

SCHOOLS FORUM

Notes of an inquorate meeting

18 July 2016

Commenced: 1.45pm **Terminated: 3.30pm**

Present:	Susan Marsh (Deputy Governor, Primary Schools – L/A Maintained Chair, in the Chair)	
	Lisa Gallaher	Primary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Scott Lees	Primary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Simon Brereton	Primary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Pam Hirst	Governor – Primary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Anne Slater	NUT
	Elaine Horridge	Diocesan representative
	Councillor L Travis	Executive Member – Lifelong Learning
	Stephen Wilde	Head of Resource Management
	David Thompstone	Senior Resource Manager
	Catherine Moseley	Head of Access and Inclusion

Apologies for absence:	Janet Rathburn	Primary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Councillor J Fitzpatrick	First Deputy Performance and Finance

41. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 2 March 2016, having been circulated, were approved as a correct record subject to the following amendments that:

Minute 34 – Update on Catering Contract - that the last sentence of the fourth paragraph read as follows:

‘The Council would not approve or agree to the risk being transferred back to the Council, in the case of Community Schools’.

Also in respect of Minute 34 – Update on Catering Contract, Elaine Horridge, Diocesan Representative, made reference to the agreement to arrange a meeting with Council Officers responsible for managing the catering contract, a representative from Carillion and the Executive Director, Governance, Resources and Pensions, to respond to concerns from schools regarding the contract, and agreed to consult with Primary School colleagues to facilitate this meeting.

42. COUNCIL MANAGED DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT 2015/16 OUTTURN REVENUE MONITORING STATEMENT

Consideration was given to a report of the Assistant Executive Director, Finance, which gave information on the centrally managed Dedicated Schools Grant for 2015/16.

It was reported that the Forum agreed, in principle, to support a number of services in 2013/14 through a combination of De-delegation and buying back into previously centrally retained services using normally delegated funding. For 2014/15, the Secondary sector chose to de-delegate funding for the Trade Union Support Service only, whereas the Primary sector voted to continue with the same services as in 2013/14.

For 2015/16 the Secondary sector chose not to de-delegate any funding for central services, whereas the Primary sector voted to continue de-delegation for the same services as in 2013/14 and 2014/15. For De-delegated Services the Council was able to automatically recover the equivalent funding from Academies. For Buy Back services the Council internally recharged Maintained Schools, but invoices had to be issued to recover the equivalent funding from Academies.

Details of the De-delegated Services per sector for 2014/15 and 2015/16 were given and details of the financial monitoring position for the 2015/16 financial year for these services at the end of September 2015, were appended to the report.

It was explained that these services should be funded from a combination of Maintained School and Academy funding as their support was available to all schools. Since the start of the financial year, some schools and Academies had questioned why they were required to contribute towards these services if they did not access them. It was further explained that although not all schools would access this funding each year, the intention was to follow the principle applied in future years when this funding was set aside for use by whichever schools were most in need of it. It was not permitted to centrally retain this funding any longer and therefore it was distributed through the local funding formula via the AWPU factors.

The Forum was asked to determine how the under spend against each of the de-delegated budget areas was used in the next financial year. Appendix A to the report contained recommendations to allocate the unspent funding pro rata to the original contribution made by each School for the Contingency, Trade Union Support and Equality, Multiculturalism and Access Team (EMAT) services. It was further proposed that the Council be allowed to use the unspent £17,829, from the Behaviour for Learning and Inclusion Service (BLIS) to partially support the significant shortfall in income for that service being projected in 2016/17. It was explained that the Schools' Forum vote on these issues would need to be taken only by the Primary Sector as they de-delegated these service costs.

AGREED

- (i) That the content of the report be noted;
- (ii) That the proposal to allocate the unspent 2015/16 funding totalling £122,887 pro rata to the original contribution made by each School for the Contingency, Trade Union Support and Equality Multiculturalism and Access (EMAT) Team services be supported;
- (iii) That the proposal to allocate the unspent 2015/16 funding from the Behaviour for Learning and Inclusion Service (BLIS) of £17,829 to support the projected shortfall income for that service in 2016/17, be supported; and
- (iv) That the proposal to use the unspent 2015/16 funding of £5,000 to support the equivalent budget in 2016/17, be supported.

43. COUNCIL MANAGED DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT MONITORING UPDATE 2016/17

The Assistant Executive Director, Finance, which updated Forum members on the centrally managed Dedicated Schools Grant for 2016/17.

The report provided details of the financial monitoring position for 2016/17 financial year for De-delegated for Primary and Secondary Maintained sectors, up to the end of June 2016.

