

Stoke on Trent Council Schools' Forum



City of
Stoke-on-Trent

Date: Monday 16 January 2017
Time: 08:30 a.m.
Venue: The Bridge Centre
Chair: Jonathan May

In Attendance: Mr C Smith, Mr M Rayner (**Secondary Academy Representatives**), Mrs L Sarikaya (**Nursery Representative**), Mr J Baddeley (**Primary Academy Representative**), Mrs S Thursfield, Mrs E Gater (**Primary Maintained Representatives**), Dr R Blencowe (**Secondary Head Teacher**), Mrs E Emery, Mr J Lovatt (**Primary Governors**), Mr P Kidman (**Special Schools Representative**), Mr H Gurden (**Union Representative**).

Mr D Perrett, Mr R Johnstone, Miss H Meigh, and Mr A Brindley attended on behalf of the Local Authority.

Minutes: Anne Callaghan

MINUTES

		<i>Action</i>
1.	Apologies	
	Apologies received from: Mr D Alston, Mr C Ward, Mrs S Smith, Councillor Bridges and Mr I Beardmore.	
2.	Election of Chair and Vice Chair of Schools' Forum	
	Dr Rowena Blencowe nominated Mr Jonathan May for Chair, Mr Derek Gray seconded and all agreed. Mrs E Gater was also nominated for Vice Chair and approved by members.	
3.	Minutes of the last meeting (14/10/2016)	
	Minutes approved. Matters arising: No matters arising.	
4.	High needs bid evaluations report	
	Mr J May mentioned a report that Mrs Jen Lomas had written and said that out of the 15 bids received 2/3rds of the bids had been approved. Miss H Meigh said that there will be a further review after 12 months.	HM

Mr J May said that we need to sharpen up bid applications showing that they are innovative and sustainable. To do this we need to share good practices and show good use of how public money is being spent.

Mr D Perrett talked about an outstanding bid for St Margaret Ward. He proposed looking at the whole of the vulnerability strategy. We presently use REACH and are looking at 2 applications for free schools that are required to give support to excluded and at risk young people from schools. They should be able to support and help with needs across the city.

Mr C Smith said he'd like to ask on behalf of the sector seeking assurance on places being accessible for example funded and their availability.

Mr D Perrett said that all are aware of the pricing model applied and that mainstream heads need to commission accordingly as sometimes they are still accountable for students post 16. He said that from sitting on alternative provision meetings, their framework and approach to funding concerns may differ and responsibility could still be with the school. Look at what is coming out in the new document, for example 50 students x £10K base budget and top-up from mainstream school to the alternative provision and all entitlements, therefore, £5 – 6K. Funding should be allocated to the student and know where it's going.

Mr C Smith asked, will it happen quickly?

Mr D Perrett said yes, immediately. The framework is in place and the Strategic Group and Local Authority have agreed.

Dr R Blencowe asked about the timeline as she said she had a student rejected from getting into REACH as all 10 places had already been filled.

Mr D Perrett agreed that there is a placement issue at the moment and he explained that he has met with REACH and they are working to restructure and should have places by April 2017. Having spoken to the Governors and Heads, REACH need teachers/staff resources. Key Stage 3 is no longer funded and they have pressure with lack of staff, therefore, we need to give REACH time to restructure and get staff in place. The plan is to review and look at a provision of 80 full time equivalent places, this will be reviewed and monitored over a 2 year period

REACH have been informed that their budget will be reduced accordingly if they are unable to meet requirements in the

timeline.

Mr J May asked, are REACH a free school?

Mr D Perrett answered not yet, however, this is being looked at or a specialist provision to be reviewed long-term. 2 free schools to be determined, (City Learning Trust and College Academy Trust). Discussions and meetings are being held around these and also looking at meeting the need for some provision to suit various needs/requirements and using alternative providers x 300 places.

Mr J May rechecked that the timeline is for after April?

Mr D Perrett said that this is the aim with the restructuring.

Dr R Blencowe asked about the £800K that has gone in for 80 places but this capacity is not yet available?

Mr D Perrett re-iterated that after 2 years the funding will be amended accordingly around pupil admission. Out-reach staff are not funded and providers have been made aware of the budget changes.

Mr H Gurden queried the original design around 80 places and asked are some in school and some out of school?

Mr D Perrett said presently full-time places for Key Stage 3 and 4 around 15 to 20 places for young people are struggling with places and, that the number of young people with higher needs has increased a lot this year.

Mrs E Gater said it looks like the chicken and egg situation.

Mr D Perrett responded that preventative areas are being reviewed. There have been some serious incidents that have had to be sorted out.

Mr H Gurden asked if we use outside provision.

Mr D Perrett responded that we only use outside provision in extreme circumstances due to the very high cost involved. Secondary Heads have a responsibility to their students and need to be aware that responsibility could still sit with them.

Mr C Smith asked about REACH and their surplus budget?

Mr D Perrett answered that they are currently funding outreach and other providers although once staffing restructure in-place this won't continue. They do presently have a healthy budget.

Mr C Smith mentioned concerns around double funding risks for example Free Schools and further provision from St Margaret Ward to other schools in the city. What guarantees do we have against ring fencing?

Mr D Perrett responded that clear guidelines are to be operated. Alternative provision will get £10K per pupil and there will be 2 free schools, although, schools will need to communicate with placements. There needs to be strength and understanding going forward that will count towards places, we can't have schools setting up the placements and getting the funding as this won't be financially viable.

Mr C Smith asked about the board having a filter?

Mr J May asked about the 2 free schools, special schools and higher needs provision?

Mr J Perrett responded that a vulnerable strategy is being set up to provide a service to meet needs of students and to avoid those going straight to special schools. There is a gap that has been identified and with SEN numbers rocketing we are looking at bridging the gap. We will put a strategy in place for additional mainstream education and ensure we put students in correct placements following assessments. This requires LA involvement as we need to ensure we have done our best for the children in our city. We need to assess their needs more effectively, for example, recognising autism, mental health issues, vulnerability, etc.

Mr H Gurden voiced his concerns with REACH and their staffing issues and getting too many students too soon.

Mr D Perrett assured him that planning and monitoring has been put in place and he understands that this is frustrating but it is necessary that REACH get their structure in place and manage it carefully before they agree to take on additional students.

Mr J Baddeley asked if £10K to schools is going to be enough to sustain the students in need. He mentioned that he had visited another school where they received £28K per child and this was a high quality provision catering to higher needs.

Mr D Perrett replied that higher needs provision was a separately funded provision beyond the School's Forum.

Mr D May agreed that higher needs were on another provision via Social Care/EHC plans.

5.	Verbal update on DSG bid evaluations	
	<p>Mr J May explained that the bid funding had gone to schools and a self-evaluation will need to be done followed by a meeting to look at how it's going and bring back to Forum. Look at the process, spend and impact on schools. LINK officers need to speak to ELT and final evaluation by February. SIG to keep up-to-date.</p> <p>Mr D Perrett said that there will be SIG monitoring and a meeting arranged for 30 January. This deadline needs to be met and similar on high needs funding. Look at challenges and successes that need to be gathered and shared.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>All</p>
6.	Requested for funding for statutory duties – Paper to be tabled	
	<p>Mr D Perrett explained that he had put together a paper, however, due to new information from Local Government, (available to view), this required more investigation and time to produce a paper with relative updates.</p> <p>Mr D Perrett said that the Statutory Duties include a responsibility to provide education that includes SEN, vulnerable young people, education provision, attendance, etc. Top slice funding varied and remedied from the budget. We had calculated over 3 years at £15 per head and this now has to be re-thought due to the document that states £28.64 per pupil out of the £1million. The work needs to be done and plan the budget around the new information in the document, then have another meeting and agree funding. Problems and Welfare structure consultation to retain and a meeting required to discuss funding around statutory duties.</p> <p>Dr Rowena Blencowe asked if ok to respond via email?</p> <p>Miss H Meigh apologised but, the response has to be returned to the DfE and as this will affect the formula it needs to be done by Friday 20 January 2017.</p> <p>Mr D Perrett said that the formula will stay the same but the figures will be reduced.</p> <p>Miss H Meigh said that all retained duties are in a block payment.</p> <p>Mr D Perrett mentioned that duties are the same but due to this £15 not £28.64 that it should be, there is a requirement to recalculate the funding allocation less the strategy duties that need to come off the top figure before the formula can be worked out.</p> <p>Mr H Gurden asked about a 1.5% lowest reduction?</p> <p>Miss H Meigh and Mr D Perrett both said that no % had been mentioned.</p>	<p>DP</p> <p>All</p> <p>DP/HM</p>

