

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM** held at Room 14 - Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford, SG17 5TQ on Monday, 7 March 2011

PRESENT

Jim Parker (Chairman)

School Members:	Anne Bell	Headteacher, Willow Nursery School
	David Brandon-Bravo	Headteacher Parkfields Middle School
	Shirley-Anne Crosbie	Headteacher, Glenwood Special School
	Richard Holland	Governor, Harlington Upper School
	Sharon Ingham	Headteacher, Hadrian Lower School
	Vaughan Johnson	Governor, Edward Peake Middle School
	Ray Payne	Headteacher, Henlow Middle School
	Rob Robson	Headteacher, Samuel Whitbread Collegiate
	Stephen Tiktin	Governor, Linslade Lower School
	Non-School Members:	Libby Bevan
Ian Greenley		Church of England Diocese Representative
Bill Hamilton		Roman Catholic Diocese Representative
Caroll Leggatt		PVI Early Years Providers Representative
Observer:	Cllr Mrs A M Lewis	Portfolio Holder for Children's Services
Apologies for Absence:	Ali Hadawi CBE	
	Sue Howley MBE	
Officers in Attendance:	Mrs M Clampitt	Committee Services Officer
	Mrs E Grant	Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services
	Dawn Hill	Senior Finance Manager - Children's Services
	Mr J McDermott	Projects Officer, Schools Organisation & Capital Planning
	Mr R Parsons	Head of School Organisation and Capital Planning
	Helen Redding	Head of SEN and Inclusion
	Mr N Turner	e-Learning Strategy Team

CBSF/10/118 Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising**RESOLVED**

that the minutes of the meeting of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum held on 24 January 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CBSF/10/119 Teachers Union and Professional Association

The Forum considered the report which sought approval for the continuation of DSG funding for facilities release time for trade unions and professional associations. Trade unions and professional associations made a significant contribution to the smooth running of schools both locally and nationally.

It was noted that the current claim process was sporadic and except for two exceptions was required to go through the school. A suggestion was made that the payments could be made directly to the Union representative thus not encroaching on the school's finances.

In response to a query raised at the Schools Forum in relation to accredited representatives time to carry out their duties, confirmation was received that at an early meeting of the trade unions and professional associations for Central Bedfordshire, the additional time allocated to NAHT was agreed due to the complexities of the work involved.

RESOLVED

that the continued funding for facilities release time for Teachers Unions and Professional Association for 2011/12.

CBSF/10/120 Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships

The Forum considered a report which proposed alternative use of DSG previously used to support a Behaviour and Attendance Partnership in Dunstable/Houghton Regis in the light of the additional resources received through the Pupil Premium.

Since September 2008, the Area Based Grant (ABG) had been used to support further Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships in Leighton/Linslade and Sandy/Biggleswade. The distribution was calculated using levels of deprivation. In 2010/11, the ABG was reduced by 24% in year reduction and each area's proportion was reduced accordingly. The money for the three partnerships had been agreed on a year by year basis.

The Forum noted that for 2011/12 the Area Based Grant would no longer be available and schools should consider how to ensure the continued delivery of the successful aspects of the partnership through pooled resources.

The Forum was asked to consider the reallocation of the centrally retained DSG be reallocated to fund the increased costs in Out of County Placements where pupils needs were such that they cannot be met within Central Bedfordshire. The Forum supported this proposal.

RESOLVED

that the DSG currently allocated to the Chiltern Behaviour and Attendance Partnership be reallocated to the Out of County Budget in the light of the changes that relate to the Pupil Premium.

CBSF/10/121 Dedicated Schools Grant

The Forum considered a report which provided an update and made recommendations on the School Funding Settlement for 2011/12.

It was noted that the Dedicated Schools Grant is distributed to the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) and the Central Expenditure (table provided). The Forum agreed at the 1/11/10 meeting (Min no. CBSF/10/ refers) that there would be no changes to the formula funding factors that distribute funds via ISB. Any grants which merged with the DSG would be clearly shown. It was further agreed by the Forum at the 24/01/11 meeting (minute no. cbsf/10/112 refers) that the Pupil Premium Allocation for Alternative provisions would be centrally retained.

