

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM** held at Council Chamber, Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable on Thursday, 24 January 2013

PRESENT

Richard Holland (Chairman)

School Members:	David Brandon-Bravo	Headteacher, Parkfields Middle School
	Paul Burrett	Headteacher, Studham CofE Lower School and Pre-School
	Shirley-Anne Crosbie	Headteacher, Glenwood Special School
	James Davis	Governor, Leighton Middle School
	Angie Hardy	Headteacher, Clipstone Brook Lower School
	Sue Howley MBE	Governor, Greenleas Lower School
	Sharon Ingham	Headteacher, Hadrian Lower School
	John Street	Academy Middle School Representative
	Stephen Tiktin	Governor, Linslade Lower School

Apologies for Absence: Anne Bell
Mr M Foster
Mrs E Grant
Caroll Leggatt
Jim Parker
J Reynolds
Robert Shore
Rob Watson

Substitutes: Mr T Ramsden for Mr M Foster – Trade Union Representative

Officers in Attendance:	Mrs M Clampitt	Committee Services Officer
	Mr P Dudley	Assistant Director Children's Services (Learning & Strategic Commissioning)
	Ms D Hill	Senior Finance Manager - Children's Services
	Mrs C Jones	Head of HR Strategy
	Miss H Redding	Head of Learning and School Support

CBSF/12/73 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

1. The Chairman welcomed Mr Timothy Ramsden from the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers as substitute for Martin Foster, Trade Union Representative.
2. The Chairman advised the Forum that items 13 and 14 would be considered after Item 3 – Minutes of the previous meeting.

3. Item 8 – Use of centrally retained Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) in 2012/13 before item 5 – School Funding Reform: Update on arrangements for 2013/14 High Needs Block (including Alternative Provision). The remainder of the agenda would be considered in order.

CBSF/12/74 Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum held on 26 November 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Matters arising:-

1. It was noted that no nominations had been received for the two vacancies on the Forum. It has been requested that specific phase of school be contacted for nominations.
2. CBSF/12/70 – the reference to the lower school monies had referred to the previous year's budget.
3. CBSF/12/67 – a letter explaining the process and what can be applied for will be issued with the budget pack.
4. The SEN contingency budget would be fully spent but the General contingency would not.

CBSF/12/75 Enabling Schools to bring individual papers / proposals to School Forum

The Assistant Director for Learning, Commissioning and Partnerships Children's Services informed the Forum that recent changes welcome the opportunity for Schools to bring items for discussion to the Schools Forums.

It was explained that a process would be put in place which would include a timetable for reports to be filed, guidance to ensure that the reports comply with the Schools Forum Constitution and consistency in the documentation received.

The Forum welcomed the opportunity to bring papers to the Forum for consideration but concerns were expressed at the time lag between meetings.

CBSF/12/76 Report Format and Publication Requirements

The Forum considered a report which set out guidance for drafting reports for "public" meetings and publication requirements.

The Forum felt that the template was complex for the type of issues which would be submitted by schools. It was requested that a simplified template be made available for the Schools to complete.

Officers agreed that Central Essentials would be used as a vessel for sharing the simplified template, simple guidance and meeting timeframe.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the corporate template and guidance for drafting reports in use by officers of Central Bedfordshire Council, be noted;**
- 2. that a simplified report template be provided for Schools to use for submission of items for consideration, be agreed.**
- 3. that any reports provided by Academies would be required to meet the legislative publication requirements, be noted.**

CBSF/12/77 Trade Union and Professional Associations

The Forum considered a report which sought approval for the de-delegation (where appropriate) for Primary and Secondary Schools and the retention of funding from the Early Years and High Needs Block funding for facilities release time for Trade Unions and Professional Associations.

The Head of Human Resources Policy and Development provided an overview of the legal requirement for trade union representation in schools and the significant contribution made by them. The funding system for schools should account for this work.

The Forum expressed concerns that they had been asked to vote on this information previously without all of the detailed analysis being available. The Assistant Director for Learning, Commissioning and Partnerships Children's Services explained that the deadlines from the DfE had been very tight and that the Forum had been asked to make a decision based on the information available at the time. Subsequent to the submission of the decision to the DfE, Officers received clarification that middle and upper schools were to be considered one phase and not two. In addition, the final pricing elements from all of the Trade Union and Professional Associations had been received and the amounts to be charged had increased, since the original vote had been taken from £2.77 to £3.56.

The Lower School Phase confirmed that their vote would not change and that de-delegation was their preferred option.

