

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

GATESHEAD SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING

Thursday, 18 July 2019

PRESENT:

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| Ken Childs (Chair) | Special Schools Governor |
| Denise Kilner | Nursery Sector Representative |
| Sarah Diggle | Primary Governors |
| Steve Haigh | Secondary Academy Headteachers |
| Peter Lague | Trade Union Representative |
| Mustafaa Malik | Primary Headteachers |
| Ethel Mills | PVI Sector Representative |
| Andrew Ramanandi | Primary Headteachers |
| Michelle Richards | Special School Headteachers |
| Domenic Volpe | Maintained Secondary Headteachers |
| Christina Jones | Pupil Referral Unit |
| Councillor Sheila Gallagher | Elected Member |
| Chris Richardson | GASH |

IN ATTENDANCE: Carole Smith, Claire Reid, Rosalyn Patterson and Cllr Gary Haley

APOLOGIES: Chris Toon, Julie Goodfellow and Allan Symons

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Allan Symons and Chris Toon.

2 MINUTES

Following the last meeting it was agreed that further information would be brought back to September's meeting around centrally retained duties.

RESOLVED - The minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

3 USE OF DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT RESERVES

Schools Forum received a report seeking approval for the use of DSG reserves to fund deficit budgets in relation to the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and Heworth Grange School. It was noted that the deficit budget was from before the schools transferred to academy status.

Forum was concerned that the DSG is for the benefit of all schools and all pupils and therefore should not be used to fund deficit budgets. The point was also made that

this does not appear allowable under current guidance (paragraph 6.2 - The treatment of surplus and deficit balances when maintained schools become Academies Guidance March 2018).

It was acknowledged that previously deficit budgets have been funded from reserves, for example for Thomas Hepburn School, however it was suggested that this was under previous guidance.

Forum agreed that any deficit should be picked up by either the Multi Academy Trust of the Local Authority.

The Forum voted on whether to approve the use of DSG reserves.

RESOLVED - Forum unanimously voted to reject the proposal to write off the two deficit balances to contingency.

4 SCHOOLS BALANCES

Forum received a report on the school balances for 2018/19. It was reported that at the end of the financial year the maintained schools balances increased by £1m, this was due to receiving £800,000 capital and FSM funding (£440 per pupil) from 2017/18 as a result of increased FSM numbers.

It was noted that overall the number of schools in deficit has increased and the value of the deficits has slightly decreased.

It was questioned whether the figures reflect that those struggling schools are the schools which do not receive Pupil Premium. It was noted that it seems to be those schools where something has happened, for example senior leadership sickness and paying for replacements, which seems to be an increasing scenario in Gateshead. The point was made that those schools not in receipt of Pupil Premium have increasing pressure on management due to not having the budget for Teaching Assistants.

RESOLVED -

- (i) Schools Forum noted the value of maintained school balances and the in-year increase of balances by £1m to the year-end value of £6.527m
- (ii) Schools Forum noted the number of schools with a deficit balance at the end of 2018/19
- (iii) Schools Forum noted the decrease in the value of deficit balances at the end of 2018/19.

5 USE OF GROWTH FUND

A report was presented informing the Forum of the successful application for Growth Funding by Ravensworth Terrace Primary School for the sum of £35,000.

It was noted that this application will happen year on year until the school is full as the new build school increases to a two form entry.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum noted that funding has been awarded to Ravensworth Terrace Primary School for growth in pupil numbers.

6 DSG OUTTURN

Schools Forum received a report on the outturn position of DSG for 2018/19. The outturn position was £100.405m against the budget of £99.421m, resulting in an overspend of £984,000.

The budget increased during the year following the additional £0.420m High Needs Block grant. The overspend was adjusted in year by £644,000 Early Years settlement update for 2017/18 following updated census information. This resulted in a call on reserves of £340,000.

It was reported that there is a carry forward of £816,000.

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

7 EARLY YEARS INCLUSION FUND

Forum received a report on the Early Years Funding modelling for 2019/20. It was noted that the formula has not changed, however supplement rates have changed for quality and deprivation.

The point was made that not all Headteachers will be fully aware that two-year-old funding will not be paid until the term after they turn three. It was agreed that an email will be sent to Headteachers to confirm.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum noted the updated EYSFF factor values and note the two-year-old funding rate.

8 DIRECTED REVISIONS TO THE SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS

A report was presented to Forum on the changes to the Schools and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2018 (no. 2). The updated regulations bring in line alternative provision pupils to claw back funding on the same basis as permanently excluded pupils.

RESOLVED - That Schools Forum noted the changes to the Schools and Early Years Finance (England) 2018 (No. 2) Regulations, and that mainstream schools will have funding recouped for all children leaving a mainstream school and then attending

alternative provision which is paid for by the local authority from April 2019.

9 NEW GROWTH FUND

A report was presented on the draft updated Growth Fund Procedure for those pupils leaving Thomas Hepburn if current secondary schools take on all additional pupils.

A number of concerns around the proposed procedure were raised prior to the meeting, it was agreed that a copy of this would be circulated to the Forum. This included issues around those schools which have admitted over their PANs historically, and also whether Gateshead is a net importer or exporter of pupils.

RESOLVED - That Schools Forum agreed to defer this report and receive a revised paper for September's meeting which would take into account the suggestions made.

10 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

26 September 2019, 10am, Gateshead Civic Centre.