

Sefton Schools Forum Minutes

Minutes of Sefton Schools' Forum Meeting Monday 12th March 2018 1.30pm PDC, Formby

Forum Members present:- Isobel MacDonald-Davies (**Chair**), Ian Raikes, Toni Oxtan Grant (on behalf of Sue Clare), Malcolm Parry, Cathy Earley, Matt Symes, Sharon Cowey, Niki Craddock, Jon Horrocks, David Jones, Danny Macareavy, Nicola Walsh, Sandra McKay, John Baden, Jacqueline Kerr, Michael Mainwaring, Debbie Rayfield and Brenda Hayes

In attendance:

Colette Jones - Clerk to Sefton Schools Forum (CJ)
Mike McSorley - Head of Schools and Families (MM)
Kevin McBlain - Corporate Finance CS Finance (KM)

Actions

1 Apologies

Dorothy Lee-Ogden, Brenda Porter, Paul Tomlinson, Cllr Richard Hands, David Jones, Anna James, Peter Hennessy Simon Penney, Sue Kerwin, Mary Johnson, Jon Horrocks, Sue Clare

2 Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes from the last meeting were agreed

3 Matters arising from Minutes

(7) Kevin McBlain provided a written response to the information Cathy Early requested

(4) DSG allocations-funding models are being prepared and will be presented to representatives from SASH/SAPH and Governors by finance in May. Ian Raikes, Matt Symes and Isobel MacDonald Davies volunteered to attend the meeting.

4 High Needs budget monitoring forecast as at January 2018

High Needs Budget overspend has increased to £2.2m, including additional spend for out of borough of £428k and the increase in Comp Education fees. It is expected that there will be a similar overspend on the HN budget in 18/19. Sefton is not the only LA struggling with demands on the HN budget and Wigan £1.6m, Warrington £1.9m and Lancashire £8.5m all reporting overspends due to increasing budget pressures, limited places, expensive day places at a cost of £40k per child pa and the increase in pupil numbers. Sefton has used DSG and Early Years reserves to balance the budget this year. Some LA s are considering proposals to reduce budget deficits by;

- Reducing dependence on Non Maintained and Independent school places and raising in-house provision
- Reducing Top ups to Special schools from a range of between 5% and 20%
- Removing spare places from Special Units and Resourced Provision
- Review Special School budgets and resourced place banding mechanism
- Funding Top ups on a pro-rata basis for provision that is not full time (i.e less than 25 hours per week)
- Reduce High Needs Central commissioned budgets.
- Reducing outreach provision

- Central savings where possible
- Exhausting reserves
- Requiring schools to fund up to 1% of their funding to High Needs with permission of the DfE through a disapplication
- Contribution from the Council matching the schools block funding to High Needs (Sefton has no resource to support something like this)
- Reducing the bandings on new EHCP s by 20%
- Stop all short term placements in Pupil Referral Units intended to reduce permanent exclusions (Sefton PRUs currently charge schools a daily rate or pre exclusions)
- Closure of a Special School and reductions in Sensory services.

All proposals will need to be discussed and decided on at a strategic level. If running a deficit year on year, the first call on funding is to meet that deficit. KMc stated that action to address the deficit is required urgently else the situation may ratchet up sharply beyond 2018/19 if not addressed. There are no more balances to bail out an overspending situation in next year and it was suggested that a number of savings options be considered and discussed at either a High Needs sub group or as part of the strategic group undertaking the High Needs review. Whatever the decision, urgent action is necessary to start addressing the situation. Some actions may need to be agreed before the High Needs review is completed.

5 Charging Schools for Complimentary Education services

There has been a significant increase by schools using the complimentary education service. This paper informed schools that from 1 April 2018 a charge will be imposed on schools for each pupil referred to complimentary education. The additional funding will pay for the extra teaching provision and transport costs for the vulnerable pupils incurred as a result of the growing numbers.

The charge will be reviewed in 6 to 9 months. A letter will be sent to all schools informing them of the charge.

Kevin McBlain to send letter to schools

6 Funding for capacity to develop an ambitious and improved nursery school model

Early Years Sub Group has made a request to Forum to use £40k of Early Years DSG reserves to assist maintained nurseries to develop an ambitious and improved model of service provision and to create a federation of nurseries. The headteachers of the Maintained Nursery schools have sought approval from Dwayne Johnson, DCS, to progress a business case for change, which will align the schools with the Council's new locality model of service for early help/intervention. The funding will be used to backfill the headteachers posts whilst the model is being developed and any remaining money will be returned to the budget. One of the nurseries has applied to become a teaching school.

Forum approved the request for £40k fund for nursery model

7 SEN Review

SEND Team have received a small amount of funding to conduct a review of the service over a four month period. The review is to understand demand and provision to develop a balanced model, increase parental confidence and support schools to provide better outcomes for SEND children and young people. Although it is cheaper to provide funding for SEND in mainstream schools it has to meet the needs of the children and even the most expensive provision may not be the most appropriate or result in better outcomes. A small group of volunteers will conduct the review and Jacqui Kerr will circulate the list of volunteers. The result of the review with any system changes or

Minutes of any review meetings to be sent to Schools Forum for comment

efficiencies savings will be reported back to Schools forum and the High Needs Sub Group (this will be re-established) before implementation. Over the summer term the High Needs Panel will only be focussing on transitions eg new schools entrants, Y6 to Y7 and new families moving to the area.

8 Income from unauthorised fines

The income generated from unauthorised fines equates to £58K and the staff costs, including legal costs equate to £96k which is non profitable and labour intensive for both schools and the LA officers. Issue raised over the process as it has not stopped parents taking children out of school as the levy is less than the savings made on holidays out of school time. Some of the Primary schools had requested detailed report of the costs of running the unauthorised fine process.

MM to send note to schools

9 Apprenticeship levy

Michael Mainwaring and Debbie Rayfield informed Forum of the apprenticeship levy and how schools can access funding for training for staff development or to employ an apprentice. Sefton have funding for 136 apprentices and have recruited 66 with 10 more joining in March. The period before funding is taken back by HMRC is 24 months, with any unused funds going back to the HMRC and being recirculated towards SME business. Training is available for apprentices and existing Sefton staff and includes courses such as AAT, an accountancy qualification for schools bursars, business admin and childcare. If schools require further information please contact Emma Finnegan, emma.finnegan@sefton.gov.uk or Debbie Rayfield, debbie.rayfield@sefton.gov.uk

10 AOB

SASH/SAPH have agreed to send letters to parents and MP's concerning schools budgets and the impact cuts will have on schools. The letter requires generic figures for Sefton schools from finance

Kevin McBlain to check for any useful financial information in support to SASH/SAPH

Date of Next Meeting

Monday 11th June 2018, 1.30pm-3.30pm, PDC, Formby