

## **SCHOOLS FORUM**

Minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2007

### **Present**

Primary School Teachers: Ron Lawrence Doreen Fellingham, Sue Meckiff and Sue Robertson

Secondary Head Teachers: Karen Raven and Meryl Davies

Primary Governors: Betsy Johnstone, Tricia Spedding and Paul Chick

Secondary Governors: Andrew Downes (Chairman) and Janet Bell

Non-School Representatives: David Bridger (Vice-Chairman),

### **Also present**

Rob Carling (Head of Children and Young People Finance)  
Mandy Russell (Children and Young People Finance Group)

## **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Kathleen Clarke, Tony Corkett and Nick Webb. Alison Register sent apologies that she would be late arriving.

Due to an error by the clerk, regarding the date of the meeting, neither Jenni Mogridge nor Isobel Vassello attended the meeting.

## **2 DECLARATIONS**

There were no declarations. At the previous meeting it had been agreed that at the beginning of each year Forum Members record any declarations for circulation at the start of each Schools Forum meeting. If there were any subsequent declarations these can be conveyed in the normal way at a meeting. The clerk would arrange to send forms to Members.

## **3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2007**

The Minutes were agreed subject to the Parent Governors being changed to Primary Governors.

## **4 SPENDING BY PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN 2006/07 Report DCYP07087**

Details were provided of schools balances as at 31 March 2007. This was an expansion of the report considered by the forum at its previous meeting. After consideration by the Forum it would be presented to the Children and Young People Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee and the Portfolio Holder.

Members asked for clarification regarding the Ravensbourne School as they still appeared to have a large deficit. Officers explained that the deficit recovery plan in place was seeing results quicker than expected. The other concern raised by members was in relation to the Priory School. Officers assured members that there were no plans to address this or any other deficit from funding for other schools.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted.**

## **5 PROPOSED MINIMUM FUNDING GUARANTEE ADJUSTMENTS Report DCYP07086**

Members considered details of schools budgets currently being funded at the Minimum Funding Guarantee level, and considered how this could be phased out over a number of years.

Each school had been looked at individually to see the reason why the MFG was higher than the formula calculation. For most schools it was simply the fact that MFG had increased at a higher rate than the formula funding over a number of years. In other schools a specific reason for the discrepancy could be identified. For example, if the pupil numbers in a school increased significantly, the MFG applied the increase to the total school funding, where as the formula funding only applied the increase to the pupil funding. However, in each instance, there was no valid reason for the school to continue to receive this higher level of funding.

Members of the Forum agreed with the principle but recognised that there may need to be special dispensation from the Forum and expected to receive requests from schools to that effect. They also felt that parameters would need to be set Any funding freed up by this process would be considered alongside any available headroom, which would help if the DSG settlement for 2008/09 is tighter as anticipated. They were also mindful to monitor the effect on small schools.

**RESOLVED that**

- (1) the report be noted and that the Children and People Portfolio Holder be requested to comment on the proposal to phase out MFG with a view to all schools being funded at formula level only at the end of a four year period; and**
- (2) Following consideration by the Children and Young People Portfolio Holder the report goes out to consultation to schools; and**

### (3) A further report be brought back to the Schools' Forum

#### 6 FINAL DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG) 2007/08

Members considered a paper which was tabled at the meeting. It outlined the position in relation to the DSG as follows:

##### DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT 2007/08

	£'000	
Estimated Dedicated Schools Grant	165,985	
Final Dedicated Schools Grant	165,628	
<b>Shortfall</b>	<b>-357</b>	
<b>Contingency Budget</b>	1,106	
Less Earmarked	-450	
	656	
Less shortfall in DSG	-357	
Less updated data for Early Years Additional nursery pupils	-252	
Inflation in line with the Minimum Funding Guarantee	-47	
	0	
Unspent DSG brought forward from 2006/07 - Prudential Borrowing	260	(see note below)
<b>Contingency Budget available</b>	<b>260</b>	

##### Unspent DSG brought forward from 2006/07

The total unspent DSG from 2006/07 was £924,000. This also included £675,000 for Post-16 Capital.

In response to concerns about the Pupil Referral Service. Officers confirmed that they would keep the Forum informed of developments and that a full report was being presented to members in September. The Forum will also receive full details of the service and budget needs of the PRS.

Members requested an update on the £675,000 Post-16 capital that was brought forward from 2007/08 in to 2007/08. Officer assured the Forum that

the funding will still be used for its intended purpose but that this funding was only part of a capital funding package needed for post 16 basic need schemes. An announcement on capital funding is awaited from the Government.

**RESOLVED that the position on DSG 2007/08 be noted.**

## **7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

A paper on "School, early years and 14-16 funding arrangements 2008-11 - Summary of decisions announced on 25 June" was circulated at the meeting. It was a response to the consultation and contained number of issues which needed to be debated. It was agreed that this would be included on the agenda at the next meeting.

Members also noted that the first meeting of the Early Years working group would take place on 5<sup>th</sup> July.

The SEN Working Group had last met on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July. They expect that they will soon be in a position to start consultation with all schools, and will bring a full report to the next meeting of the schools forum in September prior to the start of this consultation.

## **8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the School's Forum would next meet at 4.30 pm on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2007 at the EDC.

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 5.40pm