

Schools' Forum Meeting

20 January 2016

Attendees:

Members

Alan Chapman (AC) (Academies)
 Amanda Baines (ABa) (VA Primary Schools
 Large & Mid FSM<50%)
 Andrew Jordon (AJ) (Academies)
 Andy Brown (ABr) (Academies)
 David Turner (DT) (standing in for Julie Thomas)
 Helen O'Brien (HO) (Large Primary Schools
 FSM<50%)
 Jo Heaton (JHe) (Diocese of Durham)
 John Hardy (JHa) (VA Small Primary Schools)
 Lynne Pawley (LP) (Large Primary Schools)
 Mark Tilling (MT) (Secondary Schools)
 Penny Thompson (PT) (Early Years)
 Sue Sharpe (SS) (Small Primary Schools <211)
 (Chair)
 Tracey Gibson (TG) (Secondary Schools)
 Zoe Westley (ZW) (Special Schools)

Local Authority Officers

Christine Lowson (CL) (Administrator)
 Joanne Smith (JS) (Children's Finance)
 Mark Patton (MP) (Assistant Director
 Education)
 Sandra Shears (SSh) (Children's Finance)
 Katie Hammond (KH) (Education)
 Julie Reed (JR) (Education)

Agenda Item	Action
<p>1 Apologies</p> <p>The following apologies were noted;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris Hargreaves (CH) (Trade Unions) Fr Graeme Buttery (GB) (Primary Governor) Julie Deville (JD) (Academies) Julie Thomas (JT) (Mid Sized Schools 190-280 FSM>50%) Kieran Sharp (KS) (Student Support Unit) Stephen Hammond (SH) (Academies) Suzi Yeniceri (SY) (Early Years PVI) 	
<p>2 Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising</p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting held on 21 October 2015 were accepted as a true and accurate record with the following matters arising.</p> <p>Space to Learn – a meeting of the Management Committee will be held week commencing 1 February 2016.</p>	

	High Needs Block – a further set of meetings have been scheduled for those schools who did not return their data therefore a further Forum meeting will be required in early March for further consideration.	CL
3	<p>Schools Capital Suitability Update</p> <p>KH talked to the report circulated with the meeting papers and explained that £1m had been allocated to deal with suitability issues in schools however bids for over £4m had been received. She went on to explain that bids that had health and safety implications had been prioritised. Cooking in the curriculum was still being considered however the amounts requested had been large therefore Sub-group are looking at other ways of covering cooking in the curriculum rather than spending suitability funding.</p> <p>A comment was made that following the last Director's meeting asbestos in schools would become a high priority with regard to health and safety. KH explained that this would be on the agenda at the next Capital Sub-group meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that there is no funding allocated for the removal of asbestos and that the Authority manage it in relation to the regulations. Financial responsibility falls to the individual schools. It was noted that Faith schools may be able to access LCVAP funding.</p> <p>It was noted that some schools have already incurred costs for asbestos removal therefore funding needs to be agreed as soon as possible.</p> <p>Recommendations;</p> <p>It was recommended that both the high and medium priorities be approved. Forum approved the priorities.</p> <p>Funding priorities are to be reconsidered to see if they are still relevant This was agreed by Forum and Schools Capital Sub-group to consider funding for asbestos.</p>	KH
4	<p>School Balances Update</p> <p><u>Balances Survey Update</u> SSh talked to the report circulated with the meeting papers and explained it in further detail. It was noted that all 28 maintained schools had responded to the survey however only one academy had responded.</p> <p>In addition to the survey a Finance Officer had visited each school. It was noted that added pressures on school finances with regard to salaries and NI had been taken into account.</p> <p>MP highlighted that this was an incomplete picture because academies (except one) had not submitted data and asked for comments.</p>	

	<p>ABr stated that Ad Astra Trust had been advised not to submit their balances as they would not assist the exercise.</p> <p>It was noted that the EFA budget under spend claw back is beyond the remit of the Authority. It was further noted that the allocation from the Government is for all schools but concerns are around if the under spend is on the complete picture or a partial picture. JS confirmed that the 251 report submitted by the Authority is based on schools only.</p> <p>AJ stated that Dyke House did not submit on the advice of the Trust however information on the school balances is available if it is looked for.</p> <p>It was felt that the incomplete picture has a bearing on the school balances protocol.</p> <p><u>School Balances Protocol</u></p> <p>MP explained that the draft protocol had been drawn up following liaisons with neighbouring authorities. It was suggested that the wording around schools 'called' to Forum be changed to schools requested to attend.</p> <p>It was suggested that the accountability should not just be on the school alone.</p> <p>DT, HO and MT to assist MP with drawing up the protocol. Diocesan Reps are to feed this back to the Diocese.</p>	<p>MP</p> <p>MP JH</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Mid-term Transfers Update</p> <p>Following a request from Schools' Forum further work had been undertaken around mid-term transfers. JS explained that the data used had been from the 2014/15 academic year. It was noted that 52% of transfers were from out of area.</p> <p>There were two options for Forum to consider;</p> <p>Option1 – Do nothing on the basis that any change in funding may be too volatile for schools to effectively manage their budgets and there is also uncertainty relating to the 2017/18 schools formula consultation.</p> <p>Option 2 – to agree a protocol for the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary or • Secondary or • Both sectors <p>The Authority recommended that schools go with Option 1.</p> <p>A query was raised around if Option 2 was chosen could Ward Jackson School be an exception. It was explained that there could be more schools, other than Ward Jackson, that would need to be considered separately.</p> <p>Queries were raised around if there are schools that are currently</p>	

	<p>struggling/losing and also if the year used is a general indication of trends or a 'one off' year. It was noted that the Schools' Admission Forum indicates issues becoming worse. It was felt that trends need to be identified.</p> <p>It was commented that amounts of funding not received until the following year's census also need to be taken into consideration as this puts more pressure on schools.</p> <p>It was explained that it would be difficult to know if a trend was a 'real trend' or based on other factors eg building areas within the town. It was noted that movement around the town is often due to deprivation where families can no longer afford to live in their current area.</p> <p>It was suggested that Finance provide this information on an annual basis for Forum to monitor and assist schools that consistently lose funding.</p> <p>It was felt that there needs to be funding in the system to support schools already struggling as well as those that may struggle when pupils move.</p> <p>Forum agreed to go with Option 1.</p> <p>Finance is to provide updates on an annual basis and the next update is to include three academic years. It was noted that the information used is from September therefore there is an issue with pupils who are not yet on the census. Finance is to use data from October census day for future updates.</p>	JS/SS
6	<p>Schools Formula 2016/17</p> <p>SSh reported that the formula will be finalised and sent to the DfE on 21 January 2016. Budget packs will be sent to Headteachers via Anycomms+ on 10 February 2016.</p> <p>Comments were made around Headteachers finding Anycomms+ difficult to use. SSh to look into if there is another secure method of sending the budget packs.</p>	SSH
7	<p>Scheme of Financing for Schools</p> <p>SSh talked to the report that had been issued with the meeting papers and explained it in further detail. It was noted that this scheme does not apply to academies but it does apply to VA schools.</p> <p>Forum noted the report.</p>	
8	<p>Next Forum Meeting Spring Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 March 2016, 9.00 – 11.00am – High Needs Block (key decision) • 26 April 2016, 9.00 – 11.00am – Full Forum 	

9	Agenda Items for Next Full Forum Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme of Financing for Schools • Schools Formula 2017/18 	CL
10	Any Other Business There was no other business to note.	