

Central Bedfordshire  
Council  
Priory House  
Monks Walk  
Chicksands,  
Shefford SG17 5TQ

**This meeting may  
be filmed.\***



**Central  
Bedfordshire**

**please ask for** Sharon Griffin  
**direct line** 0300 300 5066  
**date** 6 December 2017

## **NOTICE OF MEETING**

### **SCHOOLS FORUM**

Date & Time

**Thursday, 14 December 2017 at 1.30 p.m.**

Venue at

**The Warrenfield Room, The Rufus Centre, Steppingley  
Road, Flitwick, MK45 1AH**

Richard Carr  
**Chief Executive**

To: The Chairman and Members of the SCHOOLS FORUM:

School Members:

- Ali Brabner, Cranfield Academy
- David Brandon-Bravo, Parkfields Middle School
- Pete Cohen, Oak Bank School/Academy of Central Bedfordshire
- Paul Burrett, Studham CofE Lower Schools and Pre-School
- Lisa Leonard, The Chiltern School
- Karen Hayward, Sandy Upper School
- Sue Howley MBE, Fairfield Park Lower School
- Alexia Moyle, Greenleas Lower School
- Leigh Davies, Willow Nursery School
- John Street, Etonbury Academy
- Stephen Tiktin, Beaudesert Lower School
- Oliver Button, Queensbury Academy

Non School  
Members

- Ali Challis, Early Years Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI)  
Provider Representative
- Martin Foster, Trade Union Representative
- Mary Morris, Catholic Diocese Representative
- Sarah Mortimer, Post 16 Education Representative

Observer:	Cllr Steven Dixon, Executive Member for Education and Skills Cllr Ken Ferguson, Chairman of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Current Vacancies	Primary Academy Representative (Governor, Headteacher or Representative) Church of England Diocese Representative	
Officers	Ms S Griffin	Committee Services Officer
	Mrs S Harrison	Director of Children's Services
	Ms D Hill	Senior Finance Manager – Children's Services
	Mr G Jones	Deputy Director Safeguarding and Early Help
	Mr L Jones	Deputy Director Transformation and Education

Please note that there will be a pre-meeting starting **half an hour before** the Forum meeting to enable technical aspects of the reports to be discussed with officers before the Forum meeting begins.

**\*Please note that phones and other equipment may be used to film, audio record, tweet or blog from this meeting. No part of the meeting room is exempt from public filming.**

**The use of arising images or recordings is not under the Council's control.**

# AGENDA

1. **Apologies for absence**

To receive apologies for absence and notification of substitute Members.

2. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

To receive any announcements from the Chairman and any matters of communication.

3. **Schools Forum powers and responsibilities**

To note the Schools Forum powers and responsibilities summary document issued by the Education Funding Agency (copy attached).

4. **National Funding Formula consultation**

To review the feedback from the consultation with schools on the proposed funding arrangements for 2018/19 and agree to the movement of 0.5% of the Schools Block into the High Needs Block.

5. **Date of the Next Meeting**

Monday 29 January 2018, 3pm, Room 15, Priory House, Shefford.

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## Schools forum powers and responsibilities

A summary of the powers and responsibilities of schools forums.

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
Formula change (including redistributions)	Proposes and decides	Must be consulted [voting restrictions apply - see schools forum structure document] and informs the governing bodies of all consultations	Checks for compliance with regulations
Contracts (where the LA is entering a contract to be funded from the schools budget)	Proposes at least one month prior to invitation to tender, the terms of any proposed contract	Gives a view and informs the governing bodies of all consultations	None
Financial issues relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>arrangements for pupils with special educational needs, in particular the places to</li> </ul>	Consults annually	Gives a view and informs the governing bodies of all consultations	None

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
<p>be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• arrangements for use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school, in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding;</li> <li>• arrangements for early years provision;</li> <li>• administration arrangements for the allocation of central government grants</li> </ul>			
<p>Minimum funding guarantee (MFG)</p>	<p>Proposes any exclusions from MFG for application to DfE</p>	<p>Gives a view</p>	<p>Approval</p>
<p>De-delegation for mainstream schools for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contingencies</li> <li>• administration of free school meals</li> <li>• insurance</li> <li>• licences/subscriptions</li> <li>• staff costs – supply cover</li> <li>• support for minority ethnic</li> <li>• pupils/underachieving groups</li> <li>• behaviour support services</li> <li>• library and museum services</li> </ul>	<p>Proposes</p>	<p>Primary and secondary school member representatives will decide for their phase. Middle schools are treated according to their deemed status</p>	<p>Will adjudicate where schools forum does not agree LA proposal</p>

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School improvement</li> </ul>			
<p><b>General Duties for maintained schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>services previously funded by the ESG general duties rate. Read the updated 'Schools revenue funding 2017 to 2018: operational guide' for more information.</li> </ul>	Proposes	Would be decided by the relevant maintained school members (primary, secondary, special and PRU).	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal
<p>Central spend on and the criteria for allocating funding from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>funding for significant pre-16 pupil growth, including new schools set up to meet basic need, whether maintained or academy</li> <li>funding for good or outstanding schools with falling rolls where growth in pupil numbers is expected within three years</li> </ul>	Proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal
<p>Central spend on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>early years block provision</li> <li>funding to enable all schools to meet the infant class size requirement</li> <li>back-pay for equal pay claims</li> <li>remission of boarding fees at maintained schools and academies</li> </ul>	Proposes	Decides for each line	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils</li> <li>services previously funded by the retained rate of the ESG</li> <li>admissions</li> <li>servicing of schools forum</li> </ul>			
<p>Central spend on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>capital expenditure funded from revenue – projects must have been planned and decided on prior to April 2013 so no new projects can be charged</li> <li>contribution to combined budgets – this is where the schools forum agreed prior to April 2013 a contribution from the schools budget to services which would otherwise be funded from other sources</li> <li>existing termination of employment costs (costs for specific individuals must have been approved prior to April 2013 so no new redundancy costs can be charged)</li> <li>prudential borrowing costs – the commitment must have been approved prior to April 2013</li> </ul>	<p>Proposes up to the value committed in 2016-17 and where expenditure has already been committed.</p> <p>See para 71 for Information on historic commitments. Read <a href="#">establishing local authority DSG baselines</a> for more information.</p>	<p>Decides for each line</p>	<p>Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal</p>
<p>Central spend on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>high needs block provision</li> </ul>	<p>Decides</p>	<p>None, but good practice to inform forum</p>	<p>None</p>



Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>central licences negotiated by the Secretary of State</li> </ul>			
Carry forward a deficit on central expenditure to the next year to be funded from the schools budget	Proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal
Scheme of financial management changes	Proposes and consults the governing body and Head of every school	Approves (schools members only)	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal
Membership: length of office of members	Decides	None (but good practice would suggest that they gave a view)	None
Voting procedures	None	Determine voting procedures	None
Chair of schools forum	Facilitates	Elects ( <i>may not be an elected member of the Council or officer</i> )	None

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**Meeting:** Schools Forum

**Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017

**Subject:** School Funding Consultation

**Report of:** Director of Children's Services

**Summary:** To provide an overview of rational for the proposed movement of 0.5% of the Schools Block into the High Needs Block for 2018/19

Contact Officer: Sue Harrison

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Council

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**To review the feedback from the consultation with schools on the proposed funding arrangements for 2018/19 and agree to the movement of 0.5% of the Schools Block into the High Needs Block**

### **1. Background**

The council and Schools Forum have been consulting with schools, on changes to funding for 2018/19 which are focused on supporting our schools in moving towards the National Funding Formula (NFF). This has included the proposals for us to adopt more closely the 14 factors that make up the NFF with CBC suggesting the adoption of the broader deprivation funding factors, changes to LAC payments and adoption of the NFF lump sum of £110,000. In addition, given recent pressures in our high needs block and a number of strategic changes we are seeking to make, part of this consultation includes the proposal to move 0.5% of the Schools block into the High Needs Block for 2018/19.

In shaping the potential schools' budgets for 2018/19, the LA has modelled a number of different scenarios to show schools the impact they would have on individual and collective school budgets. The transfer of £817k to the High Needs Block would result in £22 reduction to AWPU to schools.

The principles suggested in moving schools towards the National Funding Formula were presented at the Schools Forum on 20<sup>th</sup> November. These principles have also been the subject of consultation with schools which is due to close on 8<sup>th</sup> December, the results of which will be discussed at the additional Forum meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> December, with a view to agreeing the funding formula for schools for the financial year 2018/19.

The adoption of the proposed additional factors, particularly the significant increase in deprivation funding based on the NFF (from 2.8% to 5%) broadly results in those schools who have secondary age children seeing an increase in their budgets given the larger total number of children eligible for the deprivation factors on their rolls. Conversely a number of smaller schools see small reductions in their overall budgets.

Following discussions at the Schools Forum on 20<sup>th</sup> November, the LA produced a further set of models including one based on a 0% Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) as opposed to the -1.5% MFG in the proposal above to ensure no school loses funding based on current year figures and census data.

## **2. Local Demand and pressure on the High Needs Block**

As a local area, we have seen rises in the numbers of children requiring both SEN support and the use of Alternative Provision over the last 3 years. This has included a 26% increase in the number of pupils on roll at special schools in Central Bedfordshire over the last 3 years – a growth of 123 pupils, as well as an increase in primary and secondary exclusions and numbers of children at our local alternative provision. Inevitably such growth has led to increased pressure on our High Needs Block which required the use of unspent funds from the Early Years block in 2016/17 to balance the overall budget. It is our intention to utilise a proportion of our unspent growth fund for 2017/18 for our predicted overspend in the High Needs Block for this financial year.

Part of this demand has related to additional children entering post 16 provision which increased contributions from the HNB into local colleges which weren't covered by last year's EFSA post 16 return. As a result, we have completed more detailed analysis of post 16 pupil numbers for 2018/19 to increase the accuracy of EFSA submissions.

However, the biggest pressure has been on the increase in numbers of pupils at local special schools and our alternative provision as well as the associated recoupment charges that the High Needs Block faces. This has led to pressures of approximately £750,000 on the HNB for 2017/18 which without further actions will continue to put pressure on this budget for 2018/19.

## **3. Future Mitigations underway to support a balanced HNB Budget**

Much of our current local HNB budget is focused on support for children once they have an EHCP and the associated provision and services around this. Traditionally local spend has also been more provision rather than needs led.

As a result, the LA is working with local special and mainstream schools to seek to both change our local banding to create more consistency and needs led focus, as well as considering the need for greater investment in earlier support for mainstream schools (and children) to better identify children with additional needs and support them in progressing in mainstream schools wherever possible.

A series of actions are underway to seek to bring greater sustainability to the HNB in the future. These include: -

- a) The creation of a draft set of revised bandings, completed through detailed analysis of local cases, which is being reviewed in partnership with our special schools in December. Our expectation is to roll this out in 2018 which will help support better alignment to needs and a more balanced financial envelope. As part of our banding review, CBC will also be reviewing our other 'unit' provision attached to mainstream schools to review quality and outcomes for children and ascertain whether particularly inclusive local schools could support more children either onsite or through greater outreach in the future.
- b) Our HNB also funds a number of commissions which support children with additional needs. We are seeking to align contract end dates for these commissions and engage innovatively with providers to seek to consider whether we can re-commission differently to both provide earlier support to children to help prevent some of their needs escalating, as well as supporting as many children as possible in mainstream schools.
- c) CBC is also completing reviews of our primary and secondary alternative provision which has grown in numbers over the last few years. This review is seeking to ensure our provision is providing the best possible outcomes for children, identifying those who need support earlier and supporting children in returning to mainstream schools wherever possible. Dialogue around our AP continues with our schools and we have requested the ability to update place numbers for our AP in January.

These returns will help us confirm the full detail of anticipated spend for the HNB next year which are currently being finalised, but initial projections demonstrate a likely continuation of pressure in 2018/19 until the strategic changes described above are fully implemented.

We continue to work closely with local schools, health and social care colleagues as well as neighbouring authorities. Our work with health and social care partners has resulted in 33% of our out of area placements receiving either joint or tripartite funding from health and/or social care. Our wider review of provision is also taking place with colleagues in neighbouring authorities with a view to mapping out both growth in overall numbers of children with SEND but also locations of provision within and outside of our borders.

#### **4. Proposed transfer**

The proposal to transfer 0.5% into the HNB is predicated on using some of this funding to provide earlier support to mainstream schools in the identification and response to children with additional needs. Given the growth in the number of children requiring additional support locally, if there is no investment in earlier identification, prevention and support the forecast rise in pupil numbers will only lead to additional continued pressure on higher cost provision and associated support as they work themselves through the system.

As well as the actions already underway, a step change is required to act as a catalyst for this change. This is particularly the case for 2018/19 as it will take some time for the work described to be completed to a standard that is effective, provides strong outcomes and value for money as well as supporting the sustainability of existing support wherever possible.

We anticipate that this transfer next year along with the key actions described above will ensure the budget is sustainable in future years.