

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM** held at Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Monday, 14 October 2013

PRESENT

Richard Holland (Chairman)
Jim Parker (Vice-Chairman)

School Members:	Anne Bell	Headteacher, Willow Nursery School
	David Brandon-Bravo	Headteacher, Parkfields Middle School
	Shirley-Anne Crosbie	Headteacher, The Chiltern School
	James Davis	Governor, Leighton Middle School
	Sue Howley MBE	Governor, Greenleas Lower School
	Sharon Ingham	Headteacher, Hadrian Lower School
	John Street	Academy Middle School Representative
	Stephen Tiktin	Governor, Linslade Lower School
Non-School Members:	Ms S Driscoll	Local Authority 14 - 19 partnership representative
	Mr M Foster	Trade Union representative
	Caroll Leggatt	PVI Early Years Providers Representative
Observer:	Cllr M AG Versallion	Executive Member for Children's Services
	Mr K Howkins	Education Funding Agency
Apologies for Absence:	Paul Burrett	
	Mrs E Grant	
	Angie Hardy	
	Rob Watson	
Substitutes:	Anne Kentish	(in place of Paul Burrett)
Officers in Attendance:	Mrs M Clampitt	Committee Services Officer
	Ms D Hill	Senior Finance Manager - Children's Services
	Mrs C Jones	Head of HR Strategy
	Miss H Redding	Assistant Director School Improvement

CBSF/13/12 Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum held on 24 June 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Matters arising:**Minute reference CB/13/3 – Early Years Contingency**

Was the level of Early Years Contingency for 2013/14 enough for the whole year. The Senior Finance Officer confirmed that the amount was sufficient.

Age Range change Schools

A query was raised regarding the pupil premium for those schools taking on Year 5 students from September. The Senior Finance Officer explained that if the pupil was already in the school in Year 4 then their funding would remain with the school. However, if the pupil was at another school in Year 4 then their pupil premium would not transfer until after the January unless there was a local agreement between the two schools for the funds to be transferred. The Local Authority cannot provide the funds to the new school without agreement.

CBSF/13/13 The Issue of Rent as it affects Central Bedfordshire Community Maintained Schools.

The Forum considered a report which sought reimbursement from the Schools Forum's "Hardship Fund" from the Head Teacher of Ridgmont Lower School on behalf of four schools.

The Head Teacher informed the Schools Forum that they were not able to include rent as a factor in the amount of budget they receive and therefore are in financial difficulty because of the size of their school the amount of rent they pay was a significant portion of their annual budget.

The Senior Finance Officer advised the Forum that the Local Authority had applied to the DfE for an exceptional premises factor in 2013/14 to enable the LA to include rent as a factor for 2013/14. The application was declined on the basis that it did not meet the criteria set out for exceptional factors. The rent factor is a proposal to include in the 2014/15 budget as an 'in principle' application to the Department for Education has been approved for 6 of the 9 schools that pay rent. There would be a paper considered at the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then the Executive to approve the inclusion of this factor within the new formula for 2014/15.

It was noted that for an exceptional premises factor to be included for schools, the amount payable had to be above 1% of their School Budget Share and impact less than 5% of the authorities schools.

The Executive Member for Children's Services agreed to follow up with officers, as to why payment of rent for certain schools is required. It was agreed that Officers be requested to review the reasons for the rent being higher than other areas and provide a paper on the contractual relationship with landlords.

The Forum considered the information before them and the possibility of setting a precedent. It was agreed that each case would be determined on its own merits and that this request should be supported as a one off payment for one year only.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Schools Forum agree a one off payment from the Schools Contingency fund to the four Central Bedfordshire Community Schools identified in paragraph 2 of the report. The amount is approximately £29,050 however the amount payable will be based on actual invoices payable for 2013/14.**
- 2. That a report be brought to a future meeting of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum regarding the contractual relationship with Landlords, including peppercorn rents.**

CBSF/13/14 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

The Forum considered a report which provided an update on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). From 2013/14, the DSG has been split into three notional blocks: Early Years, High Needs and Schools.

