

**GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**GATESHEAD SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING**

**Thursday, 9 June 2016**

**PRESENT**

Ken Childs	Special School Governors
Steve Haigh	Secondary Academy Headteachers
Denise Henry	Nursery Sector Representative
Mustafaa Malik	Primary Headteachers
Andrew Ramanandi	RC Primary Headteachers
Michelle Richards	Special School Headteachers
Allan Symons	Primary Governors
Steve Williamson	Pupil Referral Unit Representative
Clive Wisby	Primary Headteachers
Matthew Younger	Primary Headteachers

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Cllr Chris McHugh	Elected Member
Carole Smith	Corporate Resources
Frank McDermott	Corporate Resources
Alan Foster	Corporate Resources
Jan Batchelor	Care, Wellbeing and Learning
Gillian Dodds	Care, Wellbeing and Learning
John Watson	Communities and Environment
Rosalyn Patterson	Corporate Resources and Governance

**1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Peter Largue, Chris Richardson, Sarah Diggle, Jim Thomson, Ethel Mills, Elaine Pickering and Julie Goodfellow.

**2 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

**3 DSG OUTTURN**

The Forum received the final outturn position of DSG for 2015/16. It was reported that the outturn is £94.959m against the budget of £95.333m, therefore an underspend of £0.374m. In addition, there was an additional £155,000 Early Years settlement for 2014/15 which was received in 2015/16, so a total of £529,000 to be added to the DSG reserve. Therefore the balance to be carried forward to 2016/17 is £3.357m.

The areas of underspend were identified as; High Needs Budget, including ARMS provision, and also premature retirement costs.

It was questioned whether the underspend on ARMS was in fact an under fund, as schools are giving them up as they are too costly, therefore the reason there is an underspend is because the provision is underfunded. It was confirmed that the withdrawal of provision has led to this underspend.

It was queried if this is a typical amount of underspend over the last few years. It was confirmed that generally there is an underspend every year and this is the highest reserves so far as there has not been any big calls on reserves recently.

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

#### **4 USE OF DSG RESERVES**

The Forum received a report on the use of DSG reserves to fund additional special school places for Gibside early years pupils. The Forum was advised that work would only be undertaken once Ward Councillors had been consulted.

It was noted that a number of Gibside pupils are placed at Blaydon Children's Centre in an early years unit and it is proposed that this be extended to increase pupil numbers by 15. There is a need to increase provision as there is no room on the Gibside site, there is an increasing need to place young children with complex needs and currently there is not sufficient capacity within the borough.

It is proposed that £16,308 from reserves be used for the works at the Children's Centre and Local Environmental Services has agreed to 'match fund' the project and will contribute £18,600.

The point was raised that more thought is needed as to the longer term position as this proposed works is reactive. It was confirmed that an officer group has been established to look at the whole population due to increasing primary numbers, pressure on two and three year old places and increasing SEN, the group will look at pinch points and how to use funding better.

It was queried whether academies could also apply for match funding, it was confirmed that all schools who buy in to the service can apply for a maximum of £40,000.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum approved the proposal to fund £16,308 from DSG reserves for the work to be undertaken at Blaydon Children's Centre for the additional early years children.

#### **5 USE OF EARLY YEARS UNDERSPEND**

A report was presented on the use of the Early Years Block underspend to create additional two year old funded places in Crookhill and Ryton. It was noted that at the meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016 a further cost breakdown and supply and demand analysis was requested before the Forum could make any decision.

An analysis of demand was undertaken based on the information received from the DWP. In terms of the Ryton, Crookhill and Stella ward, as at February 2016 there were 24 eligible two year olds, 9 of whom had taken up a place and 15 had not. In Crawcrook and Greenside there were 19 eligible children, 9 had taken up a place and 10 had not. Further more recent data from the DWP in April indicated that in September there will be 3 eligible children in Stella, 5 in Crookhill, 8 in Ryton, 8 in Greenside and 8 in Crawcrook who as yet had not taken up a place.

All providers have been consulted around their supply of places. In Ryton, Crookhill and Stella from September there are 10 places available at Care with Cuddles and four at Crookhill Early Years, however there are no places available at Willows Montessori in September. Therefore, as indicated by the demand analysis, a further two places are required for September. In Crawcrook and Greenside there are currently no places available at Bright Sparks and there will be no places in September. Therefore a further 14 places are required.

