

Stoke on Trent Council Schools' Forum



City of
Stoke-on-Trent

Date: Monday 10th October 17'
Time: 08:30 a.m.
Venue: Watermill Special School
Chair: Jonathan May

In Attendance: Mrs L Hughes (**Special Schools Representative**), Mr G Jones, Mr C Smith, Mr M Rayner, N Lowry (**Secondary Academy Representatives**), Mrs K Schonau, Mrs, E Gater, Mrs S Thursfield (**Primary Maintained Representatives**), Mr I Beardmore, Mr D Alston, Mr J Baddeley, Mrs S Moran (**Primary Academy Representatives**) Mr D Gray (**Primary Governor**), Mrs L Sarikaya (**Nursery Representative**)

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

Cabinet Member: Councillor Janine Bridges – Cabinet Member for Education and Economy.

Observers:

Minutes: Miss S Morris

MINUTES

		<i>Action</i>
1.	Apologies	
	Apologies received from: Mrs R Lee, Mrs H Emery and Mr J Lovatt	
2.	Minutes of the last meeting	
	<p>Schools Forum Minutes – 19th June 2017</p> <p>Minutes from the June meeting have been retrieved.</p> <p>Whilst reviewing the June minutes, Miss H Meigh asked all attendees if they had viewed the letter that schools had received regarding debt reports. All confirmed.</p> <p>Regarding the post 16 rep, SASCAL had put forward Mr Mark Kent to be the represent the 16-19 Partnership.</p> <p>Miss H Meigh asked Mr J May to write to Mr Mark Kent and invite him to the next meeting to represent the 16-19 Partnership.</p> <p>Minutes approved.</p>	<p>JM to write to Mark Kent and invite him to the next meeting.</p>

	<p>Schools Forum Minutes – 18th September 2017</p> <p>Regarding the September minutes, Mr J May drew attention to the lack of actions, as only 1 action was listed next to the minutes.</p> <p>Regarding the issue of non-attendees, which was discussed at the previous meeting, Miss H Meigh confirmed that there were 3 attendees that are currently being written to. It is assumed that they no longer wish to be part of the forum due to absence.</p> <p>Mr A Brindley said due to the number of schools converting to academy the Schools’ Forum Constitution and membership needs to be reviewed.</p> <p>Mr J May asked for this to do be done for the next meeting.</p> <p>Mr D Gray stated that we were currently thin on governors.</p> <p>Mrs L Hughes replied that she knew a governor that would be interested.</p> <p>Mr A Brindley read out the current list of members and vacancies.</p> <p>Mr J May requested that this be added to the agenda for the next meeting.</p> <p>Minutes approved.</p> <p>Mr N Lowry was appointed Forum Representative for Secondary Academy North.</p>	<p>SM to ensure all actions are noted.</p> <p>HM to write to non-attendees.</p> <p>HM/AB to review.</p> <p>HM to include in next agenda.</p>
3.	School Funding Formula 2018-19 – Paper to be tabled	
	<p>Miss H Meigh introduced the paper and explained that the Formula Working Group (FWG) had met on the 2nd October to discuss the proposed formula for 2018-19.</p> <p>Miss H Meigh went onto say that after lengthy discussions the FWG had agreed the principles of the proposed formula for 2018-19, highlighted within the paper, which now requires forum approval to go forward for consultation with schools.</p> <p>Miss H Meigh also pointed out that there was an error on the first page and it should have read ‘provisional transfer of £586k from primary to secondary phase’ and not secondary to primary. She apologised for this error.</p> <p>Miss H Meigh went onto to explain that the FWG had agreed to move towards a local formula that reflected the key changes within the National Funding Formula (NFF). She also said that the group also recommended that the maximum funding should be allocated through the AWPU.</p>	

She went onto explain that within the NFF the ratio between primary and secondary phases is 1:1.29 compared to 1:1.27 in our current formula. This should help schools who lost out last year with the introduction of a PFI factor.

Miss H Meigh went on to state that in the NFF the deprivation factor is made up of three elements which are IDACI, FSM and FSM6. Currently we use IDACI and FSM.

Miss H Meigh went on to say that regarding the lump sum, we've gone with the suggested formula rate and it is a drop for all schools. The FWG also wanted to keep the minimum funding guarantee (MFG) at -1.5%. She reminded Forum members that for 2018-19 the DfE would allow local authorities to set a local MFG between 0% and -1.5% per pupil.

Miss H Meigh explained that Mr A Brindley has illustrated the effects of MFG. This will be shown on sheets given out later. She also said 33 schools would see a reduction in funding. This is based on pupil numbers from October 16 census. Numbers will be later updated based on October 17 census.

Miss H Meigh stated that there was an increase of funding across the schools of £1.8million even after the possible transfer of £3m to the High Needs Block.

Miss H Meigh also pointed out that all schools have received an email from Louise Reece about a £3m transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. It was felt that we do not need further consultation as it was above 0.5%.

Miss H Meigh then said that in the illustrated examples, which will be shown to members later, there will be one showing the effect on school funding with the £3m transferred and one without.

