

## Schools' Forum Meeting

### 26 April 2016

#### Attendees:

##### Members

Alan Chapman (AC) ( Academies)  
 Amanda Baines (ABa) (VA Primary Schools  
 Large & Mid FSM<50%)  
 Andy Brown (ABr) (Academies)  
 Angela Donnelley (AD) (standing in for Debbie  
 Caygill)  
 Chris Hargreaves (CH) (Trade Unions)  
 Fr Graeme Buttery (GB) (Primary Governor)  
 Jo Heaton (JHe) (Diocese of Durham)  
 Julie Deville (JD) (Academies)  
 Julie Thomas (JT) (Mid Sized Schools 190-280  
 FSM>50%)  
 Kieran Sharp (KS) (Student Support Unit)  
 Lynne Pawley (LP) (Large Primary Schools)  
 Marion Fairley (MF) Large Schools FSM > 50%  
 Mark Tilling (MT) (Secondary Schools)  
 Mike Cooney (MC) (standing in for John Hardy)  
 Penny Thompson (PT) (Early Years)  
 Sarah Tait (ST) (standing in for Stephen  
 Hammond)  
 Sue Sharpe (SS) (Small Primary Schools <211)  
 (Chair)  
 Tracey Gibson (TG) (Secondary Schools)  
 Zoe Westley (ZW) (Special Schools)

##### Local Authority Officers

Christine Lowson (CL) (Senior Support  
 Officer)  
 Joanne Smith (JS) (Children's Finance)  
 Louise Allen – (LA) (Head of Service for  
 Children (SEND))  
 Marian Williams (MR) (Senior Legal  
 Assistant)  
 Mark Patton (MP) (Assistant Director  
 Education)  
 Sandra Shears (SSh) (Children's Finance)

#### Apologies:

Andrew Jordon (AJ) (Academies)  
 Debbie Caygill (DC) (16 – 19 Education)  
 Helen O'Brien (HO) (Large Primary Schools FSM<50%)  
 John Hardy (JHa) (VA Small Primary Schools)  
 Stephen Hammond (SH) (Academies)  
 Suzi Yeniceri (SY) (Early Years PVI)

Agenda Item	Action
<p><b>2 Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2016 were accepted as a true and accurate record with no matters arising.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2016 were accepted as a true and accurate record with no matters arising.</p>	

3	<p><b>High Needs Block Decisions</b></p> <p><u>Continuation of IPS Funding</u>  Forum had been asked to agree to the IPS hourly rate continuing at £9 per hour for the 2016/17 financial year.</p> <p>The following comments were noted;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ABr read an e-mail from West Park School. The key point of the e-mail was that the school already had a £32k shortfall in funding therefore £9 per hour will not be enough to cover the increase in salary costs.</li> <li>• There are real pressures on all schools however there is no ideal alternative.</li> <li>• SS read an e-mail from HO on behalf of her group of schools. £9 would be agreed to in the short term however a long term strategy needs to be put in place.</li> <li>• Reducing the number of out of town places which in turn would reduce the pressures on the High Needs Block would be a long term solution.</li> <li>• MP reminded schools the High Needs budget is a school budget which is managed by the Authority on behalf of schools.</li> <li>• The lack of support at primary level impacts on secondary education which in turn will increase the number of out of town placements.</li> <li>• ZW asked if Hartlepool was an Authority who would receive additional funding. It was noted that this is not yet known.</li> <li>• As Headteachers there has to be an acceptance around the rigour of IPS and how this is allocated.</li> <li>• The long term strategy will be brought to Schools Forum in the future and will then become an annual discussion.</li> <li>• The choice around who receives one to one support needs to be more rigorous and more closely monitored.</li> <li>• If this is the case then individuals need to step up, attend panel meetings and take responsibility.</li> <li>• A review of the history of the funding has taken place and there is a rigorous system in place.</li> </ul> <p><b>Forum agreed to the IPS hourly rate remaining at £9 for the 2016/17 financial year.</b></p> <p><u>Increase in Equipment Contributions</u>  Schools' Forum had been asked to agree to increase the contribution to equipment purchased from £100 to £250 or 10% whichever was the greater.</p> <p>The following comments were noted;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a family chooses a mainstream school how is this decided? The presumption in law is to follow the Code of Practice 2014. Admissions are aware of this.</li> <li>• There needs to be clearer guidelines between Education and Health as schools often have to purchase items that are not purely for education.</li> <li>• There is continuing dialogue with Health and the CCG around costs.</li> </ul>	
---	--	--

	<b>Forum agreed to the increase in contributions for equipment purchased.</b>	
<b>4</b>	<p><b>School Improvements</b></p> <p>MP explained that the comment ‘that the issue of school improvements be referred to the Children’s Services Committee and views be sought from School’s Forum’ had come from Council and was passed to Children’s Services Committee. The outcome from the debate in Committee was that secondary schools cannot do any more than they are currently doing.</p> <p>Comments from Forum were requested and noted;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can a finance Forum comment on school improvement?</li> <li>• Is it in the remit of Forum?</li> <li>• Is Council looking to Forum to direct funding in this direction?</li> <li>• Changes in the national formula would not necessarily affect this.</li> <li>• Ensure funding is fair across all five secondary schools.</li> <li>• The impact of previous monies spent could be considered.</li> <li>• The basis of the secondary formula needs to be looked at.</li> <li>• There is already some skew in funding towards secondary schools – the PRU for instance.</li> <li>• Historically approximately £200k was allocated to secondary schools for school improvement.</li> <li>• Council should be given a report on how the £200k was spent and the impact it had.</li> <li>• Improvement is not around the injection of extra funding but extra support allocated to appropriate areas. However a debate on funding allocation would be appreciated.</li> </ul> <p>It was suggested that this debate be deferred until the National Funding Formula is finalised to allow the background algorithm to become clearer. <b>This was agreed.</b></p>	
<b>5</b>	<p><b>School Balances Protocol</b></p> <p>MP explained the background to the protocol and explained that it will form an appendix to the Scheme of Financing for Schools. He then asked for comments from Forum and the following points were noted;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there guidelines for the triad of Headteachers?</li> <li>• Every school is individual and it will come down to professional integrity.</li> <li>• The Chair or Vice Chair of Forum should be Chair of the triad of Headteachers for consistency and moderation.</li> <li>• The first draft was based on the principals from three neighbouring authorities.</li> <li>• There is a need to review this annually due to the academies agenda, and the annual review of the Scheme.</li> <li>• A query was raised around if the Chair is an academy rep could they Chair the triad. It was felt this would be down to professional integrity.</li> </ul>	

	<b>The Protocol was agreed with the addition of the guidelines for the triad.</b> JHe and MP to draw up guidelines.	<b>JHe/MP</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Scheme of Financing for Schools</b>  It was explained that a consultation period had taken place which had included two drop-in sessions. The response to the consultation had been very disappointing with only two schools attending each drop-in session and a further two schools responding by e-mail.  Issues aired by these schools had been incorporated into the circulated draft.  <b>The scheme was approved</b> with start date of 26 April 2016.	
<b>7</b>	<b>Schools Formula</b>  SSh explained that the Authority had responded to the DfE consultation and some schools had also responded.  To date no further update has been received however it is hoped that an update will be received by the end of term otherwise the formula may not be available until 2017.	
<b>8</b>	<b>Northern Grid for Learning</b>  MP explained that a 2.5% uplift had been added to the NGfL contract for the current financial year and a decision is required for the 2016/17 uplift which has not yet been agreed.  The following comments were made and noted; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It had been assumed that it was a fixed price for two years.</li> <li>• Why is it a 2.5% uplift which is more than inflation and more than the RPI?</li> <li>• It is already an over inflated cost without any additional costs.</li> <li>• NGfL should be challenged before a decision reached.</li> <li>• MP is to obtain further information around if schools are legally bound by the contract.</li> <li>• If this is the case then the Chair can e-mail the decision on behalf of Forum.</li> <li>• Forum asked that the penalty clauses within the contract be re-visited.</li> </ul> <b>It was agreed</b> that the Chair would make the decision on behalf of Forum.	<b>MP</b>   <b>MP</b>  <b>SS</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>  <u>Suitability Update</u> MP referred to the paper issued with meeting papers and Forum was asked to approve following two recommendations;	

	<p>Approval is given in relation to the addition £150,000 needed to replace the mobile unit at Rift House with an extension to the main school building.</p> <p>Approval is given for Springwell to access the available Suitability Funding to convert the library space into an ASD classroom in order for them to meet need in September.</p> <p><b>Both recommendations were approved</b> with no further comments. MP to take to Children's Services Committee for final sign off.</p> <p><u>Schools Capital Sub-group Update</u> MT explained that at the last sub-group meeting a discussion had taken place around some school fencing being replaced due to safe guarding issues. Forum is to be aware that this could be an issue at other schools across the town and considerable costs may be involved.</p> <p>MT tabled a paper detailing the streams of capital funding that are available and to whom. Academies funding available from the EFA is to be added to this paper as it had been agreed that academies will apply for funding using this route first. CL to contact Julie Reed and then re-issue.</p> <p><u>Membership</u> SH term of office is due to expire on 31 August 2016. Academies are to elect a representative and substitute and notify CL before 1 September 2016. JD to take forward.</p> <p>JHa term of office also expires on 31 August 2016 therefore a primary representative and substitute will need to be appointed before 1 September 2016. SS is to take this issue forward and notify CL.</p> <p>The term of office for the PT as the Early Years representative and CH as the Trade Union rep have now expired. New representative and substitutes are to be identified and CL notified.</p>	<p><b>MP</b></p> <p><b>CL</b></p> <p><b>JD</b></p> <p><b>SS</b></p> <p><b>PT/CH</b></p>
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>7 July 2016, 9.30 – 11.30am, Conference Hall, CETL.</p>	