

## MINUTES OF DUDLEY SCHOOLS FORUM

Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2014 at 6.00 pm  
at Saltwells Education Development Centre,  
Bowling Green Road, Netherton, Dudley

### PRESENT:-

Mr L Ridney - Chair

Mrs R Wylie - Vice Chair

Mr K Bate, Mrs J Belcher, Mr C Derham, Mrs A Garratt, Mr J Kelleher, Mrs J Kings, Mr P Nesbitt, Mr B Oakley, Mr B Patterson, Ms P Rogers, Mrs H Ruffles, Mr N Shaw, Ms M Stowe, and Mrs G Withers.

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

### Officers

Mr H Powell (Acting Assistant Director of Children's Services - Education Services); Mrs K Cocker (Children's Services Finance Manager), Mrs S Coates (Senior Principal Accountant) and Mrs K Taylor (Democratic Services Officer), Directorate of Corporate Resources

#### 52      Introductions by the Chair

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### 53      Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Mr J Conway, Mrs A Hannaway, Mrs N Jones, Mr P Kilbride and Mr D Ward.

#### 54      Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Schools Forum held on 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2014, be approved as a correct record and signed.

#### 55      Matters Arising from the Minutes

No issues were raised under this agenda item.

Schools with Licensed Deficit Arrangements

A report of the Interim Director of Children's Services was submitted on the latest financial monitoring arrangements in place for the Coseley School.

Arising from consideration of this item, it was noted that the licensed deficit application for 2014/15 was £283,480 and that at September, 2014, the School were forecasting the 2014/15 budget position to be on target. However at 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2014 the School was now projecting an overspending position of £42,000, in addition to the licensed deficit figure of £283,480.

It was further reported that a financial return signed by the Acting Head Teacher had now been received prior to the Schools Forum meeting; however this was being reviewed by the Senior Principal Accountant, along with further discussions with the School.

Reference was made to the options available to a local authority in respect of a school that was unable to maintain a balanced in year budget, including reference to the DfE Schools Causing Concern statutory guidance, which was appended to the report submitted.

In responding to a question, the Children's Services Finance Manager reported that the overspend was due to the School overestimating the Pupil Premium grant, and that an update of the Schools position would be given at a future meeting to include the corrected and signed financial statement from the Acting Headteacher and the Chair of Governors.

Resolved

That the information contained in the report submitted on the latest financial monitoring arrangements in place for the Coseley School, be noted, and that further updates be provided to the Forum.

De-delegated Service Options: 2014/15 Projected Outturn and 2015/16 Proposals

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

The Children's Services Finance Manager presented the report and in doing so referred to the approved services for de-delegation for 2014/15, and the projected outturn, as indicated in Table 2 of the report, submitted, which highlighted a projected £33K underspend of the £1.4million budget, in staff costs – supply cover – Union Facilities time, staff costs – supply cover – Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT) and support for minority ethnic pupils/underachieving groups.

Reference was made to the responses following a consultation in respect of School Funding Arrangements for De-delegation Options for 2015/16, in particular, amendments to the report submitted highlighting the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) disagreement with the proposals for staffing costs to the Union Facilities Time of general union duties and Teacher Union Learning Representatives. It was also reported that the support for Minority Ethnic Pupils/Underachieving Groups – Family Support Workers would continue for 2015/16 following a request from the Head Teachers Consultative Forum (HTCF) – Budget Working Group, however a review would be undertaken in the spring term 2015 to identify how the service can become more fit for purpose for 2016/17.

An update of Table 3 of the report submitted, incorporating a revised proposal for the de-delegated Schools Specific Contingency to be increased by approximately £430,000 for 2015/16 in order to provide a safety net in respect of Dudley Schools in financial difficulty, was circulated at the meeting.

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 as follows:-
  - (a) to increase the lump sum allocations to all mainstream schools by an additional £5,000 for 2015/16 to provide a revised lump sum allocation of £149,000 to Primary Schools and £143,500 to Secondary Schools, with the additional £5,000 per mainstream school to be funded from the central Dedicated Schools Grant reserve.
  - (b) The de-delegation in respect of the Schools Specific Contingency at £182,809, per Table 3 of the original report, together with a further £5,000 per maintained mainstream primary and secondary school.

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

At this juncture, a document was circulated by NASUWT to summarise concerns in respect of the proposed reduction of the facility arrangements for Trade Unions. It was noted that two freedom of information requests and a report from the HTCF-Budget Working Group highlighting the reasons for the removal of Facility time for Scrutiny Committee, the allocation for National Executive Members (NEM) and the reduction in the allocation of Union Learning Representative time, had been requested.

It was reported that the decision for the de-delegations for 2015/16 could not be deferred, as the final decisions regarding de-delegations for Schools Forum approvals needed to be submitted to the Education Funding Agency in January, 2015. Further discussions were had including the removal of representatives in Scrutiny Committees, the duties of a Teacher Union Learning Representative, and that there were four union representatives that conducted health and safety inspections throughout the Borough.

