

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SCHOOLS FORUM** held at Room 14, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Monday, 12 June 2017

PRESENT

Mr D Brandon-Bravo (Chairman)
Mrs S Howley MBE (Vice-Chairman)

School Members:	Mrs A Brabner	Governor
	Mr O Button	Principal, Queensbury Academy
	Mr P Cohen	Executive Headteacher
	Mrs SA Crosbie OBE	Headteacher
	Mrs L Davies	Headteacher
	Miss K Hayward	Headteacher
	Mrs S Ingham	Headteacher
	Ms A Moyle	School Business Manager
	Mr J Street	Academy Middle School Representative
	Mr S Tiktin	Governor, Beaudesert Lower School
Non-School Members:	Mrs A Challis	
	Mr M Foster	Trade Union representative
Observer: Cllrs	K Ferguson	Chairman of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Apologies for Absence:	Cllr S Dixon	
	Mrs K McCamley	
Officers in Attendance:	Ms S Griffin	Committee Services Officer
	Ms D Hill	Senior Finance Manager - Children's Services
	Mr S Powell	School Improvement Consultant
	Mrs S Tyler	Head of Child Poverty and Early Intervention
	Mr V Wan	Senior Education Officer (Planning)

CBSF/17/1. **Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2017-18**

The Forum was invited to make nominations for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum.

Mrs K Hayward was the only candidate nominated and seconded. She was therefore appointed Chairman.

Mrs S Howley MBE was the only candidate nominated and seconded. She was therefore appointed Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED

- 1. that Mrs K Hayward be elected Chairman of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum 2017/18.**
- 2. that Mrs S Howley MBE be elected Vice-Chairman of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum 2017/18.**

Change of Membership

Thanks were given to Mr Brandon-Bravo for the work he had undertaken during his time as Chairman of the Schools Forum.

Members of the Forum also gave thanks to Mrs Crosbie and Mrs Ingham who were standing down as members of the Forum.

CBSF/17/2. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

That the minutes of the meeting of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum held on 6 March 2017 and 22 March 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subsequent to the following minor amendment:

Minutes of the 22 March 2017

Meeting attendance: that Mr J Selmet is to be amended to **Mr J Selmes.**

CBSF/16/51 point 23

Point 23 – that the sentence ‘there has been a reduction in the demand for places at the Academy of Central Bedfordshire due to mainstream schools not taking up the number of places as in the previous year be amended to read ‘there has been a reduction in the number of commissioned group 2 school places at the Academy of Central Bedfordshire’.

Matters Arising

Minutes of the meeting of the 6 March 2017

CBSF/16/30 Members of the Forum were advised that Mr S Powell, School Improvement Consultant would take the lead on the identification of appropriate members to contribute as School Forum members as an interim measure until the recruitment process for the vacant post of the Assistant Director Transformation had been completed.

CBSF/16/45 The membership of the High Needs Technical Sub Group needs to be revisited to ensure that it includes a cross section of schools representation on the Schools Forum.

Minutes of the meeting of the 22 March 2017

CBSF/16/51 Subsequent to the resolution that a letter would be sent to all schools from the Director of Children's Services outlining the importance of the ACB and the continuation of this provision, the decision was made for the chair of the ACB to contact all schools following which 36 of the 40 possible places had been commissioned. Disappointment was expressed at the number of secondary schools that had chosen not to purchase a place at the ACB.

[Mr P Burrett joined the meeting]

RESOLVED

- 1. that the Chairman of the Sub Groups be elected as follows:**
 - **High Needs Technical Sub Group - Mr P Cohen**
 - **Growth Fund Technical Sub Group – Mrs A Brabner**
 - **Early Years Technical Sub Group – Mr S Tiktin**
- 2. that officers would review the membership of the Schools Forum, including clarification of the term of office for members and provide an update at the September meeting.**
- 3. that the two upper school representatives, Mr O Button and Mrs K Hayward would raise the issue of the lack of ACS places commissioned by secondary schools at the secondary heads meeting.**
- 4. that a full review of Special Needs and Inclusion spend carried out in the Early Years as part of the bigger review of High Needs spend would be reported back to the Schools Forum in autumn 2017.**

CBSF/17/3. Action Plan

Members of the Forum received an update on the matters arising from the meetings of Schools Forum held on the 6 March 2017 and 22 March 2017.

Points and comments included:

- An external appointment has been made to the vacant post of the Deputy Director Transformation and Education with a starting date of the 1 August 2017.
- An Interim Head of SEND for Children's Services had been appointed.

- Clarification was requested of the wording of the response to question 3 of the High Needs Block consultation in terms of the proposed amendment from 'unsure' to welcome clarity'.

RESOLVED

- **that the actions from the Schools Forum meetings of the 6 March 2017 and 22 March 2017 were noted and would be updated accordingly.**
- **that clarification would be given on wording of the response to question 3 of the High Needs Block consultation in terms of the proposed amendment from 'unsure' to welcome clarity'.**

CBSF/17/4. Growth Fund Payments and criteria

The Forum received a report which provided an update on the standardisation rate of payment to schools eligible for Growth funding as proposed by the Growth Fund Technical Sub Group.

Points and comments included:

1. The Growth Fund Technical Sub Group met on the 2 May 2017 to discuss and agree on the payment package that would be awarded from the Growth Fund to eligible schools from the 2017/18 financial year. Discussions included the recognition of the benefits the provision of more accurate forecast of the payments for the financial year and set payment amounts.
2. The typical payment model for the Growth Fund payment package for a 1 Form of Entry expansion and the first year payment for second site expansions are set out in Appendix A and B of the report.
3. The 1 Form of Entry package includes a class room set up cost of £750 awarded for each year of the programme for the setting up of the classroom prior to the new academic year based on one teacher and one teaching assistant taking 3 days to set up the new class.
4. In response to the concern expressed at the difference in proposed payment for advertising costs (£750 for lower/primary schools and £1,500 for middle, secondary and upper schools), the understanding is secondary and upper schools advertise wider in national papers and therefore to a bigger market.
5. The key differences in the one off lead costs for the Second site expansion are staffing costs as the Growth Fund Technical sub group felt that there was the requirement for a Deputy Head Teacher to be on the new site to manage growth and classroom consumables as there are no existing provisions for the new site to reuse.

6. When a school expands onto a second site recruitment advertisement covers a range of teachers / subjects not what is required for just for one class. Lower and primary advertise for Deputy Heads nationally so there wouldn't be a difference in advertising costs for secondary and upper schools.
7. From an Academy point of view, a second site expansion takes substantial staff capacity. Why should the education of children already at the school be affected by not funding new places.
8. Some of the proposed costs are too low and the site agent time with contractors is not correct. More information is needed about the allocations and proposed spend.

Maintained schools and academy representatives of the Forum voted on the recommendation as follows:

- To approve the recommendation - 0
- To refer the report back for further work - 11
- To reject the recommendation - 0

RESOLVED

1. **that the content of the report on the standardised rate of payment to schools eligible for Growth Funding as proposed by the Technical Sub Group was noted.**
2. **that the proposed advertising costs for lower and primary schools would be reviewed and reported back to the Schools Forum.**
3. **that modelling of the Growth Fund allocation process would be undertaken and would include a flow chart indicating how payments are allocated.**
4. **the revised proposals for the Growth Fund would be circulated electronically to Schools Forum members for comments and approval.**

[the meeting was adjourned at 16.22]

[the meeting was reconvened at 16.40]

CBSF/17/5. f40 Subscriptions

Members of the Forum discussed the continuation of the f40 membership.

RESOLVED

That the f40 membership would continue and the associated cost would be taken from the School Forum budget.

CBSF/17/6. Dedicated Schools Grant

Members of the Forum received a report setting out the 2016/17 outturn position for both the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and Growth Fund, DSG allocation for 2017/18 and the Schools Block consultation.

Points and comments included:

1. Paragraphs 1-4 of the report set out the legislation for DSG.
2. There is a carry forward of from 2016/17 of £1,442,048 to 17/18.
3. The School and Early Years Finance Regulations 2017 allows local authorities to carry over any unspent money such growth and infant class size funds to be used for the same purpose in the following year. The closing balance for 2016/17 of £645,934 will be added to the agreed 2017/18 Growth Fund allocation of £2M.
4. The DSG remains split into three blocks: Schools, High Needs and Early Years.
5. The indicative DSG revenue allocation for 2017/18 is £204M

NOTED

- 1. the update to the 2016/17 DSG and Growth Fund**
- 2. the update to the 2017/18 DSG funding arrangements**

CBSF/17/7. High Needs Block - Final 2017/18

The Forum received an update on the final 2017/18 budget, the final outturn position for the High Needs Block and the next steps.

Points and comments included:

1. The final outturn position figures are very close to those given at the March meeting of Schools Forum. Monthly monitoring of expenditure and methodology has been introduced to report on spend and to control costs. The effect of the higher monitoring procedures will be reported on at the September meeting of the Schools Forum.
2. The profile spends for April 2017 is detailed in the report. April expenditure is fairly low and is below profile and this is also the same for May. The figures for May are within the profile of budgets allocated. The

figures for May, June, July and August will be reported at the September meeting of Schools Forum.

3. Following on from the discussion about the commissioning of school places at the Academy of Central Bedfordshire (ACB) at the March meeting of Schools Forum, the School Organisation team has undertaken a capacity assessment for special schools to understand the site and constraints in terms of accommodating pupil numbers. An assessment will also take place of the process required to set the admission number and provide a programme for the earliest intervention which will include the need to consult.
4. Four of the current commissioning contracts are coming to an end in 2018. From September 2017 the framework of commissioning contracts going forward will be defined which will include impact statements of commissioning work. The reporting on deliverables has been very much processes based.
5. The High Needs Contingency is reported as £311,172 for April 2017 in comparison to £67k in March 2017.
6. The Jigsaw contract will be brought back in-house due to the capacity of the Hawthorn Park School. Discussions are taking place whether this provision will continue from the existing site.
7. Concern was expressed that the Early Years contract has been extended beyond 2018.
8. The local authority vision is a published document. Part of the purpose of the review is to look at the nett flow of CBC pupils requiring special school places and to update the Central Bedfordshire Council School Places and Planning document which is 3 years old. Modelling has been predicated on CBC continuing to accept other pupils from outside the local authority.
9. Central provision from other local authorities needs to be looked at as there could be good reason other local authorities are transferring their children into Central Bedfordshire. Currently Central Bedfordshire Council seems to be absorbing a disproportionate amount of out of county children into the school system. An independent survey of SEND schools has been commissioned to look at site capacity and constraints. The results of the survey will be reported at the Technical Sub Group meeting.
10. A large piece of work has already taken place about the vision of special school places. How will the outcome of this piece of work be presented?
11. When school places are allocated it needs to be taken into account that special schools such as Ivel Valley and Chiltern do not have Pupil Allocated Numbers (PAN) and the knock on effects of the school being unable to refuse an out of county placement if named on a statement. Guidance would be welcomed.

12. It would be helpful to know more details about the commissioned contracts such as how many there are and how the division across all providers, clarification of what the £40k outturn for Therapies covers and a breakdown of what the High Needs Block covers into mainstream and special schools
13. Regular monitoring of the budgets needs to take place and with reporting from the High Needs Technical Sub Group for at least a year. Could part of the School Forum budget be used for the provision of clerking support for the High Needs Technical Sub Group meetings?
14. The budget for the Jigsaw contract was originally £450k whereas the forecast for 2017/18 is £477,331. Where is the saving?
15. There needs to be an audit process in place to show the value for money of the services being commissioned and the impact on the lives of the children the services are being commissioned.
16. Page 42, paragraph 30 refers to Special Schools banding values to be re-visited and reported back on. Consultation needs to take place with special school leaders about the banding values.
17. Work was done on banding last year by Fiona Ridgeway, Senior Support Officers and a variety of data was produced following a benchmarking exercise with other local authorities which unfortunately was not progressed.
18. The figure of 6 band 3 students at Weatherfield shown in Appendix 3 of the report is incorrect as the school believes there are currently twelve band 3 students at the school. Six students are recorded in Panel minutes.
19. In the spirit of fairness, openness and equality, transparency would be welcomed in the form of the local authority publishing the number of students admitted to a school under the Fair Access protocol (FAP).

RESOLVED

- 1. that the final outturn for the 2016/17 centrally retained High Needs Block was noted.**
- 2. that the proposed format for the monitoring expenditure in 2017/18 was noted and appending action plan for controlling costs was agreed.**
- 3. that because of the timing of the June meeting, only expenditure in the month of April was included and that the reporting methodology for 2017/18 was approved.**

4. that the results of the independent survey of SEND schools would be shared with the relevant head teachers prior of the SEND meeting.
5. that the number of pupils admitted to schools in Central Bedfordshire under the Fair Access Protocol (FAP) would be reported back to Schools Forum.
6. that the profile spend for May, June, July and August will be reported at the September meeting of Schools Forum which will include an update on the effect of the tighter monitoring procedures.

CBSF/17/8. **School Finance update**

Members of the Forum received an update on the Schools outturn accounts for 2016/17.

Points and comments included:

- Paragraphs 1-9 set out the background of the Schools Budget and the powers of the local authority to retain and de-delegate the Budget.
- To assist the Section 151 Officer in exercising his duties under the Act, Schools are categorised into Red, Amber and Green (RAG) ratings of risk. This process takes place twice a year, in May following the financial year end and January, following Schools completion of the year end forecasts outturn.
- The total revenue for 2016/17 was £10,167.069.
- Some schools are showing quite a substantial excess balance. Those schools holding excess uncommitted balances will be contacted individually requesting details of how the excess balance will be spent.

RESOLVED

1. **That the Finance update for Schools was noted.**
2. **That the details of those schools holding excess balances would be given at the September meeting of the Schools Forum for a decision on the possible process for clawback of excess funds.**

CBSF/17/9. **Schools Forum Budget**

Members of the Forum received an update on the use of the Schools Forum Budget for 2016/17.

Points and comments included:

- Schedule 2 of The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2015 allow the local authority to hold money for the servicing of the Schools Forum.
- A budget of £3k has been set for costs associated with the operation of the Forum. Regulations state if the amount is reduced it cannot be increased again.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Schools Forum spend for the financial year 2016/17 was noted.**

CBSF/17/10. Dedicated School Grant Contingency Budgets

The Forum received an update of the use of the School Contingency Budgets for 2016/17.

Points and comments included:

- From 2013/14 the Dedicated School Grant is split into three notional blocks; Schools, High Needs and Early Years with each block holding its own contingency budget.
- The underspend of £149k will be carried forward and ringfenced for delegated funding.
- The Early Years Contingency budget has been set aside to fund the headcount adjustment that is allowable within the regulations.

NOTED

The Dedicated School Grant (DSG) Contingency spend for the financial year 2016/17.

CBSF/17/11. Work Programme

The Forum received and noted the Work Programme for the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum.

NOTED

The Work Programme for Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum

(Note: The meeting commenced at 3.00 p.m. and concluded at 5.40 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated