

Sefton Schools Forum Minutes

Minutes of Sefton Schools' Forum Meeting

MONDAY 11.01.21

TEAMS - Virtual Meeting held

Forum Members present:

In attendance:

Chair: Dorothy Lee-Ogden

Isobel MacDonald-Davies, Nick Carbonaro, Kevin McBlain, Tricia Davies, Mark Chambers, Alice Apel, Niki Craddock, Cathy Earley, Toni Oxton-Grant, Sue Kerwin, Anna James, Daniel MacAreavy, Ian Parry; Amanda Ryan, Jennifer Taylor, Julian Ward, Gil Bourgade, Malcolm Parry, Christopher Lee, Alistair Devey, David Eden, Matt Jenkinson, Ginny ?

Others present: Nicola Robson

| | | Actions |
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| 1 | Apologies John Horrocks, Erin Wheeler, Alicia Cavanagh, Debra Vis | |
| 2 | Minutes from the last meeting Minutes were agreed with one amend to the wording – Page 1 Regarding DSG (DAF) – Minute amended to say, “This position has now been corrected” | |
| 3 | Matter Arising / Issues for further consideration Cathy Earley added issues around Early Years funding to AOB | |
| 4 | Risk Protection Arrangements – Insurance David Eden David Eden presented a report “Sefton Council – Insurance Services for Schools” and outlined the key areas before taking questions from the Forum. He outlined the role of the team with regards to managing risk and carrying out audits for the Council. It was explained that in March 2020 the government introduced changes to school’s insurance around the same time as the pandemic hit. It was explained that schools arrange services through the Central team. The team procure an Annual Policy on a 3-yearly basis to ensure long term stability, procuring schools insurance products is a complicated procedure, which takes time to manage and needs to be considered carefully to ensure cover is sufficient. The team considered other providers in the marketplace such as Zurich, however these were very high cost. As of April 20, a risk pooling arrangement was put in place across all schools with the number of pupils determining the size of the premium. (there are some | |

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| | <p>exclusions in the policy such as inspections and minibuses, which can be covered separately)</p> <p>The associated SLA is due to be in place in April 21, and this will realise significant savings for schools who agree to the arrangement. The SLA will cover a 3 year +1+1-year period, and schools wishing to take advantage of the savings need to commit to the longer time frame as this is a risk pooling scheme. The cover is for all providers including voluntary aid funded provision and maintained nursery's, it also covers volunteers & Governors as well as all school staff.</p> <p>The Forum are asked to consult with members and feedback with regards to rates.</p> | <p>Forum is asked to consult & feedback by end of Feb,</p> <p>For the next agenda (Nicola Robson)</p> |
| 5 | <p>Trade Union Facility Time 2021/22</p> <p>Nick Carbonaro presented a report to provide members with information on the proposed changes to the Trade Union Facilities Administration from April 2021. With the Forum asked to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Schools Forum members are requested to agree the content and proposals contained in this report. 2. Schools Forum to formally recommend all schools and academies buy- in to the continuation of the local authority's union facilities agreement. The aim being for all schools and academies by contributing to a 'pool' to share the costs of paying for teaching trade union facilities time and draw on an established wealth of expertise. <p>The forum was updated that this is the 3rd Year of an SLA for agreed Union time and that each governing body must agree to the proposal. That it is possible to grant time off for Union duties but that it is far better to go through redelegation for facilities time.</p> <p>The cost will remain the same this year (£2.20 Primary & £4.80 Secondary) due to the pay freeze, with potential cost increases if Schools vote against the proposal.</p> <p>Academies in a consortium can still purchase the cover and will receive 1 invoice to be split between the schools.</p> <p>The NEU are requesting an uplift by 1 day as they are working beyond their time, there is an associated underspend in the budget and they have had a considerable increase in their membership since September 2020. The NEU have trained case workers ready and willing to undertake duties. This uplift could be funded for the next year due to underspend and would mean an extra 24p primary and 48p secondary going forward</p> <p>The Charge for Special Schools is at a different level NC to provide information to relevant schools.</p> <p>Academy's will pay pro rata due to financial year.</p> | <p>Nick Carbonaro to provide information</p> |

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| | <p>The rates for Primary and Secondary schools differ due to numbers of staff and different funding model and because there is increased work with regards to contract work for secondary staff.</p> <p>The whole contract is being reviewed in September so changes to days, buy in etc with regards to other Unions can be considered at this point.</p> <p>It is essential that the NEU know ASAP if staff are going to be released for union duties and how this will be back filled from April.</p> <p><i>Over View - Schools Forum members were requested to agree the content and proposals contained in the report relating to the financial administration of the costs associated with the teaching unions facilities arrangements.</i></p> <p>Decision – Agreed</p> <p>The request of the NEU for an extra day’s Facility time was agreed and for 2021/22, the cost will be borne by the Schools Centrally Retained DSG reserves, to be incorporated into charges to schools from 2022/23.</p> | |
| 6 | <p>Schools; High Needs; Early Years and CSSB DSG Allocations and Budget Report 2021/22 (Requires Some voting by Phase)</p> <p>Kevin McBlain presented the Draft DSG Funding Allocations to Schools; Central Schools Services; High Needs and Early Years Blocks for 2021/22</p> <p>The content of the report contained items for approval by Phased Voting as well as content for information.</p> <p>The purpose of the report was to provide members with information on the 2021/22 proposed funding allocations to Early Years; High Needs; Individual Schools Budgets and the Central Schools Services Block (including delegation and de-delegation) on which Schools Forum were asked to formally approve as required. To note the intention of the Local Authority to submit the final Authority Proforma Tool (APT) Return on Schools funding to the DfE by the deadline of 21st January 2021 to enable School Budgets to be set for 2021/22. This will be based on the agreed approach to the Schools formula after consultation with schools.</p> <p>The Schools Forum is asked to note / and or agree the following recommendations:</p> | |

FOR NOTING BY SCHOOLS FORUM

- Note the overall DSG funding for 2021/22 and the allocation assigned to each of the 4 funding blocks including any adjustments to be made.
- Note the Local Authority recommendations in support of the Individual Schools Budgets (**ISBs**) for 2021/22 (before any de-delegation from Maintained Schools), and in line with the general direction given by SAPH and SASH, on the approach to apply to the schools formula; and note the provision of the APT Return in respect of the Schools Formula after reducing the Block funding for the contribution of 0.25% of the Schools Block towards High Needs budget pressures in 2021/22 (as agreed by a vote of Headteachers in November); and for the Infant Class size/Pupil Growth contingency adjustments (subject to approval by schools, below)
- Note the provision of funding for High Needs in 2021/22, and the continuing review of High Needs by the LA, in conjunction with schools, throughout 2020/21, to try to make efficiencies and reduce/contain expenditure in 2021/22.
- Note the provision of funding for Early Years and the intention of the LA to increase the base hourly rates payable to all EY Providers for 2; 3 and 4-Year-old childcare by: £0.08p p hour for 2-Year-old Provision and by £0.06p p hour for 3-4-Year-old provision from 1 April 2021.
- Note that the contribution from the Early Years Funding Block towards High Needs budget pressures will not occur in 2021/22, and Early Years funding will instead be used to manage a revised SEN Inclusion Fund (SENIF) from April 2021, as part of the High Needs review.

Vote 1 - To agree by a vote, to the proposed contingency allocation of **£0.600m** in support of significant pre-16 pupil growth in 2021/22 and in compliance with KS1 infant class size legislation and as described in **Paras 3.7 to 3.11 of the report (ALL Primary and Secondary School Phases to vote)**

9 Votes in favour
3 Votes against
1 Abstention

Vote Passed

Vote 2 - To agree by a vote to support the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) funding allocation as proposed (totalling **£1.174m** 21/22) with associated services. **See Paras 6.1 to 6.7 of the report (ALL Primary and Secondary School Phases to vote)**

8 Votes in favour
1 Vote against
0 Abstentions

Vote Passed

Vote 3 - To agree by a vote to the rates to be applied against Maintained Schools funding for 2021/22, in recovery of statutory costs incurred by the Local Authority on their behalf. This item was originally agreed as a de-delegated item in 2018/19 and in subsequent years since then; and this will need to be agreed for 2021/22 by Forum today. Costs are treated as de-delegated through the APT and raised through a charge per pupil for Primary and Secondary schools of £19.70; £50.74 per Place for

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| | <p>Special schools; £50.74 for AP Places; and £30.42 per FTE place at Nursery schools. <u>See Paras 7.1 to 7.3 of the report (Maintained Schools only to vote by phase as required, but including Primary; Secondary; Special/AP and Maintained Nursery Phases)</u></p> <p>7 Votes in favour 0 Votes against 0 Abstentions</p> <p>Vote Passed</p> <p>Vote 4 - To agree, by a vote of the Maintained Schools Sector only, the basis for and, de-delegation of specific central services as shown in para 7.6 Items A to E of the report, to be pooled centrally by the local authority to provide a service to all ‘maintained’ schools. (Maintained Primary and Secondary Schools Only to vote by phase, as necessary)</p> <p>6 Votes in Favour 0 Votes against 0 Abstentions</p> <p>Vote Passed</p> | |
| 7 | <p>Early Years Forecast 2020/21 update as at November 2020</p> <p>Kevin McBlain presented this update report to provide members with information on the Early Years revised forecast spending position for 2020/21, Forum was asked to:</p> <p>Note the 2020/21 Early Years revised forecast position as at November 2020 and the forecast DSG Early Years Reserves.</p> <p>This is an update to the previous report brought in October 2020 which showed an underspend of £350K. However, the ongoing COVID pandemic, reduced pupil numbers, the payment of support grants to providers to ensure places are available at the end of the pandemic and double funding as required to provide places for Key Worker children has meant that a considerable chunk of the reserves (approximately £300K) has been spent. Leaving a predicted underspend in the region of £54K.</p> <p>It had been assumed that the Spring term 2021 would be a “normal” term with regard to pupil numbers and Government funding would be based on true census data, however the situation remains difficult due to the ongoing pandemic and restrictions, therefore numbers may be down. The Government has stated that they will top up funding, up to 85%, of the 2020 census figure for Spring 2021, this means the financial situation remains under strain. As of Dec 20, the uptake was back to 91% however Jan’s data is still unknown.</p> <p>The Early Years Development group have supported a number of programmes to help the sector with over £180K worth of funding grants given out to date.</p> <p>The DFE will offer further advice about funding in the next few days and a further report will be brought to the March meeting</p> | <p>Further report to March meeting</p> |

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| | | Kevin McBlain |
| 8 | <p>Verbal update on the latest Early Years Development Group meeting</p> <p>AA gave an update on behalf of the EY sub group as follows –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of processes have been put in place with the support of Alder Hey including some online Speech & Language sessions and a training programme to help better understand language, as well as purchased packs which are available, all of which practitioners can access. • DFE require further information and data regarding the attendance of vulnerable children and an update on First Responder processes to escalate safeguarding issues. • As outlined previously sustainability issues and sufficiency once we are out of COVID are a major concern. | |
| 9 | <p>High Needs Forecast 2020/21 as at November 2020</p> <p>An update was provided by NC to give members an extract from a report going to Sefton’s Cabinet Member for Children Schools and Families in January 2021 around the current High Needs forecast position and ongoing review work across High Needs.</p> <p>Schools Forum were asked to note for information, the report being provided to Sefton’s Cabinet Member for Children; Schools and Families in January 2021 (below); including the latest forecast overspending on High Needs in 2020/21, as at November 2020, and work as a result of the ongoing Review across High Needs to start to address overspending.</p> <p>In October 20, the forecasted overspend for the HNF was £2.5 Million, this is now estimated to be £3.1 Million with a slowdown in spending observed in recent months due to ongoing mitigating actions.</p> <p>Key overspend areas continue to be none maintained out of borough placements and Post 16 as the number of young people staying on in education increases.</p> <p>A number of currently vacant posts is helping to limit the overspend in some areas and there has been in year mitigation in the form of a transfer from the school’s block. There are also a number of workstreams sitting under the HNF working group looking at actions to help reduce the spending including, sufficiency, banding etc.</p> | |
| 10 | <p>Verbal update on the latest SEND Workshop Group meeting on 8 January 2021</p> <p>Chris Lee gave an update from the SEND working groups ongoing work which included information on the role out of the DfE Whole School SEND programme, the work of the Sufficiency sub group looking at inclusive and therapeutic practice to help children thrive in mainstream settings. Work continues to understand which pupils could move to a Sefton based setting and what the maximum financial impact these moves might have. However, it is important to note that many families may not wish to move school if their children are settled, even if a Sefton school can meet their needs.</p> | |

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| | <p>The update also explained the ongoing work of the banding subgroup which includes consultation on new proposed model of funding for Special Schools / resources and maintained mainstream schools. It is the intention to have the consultation ready by Easter 21 with the role out of the new model due to begin in Sept 21. An update will be provided at the next meeting with regard to quick efficiencies.</p> | <p>Chris Lee to provide an update, to be added to next agenda Nicola Robson</p> |
| 11 | <p>Infant Class and Pupil Growth Funding allocations 2020/21</p> <p>Nick Carbonaro provided members with information on the allocations of Pupil Growth Funding in 2020/21 and members were requested to note the allocations of the Infant Class size and Pupil Growth allocations to schools in 2020/21 set aside at £600K.</p> <p>Members discussed if this fund was enough given the significant increase in pupil numbers.</p> | |
| | <p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cathy Earley requested clarity of 3-4Yr old funding for nurseries whose children may be shielding and receiving preschool home learning packs, or where children of Key Workers have to move provider. If funding is stopped, what legislation is being used and why? • Many nursery providers are concerned about how they will survive until the end of the pandemic and how many places will be lost and no longer available when children return. • When issuing data reports members request that a paragraph “what does this mean for each individual school” be included in the report to help members interpret the data, explain to peers and allow them to vote confidently knowing the impact and numbers affected. Bringing more clarity to the process. | <p>Kevin McBlain to share DFE guidance as this becomes clearer</p> |
| | <p>Date of next meeting: 15th March 1.30-4.00pm Click here to join the meeting</p> | |