

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SCHOOLS FORUM** held at Room 15, Priory House, Chicksands on Monday, 29 January 2018

PRESENT

Miss K Hayward (Chairman)
Mrs S Howley MBE (Vice-Chairman)

School Members:	Mr D Brandon-Bravo	Headteacher
	Mr P Burrett	Headteacher
	Mr O Button	Principal, Queensbury Academy
	Mr P Cohen	Executive Headteacher
	Mrs L Davies	Headteacher
	Mrs L Leonard	Head of School
	Ms A Moyle	School Business Manager
	Mr J Street	Academy Middle School Representative
	Mr S Tiktin	Governor, Beaudesert Lower School
Non-School Members:	Mr M Foster	Trade Union representative
Observer: Cllrs	S Dixon	Executive Member for Education and Skills
	K Ferguson	Chairman of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Apologies for Absence:	Mrs A Brabner	
Officers in Attendance:	Mr P Ball	Senior Finance Manager, Children's Services
	Ms S Bellamy	Schools Finance Manager
	Ms S Griffin	Committee Services Officer
	Mrs S Harrison	Director of Children's Services
	Ms D Hill	Head of Financial Support
	Mr G Jones	Deputy Director Safeguarding and Early Help
	Mr L Jones	Assistant Director for Education and Transformation
	Ms F Nnanyere	Interim Head of Service
	Mrs S Tyler	Head of Child Poverty and Early Intervention
	Mr D Waller	Policy & Implementation Manager, Human Resources
	Mr V Wan	Senior Education Officer (Planning)

CBSF/17/5. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum held on the 14 December 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

Mr P Cohen to be added to the attendance.

Mrs H Harrison, Director of Children's Services left the meeting at 2.15pm to be added.

CBSF/17/3 National Funding Formula consultation

Insert 'In light of the significance of the funding decision for schools and the apologies received by some members, the Chairman of the Forum and Director of Children's Services agreed subsequent to the meeting, that votes from those members who were unable to be present should be sought and counted alongside those who were present.

These three votes were then counted alongside the nine votes that were given during the meeting on the 14 December 2017.

The resolution was subsequently amended as follows:

6 members voted for approval

6 voted against

0 abstained'

The email sent to the 3 members about voting is to be attached to the minutes.

CBSF/17/6. Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman had no announcements or matters of communication.

CBSF/17/7. Schools Forum powers and responsibilities

RESOLVED

that the Schools Forum powers and responsibilities summary document updated in September 2017 be added to the agenda as a standing item.

CBSF/17/8. Schools Forum and Technical Sub-group Membership including Election of Members of the Schools Forum and Sub Groups

The Schools Forum considered a report setting out a review of the membership of the Forum, its current sub-groups and their purpose and

remit, members' term of office and any vacancies. In addition the report provided an overview of the Constitution and Terms of Reference and set out the recommendations for the review.

[15.16 Mr D Brando-Bravo joined the meeting]

Points and comments included:

- The Deputy Director for Education and Transformation advised that the current membership, Terms of Reference and Constitution of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum had been updated to reflect the changes made to the Operational and Good Practice Guide issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).
- The Operational guidance precluded multiple representation by one person on the Forum i.e. Academy Representative or Special Academy Representative.
- Concern was expressed that the Operational guidance did not include representation from middle schools on the Schools Forum as some areas of Central Bedfordshire operated a 3 tier education system.
- It was explained that that the DfE guidance does not recognise lower, middle and upper schools, but that middle schools were deemed secondary in the terms of reference and this could be specified.
- A discussion was held regarding the need to clarify the length of time Schools Forum members had served to understand future elections. Following the discussion, it was ascertained that some members had not been subject to formal election.
- It was therefore agreed that a formal election process needed to be put in place as current members of the Schools Forum had been elected by different processes.

[15.30 – the Director of Children's Services and Deputy Director Safeguarding and Early Help joined the meeting]

RESOLVED

- 1. that further consideration be given to the revised constitution and terms of reference for members, current vacancies and the proposed structure and elections at the next meeting of the Schools Forum.**
- 2. that evidence of election of membership and term of office be sent to the Committee Services Officer.**
- 3. that the following members of the Schools Forum would meet to determine the process for the election of members to the Forum, to undertake a review of the balance of representation of Forum members and the Constitution and Terms of Reference, including clarification of voting powers and to identify an effective mechanism for the dissemination of information from Schools Forum.**

- **Mrs S Howley**
- **Mr P Burrett**
- **Mr D Brandon-Bravo**
- **Mr J Street**

4. **that an update on the outcome of the review by the working party be given at the March meeting of the Forum.**

CBSF/17/9. De delegated Facilities Time

The Schools Forum considered a report which set out the continuation for Facilities Release Time for Trade Unions and Professional Associations.

Points and comments included:

- The cost per pupil was calculated on annual basis. The starting point of the calculations was in line with the maximum amount of £3.31 as agreed by Members of the Schools Forum.
- The issue of the re-imburement method for the NASWUT and NUT (indicated by the zeros in the table on page 9 of the report) had now been resolved.
- Discussions were taking place about a similar 'pooled' scheme for Academies which would be separate to the scheme for maintained schools.
- The response to the proposed scheme had been mixed. A report was being produced for the Director of Children's Services which set out the viability of the scheme.
- The Trade Union Representative advised that the discontinuation of the funding for facilities release time would have an impact on the ability of local trade union representatives to attend statutory consultations at schools and individual representations as there would be a reliance on regional officers which could be difficult to arrange

RESOLVED

1. **that the de-delegation of funding from the Lower/Primary School Phase for the use of Trade Union facilities time, £2.48 per pupil be agreed.**
2. **that the de-delegation of funding from the Secondary School Phase (Middle & Upper) for the use of Trade Union facilities time, £2.48 per pupil be agreed.**
3. **that the allocation of per pupil funding cost of Trade Union facilities time equally across all phases be continued.**

CBSF/17/10. Growth Fund update

Members of the Forum received a report which gave an update on the pilot year for the new payment process and sought approval for the 2018/19 payment profiles for school places commissioned by the Council.

Points and comments included:

- The new model had been implemented following Schools Forum agreement in July 2017 of the standardisation of a payment package for 2017/18.
- At request of the Schools Forum Technical Sub-Group, feedback on the new model had been sought from schools and academies in the format of a questionnaire.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the successful implementation of the first year of the standardised payment for the growth fund be noted and the payment process for subsequent years be approved.**
- 2. that the payment awards for the eligible recipients of the growth fund for 2018/19 financial year be approved.**
- 3. that the top slice of the Schools Block of £2m for the Growth Fund for payment to school expansions commissioned by the local authority be approved.**

CBSF/17/11. Early Years Block update

The Schools Forum considered a report on the Early Years Block allocation for 2018/19.

Points and comments included:

- It was felt that the risks outlined in the report understated the current financial position of the Early Years Block.
- Paragraph 8 of the reported stated that whilst £300k was centrally retained, it was distributed to settings and schools to support the inclusion of 3 & 4 year old children. There were now 2/3/4 year olds in schools who were not receiving money from the High Needs Block.
- The Head of Early Intervention/Prevention advised the Forum that discussions had taken place about the possibility of equalising the base rate in line with the Early Years National Funding Formula. This had been agreed in principle but finances did not allow this option to be taken forward.
- The Head of Early Intervention/Prevention explained that the £300,000 was inclusion money for 3 and 4 year olds undertaking education who would not be able to attend the setting without this support.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the allocation of the Early Years Block for 2018/19 be noted.**
- 2. that the retention centrally for 2018/19; Early Years SEND Advisory Team (formerly funded through High Needs Block) £225K and Early Years Inclusion Funding £300K be approved.**
- 3. that an update on the Early Years Block be given at the June meeting of the Forum.**

CBSF/17/12. **Early Years SEND linked funding strands****NOTED**

the verbal update on the Early Years SEND linked funding strands.

CBSF/17/13. **Dedicated School Grant update**

The Schools Forum considered a report on the 2017/18 DSG and funding arrangements for 2018/19.

Points and comments included:

- Paragraph 14 of the report included a breakdown of the distribution of 2017/18 DGS and latest recoupment costs based on Academy conversions as requested by members of the Forum.
- The deadline for local authorities to submit the final APT for 2018/19 was 19 January 2018. Approval of the submission was still awaited. The AWPU figure consulted on had increased slightly; however it should be recognised that if schools characteristics and pupil numbers changed, this would impact the numbers provided in the model.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the update to the 2017/18 DSG and funding arrangements for 2018/19 be noted.**
- 2. that the retention centrally for 2018/19; Admissions £313,004, School forum servicing £3,000 and a contribution to the responsibilities that the LA holds for all schools £612,216 be approved.**

CBSF/17/14. **High Needs Block spend and proposed 2018/19 budget**

The Forum considered a report setting out the current projected spend against budget for the current financial year for the High Needs Block. The

report also set out key next steps to seek to mitigate potential pressures for the financial year 2018/19.

Points and comments included:

- This report gave an overview of areas where the investment would need to make an impact on current spend as well as some initial proposals for where the investment could be targeted.
- The report suggested that given the pressure in the block, it may be advisable to invest half of the sum immediately and retain half of the sum as contingency to judge the impact of the investment proposals. If these were successful, the remaining funding could be used for similar or additional early intervention activities.
- Some members felt this was in direct contrast to the advice given by the Director of Children Services at the December meeting of the Forum that the proposed transfer of 0.5% would be ring-fenced to support early intervention and that any unspent funding would be brought back to Schools Forum to decide on reallocation and the recommendation Members of the Forum voted on.
- The Deputy Director Transformation & Education advised that this was not the intention but given the changes required, it may be sensible to judge the impact of some initial investment proposals and then allocate further funds once this was known.
- The Deputy Director also explained that as agreed with the Schools Forum, a meeting had been set up in February with a number of schools, the Interim Head of SEND and the Head of the Virtual School to look at the proposals to reduce the pressure on the High Needs Budget with an update to be presented at the March meeting.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the update on the High Needs block spend for the financial year 2017/18 and the proposed actions to be taken to mitigate future pressures be noted.**
- 2. that an update on the High Needs Block 2018/19 indicative spend and investment proposals be given at the March meeting of the Forum.**

CBSF/17/15. Dedicated School Grant Contingency Budgets

The Schools Forum considered a report setting out the use of the School Contingency Budget for the financial year 2017/18.

NOTED

the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Contingency spend for the financial year 2017/18.

CBSF/17/16. School Forum budget

The Schools Forum considered a report setting out the use of the Schools Forum Budget for 2017/18

NOTED

The School Forum spend to 31 December 2017.

CBSF/17/17. Work Programme

The Forum considered its Work Programme.

RESOLVED

That the following items be added to the Work Programme for Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum:

- **High Needs Block 2018/19 budget and investment proposal – March 2018**
- **Surplus Balances – schools update – March 2018**
- **Early Years Block update – June 2018**

CBSF/17/18. Date of the Next Meeting

Monday 12 March 2018.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 3.00 p.m. and concluded at 4.45 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated