

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SCHOOLS FORUM** held at Committee Room 2, Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable on Monday, 18 January 2016

PRESENT

David Brandon-Bravo (Vice-Chairman)

School Members:	Paul Burrett	Headteacher, Studham CofE Lower School and Pre-School
	Mr P Cohen	Academy of Central Bedfordshire / Oak Bank
	Shirley-Anne Crosbie OBE	Headteacher, The Chiltern 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:	Mrs S Mortimer	Vice Principal, Curriculum & Strategic Partnerships, Central Bedfordshire College
Observer:	M AG Versallion	Executive Member for Children's Services
	Cllr	
Apologies for Absence:	Ali Brabner	
	James Davis	
	Mr M Foster	
	Mrs M Morris	
	Rob Watson	
Officers in Attendance:	Mrs M Clampitt	Committee Services Officer
	Ms D Hill	Senior Finance Manager - Children's Services
	Mrs H Knox	Early Years and childcare quality and sufficiency Officer
	Mr R Parsons	Head of School Organisation and Capital Planning
	Miss H Redding	Assistant Director School Improvement

CBSF/15/23. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Vice-Chairman informed the meeting that the Chairman had stood down due to work priorities. It was hoped that, he would be able to become a member of the Forum again when he had capacity in the future.

Karen Hayward, Headteacher at Sandy Upper has agreed to fill the vacancy left by Mr Parker's resignation as a maintained upper/secondary school representative, but was unable to attend this meeting due to teaching commitments.

The Forum accepted the resignation and agreed that the Vice Chairman would chair the January and March meetings to complete the municipal year of meetings. At the June meeting there will be election of a new Chairman and Vice Chairman. Mr Brandon-Bravo indicated that he would not be standing.

CBSF/15/24. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum held on 21 September 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of Peter Cohen as being in attendance.

CBSF/15/25. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2015/16 Early Years Block: Use of reserves 2016/17 Early Years Block - Funding Allocation

The Forum received and considered a report which set out information regarding the Early Years Funding Block and provided feedback from the Early Years Technical Sub Group regarding the use of the Early Years reserve being transferred into an Early Years Capital Fund and proposed changes to the base rate of the Single Funding Formula. The Forum had requested a report which provided financial details at the June 2015 meeting.

The Early Years and childcare quality and sufficiency Officer provided an overview to the Forum of the information contained within the report. There were 6 recommendations and the discussion considered the background to each recommendation in turn.

At the June 2015 meeting, the Forum noted that the reserve of the Early Years Block stood at £2.43m. Following a transfer of £500k to the Schools block the balance as at 31 December 2015 was £1.93m.

The Forum noted that the funding for disadvantaged 2 year olds has been altered to reflect the actual number of eligible children participating (instead of demographic information) in early education as at January 2015 early years census and school census (344 pupils).

The use of the Early Years Reserve was detailed in the table in paragraph 12. At the end of March 2016 it is anticipated that the reserve will stand at £1.4258m which is broken down as:

£771.85k from 2 year old reserve and;
£654k from 3 and 4 year old reserve.

It is anticipated that £630k will be transferred to the reserve at the beginning of 2016/17.

The capital element of the DfE funding awarded for 2 year olds has a limited dedicated capital sum and although the Council negotiates and receives S106 as a result of housing growth, there is a need to provide further EY provision as a result of non housing related demographic growth and to top up DfE capital grant capital Council for new and expansions of early years provision. The proposal is to request the Secretary of State to allow the disapplication of school funding regulations to a sum of £1.1m of the Early Years Reserve and transfer to the Early Years Capital Fund. The capital sum would draw £500k from the 3 and 4 year reserve and £600k from the 2 year reserve. The Forum noted as an example a new provision, on a new lower school site for 45 new EY places were being provided in Cranfield University, at a cost of £547k. The additional funding would enable other projects to be considered, following due process.

The DfE provided the following indicative allocation for 2016/17:

3 and 4 year old entitlement: is set at the 2015/16 per pupil rate of £3,979.80. The initial allocation for 2016/17 had been calculated by calculating the per pupil rate by the January 2015 early years census. This will be updated in July 2016 by recalculating using the January 2016 pupil numbers and in July 2017 based on 5/12^{ths} of the January 2016 pupil numbers (to cover the April 2016 to August 2016 period) and 7/12^{ths} of the January 2017 pupil numbers (to cover the September 2016 to March 2017 period).

Participation funding for disadvantaged two year olds: set at the 2015/16 per pupil rate of £4,778.50, by multiplying the number of pupils (344) times the amount per pupil. The allocation will be updated in July 2016 and July 2017 taking into account the January 2016 and 2017 census' accordingly.

Early Years pupil premium: set at 2015/16 per hourly rate (53p). The allocation will be updated in July 2016 and July 2017 taking into account the January 2016 and 2017 census' accordingly.

The introduction of the National Living Wage, increase of 50p per hour, will impact on School Providers. The Forum were therefore asked to increase the rate per child per house on all base rates by 15p to help offset the increased impact on School Providers.

There has been a procedural change to the way the indicative allocations are calculated. The calculation will use the following data:

January 15 census – period April 16 to Mid May 16

May 15 census – period mid May 16 to end September 16

October 15 census – period October 2016 to end March 17

The current formula uses January census when calculation the indicative 3 & 4 year olds allocation, which then is adjusted to take into account May and October census. The proposed change will give providers a better budget estimation which will help them with financial planning.

The change had been consulted with both the Early Years Reference Group and Schools Forum.

From September 2017 it is anticipated that a nationally adopted figure following 30 hours will become the universal level. It is required under the 2015/16 Schools Forum Powers and Responsibilities document, to gain Schools Forum approval for centrally retained Early Years funding.

The Forum expressed concerns about the layout of the report as it did not contain a breakdown of how the funding was to be spent. The Forum were reluctant to agree to the holding of the £2m without this information. It was requested that a report be brought to the March meeting laid out as the High Needs Block funding paper with the breakdown of actual and projected spends.

The Forum also requested that the Early Years Technical Sub Group be immediately separated from the Early Years Reference Group. The Technical Sub Group should only contain members of the Forum and relevant officers. It was proposed that both groups could meet on the same day but that no non-Forum members should be part of the Technical Sub Group.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the spend of the Early Years Reserve through 2015/16 be agreed.**
- 2. That a request to be made to the Secretary of State to allow the disapplication of school funding regulations to a sum of £1.1m of the Reserve, and enable the transfer of this sum into an Early Years Capital Fund be approved.**
- 3. That the 2016/17 indicative DSG Early Years Block Allocation be approved subject to further detail being provided.**
- 4. That an increase of 15p per child per hour on all base rates be approved.**
- 5. That a contingency of £491,377 be held from the 2016/17 indicative allocation with the Early Years Block, be agreed.**
- 6. That a procedural change to the local Funding Formula for 2016/17 be noted.**

7. **That the funding for two year olds and the Early years Pupil Premium are held centrally with monthly payments based on participation be agreed.**
8. **That a report providing the detailed proposed financial spend for 2016/17 be considered at the March meeting, in the same layout as the High Needs Block funding detail.**

CBSF/15/26. Trade Union and Professional Associations

The Forum considered a report which sought approval for the continuation of funding for facilities release time for Trade Unions and Professional Association. This would be through the de-delegation (where appropriate) for maintained Lower/Primary and Middle/Secondary Schools. Nursery and maintained Special Schools would be invoiced directly, subject to their agreement to release funds for this purpose.

The estimated annual cost would be £42,854 (£2.64 per pupil), which is proportioned to the Lower/Primary and Middle/Secondary phases. This is a one year's savings of £11,000, which has been offset against the 2016/17 facilities period only. The sum was calculated using the actual cost per pupil rate from 2015/16 multiplied by the number of pupils, according to the October 2015 census.

Trade Union membership numbers also affects the overall costs and cost per pupil. The figures used were based on membership figures as at July 2015.

The Policy & Implementation Manager, HR Policy and Development explained that the representatives who had carried out work were working across a number of schools and the fund allows for cover arrangements to be put into place, where the teacher works. The unused fund returns to the DSG.

RESOLVED

1. **That the de-delegation of Trade Union and Professional Associations funding, at no more than £2.64 per pupil, from the Lower / Primary Phase be agreed for one year only.**
2. **That the de-delegation of Trade Union and Professional Associations funding, at no more than £2.64 per pupil, from the Middle/Secondary School Phase be agreed for one year only.**

The voting was unanimous for the Lower / Primary Phase and the Middle/Secondary Phase.

CBSF/15/27. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Update and 2016/17 Funding Allocations

The Forum received a report which provided an update on the 2015/16 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and Growth Fund allocation. In addition, the Forum were asked to note the 2016/17 funding arrangements and the F40 group update. Also to consider and approve £31 per pupil de-delegation for maintained schools only for the purpose of contingencies (schools in financial difficulties and deficits of closing schools).

From 2013/14, the DSG would be split into three notional blocks: Early Year, High Needs and Schools.

The Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) was set at negative 1.5% **per pupil** for 2015/16.

It was noted that the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) is no longer required to complete two statements annually instead the DfE have now requested one annual outturn statement, confirming that the DSG received by the Authority was fully deployed in support of the school budgets in accordance with the conditions of the School Regulations. In addition, it will also include a Non Maintained Special School (NMSS) statement and Fraud cases reported in school statement.

The DSG allocation for 2015/16 is £192.114(M).

The **Schools Block** is calculated using the school block unit of funding (SBUF). For 2015/16 the SBUF is £4,289.09 (after the CRC deduction of £7.51) an increase of £144.62 from 2014/15. There has been an increase of 718 pupils to 35,866 based on the October 2014 census data.

The DfE has transferred £353k for Central Bedfordshire University Technical College (UTC) for the 2015/16 formula base multiplied by the October census data uplifted by the Minimum Funding Level (MFL) increase.

The **High Needs Block** for 2014/15 has been carried forward plus:

- Increase in places for academic year 2015/2016
- Additional top-up of £47m (Nationally) distributed based on the 2 – 19 aged population in each LA. For CBC this is £233k in 2015/16.

The **Early Years Block** for 2015/16 is comprised of 3 elements:

- Three and four year old entitlement - £3,979.80 (same as 2014/15 rate) multiplied by the January 2014 census for the provisional allocation. This is updated for January 2015 pupil numbers.
- Early years pupil premium (EYPP) – the hourly rate of 53p per child per hour (for each eligible child that takes up the full 570 hours with them). The indicative allocation for CBC is estimated at £171k. Following an autumn survey to check take-up adjustments will be made in January 2016.

- Funding for disadvantaged two year olds – CBC allocation is £1.64m. This is allocated based on the number of eligible participating children.

The licences listed in paragraph 19 of the report includes four new contracts which are centrally paid.

The Forum noted the breakdowns of the distribution of the DSG, in paragraph 21 and the centrally retained DSG in paragraph 22.

2015/16 Growth Fund

The Growth Fund is for significant pre-16 growth in schools where the Council has commissioned new school places. 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 Fund 2015/16 included an adjustment of £248k which was for payments made to Academies.

2016/17 Growth Fund

The amount for 2016/17 was proposed to be set at £2m. The Forum approved the amount.

2016/17 Schools Forum Budget

The Forum agreed that the Schools Forum Budget should remain at £3,000 for 2016/17.

De-delegation of £31

The Senior Finance Officer informed the Forum that an additional top slice of DSG would be required for the three schools which were closing. It was noted that the 2015/16 approval to de-delegate £500k for the purpose of 'schools in financial difficulty' had been refused by the Forum. The LA did not request the Secretary of State to adjudicate on the de-delegation but instead applied to the Secretary of State to top slice DSG from all schools. The Secretary of State approved the proposal for 2015/16. The Forum noted that a further £500k would need to be top sliced to cover more of the shortfall caused by the schools closing. The Senior Finance Officer advised that an application had been made to the Secretary of State to allow an additional top slice of £500k to be taken from all schools. The Secretary of State refused the application and advised de-delegated funds support 'schools in financial difficulty'.

The Forum debated the issue and again stated that it was not fair that only the maintained schools should have their DSG top sliced to cover the deficits of the three closing schools, which were caused by the changes in the age ranges to other schools in the area.

It was noted that the estimated deficit would be approximately £1.3m.

The Forum voted within their phases and both the Primary and the Secondary phases voted unanimously to refuse the request for the £31 de-delegation. The LA may apply to the Secretary of State to adjudicate where the Schools Forum does not agree with LA proposals for de-delegation.

Funding Announcement for 2016/17

Schools Block

The DfE announced that the SBUF for 2016/17 and confirmed that the extra £390m fair funding uplift would continue in base-line budgets for 2016/17 and beyond.

The SBUF for 2016/17 is £4,294.39 (an increase of £5.30 for the former Non-Recoupment Academies (UTC). The pupil numbers were based on the October 2015 census and had increased by 777 to 36,643.

Early Years Block

The Early Years Block for 2016/17 is comprised of 3 elements:

- Three and four year old entitlement - £3,979.80 (same as 2015/16 rate) multiplied by the January 2015 census for the provisional allocation. This is updated for January 2016 pupil numbers.
- Early years pupil premium (EYPP) – the hourly rate of 53p per child per hour (for each eligible child that takes up the full 570 hours with them).
- Funding for disadvantaged two year olds – CBC allocation is £4,778.50 per pupil rate multiplied by the January 2015 census (344 FTEs). This is allocated based on the number of eligible participating children.

The **High Needs Block** for 2015/16 has been carried forward plus:

- Increase in places for academic year 2016/2017
- Additional top-up of £92.5m (Nationally) distributed based on the 2 – 19 aged population in each LA.

Paragraph 34 of the report detailed the indicative DSG 2016/17 for all three blocks.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the update to the 2015/16 DSG allocations be noted.**
- 2. That the update to the 2015/16 Growth Fund be noted.**
- 3. That the 2016/17 DSG allocation for Growth Fund to be set at £2m be approved.**
- 4. That the 2016/17 DSG allocation for Schools Forum to be set at £3k be approved.**
- 5. That the £31 per pupil de-delegation (for maintained primary and secondary) for the purpose of school contingencies be refused.**
- 6. That the 2016/17 funding announcement be noted.**

CBSF/15/28. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Admissions

The Forum considered a report which set out the need to increase the staffing structure of the School Admissions Team due to the increased workload and the need to improve resilience within the team which is a front-line, customer facing service with statutory timescales and deadlines to adhere to. The request is to increase the annual DSG allocation to the team, subject to an application to the Secretary of State to disapply The School and Early Years Finance Regulations..

The Head of School Organisation, Admission and Capital Planning informed the Forum that the budget for the team had been fixed in 2013. The service was disaggregated with Bedford Borough Council. The team of 7 full time staff members support and co-ordinate the admissions process for 129 Academies and Schools for Central Bedfordshire.

The Forum noted that since 2013 the pupil population in Central Bedfordshire had increased by just over 2.5% from 37,749 to 38,7575 at January 2015. It is anticipated that by 2020 the pupil population will be 45,457.

In addition, there has been many changes to the schools over the years including:

- Dunstable and Houghton Regis schools becoming a two tier area
- 51 schools converting to Academy status
- New school builds in different areas across Central Bedfordshire
- Housing Developments which have increased the number of pupils in the area without providing funding for additional school places

The Forum received reassurance that the service had been restructured, that a range of other service efficiencies had been delivered and that the request to increase the team's budget was due to the increase in the work being carried out.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the content of the report be noted.**
- 2. That the increase of £52,514 in DSG funding from 2016/17 for the School Admissions Team, subject to an application to the Secretary of State for the disapplication of The School and Early Years Finance Regulations, be approved.**

CBSF/15/29. High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Contracts for Services that Support Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The Forum considered a report which set out the SEND contracts funded by the High Needs Block and provided feedback agreed by the High Needs Block Technical Sub Group regarding contracts that would need to be varied in terms of contract price for 2016/17.

The High Needs Block Technical Sub Group had met in September 2015 and December 2015. At the meeting held on 7 December 2015, the Sub Group considered the contracts for the following areas:

- The Peripatetic Service for Children and Young People with Hearing Impairments (£195,000)
- The Peripatetic Service for Children and Young People with Visual Impairments (£252,576)
- The Early Years Children with Disability Service (£270,548)
- The Medical Needs Service (£643,890)
- The Jigsaw Centre (£464,731)
- The Academy of Central Bedfordshire (£726,000)

The Sub Group had agreed that the following contracts should be reviewed for the following:

- The Peripatetic Service for Children and Young People with Hearing Impairments (£195,000)
- The Early Years Children with Disability Service (£270,548)
- The Jigsaw Centre (£464,731) with an additional paper to the March Forum meeting.
- The Academy of Central Bedfordshire (£726,000)

It was also agreed that links to the agendas for the Local Strategic Safeguarding Board and the Children's Trust Board would be sent to Forum members.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the update regarding central spend on High Needs Block funded contracts be noted and that the actions being taken following the Technical Sub Group Meetings to inform variation to contracts if required in 2016/17 be agreed.**
- 2. That a report would be brought to the March meeting of the Forum to provide an update on the Contract review.**

CBSF/15/30. Dedicated School Grant Contingency Budgets

The Forum considered a report which provided an update on the use of the School Contingency Budgets for 2015/16. It was noted that the Dedicated Schools Grant since 2013/14 has been split into three notional blocks: Schools, High Needs and Early Years and each holds its own contingency budget.

Schools Contingency

The Forum noted that £500k had been ringfenced for the three schools which were closing through applying to the Secretary of State to disapply the regulations.

The balance, as at 31 December 2015, of £776,127 (which contains the £500,000 ringfenced) is split between de-delegated ring fenced funding for maintained schools only of £671,572 and £104,555 for all schools.

High Needs Contingency

The Secretary of State approved on 21 October 2015, the proposal for £500k of unspent DSG be transferred in year to Capital for specialist provisions. It is anticipated that another request to the Secretary of State for a transfer of the balance of High Needs Block will be made at the end of the financial year but the Secretary of State will not allow an estimated amount to be approved. It must be done at the relevant time.

Early Years Contingency

It was previously agreed that £500k would be transferred to the Schools Block for a one off payment.

The balance, as at 31 December 2015, of £999,023.

RESOLVED

that the Dedicated School Grant (DSG) Contingency spend to 31 December 2015 be noted.

CBSF/15/31. Update on Special School Place Planning

The Assistant Director School Improvement provided a verbal update on Special School Place Planning and the work which was ongoing.

It was noted that the Assistant Director School Improvement, the Head of School Organisation, Admissions and Capital Planning and the Special School Headteachers meet to consider where possible places are required. The meetings happen termly.

CBSF/15/32. School Forum Budget

The Forum received and considered a report which provided an update on the Schools Forum Budget for 2015/16.

The Senior Finance Officer confirmed that as at 31 December 2015, the remaining balance for the year was £5,283 of which £3,316 had been carried forward from 2014/15. It was noted that any unspent budget would be carried forward to the next year. It was noted that the budget for 2015/16 was £3,000, with the continued membership of F40.

The Forum considered running a training event for members of the Forum and also use the opportunity as a possible recruitment event. A questionnaire was being circulated to schools etc and one of the questions would be about joining the Schools Forum. Also existing Panel Members would be asked to provide a summary of the benefits they have found with being on the Forum. The benefits could include the greater understanding of the budget process, the networking opportunities etc.

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

RESOLVED

that the Schools Forum Budget position statement as at 31 December 2015 be noted.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 9.00 a.m. and concluded at 11.22 a.m.)

Chairman

Dated