

SCHOOLS FORUM

12 February 2019

Commenced: 10.00am

Terminated: 11.35am

Present:	Karen Burns (Chair)	Primary Schools – Academies
	Steve Marsland	Primary Schools –L/A Maintained
	Lisa Lockett	Primary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Lisa Gallaher	Primary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Andy Card	Primary Schools – LA/ Maintained
	Simon Brereton	Primary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Simon Wright	Primary Schools - Academies
	Susan Marsh	Governor, Primary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Anthony McDermott	Governor, Primary Schools – LA Maintained
	Donal Townson	Governor, Primary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Elizabeth Jones	Governor, Secondary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Richard O'Regan	Secondary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Gill McFadden	Secondary Schools - Academies
	Robin Elms	Special Schools – L/A Maintained
	Michael Wain	Pupil Referral Unit
	(For Rebeckah Hollingsworth)	
	Elaine Sagar	PVI Representative
	Elaine Horridge	Diocesan Representative
	Alison Hampson	TCC
	Tim Bowman	Assistant Director, Learning
	Christine Mullins	Finance Business Partner
	Louisa Siddall	Senior Accountant
	Wendy Lees	Senior Finance Officer
Apologies for absence:	Councillor Fairfoull	Executive Member, Performance and Finance
	Councillor Feeley	Executive Member, Lifelong Learning
	Heather Farrell	Primary Academy Schools
	Brendan Hesketh	Secondary Schools - Academies

16. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular, new Forum members as follows:

Elaine Sagar – PVI Representative replacing Lorna Meredith; and

Simon Brereton – Primary Schools L/A Maintained, who filled a vacancy in that sector.

She further welcomed Michael Wain – Pupil Referral Unit, attending in place of Rebeckah Hollingsworth, for this meeting.

The Chair also thanked outgoing members; Jon Murray, Andrea Ives and Maire Wright.

The Chair further announced that this was to be the last meeting of Alison Hampson, Tameside Consultative Committee representative, as she was retiring in the near future. She thanked Alison for her hard work for the Forum and wished her well for the future.

It was also confirmed that there were currently vacancies on the Forum, one in the Primary Maintained sector and one in the Primary Academy sector.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted by Forum members.

18. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 18 December 2018, having been circulated, were approved as a correct record, with the following typographical amendment: Minute 12, Resolution (ii), final paragraph should read 'Any elected member or officer of the Council cannot stand as Chair'.

19. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET UPDATE 2018/19

The Assistant Director of Finance and the Assistant Director of Education submitted a report updating Forum members on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) position for the 2018/19 financial year.

It was reported that the updated DSG settlement for 2018/19 was received in December 2018. The updated allocations included Additional Pressures funding of £0.517 million for High Needs as announced by the Secretary of State for Education, Damien Hinds, on 16 December 2018. The updated DSG settlement for 2018/19 and projected distribution/spend was detailed in Table 1 of the report. The projected deficit on the schools block related to diseconomies funding of £0.153 million (this would be funded from the reserve as previously agreed) and £0.056 million of business rates adjustments due to the actual charges being higher than estimated. This was partly offset by a small surplus on growth funding of £0.013 million and business rate relief from academy conversions and prior year adjustments of £0.125 million.

In respect of High Needs Funding update for 2018/19, it was explained that the budget had been updated to include the additional funding, as detailed above, and the revised forecast for year-end was an approximate deficit of £1.161 million (original deficit was £1.072 million in December 2018) the breakdown of which was shown in Table 2 of the report. It was noted, however, that there was work ongoing to verify the Independent and Post 16 spend, as well as completing the real time exercise for the Spring Term which could impact on the final outturn figure.

As previously reported to the Forum, the High Needs block was under significant pressure arising from a number of areas:

- The increasing high needs population such as special school places and resourced provision;
- Increase of Education Health Care Plans being issues;
- Increases in the number of Post 16 placements requiring top-up funding; and
- Increased spending in supporting Tameside children in the Independent Sector or Out of Borough placements.