AGREED

That the content of the report be noted.

44. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Assistant Executive Director, Finance which informed members of the arrangements concerning the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2015/16, 2016/17 and future years.

It was reported that the Schools' block was the largest element of DSG funding, which provided the majority of funding for Mainstream Schools, with additional elements potentially being allocated to Mainstream Schools through the Early Years and High Needs blocks. The DfE carried out a 'Fairer Schools Funding 2015/16' consultation in relation to proposed changes to the Schools block element of the DSG earlier in the year. As a result of the responses received to the consultation, the DfE agreed to some minor changes to their original proposals, but no significant changes were made to them.

It was explained that over the last three years, the DfE had consistently stated that School funding was unfairly allocated. They believed that Schools with similar characteristics in different Local Authority areas were allocated substantially different levels of funding as a result of historic funding allocations. The DfE had used data provided by each Local Authority in relation to the unit rates used in 2013/2014 in their respective local funding formulae to arrive at minimum levels of funding for each Local Authority. The Minimum Funding Levels per pupil also included a hybrid area cost adjustment, which was intended to reflect prevailing market rates.

The DfE had then taken the Local Authority specific Minimum Funding Levels and multiplied it by the number of Schools Block eligible pupils used to calculate funding in 2014/15 to arrive at an estimated Local Authority level for 2015/16 and compared it to the actual Schools Block funding allocated to each Local Authority in 2014/15. This analysis was summarised in the report. The 62 Local Authorities who would receive additional DSG Schools Block funding through the MFL calculation than they did through the previous calculation method were allocated a share of £350 million additional funding in 2015/16 and this did not include Tameside. It was further explained that Tameside would not receive any additional DSG Schools block funding in 2015/16 or 2016/17, however there was potential for this to change from 2017/18 onwards. The DfE had given no indication of whether the 2017/18 Schools Block allocation would be based on Minimum Funding Level rates, but if it was fully implemented by the DfE without any protection then there would be an estimated reduction of £4.264 million, which equated to 3.52% of the current allocation.

It was reported that due to the scale of potential reduction in funding from 2017/18 onwards, it was considered prudent to provide Schools / Academies with estimates of the worst case budgets that could arise. Therefore, during March 2016 the Council would issue funding estimates for 2017/18 that were based on both the DfE's new Minimum Funding Level proposal and on the basis of the current local funding scheme.

A summary of the gross allocations of DSG to Tameside from financial year 2015/16 by DfE/EFA funding block, was provided in the report.

Details were also given in respect of the proposed reduction of gains cap funding in 2016/17.

AGREED

That the content of the report be noted.

45. ACADEMY SCHOOL CONVERSION COST

A report of the Assistant Executive Director, Education was submitted, which gave information on the related expenditure incurred by the Council when a school converted to Academy status.

It was reported that in order for each academy conversion to complete, the Council was obliged to carry out a number of functions on behalf of the converter school. Details were given of the

Council services providing support to these functions and the functions delivered within the process.

It was further reported that converting schools were entitled to a DfE grant of £25,000 to prepare for conversion. It was noted that the Council received no additional funding to support the financial impact and increased workloads created by and associated with the conversion process.

Currently, the only charge levied by the Council on a school converting to Academy status related to the transfer of the related payroll service.

Forum members were informed that the Council intended to make charges as follows to related schools for conversion to Academy status, to finance the expenditure incurred by the Council:

	£
Convertor / Sponsored Academy – non PFI	13,200
Convertor / Sponsored Academy – PFI	To be determined and will include an indemnity to fund all the external legal costs required to deal with the complex PFI documentation including that of all parties (Council PFico, funders etc)

The charges were inclusive of the payroll transfer service where the Council was currently providing that service to the converting school.

It was explained that the above charges would be levied on any school converting to Academy status from 1 August 2016. It was further explained that the cost of the related conversion process would be reviewed on an annual basis as a minimum and that schools would be notified of any subsequent amendment to the price stated above.

AGREED

- (i) **That the content of the report be noted; and**
- (ii) **That the cost of the related conversion process would be reviewed on an annual basis as a minimum, and schools would be notified of any subsequent amendment to the price stated within the report, be noted.**

46. FINANCING OF SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEALS

Consideration was given to a report of the Assistant Executive Director- Learning, which gave details of the Department for Education's (DfE) proposed changes for the funding for school admission appeals following a Government consultation during November 2015. A copy of the consultation paper was appended to the report.

AGREED

That this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Forum.

47. NEXT MEETINGS

It was noted that the next meeting of the Schools' Forum be held on Tuesday 18 October 2016 at 1.30pm, venue to be confirmed.