

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SCHOOLS FORUM** held at Room 15, Priory House, Chicksands on Monday, 19 November 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, Academy of Central Bedfordshire / Oak Bank
	Mrs C Earp	Head Teacher, Henlow Middle Academy
	Mr J Hughes	Head Teacher, Beecroft Academy
	Mrs L Leonard	Head of School, The Chiltern School
	Ms A Moyle	School Business Manager, Greenleas Lower School
	Mrs J New	Head Teacher, Flitwick Lower School
	Mr D Penfold	Academy Governor, Cranfield C of E Academy
	Mr S Tiktin	Governor, Beaudesert Lower School
	Mrs S Wells	School Governor, St Andrew's Lower School
Non-School Members:	Mr B Burrett	Church of England Diocese Representative
	Cllr K Ferguson	Chairman of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Mr M Foster	Trade Union Representative
Apologies for Absence:	Mrs L Davies	
	Mr M Howe	
	Mr C Kiernan	
	Mr J Selmes	
	Mrs S Teague	
Officers in Attendance:	Mr P Ball	Senior Finance Manager, Children's Services
	Ms S Bellamy	Schools Finance Manager
	Mrs B Bourn	Early Years SEND Team Manager
	Mr P Fraser	Assistant Director Education
	Ms S Griffin	Committee Services Officer
	Mrs S Harrison	Director of Children's Services
	Ms H Slinn	Area SEND Coordinator
	Mrs S Tyler	Assistant Director Business and Supporting Services
Mr V Wan	Head of School Organisation	

CBSF/18/16. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising**RESOLVED**

that the minutes of the meeting of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum held on the 13 September 2018 and 1 October 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

The list of School Members is to be updated to reflect that Beecroft is a Primary Academy.

1 October meeting

- Mrs C Earp and Mr J Hughes be added to the meeting attendance.

- Minute CBSF/18/5 Special School Banding (Single Value Top Up)

That the following paragraph be added:

Concerns were raised about some of the methodology of the proposed Special Value Top up (SVT) and that the new values would not be reviewed for two years after implementation. Given the significance of the banding, it was felt that a review after one year would be more appropriate.

- Amendment to the following Resolution:
that an SVT approach for the financial year 2019/20 be implemented at the values shown in table 1 of the report **was agreed in principle subsequent to further modelling work being undertaken on value levels and an update given to members of the Forum.**

CBSF/18/17. Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Sharon Bellamy, Schools Finance Manager to the meeting and advised that Mrs Bellamy would be attending future meetings of the Forum in place of Mr Phil Ball.

CBSF/18/18. Schools Forum powers and responsibilities**NOTED**

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

CBSF/18/19. Growth Fund 2019/2020

The Schools Forum considered an update on the outcome of some early modelling undertaken by the Council, following the DfE's new formulaic approach to the allocation of the Growth Fund for 2019/20 and the possible impact of the new formulae on the level of funding the Council receives to

fund schools that have expanded under the New Schools Places Programme.

Points and comments included:

1. As the October census 2018 was not available, modelling to understand the impact of the national funding formula in 2019/20 compared to 2018/19 had been undertaken based on the October 2017 census and Summer 2018 census (the most recent census). A further update on the impact could be given when the October census 2018 was available.
2. Based on the new formulaic approach and the October 2017 and Summer 2018 census data the Council is due to receive total Growth Funding allocation of £200,911.26 which was significantly below the total sum of £2m endorsed by the Schools Forum for 2018/19.
3. The forecast standardised payment expenditure was £1,304,977. This figure excluded the provision for 'exceptional circumstances' which was a difficult to forecast. Schools Forum Members could request additional funding if required.
4. Although the new funding arrangements for the Growth Fund were formula driven, it would be prudent for the Growth Fund Technical Sub group to remain in place to consider requests for 'exceptional circumstances' payments, to monitor the funding arrangements and provide feedback to the DfE.
5. The membership of the Growth Fund Technical Sub group needed to be revised as Mrs Brabner's three year tenure as a member of Schools Forum ended in June and she had decided not to reapply to be formally re-elected.
6. Future funding arrangements for the Growth Fund were yet to be advised by the DfE. The guidance might need to be revised depending on the announcement made.

NOTED

- **the modelling for the Growth Fund and the risk to the Council on regard to the forecast spend and significantly small contingency for 2019/20.**

RESOLVED

- **that the primary and secondary pupil new formulaic approach be approved.**
- **that the criteria for the Growth Fund and the standardised Growth Fund payment package for 2019/20 under the new school places programme, (as set out in Appendix 1a and Appendix 1b of the report be approved.**

CBSF/18/20. Outcome of the schools funding formula consultation 2019/20

The Schools Forum considered a report on the outcomes of the consultation based on responses received and the local schools Funding Formula for the 2019/20 financial year.

Points and comments included:

1. Following the request at the September meeting of the Schools Forum, modelling had been undertaken on an additional five models to be consulted on and had been shared with schools in appendix 2 of the consultation document.
2. Due to complexity of the issues being considered, Government had announced the decision to extend the move towards the National Funding Formula for another year, taking this to 2020/2021.
3. Despite the consultation being included in Central Essentials and two reminder emails, there had been a very low response to the consultation with 16 responses from a possible 132 schools received overall via the online consultation.
4. The Director of Children's Services expressed concern about the engagement process and the lack of response from members of the Schools Forum to a key decision. All schools should be encouraged to engage and respond to questionnaires and consultations. Schools Forum members should lead by example.
5. In response to the advice received that Central Essentials had only contained a link to the questionnaire and not a copy of the consultation document. The Director of Children's Services advised that the participation of members of the Schools Forum was valued. If she had been made aware of this issue, the consultation document could have been published on the Central Bedfordshire Council website. All head teachers had received the consultation document.
6. In response to the issue raised that some members of the Forum had not received Central Essentials, the Vice Chairman advised that the format and the distribution list of Central Essentials had changed this term which had resulted in some of the chairs of governors no longer receiving the document. It was, however the responsibility of the head teacher to cascade Central Essentials to governors and staff.
7. In response to the question raised about the impact of the school funding formula proposed, it was noted that most schools at secondary level would benefit in Key Stage 3 and 4 due to the weighting relating to prior attainment.

8. The Assistant Director Business and Supporting Services explained that work was taking place to try to mitigate the potential spend pressures on the High Needs Block. However, it was envisaged that the High Needs Block monies for 2019/20 would not meet the complete needs.
9. The Director of Children's Services explained the voice of the members of Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum could be added to the lobbying on this issue to the DfE already undertaken by other local authority Schools Forum members, local and national politicians. This is a national issue.

A vote was taken by the Schools Forum on whether to agree the 0.5% uplift. Two members voted in favour of the 0.5% uplift. The majority of members voted against it.

NOTED

the outcomes of the schools funding formula consultation.

RESOLVED

not to agree the transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block into the High Needs Block to meet current demand.

CBSF/18/21. High Needs Block Project – Managing demand in SEND

The Schools Forum received a presentation on the High Needs Block Project and managing demand in SEND.

Points and comments included:

1. The Schools Forum agreed a transfer of 0.5% of the Schools Block into the High Needs Block in the financial year 2018/19.
2. This transfer amounted to just over £800,000 in year investment. Project outcomes had been identified and guiding principles around the HNB investment presented to the Schools Forum in June 2018. Seven work streams were agreed with each work stream having a lead officer from Central Bedfordshire Council from a range of services.
3. The Early Years SEND Team manager advised that the response to the three free training sessions on Early Years Intervention had been lower than expected despite the training sessions being advertised in Central Essentials and details being emailed to schools.
4. The Chairman expressed concern that head teachers were not reading Central Essentials. Members of the Schools Forum were asked to disseminate key communication documents between Central Bedfordshire Council and schools to the areas they represented and to clusters.

5. The Director of Children's Services advised that an email would be sent to the Cluster Chairs of Localities advising which schools were participating and that Schools Forum Members would be sited on the response. Schools needed to feedback if the times / dates of training were not suitable and possible alternatives such as training being held on inset days could be looked into.
6. The Early Years SEND Team manager explained that the ten schools participating in the Early Years Intervention project had been chosen on the basis of the number children identified as being at stage 2 and having behavioural and SEND needs but who were not yet at the level of an EHCP. Baseline data was available but the impact of the projects was as yet unknown as the majority of the projects were still in the early stages.
7. The Area SEND co-ordinator advised that meetings had taken place at the Children's Services Transformation Board, during which discussions had taken place about specific data. There is a robust set of performance indicators in place to enable the success of the project targets to be quantified, and this would be fed back to the Board at the next update.

CBSF/18/22. Schools' Finance risk (RAG) ratings

The Schools Forum considered a report on the current finance RAG rating for schools.

Points and comments included:

At the October meeting of the Schools Forum it had been brought to the attention of the Schools Finance Manager that some of the schools identified in the report on RAG risk ratings was incorrect. The contents of the report had been reviewed and the ratings for three of the schools had subsequently been changed from 'amber' to 'no category'.

NOTED

the updated Finance RAG rating for schools.

CBSF/18/23. Current spending forecast of the High Needs Block in 2018/2019

The Schools Forum received a verbal update on the current spending forecast of the High Needs Block in 2018/19.

Points and comments included:

1. The forecast overspend at the end of October 2018 was £1.45m which was slightly less than had previously been advised. Minimal change on the overspend was anticipated between now and the end of March 2019. A further update would be given at the January meeting of the Schools Forum.

2. The impact of early intervention measures tended to be seen after a few years after implementation rather than immediately.
3. The Director of Children's Services explained that there was rigorous data in the form of KPIs behind early intervention measures. The role of Schools Forum members included the governance function of scrutinising the impact and effectiveness of these measures.
4. It was difficult for members of Schools Forum to make a meaningful decision on the movement 0.5% into the High Needs Block to sustain or fund new projects without knowing the impact.
5. Concerns were expressed about the inability to recruit to specialist posts to drive the projects forward and the lack of engagement from schools.

CBSF/18/24. **Work Programme**

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

RESOLVED

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

14 January 2019

- **Update on the additional modelling of the Growth Fund.**
- **Update on the additional modelling of SVT levels.**

Future meetings

- **An update on the High Needs projects (2 per meeting) would be added to the agenda for future meetings of the Forum from 11 March 2019 onwards.**

CBSF/18/25. **Date of the Next Meeting**

Monday 14 January 2019

(Note: The meeting commenced at 3.00 p.m. and concluded at 4.25 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated