

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SCHOOLS FORUM** held at Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Monday, 20 January 2014

PRESENT

Richard Holland (Chairman)

Jim Parker (Vice-Chairman)

School Members:	Anne Bell	Headteacher, Willow Nursery School
	David Brandon-Bravo	Headteacher, Parkfields Middle School
	Paul Burrett	Headteacher, Studham CofE Lower School and Pre-School
	Shirley-Anne Crosbie OBE	Headteacher, The Chiltern 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 Academy
	John Street	Academy Middle School Representative
	Stephen Tiktin	Governor, Beaudesert Lower School
Non-School Members:	Caroll Leggatt	PVI Early Years Providers Representative
Observer:	Cllr M AG Versallion	Executive Member for Children's Services
Apologies for Absence:	Mr M Foster Sarah Stevens Rob Watson	
Substitutes:	Mrs J Harper in place of Rob Watson, Stratton Upper School	
Officers in Attendance:	Mrs M Clampitt Ms D Hill Miss H Redding	Committee Services Officer Senior Finance Manager - Children's Services Assistant Director School Improvement

CBSF/13/18 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman welcomed Jane Harper, Deputy Head teacher Stratton Upper School, who was substituting for Rob Watson.

The Chairman also confirmed that Sarah Mortimer would be the new Post-16 Education Representative on the Forum.

CBSF/13/19 **Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum held on 14 October 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the correction of the spelling of Carol Leggett's name with the removal of an additional 'l'.

Clarification was sought for when the report on Rent would be brought to the Forum. Officers confirmed a date would be set and it added to the work programme.

The Forum noted that there would now be a rolling work programme in place of the once a year Outline Forward Programme.

CBSF/13/20 **Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and 2014/15 Funding Allocations**

The Forum considered a report which provided an update on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and 2014/15 Funding Allocations, and to approve the DSG Admissions allocation for 2014/15. From 2013/14, the DSG would be split into three notional blocks: Early Years, High Needs and Schools.

The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations defined the local authority education budgets for the 2013/14 financial year only. The Regulations provided simplified local formulae, greater delegation to schools and new arrangements for funding pupils with high needs.

The Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) was set at negative 1.5% **per pupil** for 2013/14.

It was noted that the Chief Finance Officer (CFO), annually signed two statements: the Actual deployment (out-turn) and Budgeted Allocation of the DSG, which confirmed it had been fully deployed in support of the School's Budget in accordance with the condition of the grant and the School Finance Regulations.

DSG Budget Allocation 2013/14

The final DSG for 2013/14 is £178.842m. This is based on:

- Schools Block: 34,747 (fte number of pupils October 2012) multiplied by £4,144.47 per pupil
- Early Years Block: 2,241 (fte number of pupils January 2013) multiplied by £2,421 per pupil and will be updated again in April 2014 for 7/12ths of the January 2014 pupil numbers to cover the period September 2013 to March 2014.

- High Needs Block: This is calculated in Pre 16 and Post 16 (ages 16 to 24). The post 16 combines three previous budgets, SEN Block Grant, Specialist placements funding and the cost of high needs student in Further Education (FE) with effect from August 2013.

The Forum also noted that the floor protection for 3 year olds had been reduced by £48k from the 2012/13 funding and would be completely removed in 2014/15.

At the Schools Forum meeting held on 24 January 2013, the Forum noted that the Early Intervention Grant had been merged into the DSG, for the early education places for 2 year olds from lower income households. (minute no. CBSF/12/82 refers)

The breakdown of DSG as detailed in the table at paragraph 14 were as follows:

Schools: £144.062k

Early Years: £11,478k

High Needs: £23,302k

Direct payments to Academies included Early Years = £267k and High Needs = £2.967k. As at 31 December 2013 there had been 47 Academy conversions.

Paragraph 15 of the report provided a breakdown of the £16.4m centrally retained DSG.

Growth Fund 2013/14

The Growth Fund is for significant pre 16 growth in schools. Funds are available to both maintained schools and academies. Where a school has elected to expand they are not eligible for the Growth Fund.

The amount for 2013/14 was set at £800k and has been overspent by £22.6k. The Growth Fund Panel will be meeting on 21 January 2014 and a breakdown of the expenditure as at 31 December 2013 was detailed in paragraph 18. The Forum approved an increase to the budget of £200k making the total Fund £1m for 2014/15.

