

MILTON KEYNES' SCHOOLS FORUM

Milton Keynes Professional Development Centre (MKPDC)
Galley Hill, Milton Keynes, MK11 1PA

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 16 JANUARY 2020 AT 3.00 PM

PRESENT:

Primary School Representatives

Lizzie Bancroft – Loughton Manor First School
Kirk Hopkins – Oldbrook School
Elisabeth Morrison – Brooklands Farm School
Jo Alikhan for Christine Ryan – Cold Harbour C of E School

Primary School Governors

Francis Grant – Great Linford Primary School
Paul Hussey – Roman Village Federation (**Chair**)

Special School Representative

Finlay Douglas – White Spire School

Secondary School Representative

Kate Warren – St Paul's SBM

Academy Representatives

Neil Barrett – Stephenson Academy
Jane Edwards – Heronsgate School
Glen Martin – Shenley Brook End
Andy Squires – Denbigh School

Academy Governors

John Howe – Denbigh School
Dave Moulson – Ousedale School

Diocesan Authority

Michael Manley – Northampton Catholic Diocese

Nursery School Representative

Natalie Fowler – Knowles Nursery School

14-19 Partnership

Lindsey Styles – Milton Keynes College

CLERK:

Sue Puddifoot – Governor Support – Children's Services

LA OFFICERS: Marie Denny – Group Head, Learning and Inclusion
Sonia Hattle – Senior Finance Business Partner
Michelle Hibbert – Schools Strategy and Corporate Accountant
Natasha Hutchin – Head of Finance
Caroline Marriott – Head of Delivery SEN and Disability
Jordan Mcdougall – Finance Business Partner
Simon Sims – Head of Service Education Sufficiency, Access and Attendance

ALSO PRESENT: David Tooley – Member of the press
Amy Langford – Milton Keynes College

SF 745 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Item 1.1

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

Apologies for absence had been received by the clerk from:

Paul Herbert – St Paul’s Catholic School
Norman Miles – MK Primary PRU
Antony Moore – Giles Brook School
Anita Richards – National Education Union District Secretary
Deb Spinks – Moorlands Centre Nursery School
Tony Wilson - Oxford C of E Diocese
Jake Yeo – Bushfield School

Helen Middleton - Pre School Learning Alliance, and David Gibson/
Michelle Currie – Walton High were absent.

SF 746 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Item 1.2

There were no disclosures of interest.

SF 747 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

Item 1.3

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2019 were agreed as an accurate record. There were the following matters arising:

Minute SF 741 – Natasha Hutchin had circulated the relevant information regarding de-delegated services and the resultant votes had been included in the minutes.

SF 748 FORECAST OUTTURN 2019/20 (Sonia Hattle)

Item 2.1

The purpose of this report was to advise Schools Forum of the latest Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding allocation and the period nine forecast outturn position for 2019/20.

Sonia Hattle drew attention to the report which included the latest DSG funding allocation for 2019/20. The High Needs Block allocation had been reduced by £24k following data from the January 2019 census. The reduction would be covered by the High Needs contingency, as reported

at the last meeting. The confirmed January 2019 census data for the Early Years Block had resulted in an increase of £1.139m, as reported at the last meeting, and this allocation would be subject to recalculation based on actual take up in January 2020.

The overall 2019/20 budget had been set with a surplus of £2.956m and this had now reduced to £2.636m. The position had worsened by £0.171m since the period six report presented to Schools Forum. The change in the forecast was due to; an increased spend of £0.006m within the Schools Block after a growth adjustment correction and additional business rates rebates for academy conversions, increased spend of £0.026m in the Early Years Block against the contingency and an increase of £0.138m in services across the High Needs Block. The table in section 3.8 of the report gave a detailed summary.

Significant variances to the budget were detailed in section 4 of the report:

Schools Block – the predicted surplus carry forward into 2020/21 was £0.728m (0.4% of the total DSG allocation).

Early Years Block – the predicted surplus carry forward into 2020/21 was £0.243m (1.1% of the total DSG allocation).