	<p>Mr D Perret re-iterated that he will get the email out to Forum members to respond before Friday deadline to enable a recalculation. The funding needs to be school led for the funding and to meet statutory responsibilities. It is the responsibility of the LA to ensure that statutory duties are met. We need to standardise it and manage it via the national formula.</p> <p>Mr H Gurden asked about ESG funding?</p> <p>Miss H Meigh explained that ESG ends in September; however, LAs are advised that we can ask for monies to replace ESG for maintained schools.</p> <p>Miss H Meigh said that few items are included in the central block of funding including ESG. She also confirmed that other historic/statutory commitments such as admissions, School's Forum, redundancy, prudential borrowing, equal pay, social care budget are included within the central block.</p> <p>Mr D Perrett responded that equal pay should be reducing. However, we will still have to continue to honour commitments.</p> <p>Mr J May asked about Social Care contributions?</p> <p>Miss H Meigh explained that this relates to Children in Care and keeping them in the city while meeting their needs. There is a baseline with DfE and any issues need to be advised.</p> <p>Mr D Perrett agreed that out of area funding costs the LA a lot of money. He said he will get the paper out for response in order to meet deadline of Friday 20 January.</p> <p>Mrs Sarah Thursfield asked about training. As a new member to the group some clarity or training around the pots of money being discussed would help.</p> <p>Mr R Johnstone responded that some training had been tried out but not very successfully, however, School's Forum as it is will be being phased out by 2020 but some training/advise would be a good idea.</p> <p>Mr D Perrett re-confirmed that he would email the group with a document that will show statutory duties and how funds will be spent by Friday.</p> <p>Miss H Meigh said it needs to show legacy, historical and what needs to be paid.</p> <p>Dr Rowena Blencowe asked whether it was ok to respond by showing it's been read and in agreement.</p> <p>Mr D Perrett and Mr R Johnstone agreed that this would be acceptable.</p>	<p>DP/All</p> <p>DP</p> <p>DP</p> <p>All</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Any other business</p>	
	<p>Mr J May suggested training on this for further understanding is a</p>	

	<p>good idea, however, more realistic to arrange training around 2018/19 budgets.</p> <p>Mr D Perrett said he could arrange a half hour slot to help give a clearer understanding for example, in bite size to look at legal duties and what we need to be looking at with Forum and changes.</p> <p>Mr J Baddeley asked about cuts from the budget consultation, high needs discussions, vulnerable young people, co-operative working e.g., family support workers.</p> <p>Mr D Perrett agreed that there are reductions being made to various areas around co-operative working. The LA has major budget difficulties/cuts to meet and the use of other services and providers who can access government grants will have to be used to do these roles. The Private Sector will have to do a lot of the work around level 1 and 2 provisions in order that the capacity is filled.</p> <p>Mr J Baddeley said that he is aware of areas where this will be a problem for families that use the present facilities due to be cut.</p> <p>Mr D Perrett stated that unfortunately, Children Centre provisions are set to change and he does understand that service provisions around play and learning to develop parenting skills in Early Years development will be affected and have a knock on effect to clients who use crèche facilities to retrain for work and volunteer sectors, etc., all need to be looked at. It is challenging.</p> <p>Mr J Baddeley would like to make his concerns known and said he has communicated to try and encourage safeguarding against a potential problem.</p>	<p>DP</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Date of the Next Meeting</p> <p>TBA - May 2017 08:30 am – 10.30 am The Bridge Centre</p>	