**Birmingham Schools Forum**

Thursday 10th December 2020

2pm – 4pm

# Remote meeting via MS Teams

| **Present:** | Richard Green Primary Forum  James Hill Primary Forum  Maxine Charles Primary Forum  Debbie James Secondary Forum **Chair**  Mike White Academies Representative  Jane Gotschel Secondary Academies Representative  Nicola Redhead Academies Representative (Alternative Provision)  Les Lawrence (maintained secondary governor  Karen Mackenzie (maintained primary governor  David McCallin Maintained Nursery School governor  Sara Reece PVI representative  Catriona Savage PVI representative (left the meeting at 3.50)  Clare Madden Catholic Senior Executive Leader Lumen Christi  Steve Hughes Academies Representative (Special)  Denise Fountain Maintained Special HT  David Aldworth Maintained Nursery HT  Steve Howell PRU Representative City of Birmingham School  David Room Teacher Associations  Janet Dugmore Support Staff Union representative  Tim Boyes BEP  Tom O’Neill BCC (joined the meeting at 2.30pm)  Lisa Fraser BCC  Nichola Jones BCC  Cllr Kate Booth BCC  Cllr Kath Scott BCC  Yoke O’Brien BCC Interim Finance Manager – Schools (joined the meeting at 2.55pm)  John Betts BCC Interim Busines Partner with Education and Skills Directorate  Tim O’Neill BCC (left the meeting at 2.20pm)  Lindsey Trivett BCC  Jaswinder Didially BCC (left the meeting at 2.30)  Lucy Dumbleton BCC (left the meeting at 2.30pm)  Patricia Harvey BCC Business Analyst, Finance and Governance(supporting High Needs funding)  Observer: Rose Horsfall Cabinet Support Officer  In attendance: Janice Moorhouse (clerk) |
| --- | --- |

| 1. | **Welcome and apologies for absence** |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1.1 | The Chair welcomed members and officers to the meeting.  Apologies: apologies for absence received from Cllr Jayne Francis BCC    Absent: Paul Doddridge Primary Forum |  |
| 2. | **Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 19th November 2020** |  |
|  | The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting. |  |
| 3. | **Matters arising from the minutes** |  |
| 3.1 | Item 3.1: ACTION: draft letter to be sent to the Chair for her signature before sending to the DfE  Tim O’Neill reported this action had not been completed.  ACTION: Members suggestions on governor representatives to fill the outstanding vacancies to be sent to the Chair and the clerk.  ACTION: explanatory details related to significant amounts of funding to a school listed from both growth and falling pupil funds: agenda item 6.  Technical funding group meeting: **ACTION**: a new date to be circulated to members.  **Action completed**.  Item 7.3: EY funding: **ACTION**: a DRAFT paper to be presented at the next meeting: agenda item 7.  Item 8.3: School Improvement contract: **ACTION**: agenda item Thursday 21st January.  Nigel Harvey-Whitten to be invited to the meeting.  Item 9.10: Tim Boyes and Nichola Jones to meet with Cllr Scott. Cllr Scott reported there had not been an additional meeting since the School Forum meeting on 19th November.  **ACTION**: a meeting to be arranged.  Item 10.5: Special Schools top up funding: item to be re-visited at the next meeting: agenda item 9 | LA/T O’N  All members  LA/N H-W/Chair  Cllr Scott, TB/NJ |
| 4. | **LA update** |  |
| 4.1  4.2 | Tim O’Neill reported the Chief Executive’s appointment was not decided and under review.  A paper to go to Cabinet in the New Year on longer term planning on growth and falling pupil funding. The transformation programme was moving forward.    Sara Reece reported a concern raised at Early Years Forum related to Health Visitor checks on 2 year olds.  Tim O’Neill stated he was LA aware of the concerns which were taken seriously and resulted in active conversations and work with colleagues.  ACTION: an update on the situation on health visitors to be made at the January meeting.  The Chair thanked Tim O’Neill for the update from the LA. |  |
| 5. | **Central School Services Block** |  |
