

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM** held at Committee Room 2, Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable on Monday, 25 June 2012

PRESENT

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|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| School Members: | Anne Bell | Headteacher, Willow Nursery School |
| | David Brandon-Bravo | Headteacher, Parkfields Middle School |
| | Paul Burrett | Headteacher, Studham CofE Lower School and Pre-School |
| | Shirley-Anne Crosbie | Headteacher, Glenwood Special School |
| | James Davis | Governor, Leighton Middle School |
| | Angie Hardy | Headteacher, Clipstone Brook Lower School |
| | Richard Holland | Governor, Harlington Upper School |
| | Sue Howley MBE | Governor, Greenleas Lower School |
| | Sharon Ingham | Headteacher, Hadrian Lower School |
| | Jim Parker | Headteacher, Manshead Upper School |
| | John Street | Academy Middle School Representative |
| Stephen Tiktin | Governor, Linslade Lower School | |
| Non-School Members: | Mr M Foster | GMB representative |
| | Ian Greenley | Church of England Diocese Representative |
| | Caroll Leggatt | PVI Early Years Providers Representative |
| | Robert Shore | Local Authority 14-19 partnership representative - UTC |
| Observer: | Cllr M A G Versallion | Executive Member for Children's Services |
| Apologies for Absence: | Mrs E Grant | |
| | Bill Hamilton | |
| 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 |
| | Mrs H Redding | Head of Learning and School Support |

CBSF/12/50 Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman 2012/13

The Forum were invited to make nominations for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum.

Richard Holland was the only candidate nominated and seconded. He was therefore appointed Chairman.

Jim Parker was the only candidate nominated and seconded. He was therefore appointed Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED

- 1. that Richard Holland be elected Chairman of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum 2012/13.**
- 2. that Jim Parker be elected Vice-Chairman of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum 2012/13.**

CBSF/12/51 Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising**RESOLVED**

that the minutes of the meeting of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum held on 5 March 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The Forum asked for clarification on 3 items:-

- support for vulnerable pupils in Key Stage 2 - clarification was sought of the timeframe and which schools would be involved.
Officers confirmed that the project was from last year 2011/12 and would continue into 2012/13 and involved nine middle schools. It was noted that a report would be taken to the Council's Children's Services Management Team (CSMT) and the Assistant Director agreed to bring report to the Forum also.
- a request was made for details of the groups who met and when. Officers agreed to provide this information.
- did the School Asset Management Sub-group still meet? Officers confirmed that it still met and a report was scheduled on the Forward Programme for a future meeting.

CBSF/12/52 Use of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to support activities aimed at closing the gap for Ethnic Minority (EM) and English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils

The Forum considered a report which provided the feedback from the Headteachers and partners reference group of consideration of alternative models of distribution of the now discontinued Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) in 2012/13.

At the 5 March 2012 meeting, the Forum requested that alternative funding be sought for the EMAG (see minute ref CBSF/11/43).

The Headteacher and partners reference group requested that the funds be paid from the top-slice DSG for 2012/13 and that this would be reviewed as part of the Funding Reforms for 2013/14.

It was also noted that any surplus would be allocated to support groups and projects for vulnerable kids.

RESOLVED

that the £118,104, to close the gap for EM and EAL pupils, be allocated as proposed (as per previous years) for 2012/13 only.

CBSF/12/53 Outline Forward Programme

The Forum considered a report which provided an update on the likely programme for the next year and requested a technical funding sub-group be established.

The Forum noted that the programme would be flexible to take account of both national and local policy issues.

The Senior Finance Officer advised the Forum that the dates of two meetings would need to be altered to allow consultation on the Schools Funding Reform. The timescales for consultation ignored the six-week school holidays.

A technical funding sub-group would be established and include representatives for each level of schools including academies. There would be meetings in July. A report would be brought to the September Forum meeting, which would now be held on 3 September 2012. The change of date would allow for an additional meeting to be held on 22 October before submission of the consultation response. The November meeting would also be moved back to the 26 November.

The technical funding sub-group membership would be as follows:-

Stephen Tiktin - lower school rep
Sue Howley MBE - lower school rep
David Brandon Bravo - middle school rep
Martin Foster - trade union rep
Shirley Anne Crosbie - special needs rep
John Street - academy middle rep
Anne Bell – nursery
Richard Holland – academy upper rep

RESOLVED

- 1. the forward programme be noted;**
- 2. that a technical funding sub-group be established**

CBSF/12/54 Revision to the Scheme for Financing Schools

The Forum received a report which detailed the directed revisions to the Scheme for Financing Schools.

The Forum noted that if the Local Authority wanted to make alterations to the Scheme for Financing Schools, the Local Authority would need to consult. However, if the Department for Education (DfE) issued directed revisions, no consultation would be required as Local Authorities must incorporate in or remove from, their schemes the specified wording.

On 19 March 2012, the DfE notified LAs that with immediate effect the following changes were required:-

- removal of requirement for schools to submit a Best Value Statement
- removal of all requirements relating to the Financial Management Standard in Schools (FMSiS)
- removal of requirements relating to payments of General Teaching Council (GTC) fees
- inclusion of the requirement on schools to achieve efficiencies and value for money, to optimise their resources
- inclusion of the requirements of the Schools Financial Value Standard
- inclusion of a fraud provision which requires schools to have a robust system of controls to safeguard themselves against fraudulent or improper use of public money and assets
- revisions have also been made to the scheme to take into account the DfE's amended Guide and Regulations to the Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) Framework.

RESOLVED

that the amendments to the Central Bedfordshire Scheme for Financing Schools in line with the DfE's directed revisions, be noted.

CBSF/12/55 School Forum Budget

The Forum considered a report which provided an update on the use of the Schools Forum Budget for end of year 2011/12 and to confirm the level for 2012/13. The Forum noted that the £284 balance for 2011/12 had been absorbed into the DSG as it was not allowed to be carried over to the next financial year due to its size.

The Forum agreed at its meeting on 5 March 2012 (see minute ref CBSF/11/46) that a budget of £3,000 of which £1,000 would be used to pay for our continuing membership in the F40 group.

The Forum asked for clarification to be provided as to why parent/governors who sat on the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee received payment for their time yet members of the Schools Forum did not. Officers agreed to find out the reason and provide it outside of the meeting to all members. It was felt that it was not right to receive payment for volunteering to sit on the panels or committees.

The Governors were thanked for their time.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the School Forum position statement as at March 2012 be noted**
- 2. that the School Forum spend to 31 March 2012 be noted.**

CBSF/12/56 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 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, £1,000,000 in anticipation of the cost of redundancies in schools during 2011/12 and £275,670 for SEN Contingency.

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

RESOLVED

- 1. that the School Contingency position statement as at March 2012 be noted;**
- 2. that the School Contingency spend to 31 March 2012 be noted;**

3. **that the 2012/13 General Contingency be set at £500,000 and SEN Contingency £275,670 be proposed.**

CBSF/12/57 School Finance Update

The Forum considered a report which provided an update on the Schools out-turn position and approach to Surplus Balances for 2011/12.

Central Bedfordshire had 112 schools (excluding Academies) in 2011/12.

The Forum, at its meeting held on 7 March 2011, had resolved that there would be no balance control mechanism from 2011/12 onwards (minute no. CBSF/10/122 refers).

The Forum noted that the 2011/12 Earmarked Reserves would not be known until after the CFR returns had been filed by schools. However it was agreed that the £1.2m distributed from School Contingency during the year and awaiting the outcome of the National Consultation and associated funding uncertainties had increased balances.

Six schools had an agreed licensed deficit with a value of £509,670, with no school exceeding their agreed limit. One Lower School held an unlicensed deficit.

The categorisation of schools in the risk register would be reported to the next meeting of the Forum in September 2012. It was noted that no Notice of Concern had been issued during 2011/12.

RESOLVED

that the Schools out-turn position for 2011/12 be noted.

CBSF/12/58 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

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

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

The final DSG for 2012/13 is £174.210m. This is based on 37.333 (fte number of pupils at January 2012) multiplied by £4,658 (Guaranteed Unit of Funding (GUF)). The figure was based on 30 schools converting to Academy status as at May 2012 and \$465k LACSEG transfer.

The Forum noted that a further 22 schools are expected to convert to Academy status by the end of the financial year.

The unallocated DSG from 2011/12 of £26,878 had been transferred to the School Contingency for redistribution in 2012/13.

School Budgets 2012/13

The Forum noted that the School budgets were distributed during the week ending 9 March 2012 ahead of the 19 March 2012 deadline.

The Forum were reminded that a link was on the Schools portal which detailed the calculation of the pupil premium using Ever6.

Consultation on School Funding Reform

The DfE launched an eight-week consultation 'Next steps towards a fairer system' which ran between 26 March and 21 May 2012. Full details could be found on the DfE website: <http://www.education.gov.uk/>.

No additional funding would be available prior to the CSR in 2015. The 2013/14 settlement would be based on 2012/13.

The DSG would be split into three notional un-ringfenced blocks: Schools, Early Years and High Needs. The School Block would be delegated to schools with the following three exceptions:-

- Maintained schools agreed a service should be provided centrally
- Historic commitment
- Statutory function

Funding would be based on the October census except for Early Years which will be based on the January count.

School Blocks

The Forum noted that there were currently 37 factors in the formula and that this would be reducing to 10 different factors with effect from April 2013 as follows:-

- Basic per-pupil entitlement – AWPU (single unit rate for Primary/Secondary, although the department are asking should a separate KS3 and KS4 be permitted)
- Deprivation (based on FSM and/or IDACI – a single rate or a form of banding)
- Looked After Children
- Low cost, high incidence SEN (prescribing Early Years Foundation Stage Profile for Primary and KS2 data for Secondary)
- English as an additional language (for only three years after entry into compulsory school system)
- Lump Sum (requesting a response on what the upper limit should be in the range £100 - £150k with the same lump sum applicable to Primary/Secondary)
- Split site (to encourage schools who adopt efficient solutions, such as merging and federating)

- Rates
- PFI contracts
- Only applicable to five LA's London fringe area

The formula to be submitted with EFA by October 2012. The response to the consultation had been attached to the agenda.

The Technical Sub Group (minute no. CBSF/12/53 refers) would be considering the funding options.

The DfE confirmed that it wanted to move to a National consistency for basic entitlement and had suggested a fixed range for the Primary and Secondary funding ratio (1 for Primary and 1.25 for Secondary). Restrictions would be considered from 2014/15 onwards.

The Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) would be simplified and continue at negative 1.5% for both 2013/14 and 2014/15. Schools Forums will need to determine as part of their formula modelling, whether and how to limit gains.

The Forum noted that Special Schools would no longer have a delegated budget on the same basis as Primary and Secondary.

The Early Years Block would continue to be estimated on January counts but the funding floor would be phased out entirely by 2014/15 whilst 2013/14 is a transition year reducing the protection to 85%.

Modelling

The Forum noted that a sub group meeting had been held on 26 April 2012 to discuss the consultation response.

The Technical sub group will meet to determine the new formula and will report to early September meeting to update the Forum.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the deployment of the 2012/13 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) be noted**
- 2. that the update on the School Funding Reform Consultation be noted**
- 3. that the creation of a Technical Funding sub group to work with LA officers following the outcome of the Consultation be agreed.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and concluded at 11.30 a.m.)

Chairman

Dated