

**GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**GATESHEAD SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING**

**Thursday, 9 March 2017**

**PRESENT:**

Ken Childs (Chair)	Special Schools Governor
Councillor Chris McHugh	Elected Member Representative
Sarah Diggle	Primary Governors
Steve Haigh	Secondary Academy Headteachers
Mark Lovatt	GASH Representative
Mustafaa Malik	Primary Headteachers
Ethel Mills	PVI Sector Representative
Andrew Ramanandi	Primary Headteachers
Michelle Richards	Special School Headteachers
Chris Richardson	Secondary Headteachers
Steve Williamson	Pupil Referral Unit Representative
Matthew Younger	Primary Headteachers

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Carole Smith	Corporate Resources
Alan Foster	Corporate Resources
Rosalyn Patterson	Corporate Services and Governance

**1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Peter Largue, Allan Symons, Julie Goodfellow, Denise Henry and Jim Thomson.

**2 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

**3 EARLY YEARS FUNDING CONSULTATION RESPONSE AND FUNDING FORMULA 2017/18**

The Forum received a report on the outcome of the Early Years Funding consultation. The consultation was sent out on 10 February, the majority of responses agreed with the proposals.

The proposed rates for 2017/18 were confirmed as;

- £3.849 per hour base rate
- Quality supplement - £0.500 per hour (5% of available funding)
- Deprivation supplement - £0.006 per hour (5% of available funding)

- Flat funding rate of £5.20 for two year olds

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum noted the consultation responses and comments and approved the proposed EYSFF and the new two year old funding rate.

#### **4 EARLY YEARS INCLUSION FUND 2017/18**

Schools Forum received a report on the work undertaken to implement an Early Years Inclusion Fund (EYIF). The DfE has stipulated that local authorities must have an EYIF.

An officer group has been set up to work on what an EYIF should look like for Gateshead. Further information will be brought back to the Forum in due course and all settings will be consulted.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum noted the report and the progress made on the creation of an EYIF.

#### **5 MAINSTREAM SCHOOL FUNDING (APT) SUBMISSION**

A report was presented on an updated Authority Proforma Tool (APT). It was reported that the mainstream PFI calculation has been changed to include the post 16 element. After discussions with the DfE, they confirmed there was no way for them to fund the post 16 element of the PFI charge and the DfE advised that, as this is a premises factor, the local authority could change the PFI factor to include the post 16 element.

Three options were outlined;

- No change to the PFI formula and no post 16 PFI funding
- Change formula to include the post 16 element of the PFI charge and that this increase is funded from DSG reserves
- Change formula to include the post 16 element of the PFI charge and all schools per pupil base rates are reduced to provide this additional funding

It was noted that option one would be detrimental to Lord Lawson of Beamish pupils, option two would not impact schools budgets this year as the increased funding would be provided from DSG reserves and option three would impact all schools and in some cases this would be a significant amount due to the application of the Minimum Funding Guarantee .

It was suggested that the local authority should pick up the short fall. The point was made that resources are so tight within the Council that this would not be an option and that senior management are clear that this should not impact on the revenue support grant. It was also noted that there are currently healthy DSG reserves which have been built up over a number of years. It was acknowledged that Council did not receive additional funding from the EFA and the Council is trying to find the best solution.

The point was made that this is not a unique situation and comparisons should be made with other authorities that have been in a similar position. It was noted that this would be difficult to identify because all local authorities have different funding formulas and some authorities may have always funded the post 16 element of the PFI charges. It was confirmed that this is unique within Gateshead as Lord Lawson Academy is the only PFI school with post 16 provision. It was reiterated that the DfE's advice is that this is a premises factor and therefore should be funded from the DSG.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the Schools Forum approved the change in the PFI formula to incorporate the post 16 element of the schools PFI charge.
  - (ii) That the Schools Forum approved the one off use of DSG reserves of £227,894 to fund the post 16 element of the schools PFI charge.

## **6 SCHOOLS NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA - DRAFT RESPONSE**

The Forum received the Council's response to the National Funding Formula consultation, for comment and consideration of the Forum's response.

It was suggested that the response should contain a comment about the funding ratio, in particular under funding of Key Stage 3 and 4, and the need to move to a level playing field. The point was made that further consideration needs to be given to the impact of basic AWPU levels on the problems manifested in Ofsted judgements in secondary schools. It was queried whether the local authority takes a strategic view on that and whether there is any correlation between Ofsted judgments and funding. It was confirmed that this would not be looked at because judgements are inconsistent, however it was acknowledged that this issue does need to be looked at further.

As the Forum was unable to agree on issues around funding ratios it was decided that schools and Forum members should respond on an individual basis.

It was also suggested that a general response be made on behalf of the Forum around the lack of funding and the link to outcomes.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the Schools Forum noted the draft consultation document and agreed to individually respond.
  - (ii) That a general statement in relation to underfunding and links to outcomes be made on behalf of the Schools Forum.

## **7 HIGH NEEDS NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA - DRAFT RESPONSE**

The Forum received the draft local authority response to the High Needs Funding Consultation.

It was suggested that the Schools Forum response should contain comments about the robustness of the link between DLA and SEN in schools.

It was agreed that this was a fair response and it was noted that Special School Headteachers would be responding separately.

**RESOLVED** - That the Schools Forum noted the contents of the report and agreed the draft consultation response to be submitted on behalf of Gateshead Schools Forum.

## **8 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT Q3**

The Forum received the quarter three position of DSG for 2016/17. There is an overspend projected of £445,000 on DSG, with an overspend on the High Needs Budget of £454,000.

It was questioned whether the overspend is likely to continue, this was confirmed, based on current high levels of permanent exclusions and special school placements, but will be offset partially by a number of ARMS provisions being decommissioned next year. It was noted that £80,000 has been received from the DFE to review high needs and potential savings will be looked at in order to increase reserves.

Work is ongoing to understand why there has been an increase in permanent exclusions. It was suggested that factors such as; cuts to social services funding, cutting schools budgets and increased accountability by Ofsted have contributed to the increase in permanent exclusions. The point was made that further understanding is needed as to why Gateshead is such an outlier and that there is a need to ensure Gateshead figures are comparable locally.

A query was raised in relation to the relative cost of Schools Forum to other comparative local authority areas, it was agreed that service costs for the Forum would be compared to other local authorities.

The question was asked as to the high termination of employment costs in comparison to other authorities. It was confirmed that this is based around historic school closures and amalgamations, and they are recurrent costs.

**RESOLVED** -

- (i) That the Schools Forum noted the contents of the report.
- (ii) That the Schools Forum approved the use of DSG reserves to cover the overspend in 2016/17.

**9 VERBAL UPDATE FROM NATIONAL FAIR FUNDING CONFERENCE**

Item deferred.

**10 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The date and time of the next meeting is Thursday 18 May 2017 at 2.00pm.