Mrs E Gater then said that because they were trying to find the money, why can't they still have the £1m and go with the original plan. She felt with the additional money it was an easy target to ask for more.

Mr J May then asked for the question to be held for AOB.

All.

Mr I Beardmore then said that the FWG did not agree with £3m being removed. They only agreed on the formula.

Miss H Meigh then said that the FWG only decided on principles of the formula and she then asked the Forum members if they would like to comment.

Mr N Lowry then questioned the claim of £2million extra funding resulting from the previous years' decision of introducing a PFI factor.

Miss H Meigh explained that if you look at the information issued by the DfE it is split into two parts, pupil-led and premises. Premises are made up of rates, growth funding and PFI. If we hadn't introduced the PFI factor we would have only received funding for rates and growth funding. Pupil;-led funding would have remained the same. Therefore, we would not have received the additional premises funding of £2m in relation to PFI.

Miss H Meigh also said that if the trust did not agree with this then they just needed to look at the split provided by the DfE.

Mr Nick Lowry asked to see the information.

Miss H Meigh said we will show the DfE information on the screen later.

Councillor Janine Bridges stated that last year when it came to Forum, in September, it was clear that Forum members wanted a PFI factor introduced.

Councillor Janine Bridges went onto say schools also had the choice to stay in the PFI scheme or not. Mr N Lowry voted out. Unfortunately we now have a PFI scheme which current Councillors did not vote for.

She went on to say that schools that came out of PFI are disadvantaged regarding the PFI factor but we are now in negotiations over the contract and we could take TSSL to court. Going forward we have a new director of TSSL that we are talking to regarding the negotiations.

Mr J Baddeley addressed Mr N Lowry and asked how much he thinks he has lost.

Mr N Lowry responded by saying approximately £50-60k.

Mr N Lowry also said that he felt there were a number of secondary schools that did not benefit.

Mr J Baddeley replied by saying they will benefit this time. The additional funding will benefit them even though they do not receive PFI factor funding.

Miss H Meigh stated that they had moved £586k to the secondary phase to help.

The NFF funding summary was shown on the overhead screens for members to view by Mr A Brindley.

Miss H Meigh said that this is what the DFE have published on their website. It shows the different elements that make up the funding. If we did not have a PFI factor, in the previous year, then the amount under premises would have been lower. Most schools will benefit going forward.

Mr J May asks if there were any more questions.

Miss H Meigh then said that we would like people to be happy with the principles of the formula beforehand before the individual school allocations were given out.

Miss H Meigh informed the members that the Bridge Centre is booked for the following Thursday to consult with the head teachers so that we can make an informed decision on the formula.

HM to consult with head teachers.

Mr I Beardmore stated that it was a unanimous decision at the FWG meeting to go with the PFI factor.

Mr G Jones added that it should be shared out. We tried to opt out of the PFI scheme but we did not have a choice. He felt that they were a victim of something they had little choice over.

Mr J Baddeley then replied by asking Mr G Jones whether he felt schools that had opted out of the PFI scheme were receiving a better deal.

Mr G Jones replied by saying yes.

Councillor Janine Bridges added that she never agreed with PFI.

Councillor Janine Bridges then went onto say that the Maintenance Reserve Allowance (MRA) which schools pay into under the PFI contract was there to help schools fix or replace what was wrong. We have paid into that so we are trying to negotiate at the moment to get funds back. Lloyds have signed it off and so they believe it will be received. All in all there will be a £33m cost in penalties so it is best to go back to government and renegotiate to get some of it back.

She went onto say that if any school had failures please write to her or a member of the team and they will include them. It will be hard to get out of the contract so we will continue to negotiate and if required go down the legal route and take them to court.

All write/contact Councillor Bridges or team if any failure.

