

## **DUDLEY SCHOOLS FORUM**

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2013 at 6.00 pm**  
**at Saltwells Education Development Centre,**  
**Bowling Green Road, Netherton, Dudley**

### **PRESENT:-**

Mr Ridley – Chair

Mr Patterson – Vice-Chair

Mr Conway, Mr Derham, Mrs Garratt, Mr Kelleher, Mr Nesbitt, Mrs Quigley,  
Ms Rogers, Mrs Ruffles, Mr Ward, Mr Warren, Mr Weaver.

Person(s) not a member of the Forum but having an entitlement to attend  
meetings and speak

The Director of Children's Services

### **Officers**

Acting Assistant Director of Children's Services (Education Services),  
Assistant Director of Children's Services (Quality and Partnership), Children's  
Services Finance Manager, Senior Principal Accountant and the Assistant  
Democratic Services Officer.

#### **1. INTRODUCTIONS BY THE CHAIR**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of  
Mrs Belcher, Mrs Hannaway, Mrs Hazlehurst, Mr B Jones, Ms  
Pearce, Mr Platford and Ms Richards.

#### **3. APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBER**

It was noted that Ms Wylie had been appointed as a substitute  
member for Mrs Hazlehurst, for this meeting of the forum only.

#### **4. MINUTES**

### **RESOLVED**

That, the minutes of the meeting of the Schools Forum  
held on 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2013, be approved as a correct  
record and signed.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

No items were raised under this agenda item.

6. UNION FACILITIES TIME IN SCHOOLS FUNDED BY THE DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted in respect of a review of the funding of the school related union facilities time arrangements and to recommend the methodology for allocating funding for 2014/15.

In presenting the report, the Assistant Director of Children's Services (Quality and Partnership) referred to the review that had taken place of the Union Facility time in Dudley and stated that part way through the process, Central Government had instigated a national review of the funding of union facilities time within schools, with the aim of securing the best possible value for money. Therefore, it was considered to be sensible to await any advice or regulations from the DfE before implementing any changes in Dudley. The national consultation closed in October 2013 and Central Governments response was anticipated to be released by the end of the year or early in 2014.

The Vice-Chair raised concerns in relation to the figures presented in table 2 of the report submitted and the proportionality of representatives to the number of members and considered that this should be re-assessed.

RESOLVED

It was noted that:-

- (a) The Local Authority would await the publication of the government's response to the national consultation about union facilities time in schools, as it would not be sensible to take action without the benefit of being able to consider any advice or regulations published by the DfE.

- (b) That in principle, for the 2014/15 financial year the basis of allocation (FTE of Union Representatives) and the overall sum provided from Dedicated Schools Grant would remain at the 2013/14 level i.e. £280,051 (plus relevant inflation). This would be subject to review once the DfE consultation response was published. The timing of any local changes in light of the consultation response would be dependent upon the date of its publication.
- (c) The actual budget available to the local authority to administer the Union Facilities Time arrangement for schools could be less than the original budget delegated to schools if individual Academies and Special Schools did not agree to buy into the service. The overall budget would be reduced by the relevant amount across each trade union budget pro-rotta to the original allocation as referred to in paragraph 18 of the report submitted.
- (d) Each union would be expected to work within a defined cash sum, as notified on a monthly basis, by the Local Authority and must decide which of its officers would be accredited representatives with paid facility time funded by the Authority. The Local Authority would monitor spending closely and once the specified amount had been exhausted, no further expenditure from this source would be forthcoming. In all cases unions may supplement the facility time budget from their own funds.

## 7. BEHAVIOURAL PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT REVIEW AND RESTRUCTURE

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted in respect of the Pupil Referral Unit behavioural service review and restructure following the implementation of the 2013/14 DfE school funding reforms.

In referring to paragraph 11 of the report submitted, the Director of Children's Services clarified that from September 2014 all Primary behavioural administration would be administered from the Sycamore site, but the children would not necessarily be placed at this location. Key Stage 1 work was predominately done by outreach services in schools and that the Sycamore site was predominately for Key Stage 2 and 3 children.

The Stourbridge, Halesowen and Dudley North Primary Head teacher Representatives expressed their support for the behavioural pupil referral unit service and stated that it was highly valued by their Sector.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report submitted in relation to the behavioural Pupil Referral Unit service review and restructure be noted.
- (2) That a further progress update report be submitted to the Forum meeting in the Spring.

#### 8. DE-DELEGATIONS: 2013/14 PROJECTED OUTTURN AND 2014/15 PROPOSALS

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted in respect of the provisional outturn for the 2013/14 financial year de-delegated services and to agree the de-delegation options for 2014/15.

An update of Table 3 of the report submitted, incorporating the recommendations made by the HTCF-Budget Working Group at its meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2013, was circulated at the meeting.

The Children's Services Finance Manager presented the report and emphasised the information contained in paragraphs 15 and 16 of the report submitted in relation to those members that were eligible to vote in respect of each de-delegation. It was reiterated that Academy Schools were unable to de-delegate funds but would be entitled to buy back into services provided by the Local Authority on a traded service basis.

The Chair referred to each proposed de-delegated service individually and eligible members voted for their Sector as follows:-

- (i) Contingencies – Closed schools and rental payments

**Decision:           Primary – Agreed**  
**Secondary – Agreed**

- (ii) Staff Costs – Supply cover – Union Facilities Time

**Decision:           Primary – Agreed**  
**Secondary – Agreed**

- (iii) Staff Costs – Supply cover – NQT (Newly Qualified Teachers)

**Decision:           Primary – Agreed**  
**Secondary – Agreed**

- (iv) Support for minority ethnic pupils/underachieving groups.  
Family Support Workers

**Decision:           Primary – Agreed**  
**Secondary – Agreed**

- (v) LACES (Looked after Children Education Services)

**Decision:           Primary – Agreed**  
**Secondary – Agreed**

At this juncture, further information was provided in relation to the possible implications to the School Library Service if the Secondary School Representatives were to refuse the de-delegation of the funding for this Service, as recommended by the HTCF-Budget Working Group at the meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2013.

The Children's Services Finance Manager stated that the School Library Service would require £202,433 to continue working as it did currently. In 2013/14 the Secondary School representatives agreed to de-delegate their element of funding for this service even though it was considered that this service was predominately used by the Primary Sector.

It was stated that if the Secondary sector did decide not to de-delegate their funding for 2014/15, an option that was discussed and considered at the HTCF-Budget Working Group would be for the Primary Sector to fund the shortfall in the library service funding and de-delegate the amount required to maintain the current service. This would equate to approximately double the unit of resource, as referred to in Appendix B of the report. An alternative option would be for the service to be reviewed and restructured and to provide the primary sector with a reduced level of service.

The Director of Children's Services emphasised the importance of the Secondary Sector understanding the implications of not de-delegating their funding for this service and that an Equality Impact Assessment would be circulated by the Assistant Director for Education Services to all Secondary Schools informing them of the impact that their decision would have. Headteachers would be required to sign and return acknowledgement of receipt of this Equality Impact Assessment. She also stated that, previously the Directorate of Children's Services had provided financial support to wind down services that had not been de-delegated, however, in the current financial climate this would no longer be viable.

In response to a question raised from a Primary Sector representative it was confirmed that if the Secondary Sector did not de-delegate their funding and requested to use the School Library Service, they would be required to buy back the service, as would Academy Schools, and the Head of the Library Service was aware of the situation.

Eligible members then continued to vote on the de-delegation of services as follows:-

(vi) School Library Service

<b>Decision:</b>	<b>Primary – Agreed to de-delegate the funding required to fully maintain the service to the primary maintained schools sector at 2013/14 levels, which would include shortfall generated by the Secondary schools sector decision not to de-delegate. Secondary – Refused</b>
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(vii) Behavioural Pupil Referral Unit – Primary Outreach Service

<b>Decision</b>	<b>Primary – Agreed Secondary – Not Applicable</b>
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RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report in respect of de-delegated services for 2013/14, be noted.

- (2) That the recommendations outlined in the updated Table 3, circulated at the meeting, and as detailed above, in respect of de-delegated budgets for maintained primary schools for 2014/15 financial year, be approved by primary school representatives who were entitled to vote in accordance with the Regulations.
- (3) That the recommendations outlined in the updated Table 3, circulated at the meeting, and as detailed above, in respect of de-delegated budgets for maintained secondary schools for 2014/15 financial year, be approved by secondary school representatives who were entitled to vote in accordance with the Regulations.

9. BUDGET FACT SHEET

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted in relation to Budget Fact Sheet No. 3 dated November 2013 and the confirmed changes to the Local Funding Formula for 2014/15.

A Primary School representative requested further information in relation to the free schools meals that would be provided to all children in reception, year 1 and year 2 of state primary schools from September 2014 and how this would impact on Schools budgets.

The Senior Principal Accountant confirmed that detailed information had yet to be published by the DfE in relation to this matter.

The Director of Children's Services stated that a small working group would be set-up in the New Year to look at this issue and invites to the meeting would be circulated shortly. The Working Group would be created to discuss practical issues as the concerns that had been raised were not just in relation to funding but also as to whether schools had adequate kitchen equipment and dining room space; possible changes in school hours to accommodate additional children having a school meal; additional kitchen staff or change in their working pattern, all of which needed to be considered prior to implementation.

Concerns were raised by Members as to how the introduction of free school meals would impact on the pupil premium and that if all children were in receipt of a free school meal how would data be collated to enable the allocation of the pupil premium.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the Budget Fact Sheet No. 3, be noted.

10. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT PROJECTED OUTTURN  
UPDATE 2013/14

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted in respect of the latest financial forecast of the Schools Budget for the 2013/14 financial year.

RESOLVED

That the report submitted in relation to the latest forecast for the Schools Budget for 2013/14 financial year, be noted.

11. DUDLEY GRID FOR LEARNING – UPDATE

A verbal update was provided by the Director of Children's Services in respect of the Dudley Grid for Learning (DGFL).

The Director of Children's Services was pleased to inform the Forum that it had been confirmed and agreed for the DGFL to move forward in the New Year. She stated that RM had changed the way in which they worked and would be able to provide an updated ICT package to use in the next twelve months.

RESOLVED

That the verbal update provided by the Director of Children's Services in respect of the Dudley Grid for Learning, be noted.

12. FORMER PENSNETT SCHOOL SITE – UPDATE

A verbal update was provided by the Director of Children's Services in respect of the former Pensnett School site.

It was confirmed that the building had virtually been cleared and that a further report would be submitted to the Forum in the summer term.

RESOLVED

(1) That the verbal update provided by the Director of Children's Services, in relation to the former Pensnett School site, be noted.



- (2) That a further report be submitted to the Forum in the Summer term.

13. SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP UPDATE AND THE DfE OPERATIONAL AND GOOD PRACTICE GUIDES

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted in relation to the DfE Operational and Good Practice Guides issued in June and October 2013 and to provide a Forum membership update.

The Senior Principal Accountant stated that, to date, no nominations had been received in respect of the two Academy representative vacancies. However, it was confirmed that Mr K Bate of Halesowen College, subject to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning approval, would be appointed as the Post 16 provider representative.

RESOLVED

That the report submitted and the information provided at the meeting in relation to the Schools Forum Membership and the DfE Operational and Good Practice Guides, be noted.

14. SCHOOLS FORUM WEBSITE

A report and verbal update was provided in relation to the new Dudley Schools Forum website.

The Children's Services Finance Manager confirmed that the website was now live and that the web address had been circulated to all Forum Members by the Assistant Democratic Services Officer.

Any comments or feedback in relation to the website should be forwarded to the Children's Services Finance Manager.

RESOLVED

That the report and verbal update provided at the meeting, in relation to the Dudley Schools Forum website, be noted.

15. COMMENTS MADE BY THE CHAIR

The Chair informed Forum Members that Mrs Hazlehurst would be retiring from her post as Head teacher at Christ Church Primary School at the end of year, and congratulated her on the wonderful work that she had done in the 17 years that she had been at the School. In her absence from the meeting, the Chair expressed Mrs Hazlehurst thanks for all the support she had received and passed on her best wishes to all Members of the Forum.

This being the last meeting of the Forum attended by Jane Porter, the Director of Children's Services, prior to her impending retirement from the Council, the Chair, on behalf of the Forum expressed his thanks and best wishes to her for a long and happy retirement.

The Chair wished all Members a merry Christmas and prosperous New Year.

16. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED

That the dates of future meetings be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.10 pm.

CHAIR