

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM** held at Room 14, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Monday, 28 November 2011

PRESENT

Jim Parker (Chairman)

School Members:	David Brandon-Bravo	Headteacher Parkfields Middle School
	Jeff Conquest	Head Teacher Woodland Middle School
	Shirley-Anne Crosbie	Headteacher, Glenwood Special School
	Richard Holland	Governor, Harlington Upper School
	Mrs A Kentish	Head Teacher Kensworth Lower School
	Ray Payne	Headteacher, Henlow Middle School
	Rob Robson	Headteacher, Samuel Whitbread College

Non-School Members:	Ian Greenley	Church of England Diocese Representative
	Bill Hamilton	Roman Catholic Diocese Representative
	Carol Leggatt	PVI Early Years Providers Representative

Observer:	Cllr M A G Versallion	Executive Member for Children's Services
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Apologies for Absence:

- Anne Bell
- Ali Hadawi CBE
- Sue Howley MBE
- Sharon Ingham
- Vaughan Johnson
- Stephen Tiktin

Officers in Attendance:	Mrs M Clampitt	Committee Services Officer
	Mrs S Dakin	School Improvement Adviser
	Mrs E Grant	Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services
	Mrs D Hill	Senior Finance Manager - Children's Services
	Mrs H Redding	Head of SEN and Inclusion

CBSF/11/23 **Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum held on 19 September 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CBSF/11/24 Use of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for Special Educational Needs (SEN) Transport

The Forum considered a report which requested a £400k contribution from the DSG for the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Transport in 2011/12. A report had been considered at the Schools Forum meeting held on 19 September 2011 (minute no. CBSF/11/15 refers).

The Forum had requested additional supporting information be provided before a decision would be taken. The Head of School Support and the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services explained to the Forum that the payment request was for one year only. There had been significant savings had been made within the area of SEN Transport including a 15% reduction in the number of students attending Out of County placements. A contributing factor to the costs was the increase in petrol prices, rising ahead of inflation.

The Forum agreed that the request for £400k payment should be supported but were concerned at the cost of the transport being supplied.

RESOLVED

that the use of £400k Headroom in 2011/12 be used for SEN Transport costs be agreed.

CBSF/11/25 14-19 Practical Learning

The Forum received and considered a report which proposed the continuation of the present 14 – 19 funding arrangements for 2012/13 due to the potential risks to the provision arising from changes to funding.

In June 2009, the Schools Forum resolved to hold the relevant 'top slice' of DSG (£555,818 11/12) and Diploma Funding Grant (£160,335 11/12) which would mitigate against the risk that students may not be able to carry on with courses or have the option to take new courses due to the cost.

The Forum noted that Central Government paid all of the funds to the Local Authority through the DSG, which in turns returns the portion of funding for Academies through the LACSEG as they are paid direct from the YPLA.

RESOLVED

that the current arrangements be maintained for 2012/13 acknowledging the amount of top slice would be reduced in line with the number of maintained schools.

CBSF/11/26 Schools Specific Contingency Budget

The Forum received and considered a report which provided an update on the Schools Specific Contingency Budget for 2011/12 and proposed a further distribution of unspent funds.

The Senior Finance Officer reminded the Forum that they had approved the following:-

- At the meeting held on 7 March 2011 a General Contingency budget was agreed of £500,000 plus an additional £1m in anticipation of redundancies in schools during 2011/12. In addition, a SEN Contingency budget of £275,670 SEN was agreed.
- At the meeting held on 19 September 2011 the DSG from Bedford Borough for sole registered PRU pupils would be transferred to the Central PRU budget and an additional £25 per statutory pupil be transferred to Schools
- The Council also received 80% rate relief for the Academy properties and this amount was included in the General Contingency Budget.

The Forum noted that the redundancies were not going to happen in 2011/12 and therefore the Contingency balance needed to be reduced. It was proposed that an additional payment of £20 per statutory pupil registered on the January 2011 census in Maintained Schools as at 1 December (26,436) be transferred to maintained schools (£529k) as a one off adjustment for 2011/12.

RESOLVED

1. **that the School Specific Contingency position statement as at 31 October 2011 be noted.**
2. **that the proposal of an additional £20 per statutory pupil registered on the January 2011 census be transferred to Maintained Schools.**

CBSF/11/27 Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

The Forum received and considered a report which provided an update on the new Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS), the replacement to the Financial Management Standard in Schools (FMSiS).

It was noted that with effect from November 2010 the FMSiS was withdrawn by the Secretary of State. The replacement process was received from the Department for Education (DfE) on 14 September 2011 and known as the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS). The new process was a self certification form, comprising 23 questions, to be completed by each School and signed off by their Chair of Governors.

It was noted that schools which had not attained FMSiS by March 2010 must complete and submit the SFVS to the Local Authority by 31 March 2012. There were currently 20 schools that met this criteria and have been advised of the requirement. All remaining schools must complete their SFVS by 31 March 2013 with an annual review thereafter.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services informed the Forum that the statement "to the best of my ability" will be included on the SFVS form above the signatory area.

