

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SCHOOLS FORUM** held at Room 14, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Monday, 13 June 2016

PRESENT

David Brandon-Bravo (Chairman)
Sue Howley MBE (Vice-Chairman)

School Members:	Paul Burrett	Headteacher, Studham CofE Lower School and Pre-School
	Shirley-Anne Crosbie OBE	Headteacher, The Chiltern School
	Karen Hayward	Headteacher, Sandy Upper School
	Sharon Ingham	Headteacher, Hadrian Academy
	Kim McCamley	Headteacher, Sandye Place Middle School
	John Street	Academy Middle School Representative
	Stephen Tiktin	Governor, Beaudesert Lower School

Apologies for Absence: Ali Brabner
Cllr S Dixon
Mr M Foster
Mrs M Morris
Mrs S Mortimer
Anne 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

CBSF/16/1. **Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2016/17**

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

David Brandon-Bravo was the only candidate nominated and seconded. He was therefore appointed Chairman.

Sue Howley MBE was the only candidate nominated and seconded. She was therefore appointed Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED

- 1. that David Brandon-Bravo be elected Chairman of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum 2016/17.**
- 2. that Sue Howley MBE be elected Vice-Chairman of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum 2016/17.**

CBSF/16/2. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising**RESOLVED**

that the minutes of the meeting of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum held on 14 March 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of Mrs K Hayward as being present at the meeting.

Under matters arising of the meeting held on 14 March 2016, the Forum had requested that a Technical Sub Group be formed for the Early Years Block and that the meetings take place after the Early Years Reference Group, as the membership is different.

The Terms of Reference for the Early Years Technical Sub Group must meet the Schools Forum regulations.

It was recommended that there be specific training provided for parts of the Early Years Funding to ensure clarity. Early Years Funding covers PVI's, nurseries, child minders, 2 yr funding and 3 yr funding.

The Forum noted the following regarding page 3 – 3rd bullet point – holiday provision:

1. SNOOSC – has no early years provision – split inclusion and core funding, lack of transparency and cannot be funded by DSG
2. Autism Beds – going to a panel not appropriate to be funded from DSG
3. Childcare provision – paper from Chair of Childcare panel to Schools Forum.

The Schools Forum has requested that a paper be brought to the September meeting covering the following:

1. What is funded from Early Years Block
2. What is funded in Early Years from High Needs Block
3. What other funding is used for Early Years or Early Help
4. Application for the Growth Fund – how do you apply
5. Extended Schools

Page 5 – The request to the Secretary of State for the additional funding for closing schools which was refused by the Schools Forum, has been found by the Council.

Page 7 – A concern was raised by Forum members, who sit on the Early Years Reference Group, relating to comments made by an Officer over the movement of funding from the Early Years Block to the High Needs Block prior to the freezing of money between Blocks at an Early Years Reference Group meeting. The Forum felt it was inappropriate for Officers to ask Schools Forum members about the validity of decisions taken at a formal quorate meeting whilst attending another meeting with external attendees.

Page 9 – NFFC – 4 attended – the conference was a waste of time. The first stage of the consultation on the national formula has been concluded but there is no date available for the second stage of the consultation. It was agreed that a refund for the cost of sending the delegates would be requested.

CBSF/16/3. School Finance Update

The Forum considered a report which provided an update on the 2015/16 Schools out-turn position, 2016/17 Risk Register, note the revised risk criteria and to discuss the proposal to reinstate the balance control mechanism for schools holding excessive uncommitted balances.

Central Bedfordshire had 87 maintained schools and 51 Academies as at 31 March 2016 with a delegated budget of £82.287m. Paragraph 10 of the report provides a breakdown of the maintained schools balances.

Approved licensed deficits were given to 1 nursery school, 3 lower schools and 1 middle school for 2015/16. 1 lower school and 1 middle school closed 2015/16 with licensed deficits in uncommitted revenue balances.

The Local Authority (LA) sought the views of the Schools Forum regarding the proposal to reinstate the clawback mechanism. The Forum agreed in principle to a consultation being carried out. The Forum also sought assurance that the consultation would clarify how the funds would be identified, contingency of set amount and possible clawback of amounts above and a time limit on the spending of the additional amounts. It was agreed that a detailed consultation framework would be reviewed by the Schools Forum prior to being sent to schools.

The categorisation of schools regarding risk was carried out in March 2016. There were two additional criteria introduced for Schools Causing Concern and Age Range Changes. The ratings were as followed:

No Rating: 50 schools
Green: 16 schools
Amber: 14 schools
Red: 7 schools

The Forum noted that red and amber schools will receive a visit from the School Finance Adviser during the Autumn Term. All schools will be sent a letter advising of their RAG category and the use of criteria following the School Forum update.

Appendix A to the report detailed the School 2015/16 Revenue and Capital Balances.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Finance update for Schools be noted.**

2. **That revised risk criteria be noted.**
3. **That the consultation with schools on an amendment to the Scheme of Financing Schools to reinstate the balance control mechanism be agreed.**

CBSF/16/4. **Dedicated School Grant (DSG) Update and 2016/17 Funding Allocation**

The Forum received a report which provided an update on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and Growth Fund outturn for 2015/16 and 2016/17 DSG allocation.

From 2013/14, the DSG would be split into three notional blocks: Early Year, 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.

DSG Outturn 2015/16

The Schools Block is based on a per pupil unit of funding of £4,289.09 multiplied by 35,866 pupils as reported on the October 2014 census.

The Early Years Block is based on a unit of funding of £3,979.80 multiplied by 2,652 full time equivalent number of pupils as reported on the January 2014 census. In April 2016, the block was updated for 7/12ths of the January 2014 pupil numbers to cover the period September 2014 to March 2015.

The High Needs Block is a single block of high needs pupils/students age 0 – 24. For 2015/16 the block is split into two parts, pre-16 and post-16 (ages 16 – 24). The Forum noted that since August 2013, the post-16 funding has combined three previous budgets: SEN block grant, specialist placements funding and the cost of high needs student in Further Education (FE).

The distribution of the 2015/16 DSG based on the 51 Academy conversions at March 2016 was £192,114 (£89,800 went to Academies ISB). Direct payments to Academies included Early Years = £755k and High Needs = £3.482k. Paragraph 13 of the report provided a breakdown of the centrally retained DSG of £20.027m

A technical sub group has been set up to deal with High Needs Funding. A technical sub group is being set up to deal with Early Years Funding.

There is a carry forward to 2016/17 of £3.109m. The table in paragraph 12 of the report details the underspends. The underspend has been used in part to increase the Schools' individual budget for 2016/17 by £105k from School Contingency and a transfer to capital for Specialist Provisions of £784k from SEN Contingency.

Growth Fund Outturn 2015/16

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 2015/16 was set at £2m and has been underspent by £241,830. The Forum noted that any unspent from 2015/16 will be used for the same purpose in 2016/17. An adjustment is due from the EFA of £18k in respect of a Growth Fund payment to Academies. The adjustment will be included in the 2016/17 Growth Fund

DSG Budget Allocation 2016/17

The Forum noted that on 31 March 2016, the DfE announced the DSG for 2016/17 and that it would remain split into three notional blocks: school, high needs and early years.

The final DSG for 2016/17 is £195,576m. This is based on:

- Schools Block: £157.412m – which is based on the SBUF published in July 2015. For CBC the SBUF is £4,294.39 an increase of £5.30 from 2015/16 to take into account the non-recoupment academy now incorporated into SBUF for 2016/17. In addition, pupil numbers had increased by 777 to 36,643, based on October 2015 census.
- High Needs Block: £25,795m – which is based on the 2015/16 carry forward plus an additional top-up of £47m distributed based on the 2-19 aged population in each Local Authority.
- Early Years: £12,369m – which is based on the same rate as in 2015/16 £3,979.80 for three to four year olds. This includes the early year pupil premium (eypp) £300 per year per eligible pupil equating to £171k and funding for disadvantaged two year olds at an hourly rate of £5.03.

Paragraph 28 of the report provided a breakdown of the indicative DSG Revenue allocation of £195.576m for 2016/17.

Paragraph 31 provided a list of the single national licence managed by the Department for Education for all state-funded schools in England. The Forum noted that four new licenses had been added. It is estimated that this will cost be £245k.

Paragraph 33 provided a breakdown of the centrally retained DSG of £19.46m for 2016/17.

The Forum were asked to consider the proposal, within paragraph 37, for a new allocation process for the Growth Fund 2016/17. The Forum agreed that “the proposal to make provisional payments to schools, based on a commitment to fund to an upper limit. Actual costs and supporting evidence will be required and an adjustment will be made to the provisional allocation. This will not apply to pupil led funding.”

The Forum noted that the first stage of the Schools and High Needs National Funding Consultation, which had been launched on 7 March 2016. The Forum met on the 12 April 2016 and agreed a formal response to the consultation which was submitted to the DfE. The second consultation will commence following the DfE’s consideration of all responses.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the 2015/16 DSG Outturn be noted.**
- 2. That the 2015/16 Growth Fund Outturn be noted.**
- 3. That the update on the 2016/17 DSG allocations be noted.**
- 4. That the procedural changes to the Growth Fund allocations be agreed.**
- 5. That the update on the National Funding Consultation be noted.**

CBSF/16/5. Dedicated School Grant Contingency Budgets

The Forum considered a report which provided an update on the use of the Schools Contingency Budget 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 ring-fenced for the three schools which were closing through applying for the Secretary of State to disapply the regulations.

The balance, as at 31 May 2016, of £655,962 (which contains the £500,000 ring-fenced) 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 31 May 2016, of £1,385,726.

Early Years Contingency

The balance, as at 31 May 2016, of £880,987.

RESOLVED

that the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Contingency spend to 31 May 2016 be noted.

CBSF/16/6. **School 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 31 May 2016, the remaining balance for the year was £5,788 of which £5,253 had been carried forward from 2015/16. It was noted that any unspent budget would be carried forward to the next year. It was noted that the budget for 2016/17 was £3,000 with the continued membership of F40.

The Forum agreed that a refund would be requested for the four people (2 officers and 2 members) who attended the conference on the national formula. The attendees were very disappointed with the information covered and the change of speakers.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Schools Forum spend to 31 May 2016 be noted.**
- 2. That a refund be requested from the conference on the national formula.**

The Forum noted that the Clerk would be changing from the next meeting. The Forum thanked the existing clerk for her work with the Forum.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 6.00 p.m. and concluded at 7.40 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated