

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SCHOOLS FORUM** held at Room 14, Priory House, Chicksands on Monday, 1 October 2018

### PRESENT

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

School Members:	Mr O Button	Principal, Queensbury Academy
	Mr P Cohen	Executive Headteacher
	Mrs L Davies	Headteacher
	Mr M Howe	Governor
	Mrs L Leonard	Head of School
	Ms A Moyle	School Business Manager
	Mrs J New	Head Teacher
	Mr D Penfold	Academy Governor
	Mr J Selmes	Academy Special School Head Teacher
	Mrs S Teague	Executive Head Teacher
	Mr S Tikin	Governor, Beadesert Lower School
	Mrs S Wells	School Governor
Non-School Members:	Cllr K Ferguson	Chairman of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Apologies for Absence:	Mrs A Brabner	
	Mr P Burrett	
	Mr M Foster	
	Mrs S Harrison	
Officers in Attendance:	Mr P Ball	Senior Finance Manager, Children's Services
	Ms L Bartos	Head of Service for SEND
	Mr P Fraser	Assistant Director Education
	Ms S Griffin	Committee Services Officer
	Mr C Kiernan	Interim Head of School Improvement
	Mrs S Tyler	Assistant Director Business and Supporting Services

CBSF/18/1. **Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising**

### RESOLVED

**that the minutes of the meeting of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum held on 11 June 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:**

that Mr J Hughes be added to the meeting attendance.

## **Matters Arising/Actions from Schools Forum**

CBSF/18/14 - Academy Accounts

### **RESOLVED**

- 1. that the Academy representatives on the Schools Forum ask their colleagues to seek permission to make particular financial information available so it can be considered by the Schools Forum.**
- 2. that the financial information sought from Academies include revenue, capital balance and yearly outturn.**
- 3. that the information acquired be submitted to the Schools Forum in January 2019.**

CBSF/18/15 - F40 Conference

### **RESOLVED**

- 1. that the link to the f40 conference on the National Funding Formula held in March 2018 be recirculated to Schools Forum members.**
- 2. that a report on the contextual information relating to the National Funding Formula raised at the f40 conference be submitted to the January meeting of the Forum.**

## **CBSF/18/2. Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman had no announcements or matters of communication.

## **CBSF/18/3. Schools Forum powers and responsibilities**

### **NOTED**

**the Schools Forum powers and responsibilities summary document issued by the Education Funding Agency in September 2018.**

## **CBSF/18/4. Sub-Groups of Schools Forum**

The Forum received an update on any meetings of its Sub-Groups.

Points and comments included:

- Early Years – the Reference Group had met on 25 September 2018. The main item discussed was a draft of the Early Years Funding 2019/2020 report attached at item 7 of the agenda.

- High Needs – the Technical Sub Group had met on the 3 July and 19 September 2018. Items discussed included the single value top up report and a draft of the High needs update report.
- Growth Fund – there had been no meetings.
- School Block – there had been no meetings.

#### CBSF/18/5. **Special School Banding (Single Value Top Up)**

The Schools Forum considered a report on the proposed changes to the top-up element of the funding formula for Central Bedfordshire to Special Schools.

Points and comments included:

1. The report only included one model from which it appeared that Academy Special Schools would be penalised and local authority schools would gain. The Assistant Director Children's Services Business and Supporting Services explained that discussions had previously taken place around other models which had been shared with Special School Headteachers following which the model shown in the report had been produced.
2. Some academies had a shortfall in funding of pupil places before this report is even taken into consideration.
3. In response to concerns raised that the SVT would not be reviewed for at least two years unless changes were made to the funding levels for mainstream schools, the Head of SEND explained that there was the possibility of evaluating whether the formula was still at an acceptable level.
4. The figures used in the modelling had been based on this year's figures. There was a suggestion made that it would be more appropriate to look the historic figures for previous years and take an average.
5. Concern was expressed that the proposed change to the top-up element of the funding formula and change from individual pupil bands funded at different rates to a Single Value Top-up (SVT) would not meet the needs of the pupils and that funding had been received from historic top-ups.
6. In response to the question raised about the rationale for the inequity in the figures between local authority schools and Academies shown in the report, the Assistant Director Children's Services Business and Supporting Services explained that modelling had taken place based on the amount per school paid in banding top-ups divided by the number of children thereby giving an average. This meant that there would be a different single value within each school.

7. In response to the question raised about the needs of the children being taken into account as part of the modelling, the Head of SEND explained that some special schools are receiving funding of 10k but no top up and that there would be winners and losers within funding calculations.
8. There was discussion as to whether the modelling should take into account pupils coming into schools in Central Bedfordshire from out of county and the associated funding.
9. There was the wider issue to be considered of ensuring the provision of support for some of the most complex children in each of the four Special Schools.

### **RESOLVED**

- 1. that an SVT approach for the financial year 2019/20 be implemented at the values shown in table 1 of the report.**
- 2. that the SVT for each special school would not be reviewed for at least two years unless changes were made to the funding levels of mainstream schools.**
- 3. that the implementation of the SVT funding of special provision be carried out in two phase with Phase 1 being specifically for Special Schools. Phase 2 would be structured around a full revision of SEN provision and the application of the SVT model to include special facilities.**

### **CBSF/18/6. Early Years Funding 2019/20**

The Schools Forum considered a report which provided an update on the Early Years Funding for 2019/20 and outlined proposals for a consultation consultation exercise to be carried out with the entire Early Years Sector.

Points and comments included:

1. The continuation of top up funding/support for nursery schools had yet to be confirmed by Government.
2. The scheme for 30 hours free childcare had been in place in some areas of the country for less than a year which did not allow time for nursery providers to reflect on how the scheme affected their budgets.
3. The report outlined significant financial and risk implications for Maintained nursery schools.

4. Concern was expressed about the lump sum to the two Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS) of £100,000 each included in the current formula.
5. Based on previous knowledge and the amount the local authority must pass on to the sector, a query was raised as to how the pass through rate compared to previous years? Members of the Forum were advised that pass through rates are within the rules of the national early years formula.

#### **NOTED**

- 1. the modelled options as outlined in the report.**

#### **RESOLVED**

- 2. that a 30-day consultation on the Extra Option be carried out across all parts of the early years sector.**
- 3. that full responses to the consultation be provided to the meeting scheduled for 21st January 2019.**

#### **CBSF/18/7. High Needs Block - Dedicated Schools Grant**

The Schools Forum considered a report which outlined the spend in regard to the High Needs Block (HNB), highlighted potential spend pressures for 2018/19 and provided an update on the 0.5% investment into the HNB for this financial year.

The Chairman advised that in accordance with guidance received from the DfE, the 0.5% investment into the HNB for this financial year did not require a vote from Schools Forum members and was for discussion only.

Points and comments included:

- Paragraph 13 of the report referred to a programme of work in place to mitigate pressures outlined in the table but does not include any definitive information about the work taking place and the impact it is likely to have.
- Paragraph 32 of the report advised the in-year (18/19) HN Block Deficit currently forecast as £1.6M rather than the £1.4m overspend previously advised. The Head of SEND explained that the biggest change in the overspend is always forecast around September. The increase from £1.4m to £1.6m was due to the number of tribunals received, an increase in the number of children remaining in post 16 provision and the receipt of HNB funding to allow the children to access to this provision.
- The consultation included the proposal of a similar amount of funding being transferred from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to contribute towards the likely deficit for next year. What is this proposal based on? The Assistant Director Children's Services Business and

Supporting Services advised that work was currently taking place on a report detailing mitigations about possible savings and cost avoidance.

- It was disappointing to see the balance remaining of 0.5% transfer from School Block to the HN Block as the advice given by the Director of Children Services at the December meeting of the Forum was 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 Assistant Director Children's Services Business and Supported Services explained that projects were agreed in December 2017 with the aim of starting the work in April 2018. The High Needs team were currently undertaking intervention work totalling approximately £530,000.
- Paragraph 35 of the report does not echo the potential risks that were raised about the Growth Fund and Early Years monies in the DSG report and Early Years report presented at the meeting today.
- Paragraph 33 of the report states that without this agreement to use the reserves to offset the spend, Central Bedfordshire will need to find the money from other school services. Had other options been considered? The Assistant Director Children's Services Business and Supported Services advised that there was no other option from which to fund the £1.6m overspend or whatever the sum was by the end of year.
- The Head of SEND explained that work was taking place to look at areas of growth and where provision should be. Some young people with additional education needs should and could be educated in mainstream schools if support is in place. She added that some of the Early Years projects provided tools and support for the pressures and early intervention.
- There appeared to be two issues; there were a lot projects on the horizon to mitigate the later costs but how could current needs be funded /mitigated.

#### **NOTED**

- 1. the potential pressures against budget.**
- 2. the use of historic reserves and potential underspends in 2018/19 (as identified in the Recommendations for Meeting the Forecast Overspend section) to meet the potential High Needs Block overspend.**

#### **RESOLVED**

3. **that the proposed actions to mitigate forecast overspends for 2018-2019 were agreed.**
4. **that a verbal update as to the current state of the forecast spend on the High Needs Block be given at the November meeting of the Forum.**

**CBSF/18/8. Schools Forum New Constitution and Appointments**

The Schools Forum considered an update on the progress made in the second phase of its reconstitution.

Points and comments included:

- Elections for the following school places would take place after the November meeting of the Forum:
  - special school maintained head teacher or representative
  - primary academy head teacher or representative
  - PRU / AP academy head teacher or representative
  - secondary academy head teacher

**NOTED**

1. **the new appointment and arrangements for the third phase of the appointments process.**

**RESOLVED**

2. **that an induction programme would take place after phase 3 of the election process had been completed.**

**CBSF/18/9. Schools Forum Budget**

The Forum considered a report on the current position of School Forum Budget.

Points and comments included:

- There was a carry forward of £6,852 from 2017/18 with a total spend of £761 to date
- The F40 subscription was £500 for 18/19 only (usually £1,000).

**NOTED**

**the current position of the School Forum budget.**

**CBSF/18/10. School Finance update**

The Schools Forum considered an update on the school surplus balances at 31 March 2018 and current RAG rating.

Points and comments included:

- Schools that have triggered surplus balance percentages (Appendix A), would be contacted individually to clarify the reason for the surplus balances.
- In response to a query raised about how schools are notified of their finance rating, the Senior Finance Manager would look into the possibility of schools being notified by letter rather than via the school's portal.

#### **NOTED**

**the Finance RAG rating for schools and schools holding excess surplus balances.**

#### **CBSF/18/11. Dedicated Schools Grant Contingency Budgets**

The Schools Forum received an update on the current position of Dedicated Schools Grant Contingency Budgets.

Points and comments included:

1. The balance brought forward to 2018/19 of £220,757 is split £123,776 de-delegated funding for Maintained schools only and £96,981 for all schools.
2. The current unspent balance of £283,798 is ring-fenced de-delegated funding of £123,776 and £139,778 for all schools, which can be distributed in 2019/20 as part of the initial ISB allocation via the Age-Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU).
3. Paragraph 9- the total High Needs Contingency balance shown in the table setting out the expenditure to 31 August 2018 should be +£395.719. Only one adjustment had been made to date.
4. A supplementary report to the agenda included an update to the table setting out the expenditure to 31 August 2018 (paragraph 10 of the report) and a Total Early Years Contingency balance of £636.808.

#### **NOTED**

**the position of Dedicated Schools Grant Contingency Budgets at the 31 August 2018.**

**CBSF/18/12. Dedicated Schools Grant 2018/19**

Members of the Forum received an update on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2018/19 and 2019/20.

Points and comments included:

1. Reference was made by a member that paragraphs 4 and 10 of the report referred to different amounts of Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG). The Senior Finance Manager, Children's Services explained that paragraph 4 of the report referred to the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) for schools in Central Bedfordshire having been set at 0% per pupil and paragraph 10 referred to the figure of 1.5% per pupil set by Government.
2. A member referred to the consultation document having more one model and different levels of MFG within the model. The Senior Finance Manager explained that the overall funding for the Schools Block to the council is on a per pupil basis. Age-Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) is the balancing figure once all other factors had been taken into consideration.
3. Members of the Forum were advised that modelling was indicative for comparison purposes only and that actual funding by school would only be known when the October 2018 census figures were applied.
4. As local authority funding spending on growth did not have to match the allocation to funding, there was the ability to top slice the overall budget to fund the Growth Fund if there was a potential shortfall.
5. The Government were introducing a formulaic approach to allocating growth funding to local authorities in 2019/20. The ability for local authorities to top slice growth funding from the Schools Block remained in place until the new formula was received.
6. In response to the question raised about the impact of the minor changes applied in 2019/20 to the minimum per pupil funding levels for middle schools, Key Stage 3-only and Key Stage 4-only schools, the Senior Finance Manager advised that the changes did not affect AWPU.
7. No change has been proposed to the current approach for Premises and mobility factors from 2019/20.

**RESOLVED**

**that an update on the new Dedicated Schools Grant funding arrangements be given at the January meeting of the Forum.**

**CBSF/18/13. Dedicated Schools Grant 2019/20**

This item was considered in conjunction with agenda item 14, Dedicated Schools Grant 2019/20 – Minute CBSF/18/12 refers.

**CBSF/18/14. Work Programme**

The Forum received and considered the Work Programme for the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum.

**RESOLVED**

**that the proposed Work Programme be approved subject to the following amendments:**

**19 November 2019**

- **responses from the School funding formula consultation 2019/20**
- **Annual report from Schools Admissions team**
- **Verbal update on the forecast spend on the High Needs Block**

**21 January 2019**

- **Academies financial information**
- **Responses to the Early Years Funding 2019/20 consultation**
- **High Needs Block - Dedicated Schools Grant update**

**The list of unscheduled reports would be revised and updated to include regular and annual reports.**

**CBSF/18/15. Date of the Next Meeting**

Monday 19 November 2018, 3pm.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 3.30 p.m. and concluded at 5.30 p.m.)

Chairman .....

Dated ..... ..