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

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

|   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Decision:</b>  | <b>Primary – Agreed</b>              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Currently 4.11 fte</li><li>• Proposal to retain at 4.11 fte</li></ul> | <b>Secondary – Agreed, 1 Abstain</b> |

- (ii) Staff Costs – Supply cover – Teacher Union Learning Representatives

|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| <b>Decision:</b>   | <b>Primary – Agreed</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Currently 1 fte</li><li>• Proposal to reduce to 0.6fte (0.2fte for 3 Unions)</li></ul> | <b>Secondary – Agreed</b> |

- (iii) Staff Costs – Supply cover – National Executive Support

|   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| <b>Decision:</b>  | <b>Primary – Agreed</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Currently 0.6fte</li><li>• Proposal to reduce to 0fte</li></ul> | <b>Secondary – Agreed</b> |

- (iv) Staff Costs – Supply cover – Scrutiny Representatives

- Decision:**                      **Primary – Agreed**  
 • Currently 0.4fte            **Secondary – Agreed**  
 • Proposal to reduce  
 to 0fte
- (v) Staff Costs – Supply cover – NQT (Newly Qualified Teachers)
- Decision:**                      **Primary – Agreed**  
 • Retain as 2014/15        **Secondary – Agreed**  
 service
- (vi) Support for minority ethnic pupils/underachieving groups.  
 Family Support Workers
- Decision:**                      **Primary – Agreed**  
 • Retain as 2014/15        **Secondary – Agreed**  
 service with a  
 review during  
 2015/16 to ensure  
 service meets the  
 needs of schools  
 by 31/03/2016 at  
 latest
- (vii) LACES (Looked after Children Education Services)
- Decision:**                      **Primary – Agreed**  
 • Retain as 2014/15        **Secondary – Agreed**  
 service
- (viii) School Library Service
- Decision:**                      **Primary – Agreed**  
 • Retain as 2014/15        **Secondary – Not Applicable**  
 service
- (ix) Behavioural Pupil Referral Unit – Primary Outreach Service
- Decision:**                      **Primary – Agreed**  
 • Retain as 2014/15        **Secondary – Not Applicable**  
 service

**RESOLVED**

- (1) That the information contained in the report in respect of de-delegated services for 2014/15, 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 2015/16 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 2015/16 financial year, be approved by secondary school representatives who were entitled to vote in accordance with the Regulations.
- (4) That the proposal in paragraph 12 of the report submitted, for de-delegated service providers to produce an annual statement to appraise Schools and Schools Forum of the work undertaken during the previous financial year, and to be used to support the annual consultation process in respect of de-delegation options, be approved.

58 Schools Forum Constitution

A report of the Interim Director of Children's Services was submitted on the revised Schools Forum Constitution. A copy of the constitution was appended to the report submitted.

Resolved

That the revised Schools Forum Constitution be approved to become effective on the statutory deadline of 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2015.

59 Universal Infant Free Schools Meals

A report of the Interim Director of Children's Services was submitted on information in respect of the universal infant free school meals grants, both revenue and capital, for 2014/15.

The Senior Principal Accountant presented the report and in doing so referred to revenue funding, in particular, that previous three months trading indicated that the take up of universal infant free school meals were averaging at 82% with some schools recording a maximum of 100% and a minimum take up of 70%.

Reference was made to the School Food Plan, which was appended to the report, submitted, and that further information had been circulated to schools via the Budget Fact Sheet No. 5.

It was reported that additional capital funding was available for new projects aimed at enhancing kitchen and dining facilities, to ensure that in all instances the meals being provided were of as high a quality as possible. The criteria for the funding was strict, however two Dudley primary schools had been identified as meeting the criteria, namely, Netherton C of E Primary School and Lutley Primary School, and a bid totalling £470,000 had been submitted.

Following a discussion, a member suggested that a future review of the impact and benefits Free School Meals had on Schools.

Resolved

That the information contained in the report, on the universal infant free schools meals grants, both revenue and capital, for 2014/15, be noted.

60 Budget Fact Sheet No. 5 – December 2014

A report of the Interim Director of Children's Services was submitted in relation to Budget Fact Sheet No.5 dated December 2014, which had been circulated to Schools prior to the Forum meeting, and was available on the Schools Forum website.

Resolved

That the information contained in the budget fact sheet submitted be noted.

61 Schools Forum Membership - Update

A report of the Interim Director of Children's Services was submitted to provide the forum with a membership update.

Following the presentation of the report, it was noted that Mr M Moody would be appointed as an Academy School representative effective from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2015.

Resolved

That the information contained in the report and appendix to the report submitted, in respect of the Schools Forum Membership Update, be noted.

62 Dates of Future Meetings

Resolved

That the dates of future meetings be noted.

63. Comments made by the Chair

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

The meeting ended at 7.20 pm.

CHAIR