

SCHOOLS' FORUM

16 March 2021

Commenced: 10.00am

Terminated: 10.35am

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| Present: | Karen Burns (Chair) | Primary Schools – Academies |
| | Susan Marsh | Governor, Primary Schools – L/A Maintained |
| | Steve Marsland | Primary Schools – L/A Maintained |
| | Simon Brereton | Primary Schools – L/A Maintained |
| | Gemma Patterson | Primary Schools – L/A Maintained |
| | Kirsty Rimmer | Primary Schools – L/A Maintained |
| | Richard O'Regan | Secondary Schools – L/A Maintained |
| | Simon Wright | Primary Schools – Academies |
| | Heather Farrell | Primary Schools – Academies |
| | Mark Bidgood | Primary Schools – Academies |
| | David Ainsworth | Governor, Secondary Schools – Academies |
| | Andrew Foord | Special Schools – L/A Maintained |
| | Rosario Sarno | Governor, Special Schools – Academies |
| | Anthony Benedict | Pupil Referral Service |
| | Anne Morgan | Tameside Teachers' Consultative Committee |
| | Elaine Sagar | Early Years Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector |
| | Elaine Horridge | Diocesan Representative |
| | Elizabeth Jones | Governor, Secondary Schools – L/A Maintained |
| | Donal Townson | Governor, Secondary Schools – L/A Maintained |
| | Anton McGrath | 14-19 Sector |
| | Councillor Leanne Feeley | Executive Member |
| | Tim Bowman | Assistant Director, Education TMBC |
| | Christine Mullins | Finance Business Partner TMBC |
| | Louisa Siddall | Senior Accountant, TMBC |
| Apologies for absence: | Councillor Oliver Ryan | Executive Member |
| | Lisa Lockett | Primary Schools – L/A Maintained |
| | Lisa Gallaher | Primary Schools – L/A Maintained |

28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

29 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of the School's Forum held on 14 January 2021. With regard to agenda item 6, De-delegation and RPA 2021-22, the following amendment was agreed:

It was made clear that, as a group, headteachers of both primary and secondary sectors had attempted to seek clarity with regard to costings of the SLA in terms of what would be provided. It was acknowledged that, for a variety of reasons, this clarification had not yet been achieved. However, there was a suggestion that it would be possible to work towards an amended model. It was further explained that discussions with regard to an exploration of options had begun, with a view to continuing to work towards a model that would be suitable, moving forwards.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of Schools' Forum held on 14 January 2021 be approved as a correct record, with the above amendment to agenda item 6, De-delegation and RPA 2021-22

30 EARLY YEARS FUNDING 2021-22

Consideration was given to a report of the Assistant Director of Finance and the Assistant Director of Education, which outlined the arrangements concerning the DSG Early Years funding for 2021-22.

With regard to 3 and 4 year old funding, it was explained that there had been an increase in the hourly rate of funding received by the LA, from £4.59 in 2020-21 to £4.65 for 2021-22, for both universal and extended entitlement.

A breakdown of these rates was provided for Members and they were informed that there had been a proposal to increase the base rate from £4.20 to £4.25, with the deprivations bands to remain as they were, currently. It was further explained that there continued to be a mandatory requirement on the SEND inclusion fund, with a proposed increase from £0.180m in 2020-21 to £0.216m for 2021-22, using the remaining increase on the hourly rate.

Members were informed that the operational guidance confirmed that LAs must ensure at least 95% of the funding, in relation to 3 and 4 year olds, would be passed through to providers in 2021-22. The proposed rates, together with the SEN Inclusion Fund, would, therefore, mean the LA would be compliant with legislation and that the central retention, based on the current settlement, would be approximately £0.71m.

Members were made aware that the centrally retained funding would be used to support:

- Early Education Funding Team – This fully supports the administration of Early Years funding, the annual costs associated with the Servelec IT system which is used to calculate and process the payments to Schools and Private, Voluntary and Independent providers.
- Family Information Services – This supports an Information Officer. This post provides advice, guidance and information to families wishing to access Children's services and was implemented to support the increased demands from the early years extended provision.
- Early Years Quality Improvement Team – This supports 4 Quality Officers and 2 SENCOs. Support is primarily in relation to: signposting and promoting the standard 15 hours offer and extended 30 hours offer; OFSTED regulations and standards; and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities related issues.
- SEN Team – funding support for an Early Years SEN Caseworker as specific support for SEN in early years.
- Social Emotional and Mental Health Service – funding support for an Early Years Co-ordinator as specific support in early years.
- Sensory Support – funding support for a Hearing Impaired Teacher as specific support for Early Years.
- Making it REAL (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy). This is aimed at supporting practitioners to build parents' knowledge and confidence so that they can help their children with reading and writing and create a positive early home learning environment. This programme is evidence-based, has been very successful in Oldham at raising GLD and we are currently running a trial and test cohort in eight primary schools in Tameside. The funding will be used to bring PVIs and more school nurseries on board with Making it REAL.

In relation to 2 year old funding, it was reported that the hourly rate hourly rate of funding received by the LA had increased from £5.38 in 2020-21 to £5.46 2021-22. It was proposed that the base

rate for this funding be increased by £0.06 from £5.24 to £5.30, and the SEND inclusion fund be increased by £0.02. It was further proposed that the centrally retained element of this funding remain at £0.13, as in 2020-21.

Members were informed that there were no proposed changes for the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) and Disability Access Fund (DAF). With regard to EYPP, the allocations to individual providers would continue to be based on a maximum eligibility of 38 weeks per year, 15 hours per week and an hourly rate of £0.53. In relation to DAF, members were advised that the allocation rate for eligible children would be £615 per child.

Members were made aware that the results of the Early Years Funding Formula Consultation 2021-22 had been distributed to Members in advance of the meeting. This consultation had gathered responses and opinion in relation to the proposals set out in this report.

Consultation was undertaken with 276 providers and 29 responses were received in relation to the proposals. From the information collated, it was explained that 79% of respondents agreed with the proposed increase in provider hourly rate for 3 and 4 year olds and 21% disagreed. A similar outcome was received in response to the proposed changes for 2 year old funding, with 74% of respondents agreeing with the proposals and 26% in disagreement.

A question was raised with regard to the centrally retained element of the funding, specifically, accessing funding for 2 year olds. It was explained that the LA was looking at the most effective ways to allocate this funding and that further working groups would be set up in relation to ensuring that this continued and offered best fit for providers. It was also confirmed that the LA was very stringent in where this funding was utilised and ensured that all funding proposals were compliant and subject to review.

A concern was raised with regard to the previous surplus in relation to Early Years Funding, when taking into consideration the relatively low starting points of children entering the primary sector. However, it was acknowledged that the funding model was complex, particularly when taking into account fluctuations in demand.

It was noted that there was one objection to approval of central retention of Early Years funding, with a suggestion that the PVI sector were not wholly satisfied with the support they were currently receiving in relation to centrally retained funding. However, it was acknowledged that the consultation had provided an opportunity for these views to be shared, in advance of any decisions being taken, and that this view had not been reflected in the consultation outcome.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted and supported**
- (ii) That the central retention of Early Years funding be approved**

31 SCHOOLS' FORUM FORWARD PLAN 2021/22

Consideration was given to a report of the Assistant Director of Finance and the Assistant Director of Education, which provided a forward plan of reports and meeting deadlines for the financial year 2021-22.

It was stated that Schools' Forum meetings had moved on-line since the first lockdown and had been held via zoom during 2020/21. Members were informed that the legislation, which had allowed these remote meetings to take place was due to cease on 31 March 2021. With this in mind, Members were advised that an update on how the next meeting would be held would be provided, once this had been established, and in response to any further changes in regulations and guidance.

The following dates for 2021-22 Schools' Forum meetings were proposed:

Tuesday 22 June 2021

Tuesday 28 September 2021

Tuesday 23 November 2021

Thursday 13 January 2022

Members views were sought with regard to conducting a review of Schools' Forum during 2021-22. It was noted that, whilst Members were keen to undertake the review and felt that this would be valuable in identifying next steps, they felt that this would be more beneficial later in the year. Members requested that this review be scheduled in the November meeting, when it was hoped that the effects of the current pandemic had eased and clarification of how future meetings would be held had been provided.

RESOLVED

(i) That the proposed meeting dates set out for 2021-22 be approved

(ii) That a review of Schools' Forum be carried out during 2021-22

32 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED

That the next meeting of The Schools Forum be held on Tuesday 22 June 2021 at 10am

CHAIR