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MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING - TUESDAY, 15 JANUARY 2019

Present:

Primary School Head Teachers/Representatives

Ms J Hirst, Bispham Endowed (Chairman)

Ms E Allen, St John Vianney

Primary School Governor Representative

Ms M Lonican, School Governor representative

Academy School Representatives

Mr S Brennand, Unity

Mr R Farley, Westminster

Ms T Harrison, Thames

Ms J Heywood, Devonshire

Mr D Medcalf, St Georges

Mr D Logan, (ACT)

Mr E Vitalis, Bright Futures

Special School Academy Representative

Ms S Fielder, Park Academy

Special School Maintained Representative

Ms K Haworth, Woodlands

Non-Schools Members

Ms A Baines, Staff/Teacher Associations

Mr R Rendell, Early Years Strategic Group

Mr A Iredale for Mr S Hughes, Blackpool and the Fylde College

In Attendance:

Cllr K Benson, Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning

Mr M Golden, Finance Manager

Mr P Sharples, School Funding and Private Finance Initiative Manager

Mrs H Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources

Ms L Donkin, Consultant in Public Health

Ms S Osborne, Public Health Co-Ordinator (observing)

Mrs D Bowater, Democratic Governance Adviser (minutes)

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support, opened the meeting where introductions were made and apologies for absence were received from Wendy Casson, Education Diversity Phil Thompson, Head of SEND and Paul Turner, Head of Schools, Safeguarding and Inclusion.

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2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were noted.

3 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Forum elected Jo Hirst as Chairman of the Schools Forum until January 2020.

4 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

The Forum elected Edward Vitalis as Vice Chairman of the Schools Forum until January 2020.

5 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 9 OCTOBER 2018

The minutes of the Schools Forum held on 9 October 2018 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting pending the addition of apologies from Elaine Allen, St John Vianney School.

Matters arising from the minutes were noted:

Item 3: An update on the progression of the Children's Centre Consultation.

It was noted that an update was anticipated by the end of January 2019. It was agreed that the Schools Forum would potentially arrange an extra-ordinary meeting to discuss the outcome and the impact on Children Centre finance. A provisional date of 12 February 2019 was agreed to hold the meeting. It was agreed that Roger Farley would email Sara McCartan for an update on the Children's Centre consultation.

Item 3: Recruitment of School Safeguarding Adviser. It was noted that Jeremy Mannino had been appointed as the new School Safeguarding Adviser.

Item 10: An update on the Alternative Provision lead to work with schools. It was noted that the appointed representative had been absent from work and would not be in a position to resume the task upon return to work. The Department for Education was sourcing a replacement lead.

Item 12: Management Improvement Factor. It was noted that following discussions, the Local Authority would assume responsibility for the shortfall on the Management Improvement Factor provision.

Item 13: Schools funding formula, the Local Authority submitted information to the Secretary of State that they had approved a transfer of up to one per cent from the Schools Block. It was noted that the Local Authority had submitted the information and awaited a response. It was further noted that due to additional high needs funds, the Department for Education required further consultation with Schools Forum to take place.

Item 13: Schools Funding formula briefings for headteachers. It was noted that Hilary Wood had attended both the Primary and Secondary headteacher meetings to provide information on the Schools Funding Formula, however the position had since changed

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which would be discussed at Agenda item 13.

Resolved:

- That a provisional extraordinary meeting be arranged for 12 February 2019 to discuss Children's Centre finance, subject to sufficient progress being made by that date.

6 PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

Lynn Donkin, Consultant in Public Health, provided an update including Oral Health Surveys, Schools Health Education Unit survey, PSHE Support Officer, Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma and the new model of stop smoking support.

In relation to Oral health, it was reported that greater improvement had been identified in the oral health of five years olds in Better Start areas which was positive. It was requested that Lynn Donkin would share the information with Mark Golden.

As a comment, it was suggested that timely survey distribution be considered to avoid 'survey fatigue' amongst young people and to ensure the most accurate data was collected. It was recognised that Public Health and HeadStart discussed survey schedules to avoid too many at once to the same age group.

It was reported that a new model of stop smoking support had been launched and secondary schools would be invited to develop and trial the new service. It was noted that vaping provided a new area of concern which introduced potential addiction and cost to young people.

Finally, it was noted that the NHS had outlined a new long term plan to address mental health. It was also noted that the HPV vaccine would be available to boys from September 2019 in addition to girls, an update would be provided at the next meeting.

Resolved:

- To note the update.

7 LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE

Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources, provided an update from the Local Authority. It was noted that the Children's Services department of the Local Authority had received an inspection from the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) in November and December 2018 and the report would be published on 17 January 2019.

8 ACADEMY AND FREE SCHOOL UPDATE

Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources, presented the Academy and Free School update. It was noted that an update on the Special Free School would be presented at item 11. It was further noted that Langdale Free School had appointed a temporary Headteacher, with the permanent role out to advert. It was also noted that Roseacre had joined the Achievement through Collaboration Multi-Academy Trust on 1 December 2018.

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9 INCLUSION UPDATE

9a Inclusion

Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources, presented the Inclusion update and the Blackpool Education, Registers and Admissions Panel (BERA) Report was discussed.

It was noted that in year fair access had reduced with more pupils attending mainstream settings.

It was further noted that there was a growing demand for Elective Home Education, which was consistent with the trend across other authorities, but also presented a concern for the local authority of how to quality assure the education provided at home.

It was commented that Pupil Referral Unit provision should not be included within the SERF data, or that the heading be changed to reflect that the table showed primary provision rather than just SERFs within the report.

It was commented that alternative schools were not included within the presented information as they were not monitored by the local authority. It was suggested that it would be helpful to receive an overview picture of other provision from Paul Turner.

Finally, it was noted that permanent exclusions were lower than in previous years which was encouraging for schools.

Resolved:

- **Paul Turner to provide an overview picture of other provision including alternative schools to be presented at the March 2019 meeting.**

9b Illuminate Funding

Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources, provided the Illuminate Funding report to seek approval of the revised criteria for Illuminate funding for primary and secondary pupils and to seek agreement to apply the criteria respectively to eligible pupils admitted since September 2018. It was noted that there had been discussion in October 2018 but further amendments had been made to the criteria in consultation with schools.

Following a question, it was confirmed that the administration of the criteria would be undertaken by the local authority Admissions Team.

Prior to agreement, it was noted that some of the wording presented required further amendments to ensure clarity. Tracy Harrison and Elaine Allen agreed to contact Paul Turner to discuss the changes required.

Pending the amendments to the wording, 14 attendees were in favour of approving the criteria for the Illuminate Funding set out in paragraph 3.1 (Secondary), 3.2 (Primary) and 3.3 (Discretionary).

It was agreed that the revised criteria should be applied retrospectively to eligible pupils admitted since September 2018 with 14 attendees in favour of the recommendation.

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It was requested that further data be presented at the March 2019 Schools Forum to highlight the amount of money received by each sector.

Resolved:

- Agree in principle the criteria for the Illuminate Funding set out in paragraph 3.1 (Secondary), 3.2 (Primary) and 3.3 (Discretionary) pending amendments to the wording.
- To delegate Tracy Harrison and Elaine Allen to approve the changes to the wording of the criteria for the Illuminate Funding.
- To agree that the revised criteria should be applied retrospectively to eligible pupils admitted since September 2018.
- Paul Turner, Head of Service for School Standards and Safeguarding, provide further data at the March 2019 Schools Forum to highlight the amount of money received by each sector through Illuminate Funding.

10 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET MONITORING 2018/2019

Mark Golden, Finance Manager, provided a report on the budget position of the 2018 – 19 Dedicated Schools Grant and reserves as at 30 November 2018.

It was recognised that the main pressure continued to be within the High Needs Block with the four main areas of concern being the numbers in special schools being higher than planned equating to a forecast overspend of £197k; the numbers in the pupil referral unit (PRU) being higher than planned equating to a forecast overspend of £215k; the numbers in post 16 following the September 2018 intake being higher than planned equating to a forecast overspend of £225k; and an overspend forecast of £170k for out of borough placements.

It was reported that additional funding for Blackpool of £296,160 would be received for a two year period for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) which could offset some of the pressures on the High Needs block.

In response to a question, it was noted that education provision post 16 was challenging to forecast as young people with special education needs can now continue in education until the age of 25 so it was difficult to judge when young people would leave education.

It was commented that the High Needs block continued to overspend. It was noted that predictions were always tentative within that group.

It was further commented that the new special free school may not achieve the savings anticipated and realistic predictions were needed. It was noted that the new special free school would be discussed at the High Needs Agenda item.

It was also commented that there were high numbers in special schools due to parent preferences. It was noted that 79% of Blackpool's children with Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) attended specialist provision compared to approximately 50% in other areas. It was suggested that the application of the threshold to receive an EHCP differed across local authorities.

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Hilary Wood reported that the Department for Education had suggested that the Opportunity Area is considering funding a programme of SEND audits with the view to identifying strengths and areas for development in Blackpool schools. It was suggested that a number of audits were already taking place in school settings. It was suggested that all audits that were being undertaken across schools should be linked and the Joint Consultative Group should discuss this.

It was suggested that looking at data from other 'similar' authorities could provide some items for consideration. Post 16 transience in relation to other coastal towns was suggested as a good comparison.

A more realistic forecast of expenditure was sought. It was noted that the local authority had lobbied nationally and on a North West basis in relation to high needs.

Resolved:

- **Request that the Joint Consultative Group discuss how SEND audits can be coordinated.**

11 HIGH NEEDS UPDATE

Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources, provided an update on the latest developments relevant to the High Needs budget.

It was noted that the Isos Partnership had published a report to look at the trends of SEND expenditure.

In Blackpool, a three year plan was established to address the financial concerns and a sub-group created to monitor the plan. It was reported that the additional funding of £296k would not offset pressures. It was noted that the new Lotus Special Free School would not open until September 2020 and the use of temporary accommodation would not be feasible.

It was noted that the High Needs Working Group had identified a cohort of primary pupils who could be grouped together due to similar need and the local authority was exploring the potential for provision to be established locally, possibly as a satellite to the Lotus School.

It was noted that an out of borough placement typically costs between £30 – 35k, whereas a place at the special free school would cost approximately £22k.

12 DRAFT 2019/2020 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET PROPOSAL

Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources, provided a report to share the provisional estimates for the use of Dedicated School Grant in 2019-20 including the draft budget figures and anticipated percentage changes.

Following a question it was noted that the percentage change in relation to the SERF and place funding and top-up funding was due to the decommissioning of provision at Highfield and Marton.

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Primary Heads reported that following discussion, there was concern of the proposed one per cent transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. The consequences of maintaining a deficit in the budget were sought to be considered. It was noted that the Department for Education had not outlined the specific consequences but a new requirement from March 2019 would be for local authorities to produce a deficit recovery plan over three years if a deficit over 1 per cent of the total Dedicated Schools Grant was accumulated. It was reported that the vote by Primary Heads at their recent meeting was for a 0.5 per cent transfer.

It was commented that efficiency savings may not equate to a positive impact on children and families.

13 SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA 2019/2020 PROPOSALS

Paul Sharples, School Funding and Private Finance Initiative Manager, presented the local authority's proposal for the allocation of the schools funding formula for 2019-20.

It was noted that elements of the paper had been initially presented to Schools Forum in October 2018 but further changes to the Department for Education's model had been made in December 2018.

Following discussion, Schools Forum members agreed to the following recommendations:

- Continue to apply the National Funding Formula unit values;
- Set a minimum funding guarantee of 0.5 per cent compared to 2018/19;
- Apply the one per cent funding floor protection compared to 2017/18 baselines;
- Increase the minimum per pupil funding levels in line with the national funding formula;
- Continue to set the mobility factor unit value at an amount affordable within the total allocated funding for that factor;
- Set an effective cap at a level to ensure that the formula is affordable overall with scaling of 100 percent above the cap.

Following discussion, the Schools Forum members did not agree to the recommendation to 'transfer one per cent of the total Schools Block funding to the High Needs Block'. It was agreed by twelve members to transfer 0.5 per cent and not one per cent of the total Schools Block funding to the High Needs block.

In response to the decisions made, Hilary Wood indicated that a discussion would be undertaken with the Director of Children's Services at the local authority, the Director of Resources and Councillor Benson as the local authority may still decide to submit a request to the Secretary of State for a one per cent transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in spite of the lack of support of the Schools Forum.

It was recognised that systems and measures were being taken and considered to address the pressure within the High Needs budget deficit.

It was suggested that the issues relating to pressures in the High Needs system be raised

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at the Opportunity Area Board and the School Improvement Board to encourage the identification of solutions to address the issues using the totality of funding available in Blackpool.

Resolved:

- The recommendations agreed including:
 - Continue to apply the National Funding Formula unit values;
 - Set a minimum funding guarantee of 0.5 per cent compared to 2018/19;
 - Apply the one per cent funding floor protection compared to 2017/18 baselines;
 - Increase the minimum per pupil funding levels in line with the national funding formula;
 - Continue to set the mobility factor unit value at an amount affordable within the total allocated funding for that factor;
 - Set an effective cap at a level to ensure that the formula is affordable overall with scaling of 100 percent above the cap.
- To transfer 0.5 per cent and not one per cent of the total Schools Block funding to the High Needs block.
- That the issues relating to pressures in the High Needs system be raised at the Opportunity Area Board and the School Improvement Board to encourage the identification of solutions to address the issues using the totality of funding available in Blackpool.

14 PUPIL GROWTH CONTINGENCY 2019/2020

Paul Sharples, School Funding and Private Finance Initiative Manager, provided a report and approval was sought for the 2019-20 level of Pupil Growth Contingency at £77k based on the October 2018 census data.

It was reported that Mereside Primary Academy was the only school to meet the eligibility criteria as Gateway and Armfield Academies would be funded via estimated numbers through the funding formula.

Following discussion, it was agreed to approve the value of the pupil growth contingency at £77k in 2019-20, which was calculated based on the October 2018 census. Schools Forum members wished to note that any further growth contingency be carefully considered to avoid payment for places that were not utilised.

Resolved:

- To approve the value of the pupil growth contingency at £77k in 2019-20, which was calculated based on the October 2018 census.
- To note that any further growth contingency be carefully considered to avoid payment for places that were not utilised.

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15 DE-DELEGATION OF SERVICES AND RETENTION OF FUNDING FOR EDUCATION FUNCTIONS 2019-2020

Paul Sharples, School Funding and Private Finance Initiative Manager, provided a report to seek approval for the continued de-delegation of services and the retention of funding for Education Functions.

Consideration of free school meal eligibility checks were discussed. Maintained mainstream primary school members were asked to vote and agreed to the continued de-delegation of funding for free school meal eligibility checks.

Consideration of Insurance provision was discussed. Maintained mainstream primary school members were asked to vote and agreed to move to direct charging for insurance.

Consideration of Union duties was discussed. Maintained mainstream primary school members were asked to vote and agreed to the continued de-delegation of funding for PTA union duties at £4.00 per pupil.

Furthermore, it was agreed by the special school maintained representative that they be included in the free school meals and union duties collective arrangements.

Consideration of Education Functions was discussed. Maintained school members, including primary, special and pupil referral unit members were asked to vote and agreed to the amount of £34.63 per pupil being retained from school budgets for the purpose of funding education functions.

Resolved:

- **Agreed to the continued de-delegation of funding for free school meal eligibility checks.**
- **Agreed to move to direct charging for insurance.**
- **Agreed to the continued de-delegation of funding for PTA union duties at £4.00 per pupil.**
- **Agreed by the special school maintained representative that they be included in the free school meals and union duties collective arrangements.**
- **Agreed to the amount of £34.63 per pupil being retained from school budgets for the purpose of funding education functions.**

16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Forum noted the date of the next meeting as Tuesday 12 March 2019 at 9.15am, @The Grange, Bathurst Avenue, Blackpool, FY3 7RW.

The provisional extraordinary Schools Forum meeting would take place on Tuesday 12 February 2019 at 9.15am, an invitation would be circulated as required.

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Chairman

(The meeting ended 12.30pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:

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