A suggestion was made that some schools may have their accounts audited and asked if the SFVS would still be required. It was confirmed that it would be but the auditing of accounts could be included on the form.

RESOLVED

that the update on the Schools Financial Value Standard be noted.

CBSF/11/28 Update on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and School Funding Reform

The Forum received and considered a report which provided an update on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and the School Funding Reform.

DSG

The estimated DSG for 2011/12 was £172.555m. This was based on 37,044 (fte number of pupils as at 01/11) multiplied by £4,568 (Guaranteed Unit of Funding (GUF)). The LACSEG deductions attributable to 15 converted schools as at October 2011 was £440k. It was expected that a further 21 schools would convert before the end of the financial year requiring a further £183k from Headroom.

School Funding Reform

The Department for Education (DfE) launched a consultation on 19 July 2011 which concluded on 11 October 2011. The consultation considered the revision of the current methodology for allocating some £35bn of annual school revenue funding across 151 Local Authorities. The consultation included 47 questions. Central Bedfordshire held two sessions which were attended by Schools Forum members and Officers of the Council. Both the Schools Forum and the Local Authority responded to the consultation.

The DfE was of the opinion that the list of factors could be reduced to provide greater consistency in funding across the country and limit the degree of divergence from the national formula. The proposed list of factors were to be the following:-

- Basic entitlement per pupil (currently Age-Weighted Pupil Units)
- Funding for additional educational needs (e.g. deprivation, SEN, EAL)

- Rates
- Exceptional site factors (e.g. split site, PFI and rent)
- Lump sums for schools

The Forum supported the proposed factors as Central Bedfordshire has between 22 and 28 factors depending on the School. Officers were requested to model the reduction of formula factors for consideration at the second consultation meeting. The models 2a for Lower Schools and 2 for Upper Schools were selected. It was noted that the models did not include schools with a year Group higher than 6. It was requested that a lump sum model be run for Middle Schools. The Senior Finance Officer met with the Middle School Representatives and explained the models to them.

The Middle School Representatives thanked the Senior Finance Officer for the time and given to them to explain the process. It had been incredibly helpful and they were very grateful.

The Forum considered three different model scenarios:-

- Model 1 – factors removed and added to the AWPU – mainstreamed grants, teachers' threshold and newly qualified teachers (NQT).
- Model 2 – factors removed and added to the AWPU – mainstreamed grants, teachers threshold, newly qualified teachers (NQT), formula funding lump sum, insurance lump sum and schools meals lump sum.

For Lower Schools Model 2 assumed no lump sum and Model 2a a lump sum factor of £95k.

For Middle Schools Model 2 assumes no lump sum, Model 2a a lump sum of £47,500 and Model 2b a lump sum of £40,000. The lump sum for middle schools was included to take account of year groups 5 and 6.

- Model 3 – factors removed and added to the AWPU – mainstreamed grants, teachers threshold, newly qualified teachers (NQT), formula funding lump sum, insurance lump sum, schools meals lump sum, addition summer intake funding (Lowers only), Admissions, Free School Meals, Infant Class Size (Lowers only), Personalisation, school meals and small school protection (Lowers & Middles).

For Lower Schools Model 3 assumed no lump sum and Model 2a a lump sum factor of £95k.

For Middle Schools Model 3 assumed no lump sum, Model 3a a lump sum of £47,500 and Model 3b a lump sum of £40,000. The lump sum for middle schools was included to take account of year groups 5 and 6.

The Forum considered Model 2, 2a and 2b to be the most viable options. The Forum considered that Model 1 did not streamline the formula enough whilst Model 3 was considered to be streamlined.

Officers were asked to produce options for models 2, 2a and 2b with actual numbers to be considered via a consultation and a decision to be made at 23 January 2012 meeting. A letter would be sent by the Chairman of the Schools Forum and the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services to all Headteachers and Governors explaining what is being proposed and why the other options have been eliminated. In addition, they would be invited to attend a workshop on the School Funding Reform.

RESOLVED

that the update on the DSG and School Funding Reform be noted.

CBSF/11/29 School Forum Budget

The Forum received and considered a report which provided an update on the Schools Forum Budget for 2011/12.

The Senior Finance Officer confirmed that at the date of the meeting the remaining balance for the year was £683. It was expected that the budget would be fully spent by the end of the financial year.

RESOLVED

that the Schools Forum position statement as at 31 October 2011 be noted.

CBSF/11/30 Correspondence to the Forum

A letter from a Lower School had been received asking about the removal of the ghost funding. It was agreed that a response would be sent from the Chairman advising that Ghost Funding was not being reviewed at this time.

CBSF/11/31 Close

The future meeting dates are as follows:-

Monday 23 January 2012 at 9.30am in Watling House, Dunstable
Monday 5 March 2012 at 5.30pm in Priory House, Shefford
Monday 25 June 2012 at 9.30am in Watling House, Dunstable

Please note that coffee, tea and biscuits will be served at the morning meetings and a cold sandwich buffet at the evening meeting.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 6.00 p.m. and concluded at 7.30 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated