

Minutes of Schools Forum

Monday 8 March 2021 at 2.30pm
Virtual online meeting via MS Teams

Present:

D. Irish (Chair)
N Toplass (Vice Chair), M Arnall, J Bailey, S Baker, L Bray, J Barry, W
Lawrence, G Linford, K Morgan, E Pate and P Shone,

Officers: C Ward, R Kerr, A Timmins, S Lilley, M Tallents, J Gill, S Parkes and C
Robinson.

9/21 Apologies:

Apologies were received from D Barton, L Howard and J Topham.

10/21 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

11/21 Minutes

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2021 were
a correct record

12/21 School Budget Information 2021/22

Schools Forum received a report in respect of the final school budget
information for the financial year 2021/22.

The Schools Block funding which had been distributed through the main
funding formula was £296,454,110 and calculated as follows.



Description	£
Schools Block DSG	297,545,210
Less Pupil Number Growth Contingency	(1,091,100)
Schools Block DSG Available to Distribute	296,454,110

The school funding model had been approved by the DfE and received on 3 February 2021.

The Schools Block element of funding had been issued to schools on Monday 8 February 2021, this included notification of the funding entitlement based on the agreed authority formula, minimum funding guarantee and adjustments for de-delegations and educational functions for maintained schools.

The factor rates for the local authority formula to be applied to school's budgets for 2021/22 were as follows:

Item	Primary	Secondary
Primary : Secondary Ratio	1	1.27
Basic Entitlement (AWPU)	£3,512	£4,977
IDACI Band E	£77	£350
IDACI Band D	£485	£676
IDACI Band C	£551	£771
IDACI Band B	£602	£855
IDACI Band A	£630	£900
Prior Attainment (Low Cost, High Incidence SEN)	£1225	£1776
EAL (2 years)	£846	£1227
Lump Sum	£129,057	£129,057
Split Site	£129,057	£129,057
Rates	Actual	Actual
PFI	Actual	Actual
MFG	2.00%	2.00%
MFG	No Ceiling	No Ceiling

Agreed that Schools Forum noted the contents of the report.



Early Years Funding Rates 2021/22 – Consultation responses

Schools Forum were advised of the outcome of the consultation on the increase to the hourly rates for two year olds and three and four year old for the financial year 2021/22.

The early years national funding formula hourly rates had increased by £0.08 per hour for two-year olds and £0.06 per hour for three and four years olds.

The consultation had been sent out on 1st February to 102 Day Care Providers and 122 Child Minders. The deadline for the consultation was Friday 12 February 2021.

The proposed funding structure was as follows:

	Rate 2020/2021	Rate 2021/2022	Increase per hour
Two Year Olds Rate= per hour per child	£5.30	£5.38	£0.08
Three and Four Year Olds Rate= per hour per child	£4.00	£4.06	£0.06
Flexibility per hour per child	£0.30	£0.30	N/A
Deprivation Based on % of children and <u>their</u> postcode	Up to 10% = 0 11% to 30% =£0.05 31% to 70% = £0.10 70% to 90% = £0.20 90% plus = £0.25	Up to 10% = 0 11% to 30% =£0.05 31% to 70% = £0.10 70% to 90% = £0.20 90% plus = £0.25	N/A

79 providers completed the online survey; 4 providers submitted email responses (Total responses = 83) This represented 37% of providers who were sent the consultation. 32 responses from Child Minders and 51 responses from Day Care Providers.

Responses to the central question were as follows:

- Do you agree that Sandwell Council should use the additional Early Years funding to increase the basic rate of funding for Two Year Olds and Three and Four Year Olds?
 - 81 – Yes
 - 2 - No



The 2 – No responses gave the following reasons:

- 1 Child Minder added I feel that the 2 year old funding already matches many childminders hourly rate so we do not make a loss. However, I am finding a lot of families use the 3 to 4 year old funding ... I find that the rate is much lower than my hourly rate and there for make a financial loss when families become entitled to the funding. Of course, in the times of the pandemic this really doesn't help. Therefore, I feel that the funding should be used to increase the 3 to 4 year old funding as the rate of the 2 year old funding was satisfactory enough”
- **1 Day Care provider** made the following comments; “In regard to the increases ...this is not in line with inflation of the National Minimum Wage. Last year the NMW went up 51 p and we do not know what the increase is to be this year but more than likely it will be the same increase. If you work out the cost of staff in the two years room on a ratio of four children to one staff, then we are obtaining a 32 p increase which does not apportion the NMW increase of 51 p. Even in the three years room, the ratio will allow one staff to have eight children which is 48 p and this is still below the 51p increase. This is on the basis that we are at full occupancy which is usually never the case for us. Granted we have the flexibility to account but there are other overheads that we need to account for. This is the reason why I have disagreed with the rate increase. Please review once again from our perspective.”

Other responses from providers were included in the report.

The Early Years representative stated that providers accept the rate, however it was insufficient due to the minimum wage increase. Nurseries had incurred additional costs and had responded appropriately.

The Chair asked that when the decision was taken to Cabinet the comments of the providers be included in the report to Cabinet.

The Chair asked that Schools Forum Members vote on the following

1. Approve the increase of the Two Year olds hourly rate from £5.30 to £5.38.

Votes For: - 11 Votes Against - 0 Abstained - 0

2. Approve the increase of the Three and Four year olds hourly rate from £4.00 to £4.06.



Votes For – 11 Votes Against - 0 Abstained - 0

Agreed that:-

- (1) the increase of the Two Year Olds hourly rate from £5.03 to £5.38 be approved;
- (2) the increase of the Three and Four year olds hourly rate from £4.00 to £4.06 be approved.

14/21 Schools in Financial Difficulties – Applications for consideration

Schools Forum Members were requested to consider the recommendations made by the Schools Forum Sub Committee meeting held on 12 February 2021 in respect of deficits that had been incurred by two schools at the point of academisation.

The Sub Committee had received background information and details of the financial position of both schools and the recommendation of the Sub Committee was that School Forum approved the allocation of Schools in Financial Difficulties fund to meet the deficit positions left behind by the schools.

A vote was undertaken and the results were as follows:

Votes For - 10 Votes Against - 0 Abstained – 0

Agreed to approve the recommendations of the Schools Forum Sub Committee meeting held on the 12 February 2021, that deficits incurred by Stuart Bathurst Secondary school and Newtown Primary school, at the point of academisation, be met by the Schools in Financial Difficulties Fund.

15/21 SEN High Needs Block 2020/21 – P10 Monitoring Report January 2021

Schools Forum received a report in respect of the High Needs Block monitoring position as at 31 January 2021 projected to 31 March 2021.

The High Needs Block grant for 2020/21 was £48.583m.

A report presented to Schools Forum on 18 January 2021 reported an in year deficit of £0.193m and a balance brought forward as at 1 April 2020 was £0.561m deficit.



The current position as at 31 January 2021 was an in year surplus of £0.938m, the movement between the monitoring periods was a positive £1.131m.

The movements in monitoring between the two periods was as follows:-

	Movements £000
1) Out of Borough Placements – As most invoices have now been received any additional placements will be at a minimum, the adjusted in year allowance for new placements has been removed.	139
2) Schools Delegation - Mainstream, Focus Provisions and Special School top up delegations have been finalised and will not change again this financial year. Therefore, the adjusted in year allowance has been removed.	264
3) Increase in Recoupment - There has been an increase in income from other Local Authorities for pupils placed in Sandwell special schools during the year where the information in respect of recoupment has just been received.	200
4) Developments - The expansions in Focus Provision that were initially accounted for in 'Developments' have now been included in the FP Delegation and are no longer a pressure on this budget head.	257
5) Grant Adjustments - Additional grant adjustments have been notified to the LA following the finalisation of Census figures and a large amount of cross checking. This will be received in March 2021	245
6) Other - various small cumulative movements which are attributed mainly to staffing	26
TOTAL	1,131

The movements meant the 2019/20 deficit brought forward would be cleared and there would be a small surplus going into 2021/22, final figures pending. Officers explained that a small contingency had been built in when estimating cost of out of borough placements, however some of the places had not been used and invoices returned had meant there had been a surplus.



Agreed that School Forum members noted the contents of the report.

16/21 High Needs National Funding Formula Review – Consultation

Schools Forum was advised that on 10th February 2020 the Department for Education had issued a consultation on “Review of national funding formula for allocation of high needs funding to local authorities: changes for 2022-23”. The deadline for responses was 24th March 2020.

The authority welcomed feedback on all questions to assist in providing a response for the Sandwell area and encouraged all schools and establishments to submit a response directly to the Department for Education.

The Chair requested that Council Officers ensured that the document was forwarded to all Secondary and Primary Schools.

Agreed that Schools be encouraged to participate in the consultation and provide feedback.

17/21 Consultation on funding allocation to Westminster Special School

Officers requested that this matter be deferred to a future meeting of Schools Forum.

Agreed that the item be deferred to a future meeting of Schools Forum.

The Next Virtual Meeting of Schools Forum: 14 June 2021 @ 2.30pm

Meeting ended at 15.29

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk

