

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SCHOOLS FORUM** held at The Moorfield Room, The Rufus Centre, Steppingley Road, Flitwick, MK45 1AH on Monday, 14 January 2019

PRESENT

Miss K Hayward (Chairman)
Mrs S Howley MBE (Vice-Chairman)

School Members:	Mr P Cohen	Executive Headteacher, Academy of Central Bedfordshire
	Mr J Creswick	Principle, Ivel Valley School
	Mrs L Davies	Headteacher, Willow Nursery School
	Mrs C Earp	Head Teacher, Henlow Middle Academy
	Mr C Field	Governor, Alameda Middle School
	Mr M Howe	Governor, Leighton Middle School
	Mr J Hughes	Head Teacher, Beecroft Academy
	Ms A Moyle	School Business Manager, Greenleas Lower School
	Mr J Selmes	Head Teacher, Weatherfield Academy Special School
	Mr M Smith	Head Teacher, Priory Academy
	Mr S Tiktin	Governor, Beaudesert Lower School
	Mrs S Wells	School Governor, St Andrew's Lower School
Non-School Members:	Mr B Burrett	Church of England Diocese Representative
	Ali Challis	Early Years Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) Provider Representative
	Cllr K Ferguson	Chairman of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Mr M Foster	Trade Union Representative
Observer:	Mr I Joyce	The Shared Learning Trust
Apologies for Absence:	Cllr S Dixon	
	Mrs S Harrison	
	Mrs J New	
	Mr D Penfold	
	Mrs S Teague	
Officers in Attendance:	Ms L Bartos	Head of Service for SEND
	Mr P Fraser	Assistant Director Education
	Ms S Griffin	Committee Services Officer
	Ms D Hill	Head of Financial Support
	Mr C Kiernan	Interim Head of School Improvement
	Ms H Mason	Programmes and Improvement Manager
	Ms T Mather	Learning and Development
	Mrs S Tyler	Assistant Director Business and Supporting Services

Mr D Waller Policy & Implementation Manager, Human
Resources
Mr V Wan Head of School Organisation

CBSF/18/26. Election of Chairman for the municipal year 2018-19

The Forum was invited to appoint the Chairman of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum for the remainder of the municipal year 2018-19.

Miss K Hayward was the only candidate nominated and seconded for the position of Chairman.

RESOLVED

that Miss K Hayward be elected Chairman of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum for the remainder of the municipal year 2018-19.

CBSF/18/27. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum held on 19 November 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CBSF/18/28. Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman had no announcements or matters of communication.

CBSF/18/29. Schools Forum powers and responsibilities

NOTED

the Schools Forum powers and responsibilities summary document issued by the Education Funding Agency in September 2018.

CBSF/18/30. Sub-Groups of Schools Forum

The Forum received an update on any meetings of its Sub-Groups.

Points and comments included:

- The High Needs Technical Sub Group met on the 9 January 2019. Discussions included the purpose and remit of the group and the representation from all school phases.

- The High Needs Technical Sub Group had initially been set up to address the complexity of the High Needs reports prior to being presented at the Schools Forum.
- Special school meetings took on a monthly basis. Some of the work could be done at these meetings if needed rather than an additional meeting of the Sub Group.
- The requirement for Growth Fund Sub Group was now redundant as the funding was now formula based and there were less areas for debate.

RESOLVED

that the Sub Groups of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum only meet when required.

CBSF/18/31. Membership of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum

The Schools Forum received a verbal update on membership of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum.

Points and comments included:

- Following the November meeting of the Forum, the third phase of the appointments process had taken place. The following representatives were elected:
 - secondary maintained head teacher – Ms K Hayward
 - primary academy head teacher – Mrs K White
 - secondary academy head teacher – Mrs M Smith
 - PRU / AP academy head teacher – Mr P Cohen
 - secondary academy governor – Mr C Field
- There was a remaining vacancy for a secondary maintained head teacher.
- A membership list had subsequently been compiled setting out the date of appointment to the Forum which would provide advance notice of the expiry of the Term of Office and vacancies.
- An induction pack had been compiled for existing and new members of the Forum.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the Interim Head of School Improvement write to Maintained Middle school head teachers to advise them of the vacancy and request expressions of interest.**
- 2. that the Assistant Director Business and Supporting Services write to the PVI Sector provider to confirm representation.**
- 3. that dates for the induction programme for new members of the Forum be arranged.**

CBSF/18/32. Apprenticeship Levy

The Schools Forum received a presentation on the Apprenticeship Levy.

Points and comments included:

- The Apprenticeship Levy could be used for existing members of staff to benefit the workforce as well as new members of staff.
- The Levy only covers training costs, not other employment costs e.g. salaries; however applications will be considered from schools for training costs that exceed the amount of Levy the individual school has contributed.
- Information and guidance about the Levy is available through the schools portal.
- Presentations about the Levy had taken place at events such as the Find Your Future careers fair at the Rufus Centre, Flitwick. Suggestions of ways of increasing engagement with schools were welcomed.
- A Corporate Apprenticeship Manager had been appointed to provide support and guidance to schools and the wider Council about the levy and to advise with regard to procurement requirements.
- Schools were encouraged to complete the expression of interest form to secure funding, to think carefully about the training provider they chose and to talk to networks and share experiences
- A key requirement of the Levy was that as an employee, apprentices would normally be expected to work for at least 30 hours per week. To some schools the Levy may therefore be an additional cost to their school if apprentices are not appointed to their school and therefore they are unable to use the Levy for apprentices training costs.
- Opportunities to use the Levy other than for teaching staff, such as grounds maintenance or upskilling pupils to help them gain employment in the job market needed to be looked at.

NOTED

the presentation on the Apprenticeship Levy.

CBSF/18/33. The Growth Fund - additional modelling

The Schools Forum received a verbal update on the additional modelling of the Growth Fund.

Points and comments included:

- As advised at the November meeting, modelling of the Growth Fund had been undertaken based on the October 2017 and Summer 2018 census.
- Following the receipt of the 2018 October census, additional remodelling had subsequently taken place at the request of members of the Schools Forum.

- Remodelling had shown an increase in the forecast standardised payment expenditure of £1.3m reported at the November meeting. This was due to the census showing an increase of children in the local authority.
- The additional analysis had also shown that the change of age range of some schools and the significant growth in some areas of Central Bedfordshire had an impact on modelling.
- The DfE had confirmed a Growth Fund allocation of £2m which was similar to the figures in the latest census modelling.

NOTED

the update on the additional modelling of the Growth Fund.

CBSF/18/34. High Needs Block of the Dedicated School Grant

The Schools Forum considered a report on the spend in regard to the High Needs Block (HNB) to date, the potential spend pressures for the remainder of 2018/19, and the 0.5% investment 2018/19 into the HNB for this financial year, the indicative High Needs Block DSG Allocation for 2019/20 and forecast spend including the request for disapplication.

Points and comments included:

- Targeted speech and language support, one of the agreed work-streams of the project, had not been started this financial year. It was queried if the funding would be carried forward to the next financial year. The Assistant Director Business and Supporting Services advised that there had been a delay in the anticipated start dates to some of the projects due to capacity issues and difficulty with recruitment, but funding had been allocated and the projects would be progressed.
- Table 2, High Needs Block Budget and Forecast Spend showed an Indicative Budget for 2018/19 of £40k for additional special school/provision places funded through contingency with a Forecast Total Spend 2018/19 of £110,888. This was queried. The Assistant Director Business and Supporting Services explained that the indicative budget had to add up to the amount received from the DSG. The forecast spend is the expected spend based on current year, taking into account forecasted pupil numbers and anticipated mitigations.
- Members of the Forum had been advised at a previous meeting that the cost centre structure would be restructured making it easier to understand. This would be carried out ready for the start of the new financial year.
- At a previous meeting, members of the Forum received information about contract renegotiations in order to bring about cost savings but this had not been achieved. It would be helpful for members to receive information about existing contracts and renewal dates to enable them to be better placed to make informed decisions.

- It was felt that the significant financial risk to the local authority of cutting funding to special schools was not accurately represented in the report despite concerns raised about the information and incorrect figures being considered.
- The Chair expressed disappointment that a balanced budget had not been presented. Assurance was given that once the outcome of the request for disapplication had been received, a further paper would come to the Schools Forum.

NOTED

- 1. the continuing pressures against 2018/19 High Needs Block Allocation.**
- 2. the indicative allocation of 2019/20 along with proposed spend.**
- 3. the request for disapplication of 2019/20.**
- 4. the update on the Early Intervention Projects funded through the 2018/19 transfer of 0.5% into the Schools Block.**

CBSF/18/35. Academy Schools: Balances on 31 August 2017

The Schools Forum considered a report about the balances held by academy schools on 31 August 2017, the end of the 2016/17 financial year for academies and free schools.

Points and comments included:

- A revision to Appendix 1 of the report had been published which advised changes to balances for the following schools:
 - Clifton All Saints
 - Ardley Hill Academy
 - Sandye Place Academy
 - Biggleswade Academy
 - BEST
 - CfBT
 - Chiltern Learning Trust
- The multi academy trust scenario made it more difficult to give a true representation of the figures being presented.
- Derwent Lower is a Foundation school not an academy.
- The amended report showed the same figure as the original report for Oak Bank Special School.
- Future reporting on academy school balances would be discussed by the Assistant Director Education and Senior Finance Manager and reported to the Forum.

NOTED

the balances held by academy schools on 31 August 2017, the end of the 2016/17 financial year for academies and free schools.

CBSF/18/36. The National Funding Formula

The Schools Forum received a presentation on the National Funding Formula.

Points and comments included:

- The Local Authorities shown on page two of the document were district councils within upper tier areas not top tier councils.
- The figures showed poor performance and a wide gap in terms of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged areas of the country.
- Pupil outcomes showed significant improvement in early key stages in Central Bedfordshire.
- In Central Bedfordshire the lowest outcomes were currently in KS4.

NOTED

the presentation on the National Funding Formula

CBSF/18/37. Trade Union Facilities Time

The Schools Forum considered a report on the continuation of funding for facilities release time for Trade Unions and Professional Associations.

Points and comments included:

- Funding for Trade Union Facilities release time had previously been agreed at a maximum of £3.31 per pupil by the Schools Forum.
- The estimated cost per pupil for facilities funding 2019/2020 for Maintained Primary Secondary phases and Nursery and Maintained Special Schools was £2.51 compared to £2.48 in 2017/2018.
- The budget allocation for 2018/19 was £55,721.64 with an expected spend to the end of the year of £50.795. This was due to some union representatives not claiming their allocation of funding.
- The potential remaining balance of £4,926.64 from 2018/19 funding period would be carried forward to the 19/20 funding period therefore reducing costs per pupil.
- The amalgamation of the NUT and ATL Trade Unions to form the National Education Union (NEU) had resulted in a saving of 1.17 days per month of facilities time.

RESOLVED

- 1. that funding from the Lower/Primary Schools Phase be de-delegated for the use of the Trade Union facilities time at £2.51 per pupil.**
- 2. that funding from the Secondary School Phase (Middle and Upper) be de-delegated for the use of Trade Union facilities time, £2.51 per pupil.**
- 3. that the allocation of the per pupil funding cost of Trade Union facilities time equally across all phases be continued.**

CBSF/18/38. School Admissions Annual Report 2019/20

The Schools Forum considered a report on the performance of the School Admissions team during the 2018/19 academic year.

Point and comments included:

- The total/average of applications for schools places in 2018 in Central Bedfordshire was 9,132. This was an increase of 50% on the previous year.
- The workload of the team had increased during the current academic year due to a number of school closures and the opening of Pix Brook Academy in September 2019.
- Although significant growth had been seen in the number of in year applications for school places, the request for funding for the School Admissions Service in Central Bedfordshire from the Dedicated Schools Grant remained at the same rate as in 2018/19 (£313,004).

NOTED

the annual report provided to the Schools Forum on the work delivered by the team, performance nationally and changes to the demand volumes to ensure the team remains high performing and of sufficient depth to deliver the required functions.

RESOLVED

that the continuation for 2019/20 of the Dedicated Schools Grant funding to the School Admissions Service in Central Bedfordshire at £313,004 be approved.

CBSF/18/39. Early Years funding 2019/20

The Schools Forum considered the responses to the Consultation on Early Years Funding for 2019/20.

Points and comments included:

- The Consultation had been circulated to approximately 399 settings (all Early Years providers, private, voluntary, independent including Childminders and maintained schools).
- 61 responses were received covering 30 different settings representing approximately 7.5% of settings in the Early Years sector.
- A full analysis of the DSG allocation for 2019/20 would be given at the March meeting of the Forum.

NOTED

the responses to the Consultation on Early Years Funding for 2019/20.

RESOLVED

that the funding approach for 19/20 be agreed in principle.

CBSF/18/40. Special School Banding - Single Value Top UP (SVT)

The Schools Forum considered a report on the assessment of the Single Value Top-Up as requested at the Schools Forum meeting in November 2018.

Points and comments included:

- In response to the question raised about the reason for the difference in the top up figures shown in the table in paragraph 8 of the report (Actual 17/18 - £18,077.36 and Actual 18/19 - £14,111.17), the Assistant Director Business and Supporting Services explained that this could be due to the way that funding was organised based on the number of school places that were not necessarily filled. It was noted that it was not realistic to compare the figures for 2017/18 to those for 2018/19.
- Special school head teachers expressed concern about the remodelling of the figures shown in the table in paragraph 8 of the report, in terms of the accuracy of the actual figures for 2016-2019 and proposed figures for 2019/20, the level of top up funding proposed for 2019/20, the deficit shown in the figures for the two academy special schools and the increase in funding for Ivel Valley which had not been received.
- Due to the reduction in the top-up figures, it was felt that schools would not be able to meet the needs of the children, especially those with more complex needs.
- The risk implications around the potential impact of the Single Value Top-Up figures were not clear in the report.
- Special School Banding (SVT) needed to be reviewed earlier than the two year period being recommended for agreement by the Schools Forum, as the needs of the children changed year on year.

RESOLVED

1. that an SVT approach for the financial year 2019/20 be implemented at the values shown in table 1 of the report.
2. that the SVT for each special school be reviewed during the first full year of implementation.
3. that the implementation of the SVT funding of special provision be carried out in two phases with Phase 1 being specifically for Special Schools. Phase 2 would be structured around a full revision of SEN provision and the application of the SVT model to include special facilities.

CBSF/18/41. Dedicated Schools Grant

The Schools Forum considered a report on the 2018/19 Dedicated Schools Grant and funding arrangements for 2019/20.

NOTED

the 2018/19 Dedicated Schools Grant and funding arrangements for 2019/20.

RESOLVED

1. that the Dedicated Schools Grant funding of £313,004 to the School Admissions Service in Central Bedfordshire be retained.
2. that the budget of £3,000 for costs associated with the operation of the School Forum be retained.
3. that the contribution of £616,216 from the Central School Services Block to the responsibilities that the local authority holds for all schools be retained for 2019/20.

CBSF/18/42. Schools Forum Budget

The Schools Forum considered as report on the current position of the School Forum Budget.

NOTED

the spend for the year to the 31 December 2018.

CBSF/18/43. Schools Contingency update

The Schools Forum considered an update on the use of the Dedicated School Grant Contingency budgets for the financial year 2018/19.

NOTED

the Dedicated School Grant Contingency spend for the financial year 2018/19.

CBSF/18/44. Work Programme

Members received and considered the Work Programme for the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum.

RESOLVED

that the Work Programme be approved subject to the following amendments:

11 March 2019

- **Early Years update**
- **Induction programme for members of the Forum**

Standing item for every meeting

- **SEND Project Update (2 presentations per meeting)**

CBSF/18/45. Date of the Next Meeting

Monday 11 March 2019.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 3.00 p.m. and concluded at 5.15 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated