

Schools' Forum Meeting

5 February 2014

Attendees:

Members

Andrew Jordon (AJ) (Academies)
 Andy Brown (ABr) (Larger Primary Deprived Schools)
 Chris Hargreaves (CH) (Trade Unions)
 Colin Reid (CR) (Secondary Schools) Chair
 Dave Stubbs (DS) (Chief Executive)
 Ian Ness (IN) (standing in for Mark Tilling)
 Jan Brough (JB) (Small Deprived Primary with High Mobility)
 John Hardy (JH) (VA Primary Schools)
 Julie Deville (JD) (Academies)
 Karl Telfer (KT) (Special Schools)
 Lynne Pawley (LP) (Middle Primary 250 – 349)
 Maria Mekins (MM) (Governors Secondary)
 Mark Atkinson (MA) (Governors Primary)
 Michael Lee (ML) (Diocese)
 Peter Cornforth (PC) (Larger Primaries > 350)
 Sue Sharpe (SS) (Small Primary Schools <249)
 Suzi Yeniceri (SY) (Early Years PVI)
 Zoe Westley (ZW) (Pupil Referral Unit)

Local Authority Officers

Christine Lowson (CL) (Administrator)
 Dean Jackson (DJ) (Child & Adult Services)
 Joanne Smith (JS) (Children's Finance)
 Sandra Shears (SSh) (Children's Finance)

Apologies:

Anne Malcolm (AM) (Secondary Schools)
 Amanda Baines (ABa) (Diocese)
 Danielle Swainston (DS) (Early Years)
 Gill Alexander (GA) (Director Child & Adult Services)
 Mark Tilling (MT) (Secondary Schools)
 Alison Swann (AS) (HR Business Partner)

Agenda Item	Action
<p>1 Minutes of the Last Meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting were accepted with the following amendments noted;</p> <p>Ethnic Minority funding supports a full time post and not a part time post. The rest of the funding is used to support new arrivals and EAL pupils.</p>	

2	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>It was noted that schools formula was approved by the Children’s Services Committee.</p>	
3	<p>School Buybacks 2014/15</p> <p>DS explained that Hartlepool received a 2% decrease in the Employers Pension contribution which had meant a saving of £500,000 to the Authority. He went on to explain that the Finance Committee will meet on 6 February to approve the finalised budget.</p> <p>Hartlepool launched a vision in January for the future of the town which included local businesses and industries. The Authority owned Jackson Landing is to be turned into a major leisure facility for the North East. Shops at Jackson Landing have now been bought/let to businesses with a view to revitalising the Marina area.</p> <p>The Authority is to continue to borrow money and invest further in the town in order to continue with the regeneration of Hartlepool and create jobs within the small to medium enterprise sector.</p> <p>The Minister for Government is to visit Hartlepool week commencing 10 February to inform the Authority with regard to investment in the future.</p> <p>Forum noted the report on School Buybacks 2014/15,</p> <p>DS left the meeting.</p>	
4	<p>Task & Finish Group Feedback</p> <p>DJ clarified that the Task & Finish Group are looking at issues for the 2015/16 financial year. He explained that a report has not been issued as a further meeting of the Group has been arranged for 25 February to finalise all tasks.</p> <p>DJ gave the following updates</p> <p>Admissions – Sue Beevers is currently working on a report for this issue.</p> <p>Servicing Schools Forum – further breakdown of the costs has been requested.</p> <p>Capital Expenditure – options are currently being discussed to ensure a fairer system for all schools and academies.</p> <p>Brierton Costs – ongoing costs until the death of individuals in the scheme.</p> <p>Licences – information on how funding is spent has been considered.</p>	

	<p>Space to Learn – physical usage details have been provided and further details have been requested. A Management Committee is now in place and legal issues around the lease need to be considered.</p> <p>School Meals – ongoing discussions.</p> <p>Vulnerable Children – now been accepted.</p> <p>Trade Union Facility Time – A new separate group to include Alison Swann is to be set up.</p> <p>Inclusion – now been accepted</p> <p>Small Steps – JBr to produce business case.</p> <p>DJ is to produce a report following the meeting on 25 February.</p>	DJ
5	<p>Ethnic Minority Funding</p> <p>ZW explained that the original funding came from the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant which was match funded by the Authority. As the grant has now been stopped, funding comes from DSG.</p> <p>It was noted that there is now only one teaching assistant who is timetabled on demand and spends 100% of her work time in schools. Any funding left in the pot is then distributed to schools. In the last financial year £31k had been left in the pot 50% of which went to schools to support new arrivals with the other 50% supporting EAL pupils.</p> <p>ZW explained that the intention is to continue using the funding in the same way unless any alternatives are requested. The support given to schools is to assist them with building their own expertise then support can be withdrawn.</p> <p>It was noted that Forum had already agreed to continue to de-delegate this funding for the 2014/15 year. ZW explained that she had been expecting funding of £43k however only £36k had been received as academies have yet to decide if they are to buy back this service.</p> <p>Some discussion then took place regarding de-delegated funding and it was explained that only mainstream schools vote on de-delegated funding, funding from academies relies on them buying back the service. DJ explained that once funding is agreed by Forum further confirmation is required from academies regarding their contributions.</p> <p>Clarification was asked for around the legal standing of Schools' Forum decisions or do these decisions need to go to an individual school level. It was suggested that more concise papers are produced detailing actual budgets from mainstream schools and possible extra funding from non-mainstream schools.</p>	

6. School Balances Review

DJ talked to the report issued previously and explained that the Authority would like to bring the review of school balances forward to June in order to discuss in September.

AB stated that he felt the balances were too high and that the long term sickness category and the change in pupil numbers category should be removed.

JD explained that academies do not have to submit their balances and therefore could not contribute to this discussion.

A query was raised around whether or not any follow up exercises were carried out to ensure schools had spent their funding balances on what they had allocated the funding for.

JH explained that the projected five year budgets always show a deficit budget at the end of five years however outturns show a different picture.

It was noted that some budget elements are not given to schools until almost budget close which means that this element is carried forward to the following year.

It was noted that outturn budgets are now sent to schools in April but schools need to inform finance of any accrued invoices.

It was noted that in future finance would require figures from schools by the end of May in order to take them to the Schools' Forum meeting in June.

It was noted that a mechanism for claw back needs to be in place although it was acknowledged that this would not be used.

It was felt that there needs to be more accountability from schools for their balances

Forum members were asked;

Do they feel that the current scheme is robust enough to challenge schools and whether it is fit for purpose?

Response – Forum did not feel that the current scheme was robust enough.

Whether they feel that the permitted categories of expenditure are appropriate and whether any amendments are required for future surveys eg Long Term Sickness Absence Reserve/ Change in Pupil numbers are technically same as Setting School Budgets. Whether this category should be split over financial years?

Response – it was noted that DfE only take note of the outturn and not any

<p>9.</p>	<p>School Budget Submission</p> <p>DJ talked to the report previously issued.</p> <p>Forum were asked to approve/agree to the following recommendations;</p> <p>Approve the change in deadline for the approval of a budget plan to become 31st May each year.</p> <p>Notify their Governing Body of this change, and ensure that a Governing Body meeting is arranged in plenty of time of this date.</p> <p>Note that the Finance & General Purposes Committee has the authority to approve the school budget and it does not necessarily need to be a Full Governing Body meeting.</p> <p>Note that budget and salary related communication from the Corporate & Schools Finance Team will now be made using AnyComms+ as a secure method of file transfer, rather than by e-mail.</p> <p>Note the new deadline for receipt of Service Level Agreements of 31st March 2014.</p> <p>All of the above recommendations were noted and agreed.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>Space to Learn</p> <p>This item was deferred to the next meeting.</p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p>Next Forum Meeting</p> <p>Wednesday 2 April 2014 – 2.00 – 3.30pm, Croft Room, Borough Hall Single item agenda - response from Task & Finish Group.</p> <p>Wednesday 18 June 2014 – 9.30am – 1.00pm, Croft Room, Borough Hall Full agenda</p>	
	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>It was noted that Peter McMahon will now be the PRU representative on Schools Forum instead of Zoe Westley.</p>	