

DUDLEY SCHOOLS FORUM

Tuesday, 6th October, 2009, at 6:00 pm
At Saltwells Education Development Centre, Bowling Green Road,
Netherton, Dudley

PRESENT

Mrs Griffiths (Chairman)

Mr Millman (Vice Chairman)

Mr Dallaway, Mrs Edwards, Mrs Garratt, Mr Harrington, Mr Hatton, Mrs Hazlehurst, Mr Hinton, Mr Howells, Mr Hudson, Ms Hughes, Mr James, Mr J Jones, Mr P Jones, Mr Lynch, Mr Millward, Chief Superintendent Monroe, Mr Ridley, Mr Timmins, Mr Warren and Mr Wassall

Persons not members of the Forum but with an entitlement to attend meetings and speak.

Councillor Mrs Walker – Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services – both Dudley MBC

Officers

The Assistant Director of Children's Services (Ms Porter), Children's Services Finance Manager (Mrs Cocker) and Principal Accountant (Mrs Coates) – both Directorate of Finance, ICT and Procurement and the Assistant Principal Officer (Democratic Services), Directorate of Law, Property and Human Resources (Mr Sanders) – all Dudley MBC

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting will be received on behalf of Mrs Elwiss, Mr Francis, Mr Nutting, Mr Sorrell, Mr Warner, Mrs Withers and Mr Yates and from the Chairman of the Select Committee on Children's Services of Dudley MBC, Councillor Vickers.

It was also reported that Mr Howells, Mr P Jones, Mr Lynch and Mr Warren were serving as substitute members for this meeting in place of Mr Sorrell, Mr Nutting, Mr Warner and Mr Francis, respectively. It was reported further that, while they were acting as substitutes for this meeting, Mr P Jones and Mr Warren would become members of the Forum in place of Mr Nutting and Mr Francis respectively, once the formal appointment process under the Council had been completed.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 7 July 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the addition of the name of Mr Wassall in the list of the apologies for absence.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

No issues were raised under this item.

4. PROPOSED ALLOCATION OF 2009/10 SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT - HEADROOM

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted seeking approval to the distribution of headroom from the Schools and Development Grant of £77,799 for 2009/10.

RESOLVED

That the distribution of the 2009/10 Schools Development Grant Headroom, on a per pupil basis of £1.67 per pupil, using the January 2009 School's Census Pupil Data, be approved and that the allocation of the headroom per school, as indicated in Appendix A to the report now submitted, be noted.

5. DUDLEY'S SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS – CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted containing proposals for revisions to the Dudley Scheme for Financing Schools in consequence of responses received from the recent consultation on the issue. The responses to the consultation were set out in Appendix 1 to the report now submitted.

Particular consideration was given to the proposal for paragraph 4.2.2.(iii) in which a restriction to the value each school could hold in their reserves was proposed. This arrangement was not acceptable to Oldswinford Hospital because of the implications for the boarding account and the school had requested an amendment to the paragraph to allow for schools with boarding facilities to hold reserves of up to a maximum of 10% of the year's delegated budget. Concerns regarding Oldswinford Hospital's request had been expressed, however, on the grounds of consistency of approach for all secondary schools.

RESOLVED

- (1) That, with the exception of the proposal in relation to paragraph 4.2.2.(iii) of the local management of schools scheme, revisions to the scheme for financing schools, as set out in Appendix 1 in the report now submitted, be approved and the scheme amended accordingly.

- (2) That, with regard to paragraph 4.2.2. (iii), the scheme be amended to provide for boarding schools to retain a maximum of 5% of the relevant year's delegated budget for educational provision in reserves but also to permit boarding schools to retain 100% of the year's boarding account in reserves.

7. PROPOSED CHANGES TO DUDLEY'S RESOURCE ALLOCATION FORMULA FOR SCHOOLS

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted appended to which was a draft consultation document to be issued shortly in respect of changes proposed to the mainstream schools resource allocation formula for 2010/11.

RESOLVED

That the content of the consultation document, together with the manner in which responses are invited to be made, be noted.

8. INTRODUCTION OF A SINGLE FUNDING FORMULA FOR EARLY YEARS PROVISION CONSULTATION

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted seeking consideration of advice to be issued to the Director of Children's Services on the implementation of a single funding formula for Early Years provision with effect from April, 2010, taking into account DCSF guidance on the matter. A draft consultation document shortly to be issued in respect of the introduction of a single funding formula was set out under cover of the report.

The report summarised the content of the DCSF guidance on the issues that Schools Forums needed to address in relation to the matter and indicated the key points of Dudley's proposed formula.

In presenting the report, the Children's Services Finance Manager drew particular attention, further to minute 10 of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 June 2009, of a potential shortfall of £667,000 in the budget allocation for early years provision, indicating that the final decision regarding the extent to which the shortfall could be met from within the School's Budget could not be made until February 2010, when more information would be available regarding the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2010/11.

RESOLVED

That the Director of Children's Services be advised:

- (1) That a single funding formula for early years provision from April, 2010 be implemented, taking into consideration the DCSF Guidance to Schools Forums as set out in paragraph 6 of the report now submitted.
- (2) That a period of formal consultation be entered into from October, 2009 to 8 January 2010 in respect of proposals for implementing the Early Years Single Funding Formula, as detailed in the draft consultation document set out in Appendix 1 to the report now submitted.
- (3) That it be noted that the outcomes of the consultation will be reported to the meeting of the Schools Forum on 23 February 2010 for final approval before implementation.

9. FINAL ALLOCATION OF DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT 2009/10 FINANCIAL YEAR

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted on confirmation received from the Department of Children's Schools and Families that the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocation for Dudley for 2009/10 financial year would be in the sum of £192.388 m.

The allocation exceeded the sum estimated by £22,000, which had been added to the unallocated contingency of £112,000. A further report would be presented to the Forum in December 2009, when budget planning for 2010/11 would commence.

RESOLVED

That the final DSG allocation of £192.388 m be noted, together with the addition of the surplus of £22,000 to the unallocated contingency, thus increasing the budget to £134,000.

10. SINGLE STATUS UPDATE

The Children's Services Finance Manager indicated there was nothing further to report on this matter at this stage.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

In view of the date of the next meeting having been arranged during the week when most primary schools would be engaging in Christmas activities, was

RESOLVED:

That the next meeting of the Forum held not on 15 December 2009 but on Tuesday, 8 December 2009 at 6.00 pm at a venue to be arranged.

CHAIRMAN

The Meeting ended at 6.50 pm