

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

GATESHEAD SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING

Thursday, 8 February 2018

PRESENT: Councillor Ken Childs (Chair)
Councillor(s): C McHugh, Sarah Diggle, Julie Goodfellow, Steve Haigh, Andrew Ramanandi, Michelle Richards, Allan Symons, Steve Williamson and Clive Wisby

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor(s):

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): Peter Largue, Elaine Pickering, Domenic Volpe and Matthew Younger

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Peter Largue, Matt Younger, Domenic Volpe and Elaine Pickering.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

3 ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

Schools Forum received a report outlining a proposal around funding for Electively Home Educated (EHE) pupils as the number of pupils EHE is increasing. It was requested that consideration be given to using a similar system as is currently used for permanently excluded pupils and fair access pupils.

It was noted that currently the system does not allow discussion to be held around if parents are capable of home educating, therefore a multi-agency panel has been set up to look at this. The point was made that there are families who do not have the capability to home educate and therefore this enables support to be provided to those families.

It was proposed therefore that when a pupil comes of roll to be EHE the funding will be removed from the school and given to the local authority to hold the money, a proportion will then be given back to the school if the pupil returns, or alternatively it will be used to support the child being home educated.

The Forum agreed that a scheme was essential as this is often dealing with the most vulnerable children.

The point was made that removal of funding will penalise schools if a child leaves

before the November census as the school will never have received that funding. It was also noted that Academies could refuse to agree to the scheme. It was confirmed that currently when funding is calculated for a permanently excluded pupil checks are done to ensure the pupil is on the census before funding is removed.

It was questioned where the funding goes once it is removed from the school. It was confirmed that the funding will sit with the local authority and will be used to provide additional funding if they return to school or will be used to support alternative education. The Fair Access Panel would oversee the funding by default.

It was queried why the local authority do not fund these pupils. It was confirmed however that the local authority fund staff who manage and oversee EHE pupils and this is not a statutory function of the Council. It was noted that once a child is removed from school there is no funding attached to that child, therefore this only relates to funding for a portion of the one year because thereafter there would be no funding. Thus the incentive is to get pupils back on roll before the census so that funding can be applied.

It was questioned whether support would be provided if pupils were taken in from out of the Borough. It was acknowledged that there would be money in the pot to support pupils from out of the area as funding would be available from those pupils who did not return to education.

It was confirmed that the funding would be monitored through regular budget meetings and by the Fair Access Panel, cross referenced by Carole Smith, therefore a number of checks and balances are already in place. It was also agreed that future reports can be brought to the Forum to identify how much money has been recouped through the EHE scheme.

As the Forum was unable to agree to the proposal on behalf of individual Academies it was agreed that the report be taken to GASH and Primary Academies. It was requested that information be provided to show numbers of EHE pupils, which can be provided to GASH.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the views of all Academies be sought on the transfer of funds out of a school once a pupil leaves to be home educated and the process of recoument and redistribution on the same basis as permanent exclusions and managed moves.
 - (ii) That a further report be brought back to the Forum for agreement following consultation with Academies.

4 EARLY YEARS PAYMENTS

The Forum received a report on the consultation held with Early Years providers regarding the frequency of payments to providers.

It was reported that initial consultation showed no clear preference, with childminders preferring monthly payments and group providers preferring to stay

with current arrangements of two payments per year.

Three options were identified;

- 1.) Pay all providers on a monthly basis – in line with Government guidance but goes against the preference of the group providers.
- 2.) Pay each provider in accordance with their stated preference – concerns from Early Years staff about running the two payment systems concurrently.
- 3.) Pay all childminders on a monthly basis and pay all group providers on the current system – meets the preference of the vast majority of providers and early years staff can implement monthly payments on a small, manageable scale.

Option three was therefore proposed as this allows the majority of preferences to be met, although this will mean an increase in the bank charge bill 2 year old and 3-4 year old payments will be made together, thus alleviating the increased charges.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum approved option three and that, following implementation, further information be brought to Schools Forum for consideration.

5 MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS FUNDING

Schools Forum received a report requesting retrospective approval of the Authority Proforma Tool (APT), this was following a DfE error in the FSM data. Thanks were given to the sub-group who reviewed the re-worked APT and model.

It was reported that the reduction in FSM gave a total £96,589 to be redistributed. This resulted in funding being allocated to bring EAL up to the NFF level and Band D of the primary IDACI was taken back to phase 2, primary IDACI band F was selected to be funded at the NFF level. The small amount left was then used to increase KS3 phase 2 funding by £5.44.

The sub-group agreed to the changes on 17th January and the APT was submitted on 19th January in order to meet the deadlines.

The Forum noted Carole Smith's hard work in ensuring relevant changes were made and submitted on time.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum retrospectively approves:-

- (i) The removal of the funding cap from schools gaining under the proposed formula
- (ii) Additional funding for EAL to move to the NFF value
- (iii) Additional funding for IDACI primary band F and Secondary band B to move further towards the NFF value
- (iv) A small amount of additional funding for KS3 AWPU
- (v) The proposed APT

6 SPECIAL SCHOOLS FORMULA REVIEW UPDATE

A report was presented on the work that the Special Schools Funding Review (SSFR) group have undertaken. It was noted that this is a fundamental review due to the cohort changing and therefore the descriptors needed to be looked at.

Special Headteachers developed new detailed descriptors but further work is required around establishing staffing levels for each descriptor. The SSFR group agreed to reduce the number of specialisms from five to three, leaving; Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH), Cognition and Learning (C&L) and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It was felt that all special schools pupils could be accommodated within these specialisms. Therefore the funding formula will need to be changed to move into these three categories.

The Chair thanked the Special Schools Headteachers for their work on the SSFR group.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum approved the elimination of Sensory Physical and Medical and Communication and Learning, and noted the work undertaken by the group.

7 COMMISSIONED HIGH NEEDS PLACES 2018/19

The Forum received a report on the proposed commissioning arrangements for High Needs Places for 2018/19. Under finance regulations it is a requirement to consult the Schools Forum on high needs places.

It was noted that funding arrangements will stay the same at £10,000 per commissioned place. Mainstream school funding will be funded using the mainstream funding formula with an additional commissioned place funding of £6,000 per occupied place.

The commissioned places for 2018/19 were identified, although it was noted that this is not the total number of places and only represents commissioned numbers.

The point was made that this is not a sustainable model for some schools, however it was noted that this decision is not within the remit of the Forum.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum noted the report.

8 CONTINGENCY FUNDING

The Forum received a report confirming the decision to provide contingency funding to River Tyne Academy.

It was reported that from 1 January 2018 the school will operate from three sites, with the most recent site being in Birtley, the old Ravensworth Terrace primary school site.

The fixed costs for the site were taken from the last year of occupation at the Birtley

site, including estimated costs of running the site, for example utilities and other services. As this was not in the PRU's budget for this year it was agreed to provide contingency funding of £20,904 for January to March 2018.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum noted the funding provided to the school.

9 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The date and time of the next meeting is Thursday 8 March 2018 at 2.00pm.

Chair.....