option, as with other aspects of the school funding regulations, to request to disapply the use of the full NFF minimum per pupil values, however requests should be exceptional and only made on grounds of affordability.

**Resolved** that Schools Forum noted the contents of the Government consultation responses.

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### **Agenda Item 10 – Risk protection to maintained schools – Government response**

Schools Forum received the Government consultation response in respect of extending the academies risk protection arrangements to local authority-maintained schools sector.

Members were advised that page 19 was an executive summary of the Governments response and included the different views from schools, local authority and insurance companies. The government intended to amend the current legislation to allow maintained schools to have access to this arrangement and to allow schools to access from April 2020.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency had e-mailed today about roll out on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and schools should be aware and understand that not every school would be in a contractual position and able to take up this arrangement from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.

Page 25 referred to different types of membership and responses to how to deal with arrangements. A further report will be brought to the next meeting.



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**Resolved** that the Schools Forum noted the contents of the Government consultation responses.

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### **Agenda Item 11 – Information consultation on lifting the inspection exemption for outstanding schools, colleges and other organisations.**

Schools Forum received the Government consultation in respect of removal of the outstanding exemption.

Officers considered that this was a school improvement matter and should be discussed at other forums.

(Meeting ended at 15.25pm)

Contact Officer: Shane Parkes Democratic Services Unit 0121 569 3190
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