

DUDLEY SCHOOLS FORUM

Tuesday, 4th June, 2013 at 6.00 pm
at Saltwells Education Development Centre,
Bowling Green Road, Netherton, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Mrs Belcher, Mr Conway, Mr Derham, Mrs Garratt, Mrs Hannaway, Mrs Hazlehurst, Mr Kirk, Mr Patterson, Ms Pearce, Mr Ridney, Mrs Rogers, Mrs Ruffles, Mr Shaw, Mr Weaver and Mrs Withers.

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

Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services (Councillor Crumpton) and the Director of Children's Services

Officers

Children's Services Finance Manager, Senior Principal Accountant and Miss Helen Shepherd (Directorate of Corporate Resources)

Member of the Public

Mr P Nesbitt - Observing

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED

That Mr Ridney be elected Chair of the Forum for the 2013/14 municipal year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED

That Mr Patterson be appointed Vice-Chair of the Forum for the 2013/14 municipal year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Mr Jones, Mr Kelleher, Mr Ward and Mr Warren.

4. MINUTES

The Pupil Referral Unit representative requested that Minute No. 7 be amended to read:-

- Secondary Short Stay School.
- Cherry Tree Learning Centre.

RESOLVED

That, subject to the amendment of Minute No. 7, as indicated above, the minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 19th March, 2013, be approved as a correct record and signed.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

In response to a question raised, the Children's Services Finance Manager reiterated her comments made at the previous meeting that a further update in respect of the Pupil Referral Unit review and the additional finance support required, would be provided at the summer term meeting.

6. SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP – UPDATE

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted on appointments to the membership of Schools Forum.

RESOLVED

That the report submitted in relation to Dudley Schools Forum membership appointments from May 2013, be noted.

7. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT OUTTURN 2012/13

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted on financial data in respect of the Schools Budget for the 2012/13 financial year, which ended 31st March, 2013.

The Children's Services Finance Manager presented the report in detail, referring members of the Forum to paragraphs of specific importance.

Reference was made in particular to Table 1 of the report submitted and the £2.46m balance that was still to be allocated. The Director of Children's Services stated that there were specific criteria to which this could be allocated and that discussion with the Head Teachers Consultative Forum - Budget Working Group would continue to establish a spending plan for the Forum to consider.

A Primary School Headteacher representative referred to a previous forum meeting where this issue had been discussed and reminded Members that it was suggested that any available funds would be considered to be allocated to early years Special Educational Needs, as it was acknowledged that this was an area in need of additional support.

The Director of Children's Services requested members to inform their Head Teachers Consultative Forum - Budget Working Group representative of any areas they wished to be taken into consideration.

In response to a question raised by a Secondary School Governor representative, the Director of Children's Services stated that the £100,000 commitment in 2013/14 in relation to the Pensnett security and support to closed building, would still be relevant as the site was in the process of being closed and that the sports facilities on site was still being used by the Community and Community Groups and therefore had a commitment to keep it open. A further paper would be submitted to the forum meeting in the autumn, updating members on the next steps for the site.

Reference was made to Table 2 in the report submitted in relation to Schools Reserves and the Director of Children's Services highlighted the importance that these reserves should be used for today's children and that excessive amounts had been noted nationally with the possibility that these reserves could be pulled back into the system. She also requested that if money had been reserved for future planning developments the correct procedure was followed and that it was recorded on the Capital Programme accordingly.

The Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services reiterated the Director of Children's Services comments and requested that if a School had a development project planned for the future, that they informed their local Councillors, so that Members were aware of these local projects.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the report submitted in relation to the 2012/13 Outturn in respect of the Schools Budget, funded by the DSG and the planned use of the roll forward, as detailed in Table 1 of the report, be noted.
- (ii) That deliberation continues with the Head Teachers Consultative Forum - Budget Working Group to establish a spending plan in relation to the Central DSG Reserve balance to be allocated, for consideration at a future Forum meeting.
- (iii) That a report on the next steps for the Pensnett School site, be submitted to the Forum meeting in the Autumn term.

8. COMBINED SERVICES BUDGET OUTTURN 2012/13

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted on financial data in respect of the Combined Services Budget for the 2012/13 financial year, which ended 31st March 2013.

The Children's Services Finance Manager presented the report and made particular reference to the changes referred to in paragraph 5 of the report submitted in relation to combined budgets.

RESOLVED

That the report submitted in respect of the combined services budget outturn for 2012/13 and the ongoing budget set aside to continue the projects in 2013/14, be noted.

9. REVIEW OF 2013/14 SCHOOL FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

The Children's Services Finance Manager reported verbally in relation to the review of 2013/14 school funding arrangements and referred to the National School Funding Conference that was held in May 2013. A document highlighting the main issues raised at the conference was circulated at the meeting.

Consideration was given to comments made by the new DfE Director of Education Funding as indicated in the document circulated at the meeting and reference to the possibility of a review of School Reserve balances to ensure funds were being used effectively, reinforced comments made by the Director of Children's Services in minute no. 7 above.

The Senior Principal Accountant reported verbally, in relation to the 12 formula factors introduced in 2013/14 for 2014/15 budget, referring members of the Forum to bullet points on the document circulated of specific importance and stated that a detailed report would be submitted to the Forum in July.

Reference was made to the likely outcomes of the DfE 2013/14 School Funding Review. The Senior Principal Accountant confirmed that Dudley exceeded the national minimum percentage for the primary and secondary AWPU funding and that the sparsity funding rules would change but would be more relevant to rural areas and would be unlikely to affect schools within the Dudley Borough. She stated that the Lump Sum maximum would be £175,000 and this could be varied by phase of School but the £175,000 could not be exceeded. The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and Key Stage 2 assessment data was changing and that the attainment indicators for children not achieving in reading, writing, maths and English would be expanded. She also stated that Dudley had already adopted the £6000 Notional SEN for mainstream schools; that it was expected that the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) top-up funding would not be reduced by more than 1.5% per pupil and that there would be no increase in the DSG flat cash amount. Further details and clarifications were still awaited.

RESOLVED

That the verbal presentation and the information circulated at the meeting, in relation to the review of 2013/14 school funding arrangements, be noted.

10. EDUCATION FUNDING AGENCY OBSERVER STATUS REPRESENTATIVE

The Children's Services Finance Manager reported verbally in relation to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) Observer Status representative and stated that at the National School Funding Conference it was confirmed that EFA Observer representatives had visited 57 out of the 154 School Forums with the intention of visiting 90 groups before the end of the 2012/13 School year. It was stated that feedback from visited groups had been positive and that if an EFA representative were to attend a meeting there would be prior notification of this.

The forum was also informed that there would be a change in membership composition in October 2013 when the School Forum Regulations were updated to replace the 14-19 Strategic Partnership member with a Post 16 provider representative and to incorporate a review of Academy representation due to the increase in schools converting to Academy status.

RESOLVED

That the verbal information presented to the forum in relation to the Education Funding Agency Observer Status representative and a future review of School Forum membership composition, be noted.

11. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE FORUM

RESOLVED

It was noted that the last meeting of the Forum in the current academic year was scheduled for Tuesday, 9th July, 2013 at 6.00pm at Saltwells EDC.

The meeting ended at 7.05pm.

CHAIR