

## **DUDLEY SCHOOLS FORUM**

**Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2013 at 6:00 pm**  
**at Saltwells Education Centre**

### **PRESENT:-**

Mr L Ridney – Chair

Mrs J Belcher, Mr J Conway, Mr C Derham, Mrs A Garratt, Mr S Hudson, Mr J Kelleher, Mr D Kirk, Mr M Lynch, Mrs J Quigley, Mrs A Richards, Mrs P Rogers, Mrs H Ruffles, Mr N Shaw, Mr D Ward, Mr M Weaver and Mr Patterson.

### **Persons not a member of the Forum but having an entitlement to attend meetings and speak**

Director of Children's Services

### **Officers**

Children's Services Finance Manager, Senior Principal Accountant (Directorate of Corporate Resources); Assistant Director (Education Services) and Miss S Bailey (Directorate of Children's Services)

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Mr P Harris, Mr P Jones, Ms T Pearce, Mr R Timmins and Mr B Warren.

#### **2. APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

It was noted that Mr Patterson and Mr Ridney had been appointed as substitute members for Mr Timmins and Mr Harris, respectively, for this meeting of the Forum only.

#### **3. MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Forum on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2013 that was not quorate, be approved as a correct record, signed and that the recommendations actioned to also include the minutes from the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2012.

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

The minutes from the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2012 and the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2013 Forums where discussed and no matters were raised by the members in attendance.

5. EARLY YEARS SINGLE FUNDING FORMULA FOR TWO YEAR OLDS – CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted providing the Schools Forum members the consultation feedback in respect of the Early Years Single Funding Formula. The consultation closed on the 18<sup>th</sup> January and had 7 responses. The new formula will be implemented on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 to support two year old children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The proposals contained within the report have previously been discussed and approved by the Headteachers Consultative Budget Working Group on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2013.

Mrs Ruffles endorsed the proposals within the report and commented on the importance of the family support work.

Mr Ward enquired whether 6 family support workers was sufficient to which Mrs Ruffles responded that the funds were finite.

Mr Kelleher raised a question about the amount of Family Support Workers working for the Authority at the moment. The Director of Children's Services responded that currently there are six. Mr Patterson also raised that if option two was adopted would there be any adversary action from the DfE. The Director of Children's Services confirmed that it is possible and there is potential that the DfE will question where the funds have been spend but there will be evidence available to support the decision and this will also be reviewed after 12 months. The Children's Services Finance Manager added that the funding for two year olds was not ring-fenced within the Dedicated Schools Grant and so could, technically, be spent at discretion within the terms of the grant.

Mr Conway asked how the DfE had arrived at the forecast number of 732. The Senior Principal Accountant responded that this was based on DfE centrally held data in relation to the relevant population.

In concluding the discussion, Mrs Richards stated that there will be a need to stimulate the market to accept two year olds for nursery provision and questioned whether there are currently sufficient nursery providers for this age group.

The option for Schools Forum to consider:

Option 1 – Passport all revenue funding direct to providers which would equate to an hourly rate of £4.98

Option 2 – Fund providers at a slightly lower rate of £4.50 and retain an amount of funding centrally - £164k, this will allow the continuation of the family support to disadvantaged children.

## RESOLVED

That the report on the Early Years Single Funding Formula for two year olds be approved with the Schools Forum Membership confirming by voting option 2 to be implemented on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013.

### 6. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT PLANNING PROCESS 2013/14 – UPDATE

A Report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted to Schools Forum relating to the Dedicated Schools Grant. The purpose was to update the members on the current position of the 2013/14 budget and also to discuss and agree the Central Expenditure budgets for 2013/14.

The report detailed the dedicated schools grant funding blocks which is not ring fenced funding. The report also informed the Schools Forum members that it is no longer a requirement for the Forum to approve the Central Expenditure Limit.

Mr Lynch asked a question relating to the figure outlined in the report for the funding adjustments being - £155,000 and if this has been formula based. The Children's Services Finance Manager confirmed that was the case and the Education Funding Agency request the number of SEN places in order to make the calculation.

The Children's Services Finance Manager noted that information was still being collected from the Early Years Census and Post 16 LLDD Budgets are awaiting confirmation. An update will be taken to School Forum in March 2013 for consideration in time for the next financial year.

Mr Conway asked a question relating to Table 2 of the report on Equal pay back – pay for Academies and Trust schools. The Children's Services Finance Manager was able to confirm that the Local Authority is not the employer for these staff and therefore not liable for these costs

The Children's Services Finance Manager reiterated the meaning of de-delegations and that the maintained primary and secondary schools in the Borough agreed to pass back budgets to central either for good practice or economy of scale.

At the meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2013 discussions took place about the licences and the value of £76,116 being retained for copyright Licensing, as instructed by the DfE. As the meeting was inquorate it is requested that the decision be approved at this meeting-

The School Finance Regulations require that Schools Forum must be consulted annually with regards to the following:

- Arrangements for pupils with special educational needs;
- Arrangements for use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school;
- Arrangements for early years provision;

- Administration arrangements for the allocation of central government grants

It was agreed that the members of Schools Forum will receive further details on the annual consultation process at the meeting in March 2013.

Mr Lynch raised concerns about the centrally retained items being capped at 2012/13 financial values. The Director of Children's Services explained this will lead to cost pressures as no increase in these values is permitted under current regulations.

Mrs Quigley raised a question regarding the level of centrally retained Early Years Foundation Advice co-ordination compared with the level of funding for the similar service for primary and secondary schools. The Assistant Director for Education Services stated that the levels of funding for are of approximate equal value.

Mr Ward questioned why the values for family support workers were £165k when they were quoted at £164k in the previous report. The Children's Services Finance Manager explained that these values had been rounded to approximate values for the purpose of the report and that any variance would be added to early years contingency.

Mr Patterson questioned why the values for Admissions service differed by £59 between 2012/13 and 2013/14 when other values had remained the same. The Children's Services Finance Manager confirmed that the difference of £59 had not been required in 2012/13 so was not included in the budget for 2013/14.

## RESOLVED

The Schools Forum members agreed that:

- The contents of the report be noted.
- The central expenditure detailed in Tables 2 and 3 of the report submitted in respect of 2013/14 be approved.
- The budget top slice of £74,898 and £1,218 in respect of copy right licenses be approved in respect of mainstream schools and special schools, respectively.

## 7. SCHOOLS FORUM TRAINING

The Children's Services Finance Manager included within the agenda handouts of the presentation from the School Forum training event held on the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2013. Induction packs and details of roles and responsibilities will be circulated to members at the Forum scheduled for March 2013.

## RESOLVED

Papers to be provided to members at the next meeting scheduled for 19<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

8. COMMENTS BY THE CHAIR

The Chair advised Forum members that his position as a Schools Forum member by virtue of being a North Dudley Secondary School Governor had now come to an end with the adoption of an Interim Executive Board at Coseley and that whilst he was present at the meeting as a substitute for Mr Harris, he was seeking election of a Schools Forum member position currently.

The meeting ended at 7.10pm.

CHAIR