2014/15 Centrally Retained DSG Budget Allocations

The Forum noted that the 2014/15 budget for Admissions remains at the 2013/14 level of £260k. The Admissions Team offers a buy back service to own admission authority schools and Academies, which enables the historic budget level to be maintained whilst funding 6 team members and the recruitment of an additional team member to deal with the schools who have changed their age ranges.

School Funding Settlement 2014/15

The Forum noted the following information:

- The distribution of DSG for 2014/15 will continue on the current 'spend plus' methodology
- Underlying schools budget will remain as flat cash per pupil for 2014/15
- Central Bedfordshire pupil numbers have increased by 401 pupils
- The EFA have ensured that LAs with falling pupil numbers will not lose more than 2% of its budget in cash terms. This does not apply to Central Bedfordshire
- The Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) was set at negative 1.5% **per pupil** for 2014/15
- High Needs Block will be adjusted following LA submissions, due December 2013, following a review of places
- Early Years Block will be updated during 2014/15 for January 2014 and for 7/12 of January 2015 pupil numbers (to cover the September 2014 to March 2015)
- Early learning places for two year olds from lower income households became a statutory entitlement for 2013 at 20% and from 2014 at 40%. Funding has been allocated to extend the programme for 2014/15
- 10 December 2012 – DECC announced that all stated funded schools in England to be withdrawn from participating in the CRC Energy Efficient Scheme from April 2014. The DSG will have a deduction for 2014/15 to compensate the Exchequer for the loss of revenue resulting from this change. The charge will be on a pro-rata basis by size of block.
- Paragraph 29 contained a table detailing the DSG revenue allocation for 2014/15 by school block.
- Central Bedfordshire's indicative allocation of £181.972m will be reduced to the centralised licences arranged by the DfE for the following agencies to purchase a single national licence for all state-funded schools:
 - Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA)
 - Music Publisher Association (MPA)
 - Newspaper Licensing Authority (NLA)
 - Education Recording Agency (ERA)
 - Motion Picture Licensing Company (MPLC)
 - Filmbank Distribution Ltd
- Capital funding to provide extra places needed for the growing population (2015 to 2017) and to implement the universal infant free school meals entitlement, improving school kitchens and dining facilities where needed was announced.
- Further information will be provided once available to explain the Basic Needs allocations which are based on LA validated planning data. The DfE reserves the right to abate any overpayment made.
- Free school lunches from September 2014:
 - Every child in reception, Year 1 and Year 2 in state funded schools
 - Disadvantaged students at sixth form colleges and further education colleges
 - Funding will be delivered through LAs for maintained schools, based on the number of infant pupils they have.

- Academies will receive funding through the Academies Capital maintenance Fund (ACMF), which allows Academies to bid for improvement works.
- LAs to determine how best to target its share of the funding for expanding and improving facilities at individual schools.
- Further information to follow
- Paragraph 34 contained a table which illustrated the capital allocations announced to date.

Pupil Premium Grant

The Pupil Premium Grant for 2014/15 had been increased:

- Primary FSM 'Ever 6' pupils £1300
- Secondary FM 'Ever 6' pupils £935
- Service Children £300

From April 2014 LAC, children adopted from care or those who left care with a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) or under a Residence Order (RO) £1900. Further information will follow.

Education Services Grant (ESG)

The Forum noted the following:

- The grant will be allocated to local authorities on a per-pupil basis, as in 2014/15.
- The ESG General Funding Rate is:
 - £113.17 per pupil in mainstreamed schools
 - £424.38 per pupil in PRUS
 - £480.97 per pupil in Special Schools
- 2014/15 General Funding pot will be calculated using the October census pot.
- 2014/15 initial allocation for CBC will be £2.2m, with quarterly adjustments throughout the 2014/15 financial year to account for Academies opening since October 2013
- A flat rate of £15 per pupil will be allocated to LAs for the statutory duties not transferred to academies. The flat rate is multiplied by the number of pupils aged 3 to 19 for all maintained schools and academies equalling £592k in the Retained Duties funding pot.
- Mainstream Academies will receive a set minimum of £140 per pupil
- Alternative Provisions will receive a set minimum of £525 per pupil
- Special Academies will receive a set minimum of £595 per pupil.

RESOLVED

1. That the update on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2013/14 be noted.
2. That the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocation for Admissions to be set at £260k for 2014/15, be agreed.

The vote was unanimous.

3. That the Education Funding Agency (EFA) funding announcement for 2014/15 be noted.

CBSF/13/21 **Use of centrally retained Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) in 2013/2014**

Prior to discussion three Forum members declared interests:

Richard Holland is the Chair of HAST

David Brandon Bravo is the CEO of HAST

Shirley Ann Crosbie is a member of the EYSS and has a granddaughter who uses the VI unit.

The Forum received and considered a report which outlined how the centrally retained DSG had been used in 2013/14 and recommended uses of the centrally retained High Needs Block for 2014/15. The High Needs Block is not ring-fenced and can be moved within the three DSG blocks, with School Forum agreement.

The budget agreed for 2013/14 had been £12,332,619 as at April 2013. Allowing for adjustments made through the year the budget was £12,770,463 as at December 2013.

Early Years Children with Disabilities retained panel and support function (£23,970)

The DSG funding for this had been commissioned through a contact to the Ivel Valley and The Chiltern Area. The support provided to the children is coordinated through one individual and the salary element has been increased to £26,011 resulting in a small increase. The budget will cover two people plus on costs. It was proposed that the budget be moved from the top up element of DSG as the core budget had supplemented the DSG for 2013/14.

Advisory Support Teachers retained within the Psychology and Advisory Support Team (£113,680)

There are two staff who meet the needs of children with SEN and Disabilities within the Early Years setting. The Budget has been supplemented by core budget and therefore requires an increase of £7,531 to cover the actual costs in 2014/15.

Visual Impairment Service (£218,120)

The contract for the Visual Impairment Service has been awarded to HAST from January 2014 for £252,576 and will be included in the "Commissioned Services" budget, paragraph 29 of the report. Three months of the contract were paid from the 2013/14 budget and it is anticipated that the budget will underspend by £10k.

Due to an increase in the number of young children with severe visual impairments, HAST has reviewed the support requirements needed whilst the children are in the school system and have increased the staffing levels.

Other functions supported by the High Needs Block

Support for high needs children in Early Years:

The children with high needs, who do not yet have a statement, requiring additional support receive support paid for from this budget. Due to the number of children requiring this service, the spend to date has been the following:

Base budget £169,800 (including in year increase of £19,800)
The current commitment will total £174,676 resulting in an overspend of £4,876. The anticipated overspend for the 2013/14 year is £10k should the anticipated requests be approved at Panel. It has been requested that the budget be increased to £190,000 for 2014/15.

Therapies:

The service is commissioned on an individual child basis and it is anticipated that the £70k budget will be spend by the end of the financial year. The spend to date had been £48,936.

Statements:

Statements are a needs led budget area and the budget reduces as statements are made. It is anticipated that the £449,900 budget will be underspent by £158,900 which will be redistributed to schools in 2014. It was noted that the budget would not be reduced due to changes to the SEN code of practice and Childrens & Families.

Academy Statements:

Statements are a needs led budget area and the budget reduces as statements are made. The budget is £2,967,238 of which £2,094,641 had been allocated by November 2013. It was noted that the budget would not be reduced due to changes to the SEN code of practice and Childrens & Families.

High Cost Pupils:

Support is provided for the additional exceptional needs of the most complex pupils in special schools. The budget for this service is £199,900 and to date £166,098 has been allocated and it is anticipated that more pupils will require additional support before the end of the financial year.

Pre 16 Out of County Placements:

It was noted that currently there were 13 pupils who were 16 years of age or under placed out of Authority by education, 2 by Social Care and 1 by Health, where DSG funds the education element. 4 of the children transferred into the Post 16 provision in September 2013. These children have been placed out of county as there needs cannot be met locally. The budget for this area is

£1,689,330 and has historically helped fund the Post 16 funding for High Needs pupils.

Additional Pupil Support:

Support is provided to children who are undergoing assessments and at risk of permanent exclusion. The support provided is through specialist agencies and is a needs led budget. The budget is £219,050 and the spend to date has been £140,000 with earmarked funding of £15,000 for new requests to be appointed at Panel and also £20,000 for an Independent Hospital facilities. There will be an underspend of approximately £44,050 which will offset the overspend in high needs children in early years.

High needs Post 16:

All provision for pupils who are post 16 and high needs college placements (previously funded by the YPLA) is provided and paid for by the Council since April 2013. This area includes the out of county placements of which there are 9 pupils, 4 pupils transferred from pre-16 provision so only 2 terms of costs were required and 4 pupils left school at the end of the summer term so only 1 term of provision was funded. It is forecast the budget will be overspent by £296,294 and this will be offset by the underspend in the out of county pre 16 support.

Access and Inclusion:

The budget for providing management and advice and process for exclusions and elective home education is £95,660 for 2013/14. The budget will be reduced in 2014/15 due to the service being bought back by Academy schools. Also the post for providing the advice is part time. It is estimated the budget will be underspent by £18,955 in 2013/14.

Virtual School management and delivery:

The budget cost for the Virtual School for Looked After Children was £160,000 for 2013/14. The budget will be increased to £200,000 for 2014/15 due to the requirement for a permanent Virtual School Head teacher. The remainder of the budget remains unchanged.

PRU:

The budget of £408,942 supported the running costs of the PRU for excluded pupils until August 2013. This amount now becomes the 'commissioned service' budget for the AP Free school – Academy of Central Bedfordshire for 2014/15.

Commissioned Services:

The budget of £1,417,480 is composed of the following commissioned services:

£145,632	for the peripatetic and management element of the Hearing Impaired Service commissioned through HAST
£270,548	For the Early Years Children with Disabilities Service commissioned through Ivel Valley and Chiltern Area Special Schools
£444,539	For the Medical Needs Service commissioned through HAST
£556,761	For the alternative to the PRU provision being commissioned through the Academy of Central Bedfordshire

From April 2014, the funding for Jigsaw Centre Provision of £414,645 will be centrally held and not delegated to Hawthorn Park.

The Forum noted that all High Needs teaching and support services will be commissioned out to school based providers. The Forum were asked to give a view on all commissioned services contracts, which were identified to Schools through Central Essential.

There is an anticipated overspend in the Commissioned Services budget of £92k due to a calculation error for supply cover for the Medical needs Service and the increased number of pupils medically signed off from school requiring the service. The overspend will be covered by an underspend in the **Other Authority Top-Up payments (Pre-16)**. Clarification is being sought from the EFA regarding whether the service can be included in the high needs return as Alternative Provision.

It was noted that an increase from 5 hours to 6 hours a week teaching hours for each pupil with a statement of SEN has required additional resources to be sought to allow the Council to fulfill its statutory duty. HAST is working with the Council to determine better ways of working for service delivery. £90k will be required from the Top Up budget to the Commissioned Services budget to cover the actual supply costs.

It was also noted that for 2014/15 £50k would be moved from the Top Up budget to the Commissioned Services budget to meet the expected demand for staff to work with children with hearing impairments.

Other Authority Top Up payments (Pre-16):

This budget was formerly known as recoupment. The budget of £2,011,360 funds the mainstream statements in other Local Authority Schools and the top up element of the statement for pupils placed in other Local Authorities' special schools. In 2013, the total expenditure had been unknown when the report was presented to the Schools Forum at their meeting on 24 January 2013. Since that time and following additional funds from the DfE and reduction of

central overheads by the Council there has been an underspend of £967,478. The main source of the underspend was the recalculation of overheads.

SEN Contingency:

£275,670 budget pays for the Outreach services and will be renamed accordingly for 2014/15.

DSG Contribution to Central Overheads:

The budget began 2013 at £1,567,280 and was reduced during the year by £848,434 to £718,846 having taken into account the reduction of centrally retained services and the increase in commissioned services. The reduction was added to the Top Up budget.

The difference of £1,164,600 between the High Needs Block allocation in 2013/14 and the forecast will be transferred to the Schools Block and be redistributed to maintained schools and academies as a one off basis via the AWPU for 2014/15.

The DfE will finalise the High Needs Block in March 2014, which will provide information regarding the Pre 16 and Post 16 allocations and to finalise the proposed figures for 2014/15. Distribution of the High Needs Block settlement will be centrally retained until the following issues have been resolved with the EFA:

- The resource implications of changes in SEND provision through the implementation of the Children and Families Bill in 2014 is determined;
- The funding mechanism for the Academy of Central Bedfordshire to be clarified by the EFA;
- Whether Medical Services can continue to be identified as Alternative Provision as they were previously, and so count as £8k per place;
- The impact of Post 16 changes are known;
- How the EFA plans to top slice Local Authorities and whether that will impact on the initial settlement;
- How the EFA plans to apply growth in 2014/15.

