

# GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

## GATESHEAD SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING

Thursday, 17 March 2016

<b>PRESENT</b>	Ken Childs (Chair)	
	M Brain	Elected member representative
	Sarah Diggle	Primary Governors
	Denise Henry	Nursery Sector Representative
	Peter Largue	Trade Union Representative
	Mustafaa Malik	Primary Haedteachers
	Ethel Mills	PVI Sector Representative
	Elaine Pickering	Secondary Governors
	Andrew Ramanandi	RC Primary Headteachers
	Chris Richardson	Secondary Headteachers
	Michelle Richards	Special School Headteachers
	Steve Williamson	Pupil Referral Unit Representative

### IN ATTENDANCE:

#### 1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Allan Symons, Julie Goodfellow, Christine Ingle, Mark Lovatt and Linda Alder.

#### 2 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

#### 3 EARLY YEARS REVENUE UNDERSPEND

A report was presented to the Forum requesting agreement on the use of some of the Early Years Block underspend to create additional two year old funded places. Two schemes in the west of the Borough were proposed, all providers have been consulted with.

The proposals are for Crawcrook and Ryton. In Crawcrook an expression of interest was received from Emmaville Primary School, discussions were held with the school and two possible schemes developed. It was noted that there is no capacity within the footprint of the current school therefore an option of a demountable classroom, at an approximate cost of £175,000, was proposed as an option. The alternative of an extension to the existing building would cost approximately £380,000, this exceeds the remaining underspend in reserves.

In terms of Ryton, expressions of interest were received from Crookhill Early Years Pre-School and Care with Cuddles Day Nursery. At Crookhill Early Years either demountable accommodation or an extension would be needed, this would be at a

similar cost to Emmaville, approximately £175,000. In relation to Care with Cuddles, no building works would be required, however revenue grant of £11,000 would be needed to support the purchase of equipment.

It was noted that there are currently two year old spaces at nurseries in Ryton village but there had been no take up, therefore it would be better to expand Crookhill. Concerns were raised that this could lead to investment in something which goes against a current provider which is in place. The cost of the demountable was also queried as the Forum felt there could be better value for money options. It was confirmed however that council services must be used. The Forum therefore requested that a full breakdown of costs be provided as well as a further report giving supply and demand analysis.

RESOLVED -

That no decision can be made on the proposals until a cost breakdown and a supply and demand analysis be brought back to a future meeting.

#### **4 DSG QUARTER 3 BUDGET MONITORING**

The Forum received the quarter three position of DSG for 2015/16. It was reported that overall there is an underspend of £10,000, this is compared to £900,000 last year. There is an overspend of £51,000 in the High Needs budget, this is due to vacant posts filled and an increase in PRU top up costs as a result of increased permanent exclusions.

There is underspend of £34,000 in the Early Years budget and £82,000 underspend in the termination of employment costs.

RESOLVED -

That the Schools Forum noted the content of the report.

#### **5 PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS**

A report was presented on the process for charging schools a tariff following a permanent exclusion. Schools now have funding recouped for a permanently excluded child, on a pro rata basis. The report addresses the short fall in the High Needs Block.

It was confirmed that there has been an increase in permanent exclusions over the last two years. In 2013/14 there were 24 permanent exclusions across Gateshead, 2014/15 there were 54 and for 2015/16 so far there have been 44 permanent exclusions.

Analysis of the exclusions has been undertaken, however there are no obvious patterns. The majority of exclusions were in Key Stage 4 and was for challenging behaviour, persistent ongoing disruptive behaviour. 22% of exclusions during

2014/15 were due to drug related incidents. This year 90% of exclusions were due to persistent disruptive behaviour. It was noted that it is easier to place those children back in school who have been involved in a serious one off incident rather than those pupils who have persistently shown challenging behaviour. Therefore, as there is a high number of such exclusions this year, this will mean an increase in the number of pupils in the PRU.

A discussion was held at GASH around the proposal to implement a financial adjustment of £2,000 for each pupil who is excluded. GASH agreed that this was not currently a viable option to take forward.

It was questioned as to the reasons why GASH did not agree with option one. It was confirmed that GASH viewed this as a permanent exclusion tariff and it was therefore essentially unfair. Schools needed to retain their right to exclude and GASH felt that the proposal was a tax and a disincentive to exclude; it would also have more of an impact on some schools than others. GASH recognised the issue and acknowledged the problem in secondary schools and agreed it creates a burden on the High Needs Block.

It was queried why there has been a recent increase in the number of exclusions. It was noted that previously funding was available for alternative measures to deal with young people within schools to prevent permanent exclusions. It was noted that schools are reluctant to exclude but now there are no alternative routes and schools are under pressure to get results and therefore take action to ensure results are achieved.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum noted the report and that further work will be undertaken to resolve the funding pressures in the high needs block, and the cost of educating permanently excluded pupils.

## **6 MAINSTREAM SCHOOL TOP UPS**

The Forum received a report for approval on the Mainstream schools top up rates from April 2016. It was proposed that the bandings are reduced by 1.5% in line with MFG.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum approved the mainstream banding proposal for 2016/17.

## **7 SPECIAL SCHOOLS FUNDING AMENDMENTS**

A report was presented outlining the proposed amendments to the Special School Funding Formula.

It was reported that Eslington is now operating on a split site, Eslington previously received contingency funding and the position has been monitored. It was noted that approximately £85,000 should be added to Eslington's fixed costs as a proportion of the cost of running the site.

Furrowfield previously had its mini bus costs funded centrally from DSG, this has changes and the cost has been added to Furrowfield's fixed costs, in line with other schools. This estimated cost of the mini buses for 2016/17 is £22,500.

The Cedars school has increased substantially, there are now 138 pupils on roll, which is over a 60% increase in numbers since 2013/14. A proportion of the fixed costs has been calculated at £32,000.

In terms of Gibside School, this has expanded into Blaydon Children's Centre and fixed cost of the rental of the site is £13,000.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum approved the proposed increases to the special schools fixed costs.

## **8 PRU FUNDING FORMULA**

The Forum received a report outlining the proposed amendment to the PRU Funding Formula. The new funding model is based on commissioned place numbers and a number of top ups, and reflects hospital and home education funding.

It was noted that this is a step in the right direction to ensure funding is applicable to the resources required.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum approved the proposed new PRU funding formula.

## **9 COMMISSIONED HIGH NEEDS PLACES**

A report was presented to the Forum on the proposed commissioning arrangements for High Needs Places for 2016/17. It was reported that places will be commissioned, less the out of borough places, in order to protect the High Needs block.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum noted the report.

## **10 NATIONAL LIVING WAGE IMPLICATIONS**

The Forum received an update on the National Living Wage and was advised that HR Officers have written to all Headteacher's. There are implications for all Gateshead schools and a further report will be brought back to the Forum next year.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum noted that there will be an impact on schools budgets with the implementation of the NLW.

## **11 UPDATE FROM THE FAIR FUNDING CONFERENCE**

The Forum received an update from the National Fair Funding Conference and the two consultations; Schools National Funding Formula, High Needs Funding Formula and other Reforms.

The consultation areas for the National Funding Formula include; removal of the LAC factor and removal of mobility factor. Work is ongoing to create a new Centrally Held Block of the DSG as it is proposed that the DfE will remove the flexibility to move funding between the different DSG blocks. The DfE is looking to reduce LA responsibility for school improvement and all other duties that are not consistent with the Admissions, fair access, transport arrangements and ensuring vulnerable pupil's needs are met. The Education Services Grant will be paid to local authorities at the current rate for 2016/17 and the first five months of 2017/18 to reflect the academic year.

In terms of the High Needs Funding Formula the areas for consultation were outlined, and the factors to be used to move to a national funding formula at a local authority level. In particular it was highlighted that the consultation looks at a five year implementation period, which will include a proportion of 2016/17 spending levels. Also, the removal of notional SEN from 2019/20 and removal of £10,000 per place funding for ARMs replaced by 'normal' mainstream formula funding plus £6,000 for each of the places.

It was noted that draft responses to both consultations are currently being written and it was proposed that an additional meeting be arranged to allow the Forum to debate the response to the consultations.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the Schools Forum noted the information contained within the report.
  - (ii) That the Schools Forum noted and agreed to review the consultation documents.
  - (iii) That the Schools Forum noted the additional meeting date of 14 April 2016.

## 12 MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT WORKER

Following the update at the last meeting, the Forum was advised that the bid for £72,000 funding for a high quality mental health worker was unsuccessful. This was due to the high levels of application and demand for funding.

It was noted that there is still some matched funding, therefore it was proposed that this be used for a mental health worker to work out of the PRU in addition to a post for LAC pupils.

The point was made that children in mainstream schools have no service at this level and if there was more mental health support at Key Stages 1 and 2, this may

negate the need for this work in the PRU.

RESOLVED -

That the Schools Forum approved the funding of £72,000 from reserves to provide matched funding for the HEE Innovation fund application.

**13**

**DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> April at 10.00am.