

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SCHOOLS FORUM** held at Committee Room 2, Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable on Monday, 14 March 2016

### PRESENT

David Brandon-Bravo (Vice-Chairman in the Chair)

School Members:	Ali Brabner	Governor, Cranfield Academy
	Paul Burrett	Headteacher, Studham CofE Lower School and Pre-School
	Shirley-Anne Crosbie OBE	Headteacher, The Chiltern School
	Sue Howley MBE	Governor, Greenleas Lower School
	Mrs K McCamley	Headteacher, Sandye Place Middle School
	John Street	Academy Middle School Representative
	Stephen Tiktin	Governor, Beaudesert Lower School

Observer: Cllr M AG Versallion Executive Member for Children's Services

Apologies for Absence: Mrs S Anderson  
Mr P Cohen  
James Davis  
Mrs K Hayward  
Sharon Ingham  
Mrs M Morris  
Mrs S Mortimer  
Mrs A Simpkins  
Rob Watson

Officers in Attendance:	Mrs M Clampitt	Committee Services Officer
	Ms D Hill	Senior Finance Manager - Children's Services
	Miss H Redding	Assistant Director School Improvement
	Mrs S Tyler	Head of Child Poverty and Early Intervention

CBSF/15/33. **Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising**

### RESOLVED

**That the minutes of the meeting of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum held on 18 January 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.**

Matters arising:

CBSF/15/25 – The Secretary of State had approved the request for the disapplication of £1.1m of the Early Years Reserve and transfer to the Early Years Capital Fund. Confirmation was received week commencing 7 March 2016.

Also it was confirmed that the Early Years Technical Sub Group would be a stand alone function containing only Schools Forum members and relevant officers. It would meet on the same days as the Early Years Reference Group allowing for easier scheduling.

CBSF/15/32 – questionnaires had been sent out to all Schools and Governors, with a question about becoming a Schools Forum member. To date no requests to join had been received. It was requested that Schools Forum members email the clerk to the Forum with advantages of being on the Schools Forum to try and entice more members. May need to target some heads / governors.

#### **CBSF/15/34. Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Vice-Chairman in the Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending at the earlier time.

Mrs Kim McCamley, Head teacher Sandye Place Academy was welcomed to the Forum as its newest member.

It was agreed that a letter would be sent to Mr Davis thanking him for his time on the Forum and a replacement member would be sought.

The Chair had circulated, prior to the meeting, a letter from the acting Headteacher of Streetfield, Mr D Tynch. Mr Tynch was anxious to bring to the attention of the Forum the situation regarding the well-managed balance of finances at Streetfield under his leadership. He was concerned that the Forum saw all the Dunstable schools which were closing as having to be equally financially sustained. The Forum wanted to reassure Mr Tynch that they were aware of the situation and had on several occasions during previous meetings identified the sound financial management of Streetfield. The Chair agreed to write to Mr Tynch assuring him of these reassurances.

#### **CBSF/15/35. Use of Early Years Block Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) in 2016/2017**

The Forum received and considered a report which outlined how the centrally retained Early Years DSG had been used in 2015/16 and identified requirements for centrally retained Early Years Block for 2016/17. It was noted that the Early Years Block is not ring-fenced.

The Forum recalled at its 18 January 2016 meeting it had reviewed in detail the allocation of the Early Years Block. Referring to minutes CBSF/15/25, the Forum had requested a breakdown of the 2015/16 allocation of Early Years centrally retained DSG, which was set out in the first table in the report.

It was noted that the unallocated Early Years Block 2015/16, £45,309 as at 29 February 2016, would be carried forward for use in 2016/17 as set out in paragraph 14 of the DSG update report earlier on the agenda.

The Forum welcomed the proposed distribution of the Early Years Block DSG revenue allocation for 2016/17 as detailed in the last table of the report.

The Forum noted that a review of all aspects of the funding for additional support would be carried out in the summer term. It was noted that there were currently three areas supported by the funding:

- 3 or 4 year olds children have high levels of need but do not yet have an EHC Plan and may require additional support to meet their needs.
- If children with an EHC plan attend out of school provision, either in term or during the holidays support can be requested.
- Very specialist Special Needs Holiday Provision such as Skools out, SNOOSC and Mencap provide high quality, highly staffed provide for children with considerable extra needs.

Additional discussion of this item is referred to at Minute CBSF/15/37.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the use of the centrally retained Early Years Block in 2015/16 to support Early Years be approved.**
- 2. That any unallocated Early Years Block be carried forward into a 2016/17 contingency, and allocated in-year to fund early years provision in line with the provisions of the Early Years Block.**
- 3. That the allocation of Early Years Block for 2016/17 be approved.**

The Forum voted unanimously for all three recommendations.

### **CBSF/15/36. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Update and LA proposed amendments to Central Bedfordshire's Scheme for Financing Schools**

The Forum received a report which provided an update on the 2015/16 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and Local Authority (LA) proposed amendments to Central Bedfordshire's Scheme for Financing Schools. In addition the Forum was asked to note the 2016/17 Individual School Budget and Capital Allocations.

From 2013/14, the DSG would be split into three notional blocks: Early Years, High Needs and Schools.

The Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) was set at negative 1.5% per pupil for 2015/16.

It was noted that the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) is no longer required to complete two statements annually instead the DfE have now requested one annual outturn statement, confirming that the DSG received by the Authority was fully deployed in support of the school budgets in accordance with the conditions of the School Regulations. In addition, it will also include a Non Maintained Special School (NMSS) statement and Fraud cases reported in school statement.

The DSG allocation for 2015/16 is £192.114m.

The **Schools Block** is calculated using the school block unit of funding (SBUF). For 2015/16 the SBUF is £4,289.09 (after the CRC deduction of £7.51) an increase of £144.62 from 2014/15. There has been an increase of 718 pupils to 35,866 based on the October 2014 census data.

The DfE has transferred £353k for Central Bedfordshire University Technical College (UTC) for the 2015/16 formula base multiplied by the October census data uplifted by the Minimum Funding Level (MFL) increase.

The **High Needs Block** for 2014/15 has been carried forward plus:

- Increase in places for academic year 2015/16
- Additional top-up of £47m (Nationally) distributed based on the 2 – 19 aged population in each LA. For CBC this is £233k in 2015/16.

The **Early Years Block** for 2015/16 is comprised of 3 elements:

- Three and four year old entitlement - £3,979.80 (same as 2014/15 rate) multiplied by the January 2014 census for the provisional allocation. This is updated for January 2015 pupil numbers.
- Early years pupil premium (EYPP) – the hourly rate of 53p per child per hour (for each eligible child that takes up the full 570 hours with them).
- Funding for disadvantaged two year olds – CBC allocation is £1.644m. This is allocated based on the number of eligible participating children.

Paragraph 14 of the report provided a table illustrating the updated DSG revenue allocation for 2015/16.

Paragraph 18 of the report provided a list of the licences, including four new contracts, which are centrally paid.

The Forum noted the breakdowns of the distribution of the DSG, in paragraph 20 and the centrally retained DSG in paragraph 22.

### **2015/16 Growth Fund**

The Growth Fund is for significant pre-16 growth in schools where the Council has commissioned new school places. 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 Fund 2015/16 included an adjustment of £248k which was for payments made to Academies.

### **2016/17 Growth Fund**

The amount for 2016/17 was proposed to be set at £2m. The Forum approved this amount at their meeting on 18 January 2016 (Minute CBSF/15/27 refers).

### **2016/17 Individual Schools Budget (Schools Block)**

The Forum agreed at their meeting held on 18 January 2016 for the LA to apply to the Secretary of State (SoS) for a disapplication of The Schools and Early Years Finance Regulation to allow an increase of £52,514 in the annual amount held centrally for the Schools Admission Team. The SoS refused because as much money as possible was to be given to schools rather than be held centrally.

Paragraph 30 detailed the final distribution of the DSG to Individual Schools.

The de-delegation of £31 had been refused by the Forum at their meeting held on 18 January 2016. The funding would now be found from Council reserves.

### **DfE Capital Allocations**

There have been no changes to the Capital Allocations.

### **Amendments to the Scheme for Financing Schools**

Schools had raised questions over the responsibilities for Repairs and Maintenance. The LA proposed amending the Scheme to provide greater clarity without altering any responsibilities. The LA had to consult with schools and received 11 responses (13% of schools) – 9 lower schools and 2 upper schools. One objection was raised by a lower school indicating that small lower schools would be discriminated against. The Forum supported the changes.

A copy of the revised Section 12 – Responsibilities for Repairs and Maintenance with tracked changes is attached to the minutes for reference.

### **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the update on the 2015/16 DSG Allocation be noted.**

2. That the update on the 2015/16 Growth Fund be noted.
3. That the 2016/17 Individual School Budget be noted.
4. That the updated DfE Capital Allocations 2016/17 be noted.
5. That the LA proposed amendments to the Central Bedfordshire's Scheme for Financing Schools be approved.

The voting was unanimous for recommendation 5.

#### CBSF/15/37. Use of centrally retained Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) in 2015/2016

The Forum received a report which outlined how the centrally retained DSG had been used in 2015/16 and identified required use of centrally retained High Needs Block for 2016/17. The Assistant Director, School Improvement highlighted the changes between the 2015/16 budget and the 2016/17 expected spend.

Para.	Area	Changes
2 - 5	Early Years SEND Advisory Teacher	Increase in budget to £200k in 2016/17, following the recruitment of a second full time post holder.
6 – 7	Support for high needs 3 and 4 year olds in early years settings	Increase in budget to £300k in 2016/17, and a review of the spending by Early Years supporting inclusion, thus enabling a streamlining of the processes into 1.
8	Therapies	Reduce the budget to £50k for 2016/17, following a review of SALT services which should result in a similar approach to reviewing OT and Physio contracts.
9 – 12	Statements / EHC plans	The budget to be £500k for 2016/17 and monies transferred from the High Needs Contingency along with any additional top ups due to demand.
14	Special School Outreach and High Cost pupils	Increase in budget to £600k in 2016/17 due to the complex needs of some of the pupils being maintained in our special schools.
16	Additional Pupil Support	Increase in budget to £270k in 2016/17 due to an increase in pupils requiring this support.

17 - 19	High Needs Post 16	Likely to have an increase in budget due to provision lasting until 25.
21 – 23	Virtual School management and delivery	Increase in budget to £283,210 in 2016/17 following a restructure and recruitment of an additional Personal Advisor to help with support for transitioning students.
25 – 27	DSG contributions to Central Overheads	A carry forward of £484,852 in High Needs Block Contingency to be transferred to SEND Capital to support increasing demand for places in specialist SEND provision.

The Forum considered the information relating to the current processes being used to identify and support children in Early Years and ensuring that there was consistency and that none are slipping through the gaps when transferring to schools. The Forum were concerned that there were two teams calling on different pots of monies for the same purpose. It was agreed that having a central area for compiling the information and ensuring consistency and that the correct support is delivered as a priority. The Forum supported the review of current processes within the Early Years Block and the High Needs Block and given the changes in the ring-fencing of blocks agreed it was wise to move all inclusion related funding at this point to the High Needs Block (£128k budget provision).

The Technical Sub group were thanked for their time in reviewing the budget spends and projections for the coming year.

### **RESOLVED**

- 1. That how the centrally retained High Needs Block DSG has been used in 2015/16 to support high needs provision be noted.**
- 2. That any unallocated High Needs Block DSG is carried forward into 2016/17 and allocated to the rolling Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Capital Programme to support the delivery of SEND Vision (currently under review) and its priorities be agreed.**
- 3. That the allocation of the High Needs Block DSG for 2016/17 be noted with amendments to figures in paragraph 28 of the report to those in the table above.**
- 4. That any unallocated High Needs Block in 2016/17 be allocated to High Needs Contingency to be allocated following completion of review of Top Ups, Contracts and Outreach be agreed.**

- 5. That the movement of £128k from Early Years Block to High Needs Block to support the inclusion of the Early Years and children with High Needs in Early Years settings be agreed.**

**All voting was unanimously in support of the proposals.**

**CBSF/15/38. School Contingency Budget**

The Forum considered a report which provided an updated on the use of the Schools Contingency Budgets for 2015/16. It was noted that the Dedicated Schools Grant since 2013/14 had been split into three notional blocks: Schools, High Needs and Early Years and each holds its own contingency budget.

**Schools Contingency**

The Forum noted that £500k had been ringfenced for the three schools which were closing through applying to the Secretary of State to disapply the regulations.

The balance, as at 29 February 2016, of £776,127 (which contains the £500,000 ringfenced) is split between de-delegated ring fenced funding for maintained schools only of £671,572 and £104,555 for all schools.

**High Needs Contingency**

The balance, as at 29 February 2016, of £484,852.

**Early Years Contingency**

The Secretary of State had approved, on 1 March 2016, the transfer of £500k to Capital Projects.

The balance, as at 29 February 2016, of £1,283,981.

**RESOLVED**

**that the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Contingency spend to 29 February 2016 be noted.**

**CBSF/15/39. Schools Forum Budget**

The Forum received and considered a report which provided an update on the Schools Forum Budget for 2015/16.

The Senior Finance Officer confirmed that as at 29 February 2016, the remaining balance for the year was £5,253 of which £3,316 had been carried forward from 2014/15. It was noted that any unspent budget would be carried forward to the next year. It was noted that the budget for 2015/16 was £3,000 with the continued membership of F40.

Members were requested to send emails to the Clerk highlighting reasons why being a Schools Forum member is beneficial. There will be an article put into Central Essentials and members are requested to consider if they know anyone who may be interested in joining..

The Senior Finance Officer requested that part of the Schools Forum Budget be used to pay for four people (2 officers and 2 members) to attend a conference on the national formula. The Forum agreed for the funds to be used for this purpose. The Officers attending were: Dawn Hill and Helen Redding and the members were: David Brandon-Bravo and Sue Howley MBE.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the Schools Forum spend to 29 February 2016 be noted.**
- 2. That the attendance fee for four people to attend the National Funding Formula Conference be paid for from the Schools Forum Budget.**

#### **CBSF/15/40. School Finance Support Update (Budget, AnyComms, Support and Team changes)**

The Senior Finance Officer advised the Schools Forum that there would be a change in the delivery of support services to schools. The information would be announced at a Schools Finance Seminar on 15 March 2016.

The Schools had received their budgets electronically which had saved large quantities of paper being printed, reviewed and posted to all schools. It was noted that the Council had been reviewing the way it delivered its support services to schools.

The following revisions to how services are delivered have been made:

- There will no longer be a specific finance officer assigned to an individual school, rather a pool of officers will be able to provide support
- There will be one phone number which will rotate around the finance team
- Documents will be circulated electronically
- There will be a central email where all correspondence will be sent and dealt with.

**CBSF/15/41. Consultation ESG and DSG 16/17 (NAHT fair funding document, F40)**

The Senior Finance Officer provided the Forum with an initial overview of the National Funding Formula Consultation document. A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

The Forum agreed with Officers that a special meeting of the Forum should be called to consider the implications of the Consultation and provide a response from the Forum. It was understood that individual schools could provide their own response. The meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 12 April at 5.00pm.

There would be further discussions with the Technical Sub Group and the Forum as a whole once the detailed formula factors have been announced by the Department for Education.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 5.00 p.m. and concluded at 7.15 p.m.)

Chairman .....

Dated .....