The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations defined the Local Authority education budgets for the 2013/14 financial year only. The Regulations provided simplified local formulae, greater delegation to schools and new arrangements for funding pupils with high needs.

The Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) was set at negative 1.5% per pupil for 2013/14.

The deployment of the 2012/13 DSG had been discussed at the 24 June meeting (Minute No. CBSF/13/6 refers).

The Final DSG for 2013/14 is £178.842m. This is based on:

- Schools Block: 34,747 (fte number of pupils October 2012) multiplied by £4,144.47 per pupil
- Early Years Block: 2,241 (fte number of pupils January 2013) multiplied by £2,421 per pupil and will be updated again in April 2014 for 7/12ths of the January 2014 pupil numbers to cover the period September 2013 to March 2014.

The breakdown of DSG as detailed in the table at paragraph 17 were as follows:

Schools: £144,062m

Early Years: £11,478k

High Needs: £23,302k

Direct payments to Academies included Early Years = £282k and High Needs = £2,471k). As at September 2013 there had been 44 Academy conversions.

The Growth Fund 2013/14

The Forum noted that the Growth Fund was available for two purposes:

- Expenditure to be incurred due to a significant growth in pupil numbers as a result of the local authority's duty under section 13(1) of the 1996 Act to secure that efficient primary education and secondary education are available to meet the needs of the population of their area, but only where the authority has set criteria for determining the circumstances in which the expenditure can be incurred and the basis for calculating the amount of any such expenditure.
- Expenditure to be incurred in order to make provision for extra classes in order to comply with the School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012(b).

Paragraph 23 of the report detailed the expenditure as at 30 September 2013. The Forum agreed an additional allocation of £200k from DSG for the Growth Fund (Minute No. CBSF/13/16 refers).

RESOLVED

That the update on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) be noted.

CBSF/13/15 Revised Membership of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum

The Forum considered a paper which provided an update of the Schools Forum Membership as detailed in the School Funding Reform: Findings from the Review of 2013 to 2014 – Arrangements and Changes for 2014 to 2015. The report asked for the Forum to note the removal of the Local Authority 14 – 19 Partnership representative with a post-16 education representative.

The Forum asked for an update on the vacancies within the membership and also how the new post-16 education representative would be selected. The Assistant Director School Improvement explained that for the new post-16 education representative we would write to eligible organisations to seek membership. The clerk will continue to seek to fill the vacancy for a Maintained Middle School Head Teacher. The Team Leader, Funding Reform Team, Education Funding Agency confirmed that where there is only 1 maintained Upper School then having a Governor representative and a Head Teacher

representative was not necessary as detailed in the Schools Forum Regulations (England) 2012.

RESOLVED

That the change of membership to the Forum required by the Department for Education as detailed in their report, titled *School Funding Reform: Findings from the Review of 2013 to 2014 – Arrangements and Changes for 2014 to 2015*, for a post-16 education representative in place of the existing Local Authority 14 – 19 Partnership representative.

CBSF/13/16 School Funding Reform: Arrangements for 2014/15

The Forum considered a report which noted the update on the Funding Consultation with Schools. In addition, a proposal for the de-delegation of facilities time from School Contingency and an increase to the centrally retained Growth Fund were included.

The Senior Finance Officer provided the Forum with an overview of the Consultation process and meetings held by the Technical Sub Group during the summer to help form the consultation document. The Council also held seminars to help schools understand the changes to the funding formula and other aspects. The seminar was under attended with only 15 representatives for 11 maintained schools and 3 academies. However, the responses to the consultation showed some schools were still not fully understanding what was being proposed. The Forum were asked to help provide suggestions of what the Council could do to provide further support to the Schools.

The Department for Education (DfE) held 2 consultations in 2011:

- i. Rationale and Principles
- ii. Proposals for a fairer system

In March 2012 a third consultation was held “Next steps towards a fairer system”. The final arrangements for 2013/14 were announced on 28 June 2012.

On 4 June 2013 the final arrangements for 2014/15 were announced and the Council was required to consult with Schools and Academies on the proposed changes to the funding formulae. The changes to the funding formulae were detailed in paragraph 6 of the report.

The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2014/15 will be split into three notional blocks: Schools, Early Years and Special Needs. The per pupil unit of funding for each block would be as follows:

Schools: £4,144.47

Early Years: £3,979.80

There was a table within the report at paragraph 9 which provided the timeline for the implementation of the 2014/15 Funding Arrangements.

The Technical Sub Group had met twice to consider the funding model and the minutes of those meetings were attached at Appendix A to the report.

The Senior Finance Officer explained that for the purposes of calculating the consultation responses the strongly agree and agree responses were put together as were the strongly disagree and disagree. The EFA confirmed that our overall response rate was good and well above average.

De-Delegation

The Forum were asked to make a decision on the de-delegation of School Contingency for the maintained schools. De-delegation only applies to Primary and Secondary schools.

In 2013/14 the total de-delegation of School Contingency was £100,000 at a rate of £5.63 per pupil. In 2014/15 the total de-delegation of School Contingency is proposed to be £82,000 at the same rate of £5.63 per pupil. It was noted that any unspent DSG is reported back to the Forum and will be carried forward in accordance with the regulations operating in the new financial year.

Growth Fund

The Growth Fund is for significant pre-16 growth in schools. Funds are available to both maintained schools and academies. Where a school has elected to expand they are not eligible for the Growth Fund.

The amount for 2013/14 was set at £800K and has been insufficient and is already overspent DSG by £25k. The proposal before the Forum was to add an additional £200k making the total Fund £1m. It was confirmed that should the funds not be fully utilised the balance would be returned to DSG and passed to schools.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the responses to the proposed School Funding Consultation 2014/15 be noted.**
- 2. That the proposal to de-delegate facilities time at £5.63 per pupil for School Specific Contingency for the following phases:**
 - a. Primary Schools be agreed**
 - b. Secondary Schools be agreed****The voting was unanimous for both phases.**
- 3. That the proposal to increase the Growth Fund of £200,000 be agreed.**

CBSF/13/17 Trade Union and Professional Associations

The Forum considered a report which sought approval for the continuation of funding for facilities release time for Trade Unions and Professional Association. This would be through the de-delegation (where appropriate) for maintained Primary and Secondary Schools. Nursery and maintained Special Schools would be invoiced directly, subject to their agreement to release funds for this purpose.

The estimated annual cost would be £48,240 (£3.31 per pupil), which was calculated using the actual cost per pupil rate from 2013/14 multiplied by the estimated number of pupils for 2014/15. The Forum will be advised of the costs based on the October 2013 census when the figures become available, along with the impact of academy conversions on these numbers.

Trade Union membership numbers also affects the overall costs and cost per pupil. The figures used were based on 2013/14 arrangements and will change when the figures for 2014/15 have been provided.

The Middle School Governor suggested that the funding be allocated to schools directly and either the Head Teacher or the Governing Body would determine a reasonable amount of time to be spent.

The Head of HR Policy and Development explained that the representatives who had carried out work were working across a number of schools and the fund allows for cover arrangements to be put into place, where the teacher works. The unused fund returns to the DSG.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the de-delegation of Trade Union and Professional Associations funding, at no more than £3.31 per pupil, from the Lower / Primary Phase be agreed.**
- 2. That the de-delegation of Trade Union and Professional Associations funding, at no more than £3.31 per pupil, from the Secondary School Phase be agreed.**

The voting was unanimous for the Lower / Primary Phase representatives and 2 in favour and 1 against for the Secondary Phase.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 6.00 p.m. and concluded at 7.48 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated