

MINUTES OF DUDLEY SCHOOLS FORUM

Tuesday, 25th November, 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

Mrs J Belcher, Mr J Conway, Mr C Derham, Mrs A Garratt, Mrs A Hannaway, Mrs N Jones, Mr J Kelleher, Mrs J Kings, Mr B Oakley, Mrs J Quigley, Mrs H Ruffles, Mrs E Taylor, Mr N Shaw, Ms M Stowe, Mr D Ward 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 Miss H Shepherd (Democratic Services Officer), Directorate of Corporate Resources

40 Introductions by the Chair

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular the new Members in attendance.

41 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Mr P Kilbride, Mr P Nesbitt, Mr B Patterson and Ms P Rogers.

42 Substitute Member

It was noted that Mrs E Taylor was serving as a substitute member on behalf of Mr B Patterson for this meeting of the Forum only.

43 Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Schools Forum held on 21st October, 2014, be approved as a correct record and signed.

44 Matters Arising from the Minutes

No issues were raised under this agenda item.

45 Family Support Workers working in Early Years settings

A verbal presentation was made by the Acting Assistant Director of Children's Services – Education Services in relation to Family Support Workers working in Early Years settings.

He stated that a report in relation to this issue had been considered and reviewed by the Head Teachers Consultative Forum – Budget Working Group, which had provided reassurance of the role of the Family Support Worker. It had been recommended at that meeting that a future report be submitted to Schools Forum addressing the aspect of the provisions funded, including Family Support Workers; the service provided; the effects these services had on the children and how they impacted upon the situation. It was considered that an overview of the services would be beneficial to Schools Forum and would help in the determination of the funding to the service approved by the Forum.

A Primary School Head Teacher welcomed the report and requested that Primary and Secondary Head Teachers and Nursery colleagues be consulted in relation to their experiences of the service and that the outcome of the consultation also be included in the report.

In response to a request for the PVI providers to also be included in the consultation, the Acting Assistant Director of Children's Services – Education Services confirmed that this would not be a problem but indicated that the larger the scale of the consultation the less personal interaction there would be.

Resolved

- (i) That the verbal information presented in relation to Family Support Workers working in Early Years settings be noted.

- (ii) That a further report on Family Support Workers and the provisions and services provided; the outcomes and effects that the service had on the children concerned and the outcomes of a consultation completed by Primary and Secondary Headteachers, Nursery and PVI providers on their experiences of the service, be submitted to a future meeting of the Forum for consideration.

46 Dedicated Schools Grant Projected Outturn Update 2014/15

A report of the Interim Director of Children's Services was submitted with the latest financial forecast in respect of the Schools Budget for the 2014/15 financial year ending 31st March 2015.

Arising from the presentation of the report, the Early Years and Nursery representative raised concern in relation to the significant under spend of the time for two early years funding for disadvantaged children and it was considered that this was as a result of the lack of vacant spaces within the borough to accommodate the take up.

In response to a question raised as to whether additional spaces would be available if the amount of funding allocated per child was to be increased, it was considered that this could have some impact but the main obstacle was capacity.

The Children's Services Finance Manager stated that there had been a low take-up on the initiative nationally and all Authorities were experiencing a significant under spend in this area. She stated that she would compare the £4.50 funding currently allocated per child with other authorities allocations and report back to a future meeting of the forum.

In response to a further question, the Children's Services Finance Manager confirmed that the funding under spend would be carried forward as part of the central DSG budget and that the figures referred to in the report related to the Summer term take up and that this under spend was projected to continue to increase.

Members continued to raise their concerns that eligible two year olds were being disadvantaged due to the lack of spaces available.

Arising from questions raised in relation to the percentage of two year olds that required a place but had been refused due to the lack of capacity and which areas in the borough were particularly struggling to accommodate children, it was stated that the Acting Assistant Director of Children's Services - Education Services would establish these figures and would report back to a future meeting, but it was considered that Dudley was in-line with the national average.

Resolved

- (i) That the information contained in the report submitted, on the 2014/15 forecast outturn position in respect of the Schools Budget, funded by the Dedicated School Grant, be noted.
- (ii) That a report on the time for twos initiative including comparative figures of the funding allocated by other authorities and the number of additional places required to accommodate the number of children requesting to take-up the initiative be submitted to a future meeting of the Forum.

47 Early Years Pupil Premium and Funding for Disadvantaged Two Year Olds – DfE Consultation Outcomes

A report of the Interim Director of Children's Services was submitted on the DfE consultation outcomes in respect of the Early Years Pupil Premium and funding for disadvantaged two year olds proposals.

Arising from the presentation and in response to a question raised, the Nursery School Head Teacher and the Early Years Provider representative confirmed that they had both responded to the consultation although had not been referred to in Appendix A of the report submitted.

Resolved

That the information contained in the report submitted in relation to the funding for the early years pupil premium and funding for disadvantaged two year olds for 2015/16 with a further report being presented in the Spring 2015 term in respect of the 2015/16 funding requirements, be noted.

48 Local Authority Provisional Funding Pro-Forma for 2015/16

A report of the Interim Director of Children's Services was submitted on Dudley's submission of the provisional Authority Proforma Tool for 2015/16 to the Education Funding Agency.

Resolved

That the information contained in the report, on the successful submission and subsequent validation by the Education Funding Agency of Dudley's Local Authority Proforma Tool for the 2015/16 financial year, be noted.

49 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 and in response to a question raised by the Chair, the Children's Services Finance Manager confirmed that an election process of nominations for the two vacant Primary School Governor posts in Halesowen and Dudley North would take place in 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.

50 Schools Forum Meeting Schedule – Provisional Agenda Items for December

The Chair referred to the next meeting of the forum and appreciated that Forum Members had alternative commitments due to the festive season but encouraged Members to attend to ensure that the meeting was quorate as the agenda item in relation to De-delegations update 2014/15 and the 2015/16 consultation outcomes would require Members approval and voting procedure.

Resolved

That the proposed agenda items for the forum meeting on 16th December, 2014 and the comments made by the Chair be noted.

51 Dates of Future Meetings

Resolved

That the dates of future meetings be noted.

The meeting ended at 6.40 pm.

CHAIR