

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM** held at Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Monday, 5 March 2012

### 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
	Sue Howley MBE	Governor, Greenleas Lower School
	Sharon Ingham	Headteacher, Hadrian Lower School
	Anne Kentish	Headteacher, Kensworth Lower School
	Ray Payne	Headteacher, Henlow Middle School
	Stephen Tiktin	Governor, Linslade Lower School

Observer: Cllr MAG Versallion Executive Member for Children's Services

Apologies for Absence: Mrs E Grant  
Ali Hadawi CBE  
Bill Hamilton  
Vaughan Johnson  
Caroll Leggatt  
Rob Robson

Substitutes: Rob Watson for Rob Robson

Members in Attendance: Cllr Mrs D B Gurney

Officers in Attendance:	Mrs M Clampitt	Committee Services Officer
	Mrs S Dakin	Commissioning and Partnerships Manager / School Improvement Adviser
	Mr P Dudley	Assistant Director Children's Services (Learning & Strategic Commissioning)
	Ms D Hill	Senior Finance Manager - Children's Services
	Mr R Parsons	Head of School Organisation and Capital Planning
	Mrs H Redding	Head of Learning and School Support

**CBSF/11/38 Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising****RESOLVED**

**that the minutes of the meeting of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum held on 23 January 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.**

**Officers agreed to double check that the child care link had been included in Central Essentials.**

**CBSF/11/39 Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman informed the Forum that he would be varying the order of the agenda and would consider item 6 – Trade Union and Professional Associations prior to item 3.

**CBSF/11/40 Trade Union and Professional Associations**

The Forum considered the report which sought approval for the continuation of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for facilities to 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 2011/12 budget had a balance of £16,766 which was expected to be used by the end of the financial year. It was noted that should the balance not be used then it would be carried forward to the 2012/13 budget.

In response to a query raised at the Schools Forum, it was noted that the GMB were supported fully through Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) arrangements.

**RESOLVED**

**that the continued funding for facilities release time for Teachers Unions and Professional Association for 2012/13, be approved.**

**The Forum voted unanimously to support the proposal.**

**CBSF/11/41 Support for Vulnerable Pupils at Key Stage 2**

The Forum received and considered a report which sought funding for allocation to maintained middle schools and primary schools with Year 5 pupils to support vulnerable pupils in Key Stage 2. The support for Vulnerable Pupils at Key Stage 2 was £90,000 which was broken down as £150 per pupil and £1,000 for administrative and other costs.

The Forum noted that Central Bedfordshire Key Stage 2 results were very low at 66% of pupils achieved Level 4 or above compared with 74% nationally and 76% for our statistical neighbours.

The additional funding would target 700 pupils. There would be requirements of the schools involved to provide half termly progress data and report back regularly. This would allow a review of the help being provided and where assistance is not working well alternatives would be suggested.

The Forum asked a number of questions and Officers provided clarification where possible. It was confirmed that equal weight was given to “making level 4” and “2 levels of progress”. This was a one year action plan.

### **RESOLVED**

**That £90,000 be allocated to maintained middle schools and primary schools with Year 5 pupils identified as not making sufficient progress towards their Key Stage 2 targets, be approved.**

**The Forum voted 7 in support, 5 against and 1 abstained.**

#### **CBSF/11/42 Special Educational Needs**

The Forum received and considered a report which outlined how the centrally retained Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is used to support SEN functions, and set out future direction of travel.

The Head of Learning and School Support provided the Forum with a breakdown of where the funds were spent for the provision of SEN support. The areas were the following:-

- Early Years Children Disabilities Team
- Advisory Support Teachers retained within the Psychology and Advisory Support Team
- Sensory Impairment Teams
- Therapies
- Statements
- High Cost pupils
- Recoupment
- Hospital Recoupment
- Out of County Placements
- Additional Pupil support
- Access and Inclusion
- School Admissions

The Forum noted that improvements had been made and the provisions were far tighter than previously. Contracts had been set up to help monitor progress and groups were expected to report on progress.

It was agreed that updates should include the impact of money spent on commissioning services. It was noted that the Chairman of the Schools Forum sat on the Learning Transformation Board and he agreed to report to future meetings on these outcomes.

It was noted that the therapies budget had reduced over the last three years and was expected to reduce further with the combined services.

It was noted that work associated with the statutory assessment process for SEN were funded by the core budget but the actual money attached to statements of SEN was covered by the DSG.

The Forum congratulated the Head of School Support for the sterling job which had been done to reduce the number of Out of County placements, which currently stood at 18.

### **RESOLVED**

- 1. that the centrally retained Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) used to support provision for vulnerable pupils be noted.**
- 2. that the unspent Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) in 2011/12 being distributed to maintained schools as a one off payment based on the degree of incidence of low level needs, be agreed.**

**The Forum unanimously supported the proposal.**

### **CBSF/11/43 Ethnic Minority and English as an Additional Language**

The Forum received and considered a report which proposed that funding previously allocated to schools through the now discontinued Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant (EMAG) be allocated to schools for the financial year 2012/13 through a top-slice of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), in the same way as it was allocated in 2011/12.

It was noted that the allocation of the grant was based on the prescribed distribution of the previous standards fund grant.

The Forum felt that little impact could be made for the minimum £200 payment to a school. The Head of Learning and School Support identified that this was used for translation services. It was agreed that information on the impact on particular schools of not receiving this budget would be circulated to the Forum as soon as possible. The Head of Learning and School Support was asked to consult with the Learning Transformation Board on possible alternative ways of using the funding.

The Forum queried if any school relied on the additional payment? Examples of schools who relied on the additional payment were Stanbridge Lower School and Burgoyne Middle. Other would be identified though the provision of the budget information against particular schools.

The Forum voted not to allocate the £118,104 of top-slice DSG at the present time but rather to have new recommendations brought to the June meeting for consideration.

### **RESOLVED**

- 1. that the £118,104 top-slice of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the continuation of the funding to replace the discontinued EMAG grant, not be agreed.**
- 2. that alternatives be brought to the June Schools Forum meeting for consideration.**

### **CBSF/11/44 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)**

The Forum received and considered a report which provided an update on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) arrangements and made recommendations for the 2012/13 distribution.

#### **1. Deployment of the DSG 2011/12**

The estimated DSG for 2011/12 is £172.555m. This is based on 37,044 (fte number of pupils at 01/11) multiplied by £4,658 (Guaranteed Unit of Funding (GUF)). The Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant (LACSEG) deductions were attributed to 19 converted schools as at January 2012 as £476k. It was anticipated that a further 6 schools would convert before the end of the financial year at a cost of almost £91k. Any remaining budget would be transferred back into the School Contingency for 2012/13.

### **RESOLVED**

**that the deployment of the 2011/12 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), be noted.**

#### **2. Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) Sector**

The PVI sector for 2011/12 had a DSG allocation of £5.261M, based on the Early Years Single Funding model. As at January 2012, £4.083M had been spent with a further £798k estimated for the remainder of the financial year. The balance of £380k was proposed to be carried forward for the 2012/13 budget.

### **RESOLVED**

**that the 2011/12 unspent Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVIs) providers be Earmarked and carried forward to 2012/13, be agreed.**

**The Forum unanimously supported the proposal.**

### **3. Central Services funded by retained DSG for 2012/13**

The table, at paragraph 11 of the report, detailed the initial allocations from 2011/12 and any adjustments made at January 2012. In addition, it was noted that for 2012/13 the proposals for the centrally retained DSG was £9.748M. This amount reflected the non-breaching of the Central Expenditure Limit (CEL) for 2012/13. Some of the proposals were reliant on other items on the agenda being approved.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the allocation of Central Expenditure (CE) for 2012/13, be noted.**

### **4. Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant (LACSEG) for 2012/13**

During 2011/12, there was an amount of £1M retained as Headroom to fund the LACSEG deduction. The Local Authority (LA) noted the pressure on School budgets and therefore have contributed £550K to the Schools Block to cover half of the estimated £1.1M LACSEG deduction for 2012/13. The Forum was asked to agree a payment of £550k from the DSG to cover the other half of the estimated LACSEG deduction.

#### **RESOLVED**

**that £550k Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) be set aside for the Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant (LACSEG) in 2012/13, be agreed.**

**The Forum unanimously supported the proposal.**

### **5. Schools Budgets 2012/13**

The School Budgets would be distributed during the week commencing 19 March 2012. It was noted that although the 'Ever6' formula had been used for calculating the Pupil Premium Grant, it would be the January Free School Meals (FSM) data, that would be used when calculating factors for the Schools Individual Budgets.

The Condition Survey factor was a fixed factor and did not alter regardless of building condition but instead on the school's ranking of condition. For 2012/13 the ranking had changed significantly and to provide the same level of funding during 2012/13 as had been awarded in 2011/12 it was proposed to add £167,698 to the Condition Survey Factor. This factor will be reviewed as part of the overall review of factors in June 2012.

#### **RESOLVED**

**that an additional £167,698 be added to the Condition Survey factor, be agreed.**

**The Forum voted 12 in favour and 1 abstained**

**6. Funding for Sixth Form SEN**

“Statement of Special Educational Needs” costs had increased by £126k for 2012/13 for pupils in mainstream schools, which would be paid by DSG set aside for School Support Services. DSG would cover any residual amounts.

**RESOLVED**

**That any shortfall in funding for sixth form SEN to be funded from unallocated DSG, be agreed.**

**The Forum unanimously supported the proposal.**

**7. AWPU**

It was noted that due to the sizeable reduction in DSG held for Central Services and the increase in the number of pupils that any residual DSG should be distributed to the Schools Individual Schools Budgets for 2012/13 through the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU).

**RESOLVED**

**that any residual DSG arising from the calculation of the Schools Individual Schools Budgets for 2012/13 be deployed through the Age Weighted Pupil Unit, be agreed.**

**The Forum unanimously supported the proposal.**

**CBSF/11/45 School Specific Contingency Budget**

The Forum received and considered a report which provided an update on the use of the Schools Specific Contingency Budget for 2011/12 and to propose the level for 2012/13. The Forum approved a budget for 2011/12 of £1,775,670. The 2011/12 budget was £500,000 for General Contingency plus a further £1,000,000 in anticipation of the cost of redundancies in schools during 2011/12, and £275,670 SEN Contingency.

It was noted that the estimated balance of the General Contingency for 2011/12 was £919,283 and should be sufficient to cover any redundancy costs during 2012/13.

The Forum considered the General Contingency be set at £500,000 and the SEN Contingency £275,670 for 2012/13.

**RESOLVED**

- 1. that the School Specific Contingency position statement as at January 2012, be noted.**
- 2. that the General Contingency Budget be set at £500,000 and the SEN Contingency £275,670 for 2012/13.**

**The Forum voted unanimously to support the proposal.**

**CBSF/11/46 Schools Forum Budget**

The Forum considered a report which provided an update on the use of the Schools Forum Budget for 2011/12 and to propose the level for 2012/13. It was agreed at the 7 March 2011 meeting that a budget of £3,000 be established to meet the costs associated with the operation of the Forum, of which £2,000 was set aside for the Chairman to use for commissioning consultancy and administration support.

The Forum noted that there was a balance of £611 for the 2011/12 budget.

Officers proposed for the 2012/13 budget that an amount of £3,000 with £2,000 be set aside for the Chairman to use for commissioning of consultancy and administration support should be it required. In addition, the Forum will continue its membership in the F40 group with payment of the membership fee of £1,000 from the budget.

**RESOLVED**

- 1. that the Schools Forum noted the position statement as at February 2011.**
- 2. that the Schools Forum budget be set at £3,000 for 2012/13, 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.**

**The Forum voted unanimously to support the proposal.**

**CBSF/11/47 Pupil Referral Unit**

The Forum received and considered a report which outlined the arrangements for the use of Central Bedfordshire's Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) in the Academic Year 2011/12, and proposals for the future.



On 1 September 2011, Central Bedfordshire PRU was registered with the Department for Education (DfE). The provision for primary age pupils was commissioned to a partnership of 3 Lower Schools in Dunstable and Houghton Regis. Secondary age aspect was retained by Central Bedfordshire Council whilst future delivery work was undertaken.

Once the outcome of the national consultation was known decisions would be made regarding delegated budgets for 2013/14. From 1 September 2011, the DfE made a Commencement Order which required an education be provided for all children who through illness, exclusion or otherwise would not receive suitable education unless arrangements had been made for them.

The budget for the PRU in 2011/12 was £1,757,334 and in 2012/13 would be £1,335,552. A Management Committee had been established and worked to national regulations. It met regularly to oversee governance of the PRU.

The Upper Schools had formed a consortium since June 2011 and prepared a 100 page submission for a Free School Alternative Provision. They had shared their proposals with the Middle Schools, and a representative for the Middle Schools had joined the Steering Group. The Bid had been submitted on 24 February 2012. An alternative model of delivery through a commission was being developed should the bid not be successful.

## **RESOLVED**

**that the current position of the PRU and support proposals for the future (as is required for provision that is funded through Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)), be noted.**

### **CBSF/11/48 Capital allocations 2012/13**

The Forum received and considered a report which provided advice on the total Department for Education (DfE) capital allocations to schools and the Council for 2012/13 and invited comments on the proposed use of the Council level allocations for the Strategic Capital Maintenance Programme for 12/13.

The DfE allocations to schools and Local Authorities for the 2012/13 year is another one year allocation, pending considerations of the James Review, which could influence allocations for 2013/14.

The total capital allocation for Central Bedfordshire Council was £10,677,624 in total and specific grants were detailed in "Appendix A" to the report, including the Devolved Formula Capital (DFC).

There had been two significant changes to the DfE methodology for determining allocations:-

- Grant allocations for strategic capital maintenance had been reduced by 45% for 2012/13, which accounted for the anticipated number of pupils to be in academies.

- The allocation of Basic Need grant, provided to manage demographic growth in pupil numbers, had reduced by 40% over 11/12 levels as a result of changed DfE allocation methodology.

The Forum also considered a draft Strategic Maintenance programme prioritised against categories D1, D2, C1 and C2 works which were affordable from the £3,454,789 grant allocation. The focus would be on the external fabric of the buildings and heating systems, keeping the building watertight and warm. The information was contained in "Appendix B" to the report.

The VA schools were given a separate allocation of capital funding (LCVAP) amounting to £665,480, a 10% reduction from 2011/12. The reduction was linked to pupils in 'modernised' schools which had not been considered during 2011/12. This allocation and a draft programme for 12/13 was detailed in "Appendix C" to the report.

During 2011/12, major DfE consultation exercises have been undertaken as a result of the recommendations of the national James Review of schools capital, with more to follow. Proposals to make significant amendments to the School Premises Regulations and associated guidance and Building Bulletins have already been subject of consultation and a response submitted on behalf of Central Bedfordshire was shared.

The Schools Asset Management sub-group will be asked to consider issues arising from the potential implications of the expected DECC consultation on Carbon Reduction commitments and proposed penalties. This would be in conjunction with overseeing the delivery of the carbon reduction action plan.

The Forum noted that a paper would be considered by the Central Bedfordshire Council Executive at its meeting on 27 March 2012, which would outline the need to provide a significant number of new school places over the next five years and this programme will also require the Council to provide the funding for any shortfall in required funding.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. that the overall Department for Education allocation for 2012/13 and the proposed used of the Council's allocations, be noted.**
- 2. that, in the future, the minutes of the Schools Asset Management Sub-Group be referred to the Forum for information and comment, be noted.**

### **CBSF/11/49 Schools Forum Membership Review**

The Forum received and considered a report which detailed the changes to the composition of the Schools Forum from 1 April 2012.

The Forum noted that their appointments had been for three years from 1 April 2009. It was noted that a couple of people had been appointed within the last six months.

The existing composition of the Forum was 17 Members of which 12 were School members and 5 were non-School Members. Due to the number of schools which had converted to Academies, it was decided that this was the perfect time to review the composition of the Forum.

It was proposed that the Forum would now have 20 members of which 11 were School members, 5 were non-School Members and 4 would be Academy representatives.

The Forum had been informed that a new Union representative, Martin Foster, had been appointed from GMB. The Forum were concerned that the representative was not a Teacher or a representative of the Teachers Unions. It was noted that all of the Teaching Unions had been written to and none had responded to the request for a representative.

It was confirmed that the composition of the Schools Forum was the responsibility of the Local Authority. Letters would be sent to the Lower, Middle, Upper, Special and Nursery Schools to ask for nominations and then ballots would be sent out to all representatives on the Schools Forum.

## **RESOLVED**

**that the implementation of the Schools Forum Membership Review and agree the changes which will take effect from 1 April 2012, be noted.**

The Chairman informed the Forum that whilst he had enjoyed his time as Chairman, he would not be standing again for Chairman and thanked Officers and the Forum members for their support during his three year Chairmanship.

The Forum thanked the Chairman for all of his work and excellent chairing of meetings.

Ray Payne, Headteacher from Henlow Middle School also announced that this would be his last meeting as his school would be converting to Academy status from 1 April 2012. He thanked the Forum for their hard work.

Pete Dudley, Assistant Director, thanked all of the members of the Forum for their dedication and hard work over the last three years. He also stated that it was a wonderful membership and a well working Forum.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 6.00 p.m. and concluded at 8.40 p.m.)

Chairman .....

Dated .....