The Forum were advised that any unspent settlement would be redistributed to schools in 2015/16.

The Forum requested that due to the complexity of the report, that a High Needs Technical Group should meet to review the information prior to the next report being brought before the Forum in January 2015.

RESOLVED

- 1. That how the centrally retained High Needs Block has been used in 2013/14 to support high needs provision be noted.**
- 2. That the allocation of the High Needs Block for 2014/15 be supported.**

3. That the proposed redistribution of unspent DSG for 2013/14 be supported.

CBSF/13/22 Schools Forum Budget

The Forum received and considered a report which provided an update on the Schools Forum Budget for 2013/14.

The Senior Finance Officer confirmed that at the date of the meeting the remaining balance for the year was £1,544. It was noted that any unspent budget would be carried forward to the next year. It was proposed that the budget for 2014/15 would be £3,000, with the continued membership of F40.

Members of the Forum were reminded that they could submit travel claims for attending the Forum meetings.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Schools Forum Budget position statement as at 31 December 2013, be noted.**
- 2. That the 2014/15 budget for servicing the School Forum be set at 2013/14 level of £3,000, with the continued membership of F40.**

CBSF/13/23 Dedicated Schools Grant Contingency Budget

The Forum received a report which provided an update on the use of the Schools Contingency Budgets for 2013/14. It was noted that the Dedicated Schools Grant had been split into three notional blocks: Schools, High Needs and Early Years for 2013/14. Each block would hold its own contingency budget.

Schools Contingency

At the Schools Forum meeting held on 22 October 2012 (minute no. CBSF/12/62 refers) it was agreed that £100k would be de-delegated back to the Local Authority for the purpose of School Contingencies for 2013/14.

The Schools Contingency budget at 31 December 2013 had a surplus of £635,347. It was noted that the £100k for de-delegation had to be removed from the budget before any reallocation of surplus could be considered. The DfE had confirmed that the de-delegated funding was ringfenced.

It was noted that of the £635,347, £100k would be ringfenced for de-delegation, and approximately £500k would be available for redistribution to all maintained schools.

High Needs Contingency

At the Schools Forum meeting held on 21 January 2013 (minute no. CBSF/12/81 refers) had agreed that the SEN Contingency would continue to fund the extended role of a school such as commissioned work for Outreach and other services. The High Needs Contingency allowing for known commitments would be fully spent by the end of this financial year.

It was agreed by the Forum during the discussion of the Use of centrally retained Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) in 2013/2014 (minute no. CBSF/13/21 refers) that the High Needs Contingency budget would be renamed Outreach Service and reported as part of the annual report.

Early Years Contingency

The Early Years Contingency budget at 31 December 2013 had a surplus of £297,051. A report will be brought to the 24 March 2014 meeting to explain the spend to date.

It was noted that there had been a carry forward from 2012/13 of £296k which would be transferred to the Schools Block and redistributed to maintained schools.

The Senior Finance Officer provided the Forum with a breakdown of the AWPU and how it would be impacted with the redistribution of funds, with a one year additional payment identified on the budgets to be sent to schools. The additional payment amount will be £56.

RESOLVED

That the Dedicated School Grant (DSG) Contingency spend to 31 December 2013, be noted.

CBSF/13/24 School Finance Update

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

Central Bedfordshire had 89 maintained schools and 47 Academies as at 31 December 2013.

There were 2 schools with an agreed license deficit with a total value of £37k.

It was categorisation of schools in the risk register was carried out in December 2013 and determined the following:-

No Rating – 64 schools
Green – 16 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/13/25 Proposed Meeting Dates 2014/15

The Forum considered the proposed meeting dates for the municipal year 2014/15 and agreed them as follows:

23 June 2014 – 6.00pm – Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford
15 Sept 2014 – 6.00pm – Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford
24 Nov 2014 – 9.00am – Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable
26 Jan 2015 – 9.00am – Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable
09 Mar 2015 – 6.00pm – Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford

The Forum noted that the last meeting for the 2013/14 municipal year would be held on:

24 March 2014 – 9.00am – Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable.

AGREED

The Schools Forums meeting dates for the 2014/15 municipal year.

CBSF/13/26 Schools Forums: operational and good practice guide

The Forum received the Schools Forum: operational and good practice guide and noted that the criteria listed in Table 2 was the requirements for the Forum with regards to reports and consultations.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 6.00 p.m. and concluded at 8.30 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated