

Sefton Schools Forum Minutes

Minutes of Sefton Schools' Forum Meeting

Monday 11th March 2019 1.30pm

PDC, Formby

Forum Members present: - **Dorothy Lee Ogden (Chair)**, Isobel Macdonald-Davies, Malcolm Parry, Danny Macareavy, Anna James, Niki Craddock, Toni Oxton-Grant, Cathy Earley, Julian Ward, David Jones, Rob Rogers, Matt Symes

DfE-Carl Fagan

In attendance:

Colette Jones	- Clerk to Sefton Schools Forum	(CJ)
Mike McSorley	- Head of Education	(MM)
Nick Carbonaro	- Corporate Finance	(NC)
Kevin McBlain	- Corporate Finance	(KM)

Actions

Apologies

1 Ian Raikes, Jenny Taylor, Nicky Walsh, Sue Kerwin, Jon Horrocks

2 Minutes of the previous meeting

Forum agreed the minutes from the previous meeting with the amendment of Early Years Outcomes Fund be changed to Early Years Sub Group

3 Matters arising from Minutes

(4) Facility Time-report has been superseded by current report and has been raised at both SASH and SAPH.

(9) Early Years Sub Group has not met but will send an update at a future meeting. Linda McQueen, based in Localities will be taking this forward

4 School Resource Management Self-assessment Tool

Carl Fagan from the DfE gave a presentation on School resource management: benchmarking and self-assessment. The toolkit is a starting point for discussion and not 'a silver bullet' it is similar to and a replacement of the Schools Financial Statement. The tool is designed to support schools to make a self-assessment of their use of resources and to provide a robust and consistent method to help schools and trusts identify where a school sits in the distribution of data across the sector; to identify reasons for that position; and to decide if changes in how resources are managed are required. Support notes are available online for dashboard and checklist. DfE will not ask schools if their schools balances are in the red but will ask academies if the toolkit has been completed if they are struggling.

Colette Jones to circulate presentation and attachment

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-resource-management-self-assessment-tool>

A question and answer session followed.

Q How does it not skew the outcomes?

A Does not take size into consideration and compares with all special schools in the area

Q What about a primary with a Resource Unit and nursery how does that impact?

A Compared with all primaries but the DfE may change this

Q What about the impact on secondary schools?

A Data is based on size, FSM and region. Schools with Sixth forms are now included

Q Are nursery schools included?

A The focus is on the 4 to 16 group but Early Years Team use the same toolkit-this could be developed further

Q What about schools with SEN support?

A Schools should have discussions with the DfE to identify areas and understand the issues

5 Disapplication request to move funding from Schools Block to High Needs Block

The request for funding was finally approved by the DfE in March 2019

Forum noted the decision of the Secretary of State.

6 Early years replacement for the Sub Group Proposal

Over the last two years there has been a Early Years Schools Forum Sub Group and a 30hr Steering Group discussing issues related to the early years sectors. It is requested that Forum consider disbanding the Early Years Schools Forum Sub Group in favour of a new wider based group, similar to the former 30 hours Steering group which was disbanded last summer.

Cathy Earley to email contacts and arrange a meeting

In line with the Council's new Locality working, Forum broadly agreed to setting up a new Early Years Group with proper terms of reference and rules and procedures to be determined, and to commence in September 2019 at the start of the next Academic year. A further report on progress with recommendations will be submitted to Forum at a future meeting.

7 Complementary Education Charges

Kevin McBlain outlined the details of the report and the small change to the charge for 2019/20 which will take effect on 1 April 2019.

In March 2018, a report was brought to Schools Forum which introduced a charge for Complementary Education (Comp Ed) to cover the additional costs borne by increasing numbers of pupil referrals to the service. The Service lies within the High Needs budgets. The charges were to be reviewed in a 9 to 12-month period.

Records show, the numbers have increased from 50/60 per annum since 2017 to 100 +referrals 2018/19. Numbers have remained high throughout 2018/19.

There has also been growing concern raised through Ofsted inspections around pupil attendances at school, and Headteachers have been raising issues around the speed at which data has been made available to them on their pupils attending Comp Ed teaching sessions. The manager of the Comp Ed services has suggested employing an Admin support officer to help address these concerns, which would also alleviate pressures within the Comp Ed Service, arising since the growth in pupil referrals. This would be at an additional cost to the current charges, which it is felt should continue into 2019/20.

The charges proposed for 2019/20 have been calculated with a small increase in tuition charges of 1.8% from £9.68 per hour to £9.87 wef 1 April 2019; and a

decrease in transport charges of -31% from £4.58 per hour to £3.16 per hour. The increase in tuition charges has been minimised, through the service manager's ongoing efforts to try to reduce costs over the last 12 months, but includes for recovery of the costs of an Admin support officer.

A further review of the charges will be made in 12 months' time. Some Members of Forum requested further information on the spread of schools using the service and the numbers of pupils they are referring. The manager of Comp Ed will be asked to make this information available.

8 Scheme for Financing Schools

Sefton MBC is currently updating its Scheme in accordance with the latest updates from the DfE and will be consulting with schools around the document. The Scheme is focussed on the financial relationship between the Local Authority and its maintained schools. A paper will be brought to Forum for approval at a future meeting.

9 High Needs Review and Budget Outturn

Agenda Items 9 and 10 are linked.

Mike McSorley gave a presentation on the Better Outcomes for Children and Young People with special educational needs in Sefton - Sefton Special Educational Needs Review: October 2018 - January 2019. The presentation highlighted the trends, key issues and next steps. There has been no increase in SEN but a better understanding of SEN with children being identified at an earlier age. In the past statements only affected children from age 5 to 16 and the new EHCP reforms range from age 0 to 25, this has seen an increase in SEN numbers and consequently costs. Sefton has a different financial approach to other LA's in that it has High Needs Funding and EHCP but when added together Sefton is higher in spend compared to LA's both regionally and nationally.

Colette Jones will circulate the presentation

There are four main categories for SEN and Autism appears to be the most prominent in terms of funding but is ranked fourth. This could be the result of not recording the main problem with the child to receive extra funding. Further analysis on the data is required.

There are 80 pupils costing the LA £4.1m per annum by attending specialist independent provision and this could be due to parental choice as stated in the code of practice. Post 16 budget also has an overspend of £500k. Sefton sends more pupils to out of borough provision compared to other LA's primarily because it's specialist provision is full. The Government have awarded Sefton and extra £562k but the expected overspend will be £1.9m and this will roll over to next financial year. It is expected that there will be an overspend in 19/20 of £2/3m for Sefton.

Sefton can no longer continue funding in the same manner. Edge Hill University are conducting a review of SEN which may assist in developing a strategic plan and could include the various options that have been proposed;

- Developing a banding system and allocating funding to each band
- High needs for only 2 academic years for improvement
- Decommission places in schools particularly independent provision
- High Needs funding seen as part of the process for an EHCP
- Build confidence in schools and parents to use mainstream schools eg if Sefton can reduce out of borough provision it can invest in mainstream schools
- Challenge parents opting for specialist provision eg winning cases at tribunal and mediation

- Hatton Hill Primary School are trialling having SEN children in the same class with a teacher. This is more beneficial and cost effective
- Reduce transport costs with personal budgets and travel passes
- Schools employing a speech and language therapist and having Health meet the financial costs

10 LGA High Needs Report

This report is not for circulation outside of Forum. The School Improvement Board has requested a paper to include information on Inclusion, SEN, Free school meals in geographical areas.

11 State of Maintained Schools

At a quarter 2 of 2018/19 financial year there are 6 schools (1 nursery which will close in August 2019, 2 primary schools and 3 secondary schools) who are operating under a Notice of Concern as they are projected to be in a deficit balance situation in 2018/19 or have an agreed licensed deficit agreement with the Council. The main cause for the projected deficits; falling pupil numbers or in areas where there are more school places available. Plans are in place to reduce the deficits over time.(NOTE: that the original report incorrectly stated there were 2 Maintained Nursery schools under Notice of Concern, this was incorrect, there is only 1 MNS under concern). The correct numbers are stated above.

12 Teachers Pay

The Secretary of State has recommended a pay cap increase of 2% for Teachers pay in 2019, which schools would be expected to fund from their own budgets. The Secretary of State however is committed to paying for the increase in teachers' pension contributions. The LA Finance Teams have updated budgets for schools with this in mind.

13 School Balances Report

Schools Forum agreed to have an annual review of balances of 8% for secondary and 12% for primary schools. 21 schools were identified as holding balances in excess of these percentages. 14 of these schools were asked for additional information; and 7 schools were ultimately called. Only 1 school failed to attend the meeting as arranged - All Saints Primary School. Due to delays in the process, is considered too late for action this financial year, but in the new financial year, it is expected 'clawback' may be implemented, with added consideration for earmarked pupil premium funding held in balances. Schools Forum will debate this process again and SASH/SAPH will make the decision. High balances will be adjusted to include for pupil premium and sports funding. This review mechanism does not apply to academies.

Date of Next Meeting

Monday 1st July 2019, 1.30pm-3.30pm, PDC, Formby