	<p>Mr A Brindley then gave out a handout of the factor values for the Funding Formula 2018-19.</p> <p>Miss H Meigh then said the handout shows the values of each individual factor. If the Forum members are happy with this then we have the sheets to show the impact on each school.</p> <p>Miss H Meigh then explained the various individual factors.</p> <p>Miss H Meigh then asked for questions.</p> <p>Mr N Lowry queried the total figure. At the head teacher's breakfast meeting you said £160.2m, yet this shows £155m.</p> <p>Miss H Meigh responded by saying the DfE had sent out figures at different stages. She went onto to say that she would review the values and reply to Mr N Lowry by email.</p> <p>Mr J May asked Miss H Meigh to copy all Forum members into the email response.</p> <p>Mr H Meigh then asked members to vote on whether they were happy to consult on this.</p> <p>Mr N Lowry asked if it needed to be a unanimous decision.</p> <p>Mr H Meigh replied by saying no.</p> <p>Mr C Smith clarified that the vote is purely on principles.</p> <p>Miss H Meigh confirmed this by saying that members were not voting on the £3m but only if they were happy to consult on the principles of the formula for 2018-19.</p> <p>Mr J May then asked members to vote on whether they were happy to consult on the principles of the formula for 2018-19.</p> <p>The vote was a unanimous yes.</p> <p>Mr A Brindley then handed out the individual school breakdown of the provisional School Funding Formula 2018-19 including the £3m transfer to the High Needs Block and adjusted FSM6 factor.</p> <p>Miss H Meigh then went onto say that members need to focus on the columns highlighted in blue, for comparison purposes, as they exclude rates.</p> <p>Miss H Meigh then urged all Forum members to ask all the head teachers, they represent, to attend the meeting on the</p>	<p>HM to reply by email.</p> <p>Forum Reps to ask head</p>
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<p>following Thursday so that they can understand how their school will be effected by the funding formula.</p> <p>Mr J Baddeley then asked whether the invites would be sent out tomorrow.</p> <p>Mr J May also asked for an option of times to be sent out.</p> <p>Miss H Meigh replied by saying the Bridge Centre may be able to do after school on Wednesday.</p> <p>Mr R Johnstone then said to offer Wednesday and Thursday to provide a choice.</p> <p>Mr J May then asked if there was anything else to be discussed.</p> <p>Miss H Meigh replied by saying no.</p> <p>Mrs E Gater then said if the formula is now based on the £3m reduction what would have happened if there was no additional funding and only the original £1m had been approved. Would the additional money have been found from elsewhere?</p> <p>Mr R Johnstone responded by saying the £1m would have made only a contribution to the deficit. It is not possible to reduce the current DSG overspend by the 1st April. The plan would be to work with High Needs to come up with a strategy. Other Local Authorities are also reporting the same with a huge cost on top of DSG and overspend also on the General Fund.</p> <p>Mrs S Thursfield then queried whether there was likely to be a deficit next year and if this would carry on for years.</p> <p>Councillor Janine Bridges replied by saying no. We are currently looking for money from other places. Health can't afford it either and they will also have to make cuts. We have to become more commercial and make our own money. We are looking at how to maintain support for children, in and out of city placement and better quality at less cost.</p> <p>Councillor Janine Bridges went on to say that we have to make a resilient and robust provision within the city.</p> <p>Mrs S Thursfield again asked if there will be a deficit.</p> <p>H Meigh responded by saying that it depends on how quickly we can get the plans in place.</p> <p>Mrs S Thursfield then asked if we are seeing an increase in</p>	<p>teachers to attend meeting.</p> <p>HM to send out invites.</p>
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	<p>EHC plans.</p> <p>Mr J Baddeley responded by saying that 75% of overspend was coming from out of city places.</p> <p>Mrs L Hughes asked where the money will be found from.</p> <p>Mr J Baddeley asked if the extra £4m had not come in then would the decision to take £3m still happen. Originally it was £1m.</p> <p>Mr M Rayner then asked whether it would it be possible to see the formula modelled with £1m reduction or no reduction.</p> <p>Mr G Jones also queried whether there was a plan for everyone to see where the extra £2m would be spent.</p> <p>H Meigh responded by saying it will reduce the deficit.</p> <p>Mr A Brindley then handed out a second sheet which showed the formula with the £3m funding not taken out.</p> <p>Mr R Johnstone asked what the options for reducing the over spend quickly were. The deficit is not clear.</p> <p>Mr N Lowry said there was a plan presented at SASCAL.</p> <p>Mr N Lowry also expressed his concern in the way the £3m transfer was communicated to schools. You need to create a plan of how it will be spent as the majority of head teachers will not be happy.</p> <p>Miss H Meigh responded by saying that some schools still gain even after the reduction of the £3m.</p> <p>Mr I Beardmore expressed his concern that schools are not seeing an increase. He felt that the Local Authority had not been good with communication whether the decision was positive or negative.</p> <p>Mr R Johnstone responded by saying the decision is up to the Secretary of State and she may say no.</p> <p>Mr J May asked when the Secretary of State would get back to us.</p> <p>Miss H Meigh responded by saying early next year as it needs to be done before school budgets are produced.</p> <p>Mr J Baddeley then asked if there was a documented 5 year plan. Numbers will only increase.</p>	
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4.	Any other business	
	<p>Mr C Smith asked when the decision will be made on the formula.</p> <p>Miss H Meigh responded by saying that another School Forum meeting would need to take place where we would need to have a vote on the formula.</p> <p>Mr J Baddeley asked what the date of the next meeting was.</p> <p>Mr A Brindley replied that it hasn't been set at that moment.</p> <p>Councillor Janine Bridges requested that when making the vote the Director is invited.</p> <p>Mr J Baddeley requested a written response of the SASCAL meeting from Mr N Lowry.</p> <p>Mr C Smith asked if a date could be set for the next meeting.</p> <p>Mr J May responded with Friday 10th November. Aim for 8.30am, if the Director cannot make this time then aim for 11am. Failing that it will be 1.30pm.</p>	<p>HM to invite Director to vote. NL to provide written response.</p>
	<p>Date of the Next Meeting</p> <p>10th November Venue & Time – TBC</p>	