| 5.1  5.2  5.3  5.4  5.5 | Report Central School Services Block Allocations 2021-22 dated 4th December circulated before the meeting for decision.  John Betts reported the indicative 2021/22 CSSB allocation was estimated to be £17.774m.  This was an increase of £0.042m from the 2020/21 figure.  This overall change disguised two important factors regarding DfE’s overall calculation:   * for 2021/22, Birmingham Council had lost 20% of its funding for previous historical   commitments   * for 2021/22, Birmingham Council had gained 6.45% for its other responsibilities.   In Birmingham’s case, the DFE had agreed to exclude the £10m contribution to children services  re equal pay (non- manuals) from the deduction calculation in 2021/22.  Overall Funding: NFF funding for historic commitments + Add back in equal pay (£2m) + 2021-22  total funding for ongoing responsibilities: £17,744  Commissioning of the school improvement contract: John Betts reported the recommendation was for resources available to remain at £1.000m (irrespective of the 20% reduction in historical commitments).  John Betts reported the proposal for 2021/22 was to maintain existing budgets, in cash terms,  for 2021/22, as this was affordable.  Recommendations   * School Forum to agree the allocations for 2021/22 as outlined in Appendix 1. * Schools Forum request that the Local Authority continued discussions with DfE regarding   exempting the £0.660m budget (that funds prudential borrowing to cover school equal pay costs  for manual staff) from the 20% funding reduction calculations of the CSSB.  The Chair asked if members were happy to agree the proposed 2021/22 budget for the ongoing  and historical commitments as presented in appendix 1. **Agreed**  The Chair asked if members were happy to agree the proposed 2021/22 budget for the centrally  retained duties as presented in appendix 1. **Agreed**  and historical commitments as presented in appendix 1. **Agreed**  Mike White requested **ACTION:** John Betts to feedback on the situation regarding the £0.660m  budget when the information was available. | LA/JB |
| 6. | **Growth Fund** and **Falling Pupils Fund** proposals |  |
| 6.1  6.2  6.3  6.4  6.5  6.6  6.7  6.8 | Growth Fund report circulated before the meeting for decision on 10th December 2020  Jaswinder Didially reported the amount retained by the LA and criteria had to be agreed by  Schools Forum and set in accordance with criteria set by the Department for Education.  Growth Fund could not be used to support schools in financial difficulty or general growth due to  popularity. None of the Growth Fund was retained or used by the LA for any other purposes.  Jaswinder Didially reported for 2021/22 the DFE would allocate growth funding at Local Authority level, based on the observed differences between primary and secondary pupils at schools within each MSOA (Middle Layer Super Output Area) in the October 2019 and October 2020 censuses. Only positive MSOA growth will be used in calculating the number of pupils to be funded.  The maximum reduction in growth funding for any LA would be set at -0.5% of their total Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) schools block allocation in 2021/22 – before a safety net was applied.  Jaswinder Didially reported the criteria for in year allocation for 2021/22 was unchanged from the  previous year   * Where there was a planned net increase to meet Basic Need agreed with the Local   Authority, the additional pupil numbers would be funded for those schools.   * The LA would identify those schools in a designated hotspot area and therefore most   likely to grow as a result of in-year growth by more than 15 pupils in a key stage.   * Where there was an unfunded net increase of more than 10% or 30 pupils, whichever was   smaller, and this related to Basic Need, schools would need to submit a Business Case for any  funding from the Growth Fund.  Financial modelling based on MSOA information received from EDI showed projected explicit  growth i.e. centrally held growth budget requirements for 2021/22 (including change in growth  criteria) of £5.075m and a projected surplus in 2020/21funding of £0.868m.  Mike White queried how the LA would use the surplus.  John Bets stated that the surplus would be rolled forward into the following year and ring fenced  for use in relation to Growth or Falling Pupil funds.  Funding for growth to meet Basic Need; increased births and in-year cohort growth from migration  **Recommendation:** School Forum to agree the criteria and rates as presented. **Agreed**   * Funding for growth in pupil numbers resulting from school closure   **Recommendation:** Schools Forum agree to an approach whereby the funding rate for transferred  pupils is tailored to individual school and pupil circumstances subject to sufficient funding  within the retained School Budget Share from the closing school or closing school phase. **Agreed**   * Funding for new schools or new school phases to meet Basic Need   **Recommendation:** School Forum to agree the criteria and rates as presented. **Agreed**  Funding requirements to meet Basic Need (including new schools) and school or school phase closures  **Recommendations:** School Forum agree the criteria and the Growth Fund of £5.075 as presented.  **Agreed**  The growth fund of £5.075m will be subject to changes in the event of school closures or school  phase closures. **Agreed**  Jaswinder Didially stated that reports detailing any changes in the growth fund budget would be presented to School Forum.  Falling Pupils Fund 2021/22 circulated before the meeting  Purpose: to seek School Forum approval to the 2021/22 allocation and criteria against which the allocations would be determined.  Jaswinder Didially stated that, for 2020/21, the fund was set at £0.1m and requested that the allocation was increased to £0.546m for 2021/22 based on the need to reduce surplus Primary School places. The fund applied to all schools including Academies. It was proposed to fund the projected Fund through the forecast surplus Growth Fund budget (£0.868) with the remaining £.0322 retained for any outstanding business cases.  Jaswinder Didially reported the proposed allocation was substantially higher than previous  allocations due to the change in place planning forecasts, primary cohorts reducing in size as a  result of falling birth rates and reduced in-year growth (confirmed by the October 2020 census)  compared to the significant growth seen previously. School capacity needed to reduce to ensure  sufficiency. Schools were reducing intakes in some areas in line with need.  Cllr Scott asked if any schools were not reducing capacity when, based on LA planning, it was felt  that capacity should be reduced and if money was withheld if an unapproved PAN expansion went ahead.  Jaswinder Didially reported this was part of work currently taking place with conversations for the relevant responsible body regarding working with individual schools.  James Hill asked if the figure of 175 for the number of places had been changed from 300.  Lucy Dumbleton stated that 175 was seven twelfths of 300 places.  James Hill queried if there were plans to close infant schools that were reducing in size.  Jaswinder Didially reported working with schools to reduce PAN on a permanent basis. There  were no plans to close any primary schools as a result of falling rolls.  Cllr Scott commented on MATs that had expanded outside of sufficiency requirements.  Jaswinder Didially stated MAT must have the permission RSC officers. Information was shared  with RSC colleagues and the opinion of the LA was listened to regarding withholding funding from growth  Recommendation: Schools Forum to agree an allocation for the Fund of £0.546m for 2021/22 and  criteria as presented. **Agreed** |  |
| 7. | **Early Years Rates** and **Budgets** |  |
| 7.1  7.2  7.3  7.4 | The Chair welcomed Lindsey Trivett to the meeting.  Early Years Rate Review 2021-2022 circulated before the meeting.  Lindsey Trivett reported the paper circulated was discussed at the November meeting of School Forum.  **Recommendations:** Schools Forum agrees to the recommendations from Early Years Forum to:-   * Note that the current level (£2.4m) of funding will be retained centrally to support the   Councils delivery of the Statutory Duties for early years, and that this is less than the 5% the LA is able to retain.   * Maintain the amount allocated to ISEY of £1m noting that £0.25m is held within the   centrally retained element.   * Agree the funding rates to be applied to providers as set out for the next year in the paper (subject to bullet point 4) * Note the increase in national funding (over and above that highlighted above) to be split equally between the centrally retained element and the base rate (subject to a maximum £0.250m added to the central element)   **ACTION:** Final figures / rates to be ratified at the January Forum  Les Lawrence thanked Lindsey Trivett and her colleagues for their work related to EY, asked if there would be a move back to a three year funding settlement, if the LA was aware of the situation and if action was being taken. A budget increase did not meet increasing costs and the sector was fragile.  Lindsey Trivett stated there were increasing costs across all sectors. More could be done to raise awareness such as more formal letters to the Secretary of State. The sector was used to three year settlements and it was hoped it would move back to a three year cycle. There was concern on the lack of stability on maintained nursery school funding. This would be raised with Cabinet members and the Directorate structure.  On behalf of the EY sector, Sara Reece expressed appreciation of the work put in by Lindsey Trivett. Lindsey Trivett had worked through the consultation, written and amended the paper which was fully inclusive. There had be a sense of collaborative working with Lindsey at the centre of all the work with the finance team and an assistant director.  Tim O’Neill tanked Sara Reece for expressing well deserved thanks to Lindsey Trivett.  The Chair thanked Lindsey Trivett. Members were happy with the paper. The final figures to be reported and agreed at the January meeting. | LA/LT |
| 8. | **Special Schools Formula** working group |  |
| 8.1  8.2  8.3  8.4  8.5 | Update from SPECIAL SCHOOLS FORMULA WORKING GROUP circulated before the meeting for information.  Pat Harvey reported three meetings of the working group had been held. The current model (since 2017/18) and three other models had been discussed.   * Model 1 –average top up rates per category of setting * Model 2 –average top up per phase of setting * Model 3 –benchmarking top up rates   2021/22 DSG announcement expected (late December 2020.  Pat Harvey reported members had agreed to wait for the final HNB allocation for 2021/22 and meet again on 8th January 2021 to review funding allocations to schools and the current model and factors  As reported at the November meeting, model 3 was the suggested model for further exploration including data checking on numbers of places commissioned by the local authority and school category of SEN(D) published.  A revised model 3a was discussed in conjunction with actual numbers recorded on the SENAR files to provide a realistic funding model for comparison to current model.  Nicola Redhead commented on the information related to alternative provision recording 60 pre 16 places for 2020/21 and asked where the places were going.  Pat Harvey reported a request to anonymise the settings. The information on the slides was  based on current information.  Model 3b was updated with Year 6 removed, actual top ups data as at October 2020 and up to date with numbers in settings.  Nichola Redhead queried consultation with Alternative Provision HTs.  Pat Harvey stated Alternative Provision HTs had just been included and would be contracted when the funding model was known.  Steve Howell commented that, at the November meeting, Pat Harvey had stated the PRU was part of the consultation in terms of change to the formula and Steve Howell as HT of the PRU would be involved.  Steve Howell reported that he had not been contacted and commenting on the disparity in relation to top ups, asked why this was the case stating that the impact of the model on COBS/PRU would be low.  The Chair stated that all stakeholders wanted to feel there was an opportunity to make their feelings heard. |  |
| 9. | **High Needs block** update |  |
| 9.1  9.2  9.3  9.4 | High Needs blockupdate circulated before the meeting for information.  Pat Harvey reported indicative published allocations High Needs Block: **£212,896,280** prior to recoupment. 2020/21 recoupment: £27,342,316)  Final allocations to be published in late December 2020.  Pat Harvey reported every LA should gain at least 8% but capped at 12%  Teachers’ pay grant (TPA) and teachers’ pension employer contribution grant (TPECG) within the High Needs National Funding Formula for 2021/22 of £660 per place (limit 40 place setting)  To ensure numbers were up to date and as accurate as possible, data to be collected on the January 2021 census.  Denise Fountain asked when and where the census data would be announced.  Hospital settings – 8% increase  Import/export adjustment: children and young people resident in Birmingham but educated outside borough (excludes AP)  Recoupment for academies, free schools, AP academies and post 16 settings for place funding  Steve Hughes reported that, based on allocations, modelling showed a £50k deficit.  Denise Fountain requested **ACTION** a breakdown on where the £50k additional HNB costs had gone at the next meeting.  Denise Fountain expressed concern on the high level of spend on consultants and asked where the money had gone, what had been done and what had been the impact of the spend. £1.8m had been spent.  Steve Howell stated that modelling on the £660 funding indicated that schools would be left short.  The Chair suggested Questions related to HNB spending be addressed at the Technical Funding Group before the January School Forum meeting. | LA/PH  LA |
| 10. | **NFF for Schools** and **High Needs** |  |
| 10.1  10.2  10.3  10.4  10.5  10.6  10.7 | 2021-22 National Funding Formula for Schools and High Needs circulated before the meeting.  Provisional Funding Announcements 2021-22  The provisional allocations were based on October 2019 census data and pupil data sets.  Yoke O’Brien reported the government had announced that the five to 16 core schools and high needs budget would, compared to 2019/2020, rise nationally by:   * £2.6 billion for 2020/21 * £4.8 billion for 2021/22 * £7.1 billion for 2022/23   This included a further £730m extra for High Needs in 2021-22.  The final DSG block allocations would be published in December 2020 and based on October 2020 census pupil numbers and data sets. The provisional Early Years block allocations had not yet been issued by the ESFA.  The 2020 spending review announcement promised a further £44 million (nationally) for early  years education in 2021-22 to increase the hourly rate paid to childcare providers for the  government’s free hours offer.  Key Funding changes  Yoke O’Brien reported the funding factors used in the formulae remained the same except for two technical changes:   * Teachers’ pay grant and teachers’ pension employer contribution grant, including the   supplementary fund had been added to schools’ NFF allocations from 2021-22. The funding had been added to basic per pupil entitlement, to the minimum per pupil funding levels and to schools’ baselines and was protected through the funding floor.   * The 2019 update to the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index had been   incorporated so that deprivation funding allocated through the formulae was based on the latest data.  The main changes affecting local arrangements in 2021-22  Yoke O’Brien reported the compulsory minimum per pupil funding levels would be set at £4,000 for primary schools, £4,950 for KS3 secondary schools and £5,450 for KS4 secondary schools.  These schools would receive an additional £180 per pupil for Primary and £265 per pupil for Secondary respectively to cover additional teachers’ pay and pension costs previously funded through the separate grants  Every school would be allocated at least 2% more pupil-led funding per pupil compared to its 2020-21 NFF baseline.  The FSM factor would increase by 2.0% as the factor value was based on an estimate of the actual cost of providing school meals.  Premises funding would continue to be allocated at local authority level on the basis of actual spend in the 2020-21 APT, with the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) factor increasing in line with the RPIX measure of inflation (1.56%) to reflect PFI contracts.  The minimum funding guaranteehad to be between +0.5% and +2.0%.  Central schools services funding in 2021-22 would increase by 4% for the ongoing responsibilities that local authorities continue to have for all schools  Funding for historic commitments would decrease by 20% to be in line with the process introduced for 2020-21 to withdraw funding over time based on the commitments local authorities entered into before 2013-14,  High Needs funding: Yoke O’Brien reported the DFE had announced a provisional 2021-22 HNB budget of £212,896,279. This was a significant increase of £25,191,419 on the 2020-21 budget of £187,704,860.  Les Lawrence commented on the potential shortfall across budgets and, if there was a shortfall, the need for the LA to explain the consequences of the shortfall and actions taken to School Forum.  Yoke O’Brien stated that, until modelling on figures was carried out, it was not possible to know the amount of shortfall.  John Betts reported modelling to be carried out related to the teachers’ pension employer contribution grant in terms of what would have been received if the grant had continued and what had been received. |  |
| 11. | **Any Other Business** |  |
| 11.1 | The Chair reported the meeting in January was a decision making meeting on areas of spend. |  |
| 12. | **Dates of future meetings**  Thursday 21st January 2021  Thursday 11th March 2021  Thursday 24 June 2021 |  |
|  | The meeting closed at 3.25pm |  |