A Forum representative had confirmed that based on the report and the revised figures, he would change one of the middle school votes and considered de-delegation the correct option. There was no Upper School representative at the meeting and due to DfE requirement that the Middle and Upper School votes

be combined, the Upper Schools vote would be annulled.

Another Forum representative:

- Commented upon, and expressed concerns about, the Report and associated appendices for this agenda item which did not explain why Schools Forum were being asked to revote.
- Questioned why, and upon what competence, a revote was required
- Queried why the previous consultation and vote should not stand.

It was noted by the Forum that the vote would only affect schools for one year. The forum also considered that the recommendations should have identified the preferred option from the two presented. The Forum agreed that a request for a specific option should have been made and recommended that this be done.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the vote to de-delegate funding from the Lower School Phase be confirmed;**
- 2. that the de-delegation of funding from the Secondary School Phase (Middle & Upper) be agreed;**

The vote was unanimous - 2 votes for

- 3. that the Early Years and High Needs Blocks are not required to vote for de-delegation of the monies allocated for facilities time however it is recommended that the allocation of funding for facilities time be noted.**
- 4. that all de-delegated funding and funding from the Early Years and High Needs Blocks to be used to facilitate release time for Trade Unions and Professional Associations in accordance with the costs allocated in Appendix A, Option B.**

The Forum voted 5 for and 0 against 1 abstention

CBSF/12/78 Use of centrally retained Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) in 2012/2013

The Forum considered a report which outlined how the centrally retained Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) has been used in 2012/13.

The Head of Learning and School Support provided the Forum with a breakdown of where the funds were spent for the provision of SEN support. The areas were the following:-

- Early Years Children with Disabilities Team
- Advisory Support Teachers retained within the Psychology and Advisory Support Team

- Visual Impairment Team
- Therapies
- Statements
- High Cost Pupils
- Recoupment
- Hospital Recoupment
- Out of County Placements
- Additional Pupil Support
- Access and Inclusion
- Virtual School management and delivery
- PRU
- Commissioning
- Raising Attainment at KS2
- School Admission

The Forum noted that improvements had been made and the provisions were far tighter than previously and budgets had been reduced. It was requested that future reports shows comparison to previous year.

The Chairman of the Schools Forum will write to the DfE and the EFA to challenge the hospital recoupment charging and asking for a rebate. It was noted that the monies from 2013/14 would be withdrawn differently at an increase of 3 times the previous amount paid. The DfE and the EFA have confirmed that the amounts submitted by the Hospitals have not been challenged. The F40 group will be provided with a copy of the letter.

The Forum noted that there were 180 looked after children in the area, with the majority in pre-school.

The Head of Learning and School Support confirmed that the SEN Contingency budget was to be used for the Outreach services. This had been agreed by the Schools Forum when Bedfordshire County Council had been the Local Authority.

RESOLVED

- 1. that how the centrally retained Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) be used to support provision for vulnerable pupils and raising attainment, be noted.**
- 2. that the decision made in the November Schools Forum meeting for the distribution of unspent DSG, be noted.**

CBSF/12/79 **School Funding Reform: Update on arrangements for 2013/14 High Needs Block (including Alternative Provision)**

The Forum considered a report which made recommendations regarding the allocation of the High Needs Block (HNB) in 2013/14 in line with the changes in the Funding Regulations and their impact on schools budgets, and centrally retained Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). HNB activity will be funded from HNB budget allocation in line with funding regulations. No transfers will be made into the HNB from the Schools Block or the Early Years Block. Any overspend will need to be agreed by the Schools Forum, and this will then have first call on 2014/15 DSG. Any underspend will be distributed to schools in April 2014.

The Head of Learning and School Support provided with Forum with information to allow them to comment on the following proposals:-

1. Mainstreamed schools will fund the first £6k towards SEN provision, which is comparable to the funding of the first 12 hours of support. The request had come from the DfE.

NOTED

That mainstream schools fund the first £6k for pupils with Statements of SEN through their delegated budgets, and be paid top-up funding monthly for each pupil against their identified needs as specified in the statement (as they do now).

2. Schools with Specialist Provisions for Autism (ASD) and Behaviour, Emotional and Social Disabilities (BESD) to receive £10k base funding and top-up funding paid monthly.

NOTED

That Schools with Specialist Provisions for Autism (ASD) and Behaviour , Emotional and Social Disabilities (BESD) receive £10k base funding for each place, and be paid top-up funding by the commissioning Authority for each pupil to the equivalent of a Band A statement.

3. Schools with Specialist Provisions for Hearing Impairment (HI) receive £10k base funding for each place (20 places across 3 schools) and top-up funding. The funding will be transferred to the Harlington Area Schools Trust (HAST) who have been commissioned to deliver the service.

NOTED

That the Schools with Specialist Provisions for Hearing Impairment (HI) receive £10k base funding for each place (20 places across 3 schools), and be paid top-up funding by the commissioning Authority for each pupil to the current equivalent. These schools will transfer this funding to the Harlington Area Schools Trust (HAST) who are commissioned to manage and deliver this service.

4. Should there be any unallocated places the top-up costs would be paid by Central Bedfordshire Council until the places would be filled. This would allow stability to the budget to allow appropriate staffing levels to be maintained.

NOTED

That unallocated places for specialist provisions would be funded through top-up at the same level by Central Bedfordshire Council.

5. The pupils who have statements for SEN and attend either of the two lower schools which have resourced Language Provision (St Andrews in Biggleswade and Heathwood in Leighton Buzzard) will receive top-up funding to the current Band D level of £8,280 linked to their statement of SEN. The minimum number of 8 places / pupils be funded to allow stability in the staffing levels.

NOTED

That schools with resourced provision for Speech, Language and Communication Needs be paid top-up funding for each pupil against their identified needs at Band D as specified in their statement of SEN. It is recommended that at Heathwood Lower School a minimum of 8 places / pupils be funded in this way in order to retain the appropriate levels of staffing.

6. The administrative charge of 5% should be added to the charges by mainstream schools to other local authorities to cover the monthly processing, which matches the current level charged via inter-authority recoupment.

NOTED

That Mainstream Schools are advised to add a 5% administration charge to other Local Authorities when claiming the top-up element of funding of statements and specialist provisions.

7. Special Schools from 2013/14 would not be entitled to the same factors as mainstream schools within the new funding arrangements. Funding for special schools must be based on £10k per number of places / pupils based on numbers reported in 2012/13, plus a top-up paid monthly by the commissioning Authority. It is recommended that an administrative charge of 10% should be applied to the charges by special schools to other local authorities to cover the monthly processing, which matches the current level charged through recoupment.

NOTED

That Special Schools are advised to add a 10% administration charge to other Local Authorities when claiming the top-up element of funding for statements and specialist provisions.

8. The number of potential requests for special school places had been estimated on historical data across an academic year for each school. It was noted to keep stability in the budget, indicative banding had been identified for top-up across the places based on the profile of need at the school. The banding is then allocated against one of the unallocated places.

NOTED

That the indicative banding levels are given to empty places in special schools until the places are filled.

9. The Special School Leaders Group revised the banding levels for the schools to take account of the different factors applicable i.e. split site schools and floor area. The simplified process was replaced with a more accurate complicated process which the schools were pleased with.

NOTED

That Special School budgets have been revised to take account of the different factors previously applied to each school, which has set a different banding value for each school.

10. The Special School Leaders Group agreed that the following three factors should be included in the Oak Bank School budget to maintain school places for the students who would otherwise be placed out of the Authority:
 - (a) £30k that funds support for the additional curriculum requirements of the very small number of girls on roll at the school (currently 6);
 - (b) £100k that currently funds the Therapeutic Project and has had a significant impact on outcomes for pupils at the school over the last 4 years;
 - (c) £15k additional top-up for exceptional needs beyond band 4 (Band 4+) against 8 of the band 4 places. This is the average number of pupils funded at this level in previous years.

NOTED

That funding currently centrally retained for Oak Bank Therapeutic Project, their curriculum for small number of girls, and 8 exceptional needs places / pupils are allocated as part of Oak Bank's Individual Budget Share (ISB) through the top-up funding.

11. In 2013/14 the Pupil Premium remains a separate grant to the High Needs Block. The Forum agreed at its meeting in November (minute no. CBSF/12/71 refers) agreed the grant be given to schools rather than be held centrally.

NOTED

That Pupil Premium ceases to be held centrally to fund additional needs of pupils, and be allocated to special schools.

12. The PRU will be funded the same as a Special School but with a base funding unit of £8k. A top-up will be available until 31 August 2013 and based on 5/12ths of the PRU budget.

From 1 September 2013 the AP Free School will be open and Alternative Provision for each of the 70 pupils is £8k, funded directly by the EFA. The school will be funded as an Academy Free School. The EFA will top-slice £326,667 upon confirmation of the start date.

Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) will have a contract with the Academy of Central Bedfordshire, which will have CBC provide top-up funding as required to provide an alternative to permanent exclusion.

2 places per school will be commissioned by the Upper Schools in addition to the CBC provision. The EFA will be contacted to help arrange the best payment process. A joint commissioning arrangement will need to be agreed between the schools, CBC and the Academy of Central Bedfordshire.

NOTED

That the current PRU budget spend be split into five twelfths and seven twelfths of the year to take account of the closure of the PRU and the opening of The Academy of Central Bedfordshire (AP Free School).

13. The Forum noted that the Outreach work was carried out currently by three approved schools.
 - The Chiltern and Ivel Valley Area Special Schools will deliver the Early Years Children with Disability Service from 2013;
 - The Peripatetic aspect of the Hearing Impaired Provision, and the Medical Needs Service will be commissioned in the same way through HAST. The contracts values are £145,632 and £444,539 respectively;

- The alternative provision for primary age children at risk of exclusion will be commissioned through the Hawthron Park Lower School at a value of £414,645.
- The alternative provision for secondary aged pupils at risk of exclusion for two terms will be at a value of £230,094. The EFA will paid the additional £326,667.

NOTED

That the Outreach and commissioned services continue to be commissioned as they are currently.

14. From April 2013 recoupment for out of county placements will not be allowed to be paid retrospectively. Schools will be required to charge monthly for the top-up element to the commissioning Council for pupils with statements in their schools. Maintained Schools after £6k and Special Schools after £10k. Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) will provide support initially.

Due to possible pupil removal a notice period will be considered to allow the pupil to remain supported and to cover the notice period for the member of staff.

As the number of SEN pupils is not known for 2013/14, it was agreed that an additional 10% of DSG be retained to enable payment of admin charges for the unknown sum.

NOTED

That sufficient DSG is retained centrally once known to fund top-up payments to schools in other Council areas, plus a 10% cushion for any increase in numbers / charges.

15. The Forum noted that the High Needs in Post 16 combined three previous budgets: SEN Block Grant, Specialist placements funding and the cost of high needs student in FE. The EFA has not finalised the impact of the charges fully and Officers request that the DSG continue to be paid until the details are finalised.

Between April and July, the High Needs Post 16 will continue to be paid by the 3 elements. Between August and March elements 1 and 2 will be funded by the EFA and element 3 by the Post 16 High Needs Block.

Paragraph 50 of the report detailed the historical shortfall of Post 16 income.

NOTED

That the way in which High Needs Block in Post 16 is allocated is changing significantly in 2013/14.

16. The Forum noted the information contained within paragraph 46 which detailed the retained DSG and the proposed future DSG for centrally retained services to be funded.

RESOLVED

That the continuation of centrally retained funding to support the services identified in Paragraph 46 of the report be agreed.

The Forum voted unanimously to support.

17. The Forum noted the contents of table 47 which set out the centrally retained DSG to be paid to schools for commissioned services through a contract (new and continuing commissions). Previously the elements had been funded from different areas of budgets.

NOTED

That the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocated to commission services from schools that were previously retained with the Council.

CBSF/12/80 Revision to the Scheme for Financing Schools

The Forum considered a report which provided an update and made recommendations following the recent consultation on a proposed revision to Section 4.10 of the Scheme for Financing Schools – Asset Loan Scheme.

The Forum at the 26 November 2012 meeting agreed to the consultation for the proposed changes to Section 4.10 of the Scheme for Financing Schools – Asset Loan Scheme (Minute CBSF/12/68 refers).

There were no objections to the proposed changes and the only queries were in relation to how to apply for the Asset Loan Scheme.

RESOLVED

That the proposed change to the Scheme for Financing Schools be approved.

CBSF/12/81 Schools Specific Contingency Budget

The Forum considered a report which provided an update on the use of the School Contingency Budget for 2012/13 and the proposed distribution of unspent Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

At the Schools Forum meeting held on 5 March 2012, the following budgets were agreed:-

- £500,000 General Contingency
- £275,670 SEN Contingency

The total budget agreed for 2012/13 was £775,670. There was also a carry forward from 2011/12 of £898,917 which was split £818,999 (General) and £79,918 (SEN). The balances were £1,318,999 (General) and £355,588 (SEN).

It was noted that due to unspent centrally retained DSG and the reduction in forecasted expenditure that a one off payment of a minimum £50 per statutory pupil registered in the January 2012 census be transferred to Central Bedfordshire Maintained Schools.

The Forum asked for a breakdown of the unspent DSG, which was as follows:-

£130,000	Virtual School
£350,000	School Support Commissioning
£ 21,561	Education Psychology
£110, 020	Post 16 Special Recoupment
£316,890	Special Recoupment

The SEN Contingency budget allowing for known commitments would be fully spent by the end of the financial year. The commitments for the SEN Contingency budget were determined by the Schools Forum whilst it was run by Bedfordshire County Council.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the School Contingency spend as at 31 December 2012, be noted.**
- 2. that the proposed additional £50 per statutory pupil registered on the January 2012 census be transferred to schools be agreed.**

CBSF/12/82 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

The Forum received a report which provided an update on the DSG, DSG Settlement 2013/14 and the new Education Services Grant (ESG).

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

The DSG for 2012/13 is £173.915m. This is based on 37,336 (fte number of pupils at January 2012) multiplied by £4,658 (Guaranteed Unit of Funding (GUF)). The figure was based on 37 schools converting to Academy status as at December 2012 and £524k LACSEG transfer.

DSG Settlement 2013/14

The Department for Education (DfE) advised that the Pupil Premium for 2013/14 would be £900 and the Service Premium £300 per pupil. The final allocations will be confirmed in the summer 2013.

The DfE announced the new grant, Education Services Grant (ESG), which will replace the Local Authority (LA) Block element of the LACSEG for Academies and the LA revenue funding from 2013/14.

The Forum noted that the DSG would continue to be based on 'spend plus' methodology for 2013/14 but split into the three blocks (Early Years, Schools and High Needs). The underlying school budget will remain at flat cash per pupil for 2013/14 (before the addition of Pupil Premium).

The Minimum Funding Guarantee remains at minus 1.5% for 2013/14 and 2014/15.

The 2013/14 funding for early education places for 2 year olds from lower income households has been merged into the DSG. The funding of £1,288k for statutory places and £505k for 'trajectory building' places, based on the eligible 2 year olds using Free School Meals data for 4 to 6 year olds as a proxy.

The DfE has agreed with the Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA) and the Music Publishers Association (MPA) to manage a single national license for all state managed schools in England. The cost to Central Bedfordshire Council will be £83,772 on total pupil numbers.

Education Services Grant (ESG)

The ESG funding comes from a local government transfer of £1.04 billion in 2013/4, £180m less than the July 2012 proposal. It takes into account the total net planned expenditure as reported in the 2012/13 S251 budget statement submitted by Las, deflated in line with reductions in local government revenue funding but taking into account council tax revenue.

The DfE has established a process to protect Academies from significant year on year funding reductions, the higher of two protections will apply:-

- (a) a minus 10% per pupil protection applied to the 2012/13 LA Block LACSEG rates for the LA (Primary and Secondary £174.01 and Special schools £739.54), or
- (b) a minus 20% per pupil protection on the Academy's individual 2012/13 LA Block LACSEG allocation.

RESOLVED

That the update on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) be noted.

The Forum considered a report which provide an update on the Licence Deficit Schools and the Schools Finance Risk Register.

Central Bedfordshire had 100 maintained schools and 37 Academies as at 31 December 2013.

There were 2 schools with an agreed license deficit with a total value of £287k.

It was categorisation of schools in the risk register was carried out in October 2012 and determined the following:-

No Rating – 52 schools

Green – 39 schools

Amber – 7 schools

Red – 2 schools

The Forum noted that red and amber schools will receive a visit from the School Finance Adviser during the Autumn Term. All schools will be sent a letter advising of their RAG category and the use of criteria following the School Forum update.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the update on the License Deficit Schools be noted.**
- 2. that the update on the Schools Finance Risk Register be noted.**

CBSF/12/84 School Forum Budget

The Forum received and considered a report which provided an update on the Schools Forum Budget for 2012/13.

The Senior Finance Officer confirmed that at the date of the meeting the remaining balance for the year was £1,141. It was expected that the budget would be fully spent by the end of the financial year.

It was noted that travel claims had been received for the 2012/13 year. Members of the Forum were reminded that they could submit claims for mileage travelled to attend the meetings.

RESOLVED

that the Schools Forum Budget position statement as at 31 December 2012 be noted.

CBSF/12/85 Review of the Forum's Constitution and Terms of Reference

The Forum considered a report which enabled the first stage of a review of the Constitution and Terms of Reference as previously requested by the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum.

It was agreed that the Forum members would forward any proposed changes and they would be incorporated into a track changed version of the Constitution and Terms of Reference for consideration at the 4 March meeting.

RESOLVED

That comments on the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum Constitution and Terms of Reference be forwarded to the Committee Services Officer to enable a revised draft, compliant with the Regulations issued in 2012, to be brought to the next meeting for further consideration, be agreed.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 4.30 p.m. and concluded at 7.50 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated