

**Sefton Schools Forum Minutes**

**Minutes of Sefton Schools' Forum Meeting**

**Thursday 22/10/20**

**TEAMS - Virtual Meeting held**

**Forum Members present:**

**In attendance:**

Chair: Dorothy Lee-Ogden

Isobel MacDonald-Davies, Nick Carbonaro, Kevin McBlain, Tricia Davies, Mark Chambers, Debra Vis, Vicky Buchanan, Alice Apel, Niki Craddock, Tricia Davies, Cathy Earley, Toni Oxtan-Grant, Sue Kerwin, Anna James, Daniel MacAreavy, Roz Moreton; Ian Parry; Amanda Ryan, Jennifer Taylor, Julian Ward, Erin Wheeler, Gil Bourgade; Malcolm Parry, Alistair Devey, Matt Jenkinson, Amanda Ryan,

**Others present:**

		<b>Actions</b>
1	<b>Apologies</b>  Rosalynd Morton (sub Alistair Devey)	
2	<b>Minutes from the last meeting</b>  Minutes were agreed	
3	<b>Matter Arising / Issues for further consideration</b>  Item 9 on the previous minutes – will be updated as Item 4 at this meeting	
4	<b>Decision making around DSG funding – matter arising from June Forum (KMc)</b>  Following on from a previous query regarding how funding decisions are made, the Forum were given documents and a presentation to refresh their knowledge about: - how decisions are made by the Forum, the delegated powers the Forum has, the importance of the role of the Forum in the financial settlement voting process and how the Forum is the place to bring issues which can be addressed directly by or by one of the sub groups.  A discussion took place around Early Years Pupil Premium not being paid to settings and about funding being withheld during early part of pandemic, however it was explained that this was not intentional and probably an error at what was a difficult time to understand what was happening on the ground as the situation escalated so quickly. This error has now been corrected.	
5	<b>Early Years Forecast 2020/21</b>	

	<p>Periodically we give an update on the Early Years budget and generally, Early Years is always under spent, however the past 8 months have been incredibly difficult for providers, as many were asked to stay open unsustainably for Key Worker children. Those that did manage to stay open had financial difficulties, and small grants were issued, operators were asked to take children from other providers and reserves used for sustainability initiatives.</p> <p>Funding is based on the January Census which will benefit us this year as the January head count has increased year on year, however numbers have now decreased and may continue to decline, so it is not known how this will affect the next head count if it is based on real data and not the previous year's count. DFE have been informed that using the current head count may cause issues in funding and are looking into this further.</p> <p>We are forecasting that BVI's will be underspent this year and that Maintained Providers will be slightly overspent.</p> <p>A discussion took place regarding the current surplus in the budget and if this could be used to increase the hourly rate, however there is always a possibility of claw back, which has happened in previous years (2 out of 4 years), it was noted that our hourly rates are in line with other authorities, it was felt that the underspend should be put to good use (such as training) to benefit the sector.</p> <p>It was confirmed that we will have a better understanding of funding and possible claw back by January and that the possibility of increased hourly rate as well as small grants are being investigated to help mitigate the ongoing Covid difficulties.</p>	
6 & 7	<p><b>High Needs Forecast 2021/22 and 2021/22 (KMc / NC)</b></p> <p>An over spend of £4.5million was reported for Higher Needs in June last year, some changes were made to this year's funding schedule with this year being a proposed transitional support year for SEN funding, with no new funding being made available, however support has now been extended until July 2021 to give some capacity in the system due to Covid related costs.</p> <p>Schools were asked to make an SEND contribution which totalled £300K and at the last forecast (Aug) it was estimated that the over spend was currently £2.1million, early analysis of outstanding cases estimates the overall total overspend to be £2.5million at year end. There are a number of sub groups looking at different options to reduce this overspend including making extra places available in Sefton schools, reducing the out of borough placements, increased top up funding etc.</p> <p>It is envisaged that by 2021-2022, a new methodology will be making an impact on the out of borough placements, with in borough schools becoming more inclusive and easing pressure. However, these changes will still take time to embed and it is predicted that there will still be a £1.5million over spend and that there may be a need to ask schools for a ¼% schools block contribution to reduce the deficit.</p> <p>A number of different scenarios and funding contribution models were shared by NC for consideration and it was outlined how the funding package formula will integrate pay and pension awards from 21/22. It was explained that there will be a 3% National uplift across the system, but depending on the model used not every school would receive the 3% due to the waiting's of different cohorts and local deprivation, it is proposed that any increase is capped at 3.8% increase, not the modelled 6.2% increase. And where any decrease is predicted from the modelling,</p>	

	<p>Head Teachers were assured that schools would be protected to minimise any decrease in real terms.</p> <p>(In 20/21 it is proposed that Sefton will move to a hybrid funding model, moving to the National model in 21/22)</p> <p>A number of options were proposed for calculating the amount of contribution paid by each school, and it is for the forum to agree how this will be calculated. This could include top slicing schools who receive the greatest funding increase, all schools paying a per child payment, or schools paying a combination of a lumpsum and per child payment. It is proposed that forum members consult with colleagues in an early meeting to agree and feedback their preferred model.</p> <p>The use of language around “winners and losers” was discussed as inappropriate with regard to funding, as those considered winners due to increased funding settlement are in areas experiencing huge amounts of deprivation and its associated factors, and therefore dealing with multiple challenges which require additional resources.</p> <p>Feedback from schools is required by the 6<sup>th</sup> Nov to meet deadline of 21<sup>st</sup> November.</p>	
8	<p><b>Updated Scheme for Financing Schools (Maintained Schools related only) NC Vote Needed</b></p> <p>In July, this year DFE came back to the authority regarding the scheme for financing schools, based on consultation which ended September 19 and proposed funding changes will come into place in April 21 with the creation of a 3-year budget for maintained schools. Schools with a deficit above 5% have been asked to develop a recovery plan and risk protection arrangements have been put in place from April 2021. Schools with deficits on the 30<sup>th</sup> April have been asked and agreed to produce recovery plans within 3 months, once budgets are known.</p> <p>The Maintained Sector were asked to vote on accepting the updated scheme for financing schools. Total number of votes available 8</p> <p>Votes in Favour – 8 Votes against – 0</p> <p>Result: Voted Passed</p>	
9	<p><b>Verbal update on the latest Early Years Development Group meeting on 10 September and approved Minutes from the 17 June meeting (AA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early help &amp; readiness manager in place</li> <li>• 2 subgroups in place (Training &amp; Covid)</li> <li>• Waiting to clarify funding</li> <li>• Increase in 2-year-old uptake, which was at 85% pre Covid</li> <li>• Funding helping communicator accreditation – speech &amp; language</li> <li>• Training subgroup (SENCO training, Trauma informed practice, self-regulation, all training brought together in 1 place)</li> <li>• Covid subgroup (Impact on provision and ensuring still viable, demand difficult to predict, daily communication with providers, identifying vulnerable children, grants to providers at first peak)</li> </ul>	

10	<p><b>Verbal update on the latest SEND Workshop Group meeting on 12 October (DV)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting took place last week</li> <li>• Higher needs funding review continues</li> <li>• Interim arrangements in place for this year (some Covid impact but not excessive)</li> <li>• 2 sub-groups (Inclusion and Banding) working to tight timescales</li> <li>• SEND at crisis as specialist provision full and there is a need to stop sending straight to specialist provision or out of borough</li> <li>• Work is taking place to look at threshold banding like other Authorities and the progress will be shared with the Forum</li> <li>• Sufficiency planning is ongoing</li> <li>• Work is taking place with parents to educate about the benefits of Mainstream provision where children can thrive and reduce capacity in specialist provision as well as out of borough</li> </ul>	
11	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>Is there any further information about safe Covid seating plans? To be raised at the Health Cell after ½ term</p> <p>Kevin to attend Head Teacher meetings 7<sup>th</sup> Dec, Figures usually around 18<sup>th</sup> Dec so need early January meetings to agree funding and models, to ensure vote completed on time.</p>	
	<p><b>Date of next meeting: Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 1.30pm by Virtual TEAMS - <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a></b></p>	