High Needs Block – the predicted surplus carry forward into 2020/21 was £1.665m (4.1% of the total DSG allocation).

(NB – correction in report, page 4, Early Years block second paragraph “carry forward from 2019/20” should read “carry forward from 2018/19”.)

Schools Forum requested clarification on the forecast overspend in top up funding of £0.529m. This related to the increase in numbers of children with EHCPs; 41 plans were agreed up until July 2019 and 61 plans had been agreed since July 2019 to January 2020.

Schools Forum noted the latest DSG funding allocations for 2019/20 and the latest forecast outturn position.

SF 749 ANNUAL REPORT ON HIGH NEEDS (Caroline Marriott) *Item 2.2*

The purpose of this report was to update Schools Forum on the delivery of SEND support in Milton Keynes and provide an understanding of current pressures and actions to address the pressures.

Caroline Marriott explained that the report gave the headlines for SEND support, including the number of EHCPs. These numbers showed the continued increases and those with high complex needs remained a focus.

The numbers in residential provision continued to reduce.

Annex A showed place planning.

Schools Forum noted the report.

SF 750 BUDGET SETTING AND GOVERNMENT UPDATES - DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET 2020/21 (Natasha Hutchin) *Item 2.3*

The purpose of this report was for Schools Forum to understand the distribution of the DSG for the financial year 2020/21.

Natasha Hutchin explained that the report included draft information with provisional funding formula for the next financial year as the ESFA checks were still to be undertaken.

The table in 4.4 of the report included changes in funding allocations and the table in 4.5 showed the breakdown of the £14.747m increase in DSG funding for the Schools Block. The NFF unit rate increase was responsible for £11m of this total. The reduction in growth funding had already been brought to the attention of Schools Forum and the remaining changes were due to increased pupil numbers and a premises increase.

Schools Forum members were aware of the gap in the schools funding formula regarding pressure on growth and that this funding was lagged. A consultation on how to manage this shortfall had taken place and the responses were given in Annex H.

Other schools budget pressures were listed on page 6 of the report and section 5.25 outlined the confirmed options:

- MFG would be set at +0.5%
- MFG disapplication to be submitted to the DfE in cases regarding growing schools as these already received funding through growth and growth protection.
- Split site funding to be left as is, with the criteria clarified to make it explicit.

There remained an overall pressure of £0.485m and following the consultation responses, collaboration with the lead member and DCS and receipt of final data, section 5.29 of the report outlined the measures forming the final basis of the funding formula for 2020/21; the funding cap would be removed and the remaining options were to reduce the MPPF (minimum per pupil funding level) by £50 from the DfE set level or top slice the AWPU (age weighted pupil unit). Therefore Milton Keynes would set the MPPF levels at £3,700 for primary and £4,950 for secondary pupils (£50 less than the DfE set amount).

It was felt reducing the AWPU was not fair or distributed the pressure evenly and due to the impact on the MFG it would cost more in real terms. Altering the MPPF would still give all schools an increase, however approval would be required from the DfE and a response was awaited.

Schools Forum clarified that the reduction in the carry forward included the allocation to growth funding. Officers were continuing to do work on growth funding and there may be future increases from government.

The 2020/21 position was more positive than in October 2019 with the shortfall to be covered by reducing the MPPF by £50.

Schools Forum members questioned what would happen if the request to reduce the MPPF were refused and it was explained that in that case, the AWPU would have to be reduced by 0.5% (Annex I). There were no objections from Schools Forum members in applying the MPPF rate reduction.

Schools would be issued with information outlining the minimum financial allocations and for some, particularly the secondary sector, this still gave significant increases.

Annex A detailed the allocation of the DSG and included the DSG Conditions of Grant, which had yet to be confirmed by the DfE for 2020/21.

Schools Forum clarified that the rate per pupil for central services was based on total pupil numbers from both the maintained and academy sectors. Annex B1 outlined the Schools Block central expenditure.

RESOLVED

2.2 Schools Forum agreed the Central Schools Services Block budget (Annex B1).

In favour	17
Against	0
Abstentions	0

Annex C gave the primary and secondary schools budget shares.

