

DUDLEY SCHOOLS FORUM

Tuesday, 17th September, 2013 at 6.00 pm
at Saltwells Education Development Centre,
Bowling Green Road, Netherton, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Mr Ridley – Chair

Mr Patterson – Vice-Chair

Mrs Belcher, Mr Conway, Mr Derham, Mrs Garratt, Mrs Hannaway, Mrs Hazlehurst, Mr Kelleher, Mr Kirk, Mr Nesbitt, Ms Pearce, Mr Platford, Mrs Rogers, Mrs Ruffles, Mr Warren, Mr Weaver and Mrs Withers

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

The Director of Children's Services

Officers

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

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 Mr Harris, Mr Hudson, Mr Jones, Mrs Quigley, Ms Richards, Mr Shaw and Mr Ward.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That, the minutes of the meeting of the Schools Forum held on 9th July, 2013, be approved as a correct record and signed.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Arising from Minute No. 5, it was noted that a report including details of future membership arrangements would be considered at this meeting.

Under Minute No. 7, it was noted that a report on the Pupil Referral Unit Service Review would be submitted to the Schools Forum later in the autumn.

In connection with Minute No. 11, it was noted that work was in progress concerning the Schools Forum website.

5. THE CHILDREN'S DATA AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS TEAM

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted on the work of the Children's Data and Information Systems Team. The Team received funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant through the Combined Services Budget.

Further to comments made concerning School Census data, the Assistant Director of Children's Services (Quality and Partnership) undertook to consider data quality issues and clarity in the future presentation of the report.

In connection with comments made concerning the effectiveness of the DSG funding in support of the Children's Data and Information Systems Team, the Children's Services Finance Manager expressed the view that the work undertaken by the Team represented good value for money. It was also noted that the Team arranged workshops for Dudley school administrators concerning School Census returns and data quality issues.

RESOLVED

That the Schools Forum note the report in respect of the cost effectiveness of the data quality role of the Children's Data Information Systems Team in the maximisation of Dudley's grant funding through the Dedicated Schools Grant and the Pupil Premium.

6. SCHOOLS FORUM CONSTITUTION

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted on proposed revisions to the Schools Forum Constitution.

Further to comments made regarding the category of Forum members eligible to vote on matters concerning the funding formulae, the Children's Services Finance Manager agreed to review the clarity of paragraph 65 and Appendix 1 (1) of Appendix A and amend this to include Academy members.

Members of the Forum commented on the practical application of the revised Constitution, which could potentially lead to the Head Teacher and School Governor representation not reflecting the geographical make-up of the Borough. The Director of Children's Services indicated that the situation would be monitored in the light of views expressed by the Schools Forum. The revised Constitution would be recommended for approval by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services taking account of the comments made.

RESOLVED

- (1) That, subject to the comments referred to above, the revised Schools Forum Constitution be approved to become effective before the statutory deadline of 1st January, 2014.
- (2) That an update in respect of the three new member representatives be presented to the Schools Forum in due course.

7. CONSULTATION ON SCHOOL FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS AND CHANGES FOR 2014/15

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted on proposed changes to the local school funding arrangements for the 2014/15 financial year.

It was noted that a review of the quantum and methodology of allocating funding for deprivation had been discussed by the Headteacher's Consultative Forum - Budget Working Group. A report would be submitted to Schools Forum to provide an update in respect of responses to the consultation in due course.

In connection with the de-delegation of funding for services, the Director of Children's Services indicated that the Equality Impact Assessment would be reported to Schools Forum for consideration at the appropriate meeting when a decision was taken on de-delegation of funding for 2014/15.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the consultation on School Funding Arrangements for 2014/15 be noted.
- (2) That the Schools Forum note that the consultation closes on 11th October, 2013 and that all schools and governors be encouraged to complete and return responses by the required deadline.

8. FINAL ALLOCATIONS OF DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG) 2013/14 FINANCIAL YEAR

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted advising the Schools Forum of the correspondence from the Department for Education to local authorities dated 23rd July, 2013 concerning the final allocation of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the 2013/14 financial year.

The Schools Forum was requested to note the 2013/14 financial year final DSG allocation in accordance with the requirements of the Department for Education.

RESOLVED

That the final Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocation for 2013/14 of £234.323m, which is £0.022m higher than the March 2013 estimate, be noted and that the additional funds of £0.022m be added to the Early Years contingency to increase this budget available to £102,702.

9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates of future meetings were noted, subject to the correction of the dates from February onwards to read '2014'.

10. DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Schools Forum noted the announcement that Jane Porter, Director of Children's Services, would be retiring from the Council's employment in December, 2013.

The meeting ended at 6.45 pm.

CHAIR