The estimated DSG for 2011/12 was £169.61m at the time the agenda was published. Officers confirmed that the amount had been increased to £172.61m at the time of the meeting due to the rise in pupil numbers.

RESOLVED

- 1. To note the estimated Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding and deployment.**

The Forum noted that of the six schools which had received Secretary of State approval to become Academies, it was anticipated that four would convert on 1 April 2011. Eight additional schools were at the advanced stage of applying.

When schools convert to Academies an estimated sum of £481k will be recouped from the DSG during the financial year when the school changed. The Forum agreed that recoupment of up to £1m could be processed without notification to the Forum but should the cumulative amount exceed £1m then the item to be brought back to the Forum for further consideration.

The Forum were asked to approve a one year budget of £60,000 be set aside to fund a temporary appointment to provide dedicated programme management support and coordination of the LA conversion process and to manage the communication relationship between the Council, converting schools and their professional consultants and legal terms. The Forum did agree to the budget being set aside but had expressed concerns at the reduction in available funding for the non converting schools.

- 2. to endorse that LACSEG (Academy) recoupment of up to £1m for 2011/12 to be paid from Headroom and any amount over this cumulative sum would be brought back to the Forum.**
- 3. to endorse the use of headroom to fund a temporary appointment for 1 year and to commission targeted support for Academy conversions.**

The Forum were informed that three grants which were previously awarded independently through Standards Fund have now been merged into the DSG. These grants were previously retained centrally and allocated to schools via various formulae and criteria.

The grants were the following:-

The 1-2-1 Tuition grant would now be paid out at the beginning of the financial year on a per pupil basis at Key Stages 2 and 3 at a current rate of £57. The payment would be recorded separately on the ISB through the factor Raising Standards.

- 4. to endorse the distribution of 1-2-1 Tuition Grant mainstreamed into DSG to Key Stage 2 and 3 pupils.**

Previously schools had worked together in clusters to provide extended services. It was noted that the previous cluster approach was no longer appropriate and the funds would now be allocated to the most vulnerable through direct allocation to schools through the Social Deprivation factor of the ISB.

- 5. to endorse the distribution of the Extended Schools Grant mainstreamed into DSG through the Deprivation factor.**

National Strategies previously directed at pupils who are at risk of underachieving at key stage 2, 3 and 4 was proposed that the funds be delegated via the AWPU (age weight pupil units) for 3 to 10 years to support achievement at these key stages.

- 6. to endorse the distribution of the National Strategies Grant mainstreamed into DSG to the age weighted pupil unit for year groups 3 to 10.**

The Forum were asked to agree a probable breach of CEL at the beginning of the financial year, due to the initial level of headroom being retained centrally.

The Forum noted that should they not agree the probable breach then the Secretary of State would have to be contacted for approval.

7. to approve a breach of the Central Expenditure Limit (CEL) in the specific circumstance of funds held as Headroom.

The Forum noted that the recommendation 8 – to endorse that shortfall arising from the funding for Looked After Children Pupil Premium be funded from headroom, was not required for consideration at this time.

The Young People Learning Agency (YPLA) SEN funding could have a shortfall and the Forum was asked to approve this being covered by Headroom.

8. to endorse that any shortfall from the Young People Learning Agency (YPLA) SEN funding to be funded from Headroom.

CBSF/10/122 Scheme for Financing Schools

The Forum considered a report which provided an update and made recommendations following the recent consultation on proposed revisions to the Scheme for Financing Schools following revised DfE guidance.

The Scheme is based on the legislative provisions in Section 45-53 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the Schools Finance Regulations 2008.

The Forum noted that 8 responses had been received from the 136 schools. The responses were included in paragraph 4 of the report. Officers reported that the FMSiS had been removed and the replacement would be advised shortly. Procurement cards would be considered at a later meeting in preparation of a possible September start.

The Forum noted that the last year for clawbacks would be 2010/11. The DfE has proposed that the maximum length for repayment of deficits should be 3 years which is an increase for Central Bedfordshire from 2 years. The Forum supported this recommendation.

Officers informed the Forum that the DfE default position advised in the consultation on redundancies and early retirement is that ; premature retirement costs must be charged to the schools delegated budget, whilst redundancy costs must be charged to the LA's budget. However it was pointed out that there were circumstances where the redundancy cost would be delegated to the school's budget if:-

- A school acts outside the authorities policy
- The LA believes the redundancy is not necessary
- The redundancy has arisen due to a deficit within schools control
- A school has refused to engage with the LA's redeployment policy.

It was agreed by the Forum that as there would no longer be surplus balances that “the school has excess surplus balance and no agreed plan to use these” be removed from the list of exceptions.

Officers explained that since the last Scheme the numbering and heading of paragraphs had been realigned to match the DfE published template Scheme for Financing Schools.

RESOLVED

- 1. that schools must be allowed to opt out of LA arranged contracts.**
- 2. that all references to FMSiS be removed from the Scheme.**
- 3. that the introduction of procurement cards be postponed and a report on their introduction be brought back to a future meeting of the Schools Forum.**
- 4. that there is no balance control mechanism on schools balances from 2011/12 onwards**
- 5. that the maximum length over which schools may repay a deficit should not exceed three years**
- 6. that the Department of Educations default position for payment of redundancies and early retirement costs be adopted.**
- 7. that the Scheme has been amended numerically to align with the Department for Education’s statutory guidance for LAs be noted.**

CBSF/10/123 Schools Specific Contingency Budget

The Forum received and considered a report which provided an update on the use of the Schools Specific Contingency Budget for 2010/11 and to propose the level for 2011/12. The Forum approved a budget for 2010/11 of £980,728. The 2010/11 budget was £500,000 for General Contingency, £275,670 for SEN Contingency and £205,058 to finance the shift of funding between the two new authorities arising from the Special Schools Funding Formula review.

The Forum considered the General Contingency be set at £500,000 and the SEN be £275,670 for the 2011/12 financial year. The SEN contingency was the former allocation to Rainbow School and was retained for the SEN provision and mostly pays for Outreach work. It was noted that the payment to Bedford Borough Council in 2009/10 was the last payment to be made following changes by the DofE.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the the School Specific Contingency position statement as at February 2011 be noted.**

- 2. that the 2011/12 the General Contingency be set at £500,000 and SEN Contingency £275,670 be proposed.**

CBSF/10/124 School Forum Budget

The Forum considered a report which provided an update on the use of the School Forum Budget for 2010/11 and to propose the level for 2011/12. It was agreed at the 8 March 2010 meeting of the Schools Forum that a budget of £5,000 would be established to meet the costs associated with the operation of the Forum. The budget would be reviewed annually.

The Forum noted that there was balance of £3,848 for the 2010/11 budget.

Officers proposed that for the 2011/12 budget the amount be £3,000 and that £2,000 be held for the Chairman to allocate for consultancy work as required.

The Forum agreed for the continuation of membership in the F40 Group and that the £2,000 annual subscription be paid from the budget.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the School Forum noted the position statement as at February 2011.**
- 2. that the School Forum budget be set at £3,000 for 2011/12, with the continued membership of the F40 group and £2,000 delegated to the Chairman of the School Forum to fund the commissioning of consultancy and administration support.**

CBSF/10/125 Capital Allocations 2011/12

The Forum considered the report which advised of the total Department for Education capital allocations to schools and the Local Authority (LA) for 2011/12 and to invite the Forum to comment on the proposed use of the LA level allocations.

The Forum noted that Appendix A to the report contained the breakdown of the Department of Education's (provisional) £17,934,872 capital allocations for Central Bedfordshire for 2011/12.

Appendix B to the report provided a provision allocation of £737k for 2011/12 in relation to Locally Controlled VA programme (LCVAP).

Appendix C to the report provided the draft Strategic Maintenance programme relating to categories D1, D2, C1 and C2 works which could be afforded within the £6.314m envelope. The main focus would be on keeping buildings watertight and warm.

It was noted that the £9.791m funding allocation would be used for “Basic Need” which was for all schools in the LA area including:- LA maintained, VA schools, Academies and new (free) schools where the proposals increased the capacity in response to the need for additional places. The Forum noted that £2m would be allocated to the Roecroft Lower School Scheme as it was being replaced as a larger school to meet growth in the area.

It was noted that maintenance funding for Academies was being held by Central Government.

NOTED

- 1. that the overall Department for Education allocations for 2011/12.**
- 2. that a further report would be presented to the Forum in due course setting out any implications of the James Review of capital expenditure and bringing forward proposals for expenditure of the Basic Need allocation to the Authority.**

CBSF/10/126 Draft Schools Carbon Reduction Action Plan

The Forum received and considered the report which contained the draft Schools’ Carbon Reduction Action Plan. The Plan had been produced to ensure that carbon reduction was owned and addressed by all stakeholders across the schools’ estate: by implementation of both behavioural and physical changes that would result in greater energy efficiency and reduced carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions thereby minimising utility costs and mitigating against the impact of future carbon taxes.

Central Bedfordshire Council has been given the challenge of reducing the impact of the changing climate and the delivery of services. The Council has been working on the reduction of its own carbon footprint and reducing energy costs and fuel use from the Council’s estates, schools, fleets and services it provides.

The Council was working towards the establishment of a Schools’ Carbon Reduction Action Plan by March 2011. The work included the establishment of a Schools’ Asset Management Planning sub group of the Schools’ Forum which consisted of a cross section of school Governors, Headteachers and Business Managers from CBC’s Upper, Middle and Lower schools and specialist CBC Officers. The sub group followed three work-streams:-

- Corporate context and suggested Carbon Reduction Commitment actions for schools
- Zero Carbon Taskforce roadmap and Eco-schools Agenda
- Results of the LowC Commission

Officers informed the Forum that the Council would be recharging the allowances through the DSG. There had been an invest-a-save grant established with a value of £200k to allow schools to undertake improvements. It was explained that Officers would work with the schools to help them make changes, some behavioural, to help minimise their carbon footprints. Officers did acknowledge that whilst new schools/academies were being built to be long term sustainable and with minimal carbon footprint some schools had been built over 20 years ago and would not be able to easily reduce their footprint.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the Schools' Forum considered the draft Schools' Carbon Reduction Action Plan as attached at Appendix A to the report and indicated its support for the approach taken in developing the plan.**
- 2. that the Schools' Forum invites all schools to support and adopt the approaches set out in this plan.**

CBSF/10/127 Harnessing Technology 2010/11 Update

The Forum considered the report which provided details of the annual maintenance resource implications for the Harnessing Technology and Learning Platforms and the communications sent to the schools which advised of the proposed broadband charges. It was noted that at the 1 November 2010 meeting, the Forum requested a report back when a clearer picture of costs for the broadband package and learning platforms had been made.

The Forum noted that the requested information had been circulated through Central Essentials.

Officers explained that should 100 schools sign up to the learning platforms that a cost reduction of 50p per student would be achieved. At the time of the meeting 71 schools had migrated.

The Forum noted that the cost of the broadband would increase significantly following the 1 April with the removal of the Harnessing Technology subsidy. Schools were asked to indicate their intention to either accept the proposed new costing or indicate their intention to make alternative arrangements. It was noted that notification was required by 11 March 2011 and that 40 schools had responded to date. One school had indicated its intention to make alternative arrangements.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the details of proposed charges for the purchase of a learning platform – July 2011 onwards be noted.**
- 2. that the details of charges for the Broadband package to schools be noted.**

3. **that the communications with schools regarding broadband package charges and distribution of HT funding for migration to G2 management information system be noted.**

CBSF/10/128 Correspondence to and from the Forum

The Forum considered a request to review the membership of Academies on the Forum in light of the new academies being established in the area. It was agreed that the appointments would be reviewed and reported to the next meeting.

CBSF/10/129 Future Meeting Arrangements for the Forum

The Forum noted the arrangements for the following meetings of Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum:-

- **20 June 2011 at 9.00am in Room 15, Priory House**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 6.00 p.m. and concluded at 8.00 p.m.)

Chairman.....

Dated