Annex D gave detail of the Early Years Block funding for 2020/21 and Schools Forum noted the 8p DSG hourly funding rate increase for two, three and four year olds.

Marie Denny explained the volatility in the block, particularly attracting two year olds. Schools Forum members pointed out that this was a difficult area with issues regarding birth rates, attracting take up and provision for two year olds having different staffing ratios and therefore higher costs. Providers tended to go for the 30 hour offer as this gave a more stable financial position. Schools Forum also clarified that the deprivation allowance for three and four year olds applied to all pupils if the percentage was met.

Further discussion identified the need for a meeting of the Early Years Reference Group to discuss the issues raised and the decision on the Early Years central expenditure was deferred to the end of February via email (maintained primary members only).

Action – MD - EYRG and maintained primary members

Similarly, Annex E – High Needs Budget was briefly discussed as the special school place funding had been frozen for some time. Further discussion was referred to the High Needs Reference Group.

Action – CM - HNRG

Annex F outlined the government grants for 2020/21 however there was still some uncertainty and further announcements expected in the new year would be communicated via the educ@te bulletin.

Annex H detailed the consultation responses on schools funding.

Schools Forum noted that the introduction of a hard National Funding Formula was expected and the authority was close to these guidelines. The only concern was around growth.

Schools Forum noted the DSG budget of £271.133m for 2020/21 (Annexes A and G).

Schools Forum noted the budget for the growth fund (Annexes B1 and B2).

Schools Forum noted the unit rates for the primary and secondary funding formula (Annex C).

Schools Forum noted the unit rates for the Early Years Funding Formula (Annex D).

Schools Forum noted the distribution of government grants (Annex F).

SF 751 ANNUAL REPORT ON ALTERNATIVE PROVISION (Simon Sims)

Item 2.4

The purpose of this report was to update Schools Forum on the use of alternative education provision in the primary and secondary sector during the 2018/19 academic year and throughout the first term of 2019/20.

Schools Forum noted the report and that there were 18 places commissioned at the Primary PRU, subject to review following recommendations from a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group. There were 195 places at Bridge Academy (secondary).

SF 752 ANNUAL REPORT ON EARLY YEARS (Simon Sims)

Item 2.5

The purpose of this report was to provide Schools Forum with an update on the latest participation rates in early years education in Milton Keynes as compared to the wider local and national picture.

Simon Sims outlined the key issues in section 4 of the report. Participation for two year olds had dropped and the project group would be put back in place to involve community workers to try to improve the position. A significant marketing campaign was planned.

Schools Forum pointed out that parents had to be supported to access this provision and meet the eligibility criteria. Following discussion, this was another area for consideration by the Early Years Reference Group to inform progress.

Action – MD/SS EYRG

SF 753 SECTION 251 BUDGET STATEMENT 2019/20 (Sonia Hattle) *Item 2.6*

The purpose of this report was to inform Schools Forum of the budget statement provided to the DfE under Section 251 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

Sonia Hattle explained this report and referenced the graphs that compared Milton Keynes with its statistical neighbours.

Schools Forum noted the report.

SF 754 FUTURE SCHOOLS FORUM (Marie Denny/Natasha Hutchin) *Item 2.7*

It was explained that as there were not the same level of local decisions being taken, no dates for future Schools Forum meetings had been set. There were other mechanisms for dialogue such as headteacher meetings, Chairs and Vice Chairs meetings and the primary inclusive partnership, which may be split geographically to enable more voices to be heard and provide a deeper understanding of how schools finance worked.

Therefore, any future meetings would be notified separately.

SF 755 MEMBERSHIP AND CONSTITUTION (Natasha Hutchin) *Item 3.1*

There remained a primary academy vacancy on Schools Forum.

SF 756 UPDATE FROM SUB-GROUPS OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM *Item 3.2*

Minutes of the meeting of the Schools Reference Group held on 6 November 2019 were noted. None of the other reference groups had met.

SF 757 FORWARD PLANNING *Item 4.1*

Issues to be considered by Schools Forum and dates of the next meetings would be notified separately.

The meeting closed at 4.25pm