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MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING - TUESDAY, 14 JULY 2020

Present:

Primary School Head Teachers/Representative

Ms J Hirst, Bispham Endowed
Dr E Allen, St John Vianney

Primary School Governor Representative

Ms M Lonican, School Governor, Our Lady of the Assumption

Special School Maintained Representative

Ms K Haworth, Woodlands

Special School Academy Representative

Ms S Fielder, Chair of Governors, Park Community Academy

Academy School Representatives

Ms A Bailey, Highfield (Star Academies)
Mr R Farley, Westminster
Ms T Harrison, Thames
Ms J Heywood, Revoe
Mr E Vitalis, Marton / South Shore (Bright Futures)

Pupil Referral Unit

Ms W Casson, Educational Diversity

Non-Schools Members

Mr N Adams, Staff / Teacher Associations
Ms A Baines, Staff/Teacher Associations
Mr R Rendell, Early Years Strategic Group

In Attendance:

Councillor K Benson, Cabinet Member for Schools, Education and Aspiration
Mr M Golden, Finance Manager
Ms K Thompson, School Funding Officer
Mr P Thompson, Head of SEND
Mr P Turner, Head of Service for School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion
Mrs H Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources
Mrs D Bowater, Democratic Governance Adviser (minutes)

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Introductions were made and apologies for absence were received from Dean Logan, Roseacre (Achievement Through Collaboration), Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services, Blackpool Council, Judith Mills and Nicky Dennison, Public Health.

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Both Simon Hughes, Blackpool and the Fylde College and Simon Brennand, Unity had indicated that they would arrive late to the meeting however the meeting finished before they joined.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were noted.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2020 were considered and agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Matters arising from the minutes were noted:

Item 3: Minutes of the previous meeting – The process of applying for and receiving Illuminate funding. It was agreed to seek comments from headteachers on the process of applying for and receiving the Illuminate funding. It noted that the issue would be raised at the Primary and Special Headteacher meetings to provide clarity for the new school year on any difficulties experienced. Tracy Harrison agreed to email out to all headteachers.

Item 3: Minutes of the previous meeting – To present the balance relating to the fund for union duties. Hilary Wood confirmed that there was an in year surplus of £11k meaning that there was £48k accumulated in reserves. It was noted that the information would be added to the statement of reserves in future reports. Following discussion relating to Unions, it was agreed that a paper would be presented to the October 2020 Schools Forum to reflect the Department for Education guidance advice on delegation of funding and the implications of including all unions including Unison within the process.

Resolved:

- **To consult all primary headteachers and seek comments on the application and receipt of the Illuminate funding through the Headteachers meeting and through email to identify any issues experienced and provide clarity for the new school year.**
- **To present a paper on the Union duties fund to the October 2020 Schools Forum for consideration to reflect the Department for Education guidance and the implications of including all unions within the process.**

4 PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

The report provided an update on: Psychological first aid in emergencies training; Smoke free Blackpool services (age12 years+); Fluoride Milk; Relationships and Health Education and Blackpool Summer of Fun. It was agreed to circulate the report to all headteachers for information.

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Resolved:

- **To circulate the Public Health update report to headteachers for information (Danielle Bowater).**

5 LOCAL AUTHORITY AND INCLUSION UPDATE

Paul Turner, Head of Service for School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion provided a high level overview of recent developments within the Local Authority.

Following the advertisement of the School Safeguarding Advisor role, the vacancy had been filled for a two year period. The new role was a Schools Early Help and Safeguarding Officer and would provide assistance with early help and safeguarding. It was requested that once the formalities of recruitment were complete, headteachers would be presented with the information on how the role supported schools as soon as possible.

6 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT YEAR END BUDGET MONITORING 2019-2020

Mark Golden, Finance Manager, reported on the budget position of the Dedicated Schools Grant for the Financial Year Ended 31 March 2020 and the amount of Dedicated Schools Grant reserves as at 31 March 2020. The deficit for 2019/20 was £2.683million, the balance brought forward was £400k resulting in a final deficit of £3.1million.

The report was noted.

It was requested that deficit information from other authorities on their level of deficit be identified to compare to the position in Blackpool. It was agreed that the North West position would be collated via the North West school funding group and reported back to the next Schools Forum meeting.

Resolved:

- **To collate the North West deficit position and present to the next Schools Forum meeting (Hilary Wood / Mark Golden / Kirsty Thompson).**

(Neil Adams left the meeting)

7 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET MONITORING 2020-2021

Mark Golden, Finance Manager, reported on the budget position of the 2020-21 Dedicated Schools Grant as at 31 May 2020 and the amount of Dedicated Schools Grant reserves as at 31 May 2020. There was a forecast £193k overspend on top of the planned overspend of £1.2million, which when added to the brought forward deficit of £3.1million could result in a total deficit of £4.5million by the end of the financial year. A large proportion of the unplanned overspend was due to the increased costs at special schools. In addition, the financial impact of Covid -19 would have to be considered.

It was noted following a further question that no additional DSG funding had been received to support Covid-19 costs. It was reported that there was a £650million national catch-up

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fund but the allocation methodology had not yet been published.

It was agreed that that the catch up fund would be discussed at the next meeting.

Resolved:

- **An agenda item on catch-up funding be discussed at the next Schools Forum meeting.**

8 HIGH NEEDS

Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources, presented an update on the latest developments relevant to the High Needs budget. Schools Forum members were asked to agree to support the proposals outlined in 'Blackpool's vision for exceptional SEND and Alternative Provision – Proposals for change June 2020'.

It was reported that the consultation on the proposals received seven responses and good feedback with eight out of the nine proposals fully accepted and the other proposal receiving majority support.

Comments were sought on the proposals. It was queried whether the Local Authority planned to support schools with any redundancy or pension strain costs resulting as the SERFs were decommissioned. Hilary Wood confirmed that nothing had been built into the proposals but it would be unfair for schools to cover any such associated costs and would look to cover the costs from the Dedicated Schools Grant. Redundancies would be minimalised as the range of proposals provided a number of other opportunities for staff to consider.

It was acknowledged that the details and updates of each proposal would be brought to the Schools Forum as the proposals progressed.

It was queried what support would be provided to the young people who were allocated a place at a SERF in March or April 2020? It was confirmed that provision would be arranged for KS1 provision at one of the existing SERF schools and KS2 provision to be provided at the Pupil Referral Unit from September 2020. It was requested that this information be communicated to parents and young people as soon as it was confirmed.

The Forum members agreed to support the proposals outlined in 'Blackpool's vision for exceptional SEND and Alternative Provision – Proposals for change June 2020'.

Finally, Hilary Wood reported that the status of the Lotus School was unchanged. The building construction was well underway and, despite some initial setbacks due to Covid-19, continued to be on track to be completed for the planned opening in September 2020. The Lotus School would provide 48 places for 10 to 16 year olds with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. This was a vital part of the High Needs medium-term financial plan, as it will provide cost effective local provision, and avoid the need to place pupils in more expensive out of borough independent settings.

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Resolved:

- **The Forum members agreed to support the proposals outlined in 'Blackpool's vision for exceptional SEND and Alternative Provision – Proposals for change June 2020'.**

9 DIRECTED REVISION OF SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS

Kirsty Thompson, School Funding Officer, reported on the updates on changes to the Department for Education guidance, which were expected to be reflected in Blackpool's Scheme for Financing Schools. It was requested that maintained schools representatives approved the revision for incorporation in Blackpool's Scheme for Financing.

The new section (10.2) was proposed:

- A. After 1st April 2020 maintained schools may wish to join the Secretary of State's Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) for risks that are covered by the RPA (see ANNEX C). Schools may do this individually when any insurance contract of which they are part expires (March 2022).*
- B. All primary and/or secondary maintained schools may join the RPA collectively by agreeing through schools forum to de-delegate funding.*

The maintained schools representatives including the Pupil Referral Unit representative agreed to the proposal.

Resolved:

- **That the maintained schools representatives agreed to the proposals and approved the revision outlined.**

10 SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING DATES 2020-2021

The proposed dates for the 2021 Schools Forum meetings were considered. It was noted that membership for all members expired in January 2021 therefore following this date, nomination and election of new members would be undertaken for the next three year period.

It was acknowledged that membership required commitment to attend the full meeting (9.15am to 12.15pm) and to arrive by 9am to ensure a prompt start. It was also requested that apologies be presented for non-attendance.

It was asked that all members be clear on the requirements prior to agreeing to membership on the Schools Forum for the next period.

Resolved:

- **The dates for the 2021 meetings were noted.**

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11 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 13 October 2020 at 9.15am via Microsoft teams.

Finally, it was acknowledged that Jo Hirst would be retiring from her role and thanks were extended for her contributions and dedication to the Schools Forum over the years.

Chairman

(The meeting ended 10.27am)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
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