

Sefton Schools Forum Minutes

Minutes of Sefton Schools' Forum Meeting

Monday 4th November 2018 1.30pm

PDC, Formby

**Forum Members present:**

**In attendance:**

Dorothy Lee-Ogden, Isobel McDonald-Davies, Anna James, Daniel MacAreavy, Niki Craddock, Jenny Taylor, Neil Moore (Stanley H Stand in for Hillside Rep Amanda Ryan), Ein Wheeler, Ian Parry, Toni Oxtan-Grant, Cathy Earley (Early Years), Ginny Taylor, Vicky Buchana, Nicola Walsh, Mark Chambers, Kevin McBlain

**Actions**

- 1 **Apologies**  
Amanda Ryan – Hillside represented by Neil Moore Stanley High  
Malcolm Parry  
Sue Kirwen  
Julia Ward
- 2 **Minutes from the last meeting**  
Minutes were agreed
- 3 **Matters arising from the minutes**  
Early years sub group on 24/10 has approached a new independent chair. Interim sees Linda McQueen is Vice Chair.
- 4 **Schools Forum membership 2019/20 (to be tabled)**  
The list of members was tabled and amendments were noted, this will be sent out with the minutes. Any gaps in representation will need to be identified and filled.
- 5 **Feedback from Schools Forum sub groups**  
The EY Development Group had had 2 meetings so far, the first to determine terms of reference, the second identifying individuals needed to be involved and other EY issues.  
The SEN School forum group now also feeds into the Continuous Improvement Board. It is developing its terms of reference and remit. The Continuous Improvement Board is developing a plan that the SEND sub group will fit into.  
High needs sub group has not met as a sub group of the Schools Forum as there was the development of the Continuous Improvement Board, where it met under that remit. The group has re-established as a sub group of this forum last month and is working on revised top up funding arrangements and looking at the whole HN top up system and at the funding process across two separate panels who currently meeting.  
There is a need to review the workings of the high needs panel to

review transparency and consistency, and a need to re model the panels in the future.

There is a need to Identify the established links between sub groups of the School Forum. At next meeting of the sub groups they are asked to identify link members between sub groups. Forum sub groups should be a standing item on the Schools Forum agenda with feedback from representatives and minutes provided for Forum members.

**ACTION: Identify link members between sub groups and forum.**

## 6 **Early years budget position**

News from finance:

Information received last week was of £66m across early years provision nationally, Sefton will see an increase of at least £0.08p per hour for both 2-Year-Old and 3-4-Year-Old provision, with rates increasing to £5.28 p hour from £5.20 and £4.38 p hr from £4.30 respectively from April 2020. Finance will work the figures out and bring to the next Early Years Development Group in December, to discuss how this is passed onto providers.

Funding given to protect Maintained Nursery Schools has been extended at least until the end of the 2020/21 Financial Year.

Report was presented by Kevin McBlain – please refer to the report for details of the information given.

The report was an update - To provide members with information on the Early Years forecast spending position for 2019/20 and to report on the DfE's announcements on Early Years formula funding for 2020/21.

The Forum was asked to

1. Note the 2019/20 Early Years forecast outturn position and the DSG Early Years Reserves following changes agreed at the last Schools Forum;
2. Note the intention of the DfE to increase Early Years formula funding for 2020/21 for 2; 3 and 4 Year olds and that this will be passed on to Providers once details become known.
3. Note the intention to use £200k from Early Years formula floor funding towards High Needs cost pressures in 2020/21, similar to 2018/19, and 2019/20.

Comment that mention in report of 40 places for SEND was also for looked after children and siblings of children with SEND, it is not exclusively SEND.

Comment: Reserves used for high needs funding but need be assured the 40 eligible places are not lost due to funding not being available.

Request: for a breakdown of what is top sliced off early years budget. Approximately 2 years ago received a SEN sheet showing each cost centres in high needs budget broke down into spend, would like that for Early Years also showing what % of early years funding is being used on high need care. High needs budget has early needs support within too.

Finance will bring a report to the next Early Years Development group, which is best placed to discuss funding and ideas of how funding can be used.

**ACTION: Finance to produce a breakdown report to be presented to EY Development Group.**

7 **Update on the Schools and High Needs Formula Indicative Funding for 2020/21**

A report was presented by Kevin McBlain and Mark Chambers. The purpose of this report is to discuss the indicative Schools and High Needs funding for 2020/21 and to consider some draft funding models as part of a consultation with Schools. Revised papers were tabled as those sent out contained some errors.

That the Forum notes the report – please refer to the report and updated figure reports which will be available with these minutes.

Kevin talked through the report and the figures.

The forum was asked to

1. Agree for the LA to draft a 2020/21 schools' formula funding model on the same, or similar basis, as 2019/20, using Local formula factors and assuming to include any announced uplifts in funding by the DfE. OR Suggests the LA adopts the National Formula Funding model.
2. That consultation regarding the schools funding formula will run for four weeks throughout November and will consist of a funding model containing use of Sefton's local formula factors as 2019/20 and a model using NFF factors as prescribed by the DfE in comparison. (The final funding allocations will only be made available to Local Authorities in December, following the publication of the October Schools Census data.) A proposed 2020 - 21 formula would then subsequently be presented to Schools Forum in January at budget Forum for final approval.

That Schools Forum agrees with the Local Authority's request to maintain the same level of inter-Block support from Schools (0.5% Schools Block allocation) and Early Years (£0.200m), as 2019/20, towards High Needs funding pressures in 2020/21. Note – action regards the Schools Block contribution will be voted upon as part of another report on High Needs in this agenda.

The forum discussed and requested discussion about which direction the forum would like to take.

Anna – Made the point that those schools who have high levels of deprivation, which has been identified by national agenda within the National Formula Funding model, would largely benefit from moving towards the National Formula, rather than staying with the Local formula model and she suggested that perhaps the LA should look to provide a hybrid model somewhere between the existing model and the NFF as a full move towards the NFF may not be acceptable to some schools.

Difference in funding for free school meals element values between primary and secondary is confusing, can this be investigated?

Secondary figure is much higher!

National funding model will become the only way in the future, do we do it now whilst extra funding being put in or wait and stay with local formula. In the NFF everyone gains but some not as much as the local formula.

Comment – should there be a setting the objectives before setting the budgets.

Revised comparisons showing a few finance models will be worked up by finance to show a hybrid of NFF; a full move to the NFF and the local model. These will be sent out by end of this week as requested by Forum members. Reports to be taken to and discussed at SAPH on

**ACTION: Finance will investigate and feedback the difference in costings of free meals funding between primary and secondary.**

**ACTION: Revised comparisons**

26/11 (CLAC) and SASH on 10/12 (PDC). Finance happy to attend meetings to talk through objectively.

Decision back through SAPH and SASH representatives/Chairs via email to Kevin and Mark by end of week 13th Dec 2019.

Timetable for the Schools funding allocations: Final budget meeting of Schools Forum on 13<sup>th</sup> January. Return to Government 16<sup>th</sup> January.

**showing  
different models  
of funding**

## 8 **High needs budget position at September 2019**

Report was presented by Kevin McBlain / Vicky Buchanan, please refer to report for full details.

To discuss the current forecast overspending on High Needs and 2020/21 funding issues. 2019/20 High Needs overspending is now forecast to be between £3.5m and £4m. At this level, it would place the DSG into an overall deficit position in excess of £2m (i.e above 1% of DSG Funding) by the year end, including Central Schools and Early Years forecasts and including the DSG net deficit on reserves brought forward from 2018/19 (£0.230m).

Forum Members are asked to note the report and the updated forecast overspending position on High Needs of between £3.5m and £4m this year.

Note the likely requirement to provide a deficit recovery plan for the DfE by June 2020, should the level of the DSG deficit exceed 1% of DSG funding (c. £2m)

Note the intention, over the coming months, to consider a High Needs cost recovery plan from April 2020, or before, in conjunction with all partners across a range of areas, and any other action considered necessary to reduce spending in 2019/20.

Note the intention of the Local Authority to continue with the Early Years Block contribution (£0.200m) towards High Needs budget pressures in 2020/21.

Funding update was given, showing national high needs funding being increased by £780m with Sefton receiving £3.8m in 20/21. No indication of extra funding beyond that date. Despite level of increase of funding, we still need contribution from school to support the HN funding block due to increase of demand and costs. This information has already been to SAPH.

Questions: Increased staffing in SEN – Is cost from DSG budget?

No, it is coming from Council reserves.

What are the plans for future?

Money from reserves is for a fixed term additional resource for bringing into line the timeliness of EHCP, by clearing of the backlog. After this it returns to a sustainable level it will return to business as usual with the appropriate staffing to process EHCP's in a timely way. Previously, grants funded the staffing that facilitated more EHCP plans being completed on time, those grants ended and the waiting time increased. The Council committed to funding this service in the future, following the clearing of the backlog.

**ACTION:** Requested Council funding into SEND staffing and service to be provided by finance.

**Comment:** Strategic planning for high needs services is needed as currently it is reactive and at short notice. SEND sub group and

Continuous Improvement is trying to bring this more together, in a consistent, fair and transparent way.

Feedback: Schools have started to see improved communications from high needs decisions both in speed and accuracy.

**8a Vote**

The Local Authority requests the mainstream Schools representatives on Schools Forum to vote on the issue of agreeing a Schools Block contribution to High Needs in 2020/21 equivalent to 0.5% of the Schools Block funding (Est £0.819m) in advance of progressing the final Schools funding models for 2020/21.

This funding will not be used to net off historical deficits. It will be ringfenced to support funding in 2020/21 of additional provision in mainstream schools. The funding will stay within the mainstream system but be directed towards the most inclusive schools to alleviate funding gaps that result from supporting SEND pupils in the mainstream sector.

Before voting:

Primary heads wanted it raised about the level of communication re the Notional SEND budget, if a school has the number of pupils over a certain % they received additional budget at the end of the year. This was stopped with no communication this was happening, this has effect on supporting budget planning.

Question: Who decided to end this and when was it made? Why were the schools not informed?

Schools would like a little more transparency, they can see improvement being made by Council. E.g. if agree to the contribution to budgets they want to know where it was going for example, tell the school forum if places allocated from that funding. The Council have committed to doing this.

Vote to allow the transfer of 0.5% of the 2020/21 Schools Block funding to be transferred to High Needs in support of significant budget pressures.

4 – For

0 - Against

2 - Abstain

Carried – agreed.

**9. AOB**

There was no additional business.

Next Meeting

13th January 2019 at 1.30pm in Formby PDC