

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

GATESHEAD SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING

Thursday, 7 December 2017

PRESENT

Ken Childs	Special Schools Governor (Chair)
Denise Kilner	Nursery Sector Representative
Councillor Chris McHugh	Elected Member Representative
Sarah Diggle	Primary Governors
Julie Goodfellow	Primary Academy Headteachers
Peter Lague	Trade Union Representative
Mustafaa Malik	Primary Headteachers
Ethel Mills	PVI Sector Representative
Chris Richardson	Secondary Headteachers
Allan Symons	Primary Governors
Steve Williamson	Pupil Referral Unit Representative
Louise Levy	Secondary Academies

IN ATTENDANCE:

Alan Foster	Corporate Resources
Carole Smith	Corporate Resources
Steve Horne	Care, Wellbeing and Learning
Jenny Edwards	Care, Wellbeing and Learning
Jeanne Pratt	Care, Wellbeing and Learning
Julie Robertshaw	Care, Wellbeing and Learning
Melvyn Mallam-Churchill	Corporate Services & Governance

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from: Elaine Pickering and Clive Wisby.

2 MINUTES

It was noted that Steve Horne's attendance was omitted from the previous minutes – it was confirmed that he was in attendance.

All other minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2017 were agreed as a true record.

3 DE-DELEGATION - ETHNIC MINORITY AND TRAVELLER ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE

The Forum received a report on the De-delegation – Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service.

The Forum were advised that in the last year Gateshead has again seen a rise in Ethnic Minority and Gypsy Roma and Traveller children attending school in the borough. It was noted that of these children 6.54% were identified as having a first language other than English.

It was said that the role of the EMTAS has been reviewed with input from primary head teachers and attendance by the manager at Cluster meetings and at Talking Heads. It was noted that Primary maintained mainstream schools have access to a variety of core services including assessment of language skills for pupils with EAL.

The Forum were made aware that there are currently 63 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils in Gateshead supported in seven primary schools. It was also noted that there are regular fortnightly drop in sessions available at the Dryden Centre for secondary age pupils who are home educated and that there are some who attend regularly. It was said that links have been established with regional colleagues and the team are now part of the Naldic Special Interest group (National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum) and a Regional Special Interest Group led by Newcastle University Staff.

It was noted that mainstream maintained primary schools with more than 20% EAL pupils have a weekly visit from an EMTAS specialist and that four secondary schools and academies have an SLA with EMTAS for weekly visits.

It was said that Newcastle University volunteers are also offering a 'Language into Schools' project in partnership with EMTAS commencing November 2017. The Forum were advised that separate funding has been secured to employ a refugee integration officer for twelve months to work with Syrian refugees placed through the Governments Resettlement Programme.

It was proposed that to enable EMTAS to continue to provide their services to schools that schools de-delegate their funding. The report outlined the proposal to change the flat amount of £13.42 for all maintained mainstream primary school pupils to a rate of £3.00 for all maintained mainstream primary school pupils with an additional amount of £245.00 for each primary EAL pupil.

It was noted that schools with no EAL pupils will not receive funding however the funding model as outlined in the report was fair. It was also said that it was welcomed that schools are continuing to receive support from the fair access panel.

It was asked where the money has come from to support the Syrian refugees in schools – it was noted that this money has come from the Home Office.

A question was raised regarding the statutory responsibilities of the Council as it was noted an EMTAS worker was providing support on hate crime. Steve Horne advised he would speak with Cllr Chris Hughes to get a clear answer on this.

Forum members noted that Jenny Edwards is doing a great job since coming into post in April 2017 and passed on their thanks.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum note the work undertaken by EMTAS and approve funding for the service to enable them to continue their work in Gateshead.

4 DE-DELEGATION - FAIR ACCESS PANEL EDUCATION PSYCHOLOGIST AND PRIMARY IN SCHOOL SUPPORT SERVICE

The Forum received a report on the De-delegation – Fair Access Panel (FAP) Education Psychologist (EP) and Primary In-School Support Service.

It was noted that the purpose of the report was to bring to the Schools Forum an update on existing services (FAP EP and Primary Behaviour Support) that is currently funded through de-delegation and to consider de-delegation for 2018/2019 financial year.

The report was reviewed and it was noted that the work being done within primary schools is increasing due to growing demand for behavioural support. The Forum was advised from the report that advice and support has been provided in a number of areas including behaviour management, bereavement and anger management.

It was noted that the Primary Behaviour Support Team consists of four special needs teaching assistants and two teachers who during the 2016/17 academic year provided 67% of primary schools with support with excellent feedback.

It was said that the work of the team was not intended to duplicate support that is already available within schools but to provide additional support to maximise interventions.

The work of the Primary Fair Access Educational Psychologist was presented. It was noted that there has also been an increase in the number of children interacting with the EP within schools which has allowed the needs to children to be met within school. From the report the Board were advised that there have been 50 referrals to the EP, 29 of which were made during the 2016/17 academic year.

A comment was made that the support from the Primary Behaviour Support Team has been invaluable but concerns were noted that capacity may become a problem with increasing demand for support. It was said that the service would be reviewed as demand grows.

The proposed de-delegation values are:

- a. Fair Access Educational Psychologist - £4.50 per public (primary only)
- b. Primary Behaviour Support - £8.08 per pupil (primary only)
Or £3.00 per pupil and £20.00 based on low prior attainment pupil numbers.

RESOLVED – That the de-delegation of funds to the Primary Fair Access Educational Psychologist and the Primary Behaviour Support Team special needs assistants is approved.

5 EARLY YEARS PAYMENT OPTIONS PROPOSALS AND CONSULTATION

The Forum received the report Consultation on the Frequency of Payments to Early Years Providers.

It was advised that the payments relate to funding for eligible two year olds, the universal entitlement and the additional entitlement for eligible working parents of three and four year olds for private voluntary and independent providers, and academies.

It was noted that the report details a proposed cash flow change and not any change in funding – it would mean that Early Years providers would go from receiving two payments per term (one received at the start and another at the end) to eleven payments spread across the year.

It was advised that it would be best for providers to either remain on the current system rather than to switch to the alternative. To have providers receiving payments at different frequencies would be difficult to manage. Members were also advised that a new computer system is to be implemented to manage the issuing of payments the alternative payment pattern.

RESOLVED – That the Schools Forum agree to grant permission to brief providers on the monthly payment system and to consult with providers on their preferred payment frequency option.

6 SCHOOL FUNDING UPDATE AND PROPOSED MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS FORMULA

The Forum received the report Schools Funding Update and Proposed Mainstream Formula. It was noted that the report has been written to update the Forum on school funding developments and to ask the Forum to approve proposals made by the Mainstream Schools Funding Sub Group.

The Forum was advised that the local authority will have a say on how the formula will be implemented – it is proposed that a transitional implementation model is used to alleviate any negative impact of the move to the National Funding Formula (NFF).

The proposed formula adhered to the agreed Principles of:

- An affordable equitable and transparent mainstream school funding formula
- A formula that will focus only on mainstream school age range – not taking other age ranges into account (e.g. post 16 or 2, 3, and 4 year olds)
- A formula that where possible prepares schools for the NFF and moves Gateshead's formula in the direction of travel towards the NFF

And the funding aims of:

- Phase the changes required over the next two funding periods
- A primary secondary ratio of 1:129
- 3% funding gains cap

- Minimise the value of MFG

An overview of Gateshead's current formula compared to the NFF was provided in addition to various factor values including phased factor values, proposed factor values for 2018/19, the proposed authority proforma tool summary and various school level data.

The different appendices were talked through to provide an overview of the work of the mainstream schools funding sub group and how they had reached the proposals that they were recommending to Schools Forum.

It was noted that the factor values and the actual allocations will change when the updated Authority Proforma Tool is issued and the actual funding available for the formula is provided by the DfE usually mid-December.

A comment was made that Gateshead's position to phase in the changes shows a much more strategic position compared to neighbouring authorities.

Several members of Schools Forum noted compliments to Carole Smith for the work she has put in to the report and its appendices.

RESOLVED – That the Schools Forum approved the principles and funding aims proposed in the report and the proposed mainstream funding formula.

7 SCHOOLS FUNDING CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

The Forum received the report Schools Funding Formula Review to allow for input into the proposed mainstream schools funding formula for 2018/19, consultation document and timetable on the schools funding formula review.

It was noted that the consultation period with schools would be very short due to DfE timescales.

It was advised from the report that the DfE have introduced a national funding formula to local authorities for the schools block, high needs block and central schools services block from 2018/19.

It was noted that the consultation paper will be sent to all schools to allow them to make an information decision on the proposals.

RESOLVED – That the Schools Forum reviewed and agreed the consultation document.

8 DISAPPLICATION OF SCHOOLS AND EARLY YEARS FINANCE (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS

The Forum received the report Disapplication of schools and Early Years Finance Regulations. The report outlines the application of the Secretary of State for

Education to disapply the Schools and Early Years Finance regulations to enable a positive minimum funding guarantee (MFG) to be set up to a value of 0.5% for mainstream schools. Following the disapplication request an e-mail was received from the DfE stating that LA's were no longer required to disapply the regulations to have up to a 0.5% positive MFG.

RESOLVED – That the Schools Forum noted the contents of the report.

9 DISCRETIONARY SCHOOL MEALS - UNIVERSAL CREDIT

The Forum received the report outlining a proposal to use Dedicated Schools Grant reserves to provide schools with funding to provide a discretionary school meal following the roll out of Universal Credit in Gateshead.

It was noted that there is an up to eight week window for a claimant to wait from making a claim for Universal Credit to receiving their first payment. It was said that the benefits team in Gateshead have been doing a good job on developing the process that will allow funding to be provided to schools provided a meal to children whose parents/guardians are awaiting a payment of UC.

It was noted that the priority of schools is to look after its pupils but that this was a social issue and not a schooling issue. It was said that there is an ongoing anti-poverty strategy in place but that the timescale to react to the impact of the UC rollout is tight. The use of reserves will provide the most immediate solution however a longer term plans will be drafted in due course.

RESOLVED – That the Schools Forum approved the use of DSG reserves to provide schools with funding of the price of a meal taken by a child for a maximum of 8 weeks following the claim for UC by a parent/guardian.

10 CONSULTATION - ELIGIBILITY FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS AND THE EARLY YEARS PUPIL PREMIUM UNDER UNIVERSAL CREDIT

The Forum received the report to draw attention to the Department for Education (DfE) Consultation on Eligibility for Free School Meals and Early Years Pupil Premium under Universal Credit.

RESOLVED – That the Schools Forum noted the contents of the report.

11 DE-DELEGATION - TRADE UNION FACILITY TIME AND MATERNITY CREDITS

The Forum received the report outlining the options to consider for de-delegation so that maintained schools by phases (primary and secondary schools) can consult with their sector on the options for de-delegation.

It was noted that revenue funding arrangements for schools changed following the

school's funding review which commenced in 2013.14. It is now not permissible for LA's to hold budgets centrally for the provision of some services to schools. This previously centrally held funding has been delegated to schools on a per pupil basis. The Forum were advised of some areas that schools have the options for de-delegation which included staff costs, which include supply cover for maternity and trade union facility time.

RESOLVED – That the Schools Forum approved the de-delegation of:

- a) Maternity Credits at £8.00 per pupil
- b) Trade Union Facility Time at £4.00 per pupil

For both primary and secondary maintained schools

** Peter Largue declared an interest in this item but was not part of any discussion around the report.*

12 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT REVENUE MONITORING

The Forum received the report Dedicated Schools Grant Revenue Monitoring Qtr 2 2017/18.

The Forum were advised that the quarter 2 report for 2017/18 shows a projected outturn of £102.749m against the budget of £101.147m which results in an overspend of £1.602m. It was noted that the overspend is being action planned to reduce it as much as possible to year end but that DSG reserves will be required to meet the final overspend.

It was highlighted from the report that DSG reserves currently total £3.167m so the overspend for 2017/18 remains at the current level and if reserves are used the reserve balance would be reduced to £1.565m to carry forward into 2018/19.

RESOLVED – That the Schools Forum noted the content of the report and approved the projected overspend to be met from DSG reserves in 2017/18.

13 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The date and time of the next meeting is Tuesday 19th December at 2:00pm.