Neighbouring wards were then looked at to establish whether any places could be accessed there. In terms of Stella, it could reasonably be expected that three children could access provision in Blaydon and there would be places for eight children living in the Ryton area at Care with Cuddles. Therefore there are still three areas with insufficient available places; Crawcrook, Crookhill and Greenside.

Greenside Primary School has been approached but do not want to provide two year old places. Therefore the following options were proposed to the Forum;

- Create places in Emmaville Primary School and Crookhill Early Years
- Create places at Emmaville Primary School only
- Create places at Crookhill Early Years only
- Enhance the learning resources at Care with Cuddles

Following a feasibility study the recommended options were; create places at Emmaville, through a demountable building at a cost of £205,000 and enhance the learning resources at Care with Cuddles, at a cost of £11,000.

It was noted that the funding for resources at Care with Cuddles will help the setting obtain a 'good' Ofsted rating when they are inspected, as places can only be funded in good or outstanding settings.

It was questioned whether any second hand demountable units had been priced. It was confirmed that this had not been looked at and prices were sought through a private company, however if this progresses the tender process will be followed.

It was queried what the £11,000 would be used for at Care with Cuddles. It was confirmed that the provision is ran out of a church hall, there is a lot of communal play areas and the funding will be used to further enhance the provision. It was questioned whether there is any precedent for giving private companies funding. It was confirmed that this has been done previously. It was also noted that Education Gateshead has provided support in terms of enhancing the provision. It was queried whether the profits are used for resources. It was acknowledged that Care with Cuddles only makes a small profit, the £11,000 is a start-up grant and will not be

provided again.

It was acknowledged that in the long term work needs to continue with partners to provide quality provision, which could impact on later school years.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the Schools Forum approved the option to create places at Emmaville Primary School.
  - (ii) That the Schools Forum approved the option to enhance the learning resources at Care with Cuddles.

## **6 SCHOOLS SURPLUS BALANCES REVIEW OF 2015/16 LICENCES**

The Forum received a report on the current schools surplus balances. Forum was advised that last financial year £415,000 was approved, the surplus balance has reduced by £231,000. A list of schools with funding sill to spend was provided to the Forum.

- RESOLVED -
- That the Forum noted that surplus balance licence have reduced by £231,000 during 2015/16.

## **7 SCHOOLS SURPLUS BALANCES 2015/16 LICENCE APPLICATIONS**

A report was presented on the level of schools surplus balances in maintained schools and the amount of licence applications for the use of 2015/16 surplus balances. It was reported that the total amount of surplus balances is £270,000, the surplus is within the nursery and primary sector, the secondary and special sectors have no surplus balance.

- RESOLVED -
- That the Forum noted the surplus balance amounts.

## **8 SCHOOLS SURPLUS BALANCE CHANGE REQUEST**

A report was presented on the decision to alter the surplus balance licence for Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School. The surplus balance was requested for the refurbishment of pupil's toilets, however the charge for the work was put through on the wrong account and was not picked up before the 2015/16 accounts were closed. Therefore the school requested the remaining licence to fund a teaching assistant. The licence would have been fully spent if the charge had been correctly allocated so the request was granted.

St Joseph's Primary School Gateshead had previously been granted use of some of their surplus balance to make improvements to the car park. However due to budget pressures the school requested to change part of the licence to maintain support staff levels for 2016/17. This was granted as the three year projected budget position would benefit from the change in the licence.

- RESOLVED -
- That the Schools Forum noted the change of

surplus balance for Corpus Christi Primary School and St Joseph's Gateshead Primary School.

**9 GROWTH FUND APPLICATION**

A report was presented to inform the Forum of the successful application for Growth Funding. Ravensworth Terrace Primary School applied for funding due to the increased pupil numbers. The school met the conditions set in the growth fund criteria, as its planned admission number increased from 30 to 60, and the school was supported in its expansion due to projected increase in pupil numbers, therefore £35,000 was awarded.

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

**10 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The date and time of the next meeting is Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> July at 10.00am.