It was explained that the funding pressures faced in Tameside were being replicated in local authorities across the country. As discussed previously, ways to manage these pressures were being considered whilst continuing to support those children most in need.

Table 3 of the report provided updated information in respect of Early Years allocations of the funding compared with projected distribution/spend against the grant. The projections were based on estimates for uptake and would continue to be updated throughout the financial year.

The known commitments and projected pressures on the DSG were detailed in Table 4 of the report. Ongoing monitoring would continue to review the position of the reserve.

RESOLVED

That the content of the report be noted.

20. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT FUNDING (DSG) FORMULA 2019/20

Consideration was given to a report of the Assistant Director of Finance and the Assistant Director of Education, which gave information in respect of the arrangements concerning the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for 2019/2020.

It was reported that the provisional DSG settlement for 2019/20 of £200.418 million was received on 17 December 2018. All DSG funding must be deployed to schools and/or pupils in accordance with the School and Early Years Finance (England) (No 2) Regulations 2018.

Table 1 of the report provided the breakdown of the provisional settlement for the four blocks within the DSG plus the High Needs additional pressures allocations announced in December 2018, compared with the 2018/19 updated settlement figures.

It was explained that the Schools Block 2019/20 was the largest element of DSG funding which provided the majority of funding for Mainstream Schools and Academies, with additional elements potentially being allocated through the Early Years and High Needs blocks. The schools block settlement from the DfE was made up of the following funding:

- A primary unit of funding of £4,141.62;
- A secondary unit of funding of £5,274.27;
(These units of funding were based on 2018/19 pupil numbers and characteristics and make up of the vast majority of the schools block);
- Premises – this included PFI and business rates which were based on historical spend; and
- Growth – this was calculated using the difference between the primary and secondary numbers on roll on the October 2017 and October 2018 school censuses.

A breakdown of the schools block settlement from DfE was detailed at Table 2 of the report. The rates used for each sector to allocate the funding to each individual school were included in Appendix A to the report.

In terms of growth, it was reported that the existing policy for the Growth Fund (attached as Appendix B to the report) would continue to be used. Schools Forum was requested to note and approve the inclusion of diseconomies funding to the Growth Fund Policy, (also detailed in Appendix B to the report), to fall in line with DfE recommendations. This would only apply to any new schools opening from 2019/20 onwards. There was an existing funding agreement in place for diseconomies, which Schools Forum had previously agreed to and the Council was not looking to change this historic agreement.

It was further explained that there were two types of growth that were funded from the Growth Fund: Explicit Growth and Implicit Growth and details of both were given in the report.

Forum members were informed that, during a review of the formula for 2019/20, schools had asked for a split site criterion to be established. The purpose of this factor was to support schools that had unavoidable extra costs because the school buildings were on separate sites. The proposed criteria was detailed, along with a proposed funding allocation at Table 5 of the report. There were no schools funded from the Schools block. However, this factor would apply to the Tameside Pupil Referral Service, which was funded by the High Needs Block.

De-delegation was the terminology employed by the DfE in relation to Schools Forum representatives of Council Maintained Schools voting on whether to support mandatory charging to all Council Maintained Schools for certain Council services. The Primary and Secondary sector were asked to vote separately in relation to each of the services, following discussion with their wider stakeholder colleagues.

Academies did not have the option of de-delegating but had the opportunity to procure the service as a traded service. The charge would be on the same basis as de-delegation. Schools Forum was asked to approve the de-delegation of: Trade Union Support and Contingency budgets for 2019/20 as detailed in Table 6 of the report.

As in previous financial years, schools were asked to support safeguarding in the Borough, by agreeing to make a contribution of £0.096 million towards the cost of the Tameside Safeguarding Children Board. All schools were asked to support the continuation of this arrangement in 2019/20. This equated to approximately £2.76 per child.

In respect of High Needs 2019/20, it was reported that in December 2018, the government released the provisional 2019/20 High Needs Block Allocation of £20.854 million. This was an increase in funding of £1.013 million compared to 2018/19 current settlements. In addition to this, the Local Authority received Additional Pressures funding of £0.571 million both in 2018/19 and 2019/20. Table 7 of the report illustrated the changes compared to 2018/19 and Table 8 of the report broke down the settlement into the various factors.

With regard to the Early Years Block, the yearly years block provisional settlement from the DfE was shown in Table 9 of the report. It was explained that the allocations were currently based on Schools, Early Years and Alternative Provision censuses data from January 2018 and would be updated based on January 2019 and January 2020 census data.

In respect of the Central School Services Block (CSSB), it was explained that this block was introduced in 2018/19 to fund statutory duties the Local Authority undertakes for both maintained schools and academies. The CSSB brought together:

- Funding previously allocated through the retained duties element of the Education Services Grant (ESG);
- Funding for ongoing central function such as admissions which were previously top sliced from the schools block; and
- Residual funding for historic commitments of which there were none for Tameside MBC.

The allocation to the Council was based on a per pupil element of £26.99 for ongoing duties (i.e Admissions, Schools Forum, copyright Licenses, former ESG duties) totalling £0.925 million.

The DSG operational guidance for 2019/202 required the Council to formally request Schools' Forum approval for the central retention of the following:

- £0.226 million to support the School Admissions service;
- £0.005 million to support the costs of the Schools Forum; and
- £0.523 million to support elements of the Councils centrally retained duties (formally the retained duties element of the ESG)

Detailed discussion ensued in respect of each aspect of the report and the recommendations to the Forum.

Particular concerns were made in respect of the Split Site criterion and members sought a review of the criteria to form part of a consultation process with schools for 2020/21.

Forum members sought further clarity in respect of de-delegation of Trade Union Support and Contingency budgets and the need for transparency and requested further information regarding the criteria for spend from the Contingency budget.

The Assistant Director of Education, in his response, explained that the Funding Group would decide the criteria and this would be reported back the Forum at a future meeting. He further highlighted the importance of having a plan in place to mitigate against financial pressures.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the content of the report be noted and supported;
- (ii) That the proposed Dedicated Schools Grant 2019/20 proposed funding formula for mainstream schools, as detailed in the report, be approved;
- (iii) That the Growth Fund for 2019/20, as detailed in the report, be approved;
- (iv) That Primary Maintained School Members approve to de-delegate the costs of the following services for financial year 2019/20:
 - Trade Union Support
- (v) That Secondary Maintained School Members approve to de-delegate the costs of the following services for financial year 2019/20:
 - Trade Union Support; and
 - Schools Contingency.
- (vi) That the Split Site criteria, as detailed in the report, be approved for 2019/20 subject to review of the criteria to form part of a consultation with schools for 2020/21;
- (vii) That schools' continued contribution to the Tameside Safeguarding Board for 2019/20 be supported;
- (viii) That the central retention of Early Years funding, as detailed in the report, be approved;
- (ix) That the allocation of the Central Services Schools Block be approved as follows:
 - The retention of £0.226 million to support the cost of the Admissions service;
 - The retention of £5,000 to support the cost of the Schools Forum; and
 - The retention of £0.523 million to support elements of the Councils Centrally Retained duties (formerly the retained duties element of the ESG).

21. SCHOOLS' FORUM FORWARD PLAN 2019/20

A report of the Assistant Director of Finance and the Assistant Director of Education submitted a report outlining the timetable and schedule of meeting and reports to be presented for the upcoming year, forming a forward plan.

RESOLVED

That the meeting dates set out for 2019/20 and the reports to be tabled at each meeting, be noted.

22. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED

To note the date of the next meeting of the Schools Forum as Tuesday 25 June 2019 at 10.00am, Discovery Academy, Porlock Avenue, Hyde.