

MILTON KEYNES' SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 14 JANUARY 2021 AT 3.00 PM
VIA MS TEAMS

PRESENT:

Primary Representatives

Elisabeth Morrison – Brooklands Farm School

Primary School Governors

Charlie Deycon – Wavendon Gate School

Paul Hussey – Inclusive Learning Federation (**Chair**)

Antony Moore – Giles Brook School

Jake Yeo – Bushfield School

Secondary School Representatives

Paul Herbert – St Paul's Catholic School - Governor

Kate Warren – St Paul's Catholic School - SBM

Academy Representatives

Neil Barrett – Stephenson Academy

Tony Nelson – The Hazeley Academy

Andy Squires – Denbigh School

Robert Tite – IFtL – CFO

Academy Governors

Dave Moulson – Ousedale School

Nursery School Representative

Natalie Fowler – Knowles Nursery School

Deb Spinks – Moorlands Centre Nursery School

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Shared Vote

Early Years Providers Representative

Helen Middleton – Early Years Alliance

Diocesan Authority

Michael Manley – Northampton Catholic Diocese

Teachers' Trade Union Representative

Anita Richards – National Education Union District Secretary

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

SF 783 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Item 1.1

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, especially new members Rosemarie Jones, St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School and Tony Nelson, The Hazeley Academy.

Apologies for absence had been received by the clerk from:

Finlay Douglas – White Spire School
Lindsay Styles – Milton Keynes College

And after the meeting from:

Kirk Hopkins – Oldbrook School
Rosemarie Jones – St Mary Magdalene

It was noted that Jane Edwards – Heronsgate School, Michelle Curry – MKET, Sharon Lynch - Stantonbury International School, Norman Miles – MK Primary PRU and Tony Wilson - Oxford C of E Diocese were not present.

SF 784 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Item 1.2

There was a disclosure of interest from both Nursery School representatives regarding the request in item 2.1 on the agenda.

SF 785 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

Item 1.3

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2020 were agreed as an accurate record. There were no matters arising.

SF 786 2020/21 FORECAST OUTTURN (Sonia Hattle)

Item 2.1

The purpose of this report was to inform Schools Forum of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding allocation and the period nine forecast outturn position for 2020/21.

Sonia Hattle drew attention to the report which indicated there had been no changes to the funding allocations from those reported to the last Schools Forum meeting in December.

The period nine forecast position estimated a surplus carry forward of £3.346m into 2021/22 against the relevant blocks. This was an improvement of £0.318m from the last report to Schools Forum at period eight and was due to a reduction of spend in the High Needs Block due to the release of contingency being held in 2020/21, with further information detailed in section 4 of the report.

Schools Block – the predicted surplus carry forward into 2021/22 remained at £0.432m (0.2% of the DSG allocation).

Early Years Block – the predicted surplus carry forward into 2021/22 remained at £0.427m (2.0% of the DSG allocation). The underspend on three and four year olds was countered by an overspend on two year olds and the build up of a small contingency was essential due to the volatility in this block and as a result of Covid-19.

High Needs Block – the predicted carry forward into 2021/22 was now £2.481m (5.5% of the DSG allocation) at period nine. This projected underspend had increased from £0.499m to £0.816m. Some of the reasons were due to Covid-19 and not expected to continue into future financial years. Further details were included in section 4 of the report.

Schools Forum noted the latest DSG funding allocations for 2020/21 and the latest outturn position.

There was also a funding request for the maintained nursery schools due to the additional costs incurred due to Covid-19. A total of £2,300 from the £400k contingency was requested to contribute to the costs of PPE, cleaning, increased phone bills as a result of contacting families, additional paper and printing costs to provide learning packs to children not attending settings and increased mileage costs to deliver those packs to families. Unlike schools and other early years providers, the maintained nursery schools had not been entitled to claim for support under the government schemes such as small business grant, business rates holidays, business interruption loan scheme or the Covid catch up funding.

Sonia also explained that updates made on the spring term funding following the January 2021 census would be passed on once they were received. Officers had recommended that providers continue to be protected by receiving funding for children registered at the setting and a top up payment continued to be passed to providers that had seen a significant reduction when compared to Spring 2019. This request would be presented for delegated decision on 19 January 2021 and would then be subject to a usual call in period. A copy of the report could be found on the MKC CMIS page.

DfE guidance on the census for 2021 had been received on 14 January 2021. Further information on this would be shared with providers as soon as possible as MKC appreciated the uncertainty that providers are facing.

Schools forum **agreed** the allocation of £2,300 as a one-off contribution from the early years contingency to support the maintained nursery schools for additional costs incurred in 2020/21 as a result of Covid-19.

SF 787 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET 2021/22

(Sonia Hattle)

Item 2.2

The purpose of this report was to inform Schools Forum of the distribution of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the financial year 2021/22.

The main elements to agreeing the Schools Budget were:

- Estimating the value of the DSG for 2021/22 (resources available) and the estimated carry forward balance at 31 March 2021
- Determining those elements that were to be retained centrally by the Local Authority (LA) and seek Schools Forum approval where required (this was addressed in December 2020)
- Consider and seek approval from Schools Forum for any movements between funding blocks
- Determine the distribution of the resources within the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) between schools maintained by the local authority, academies and Early Years providers applying the funding formulae.

The changes to the DSG were summarised in the table in section 4.4 of the report.

Changes to the Schools Block resulted in an increase of £16.052m, as detailed in 4.5 of the report. Schools Forum noted that from 2021/22 the teachers' pay and pension funding would be part of the schools funding formula rather than paid as a separate grant.

In order to manage the pressure on the Schools Block, the following areas were considered at previous Schools Forum meetings and formed the consultation with all schools in November. These were now confirmed in the formula for 2021/22:

- **MFG** - will be 0.5% which will cost £0.326m and will affect 18 schools. Local authorities have the freedom to set an MFG of between +0.5% and +2.00% per pupil so all schools would see a funding increase. Although this effects 18 schools, the average per school is relatively low, suggesting most schools were triggering an increase in funding without the need for MFG. For 2020/21 the allowable range was between +0.5% and +1.84%, with Milton Keynes using a rate of +0.5%.
- **Split Site Funding** - will be left as the current criteria.
- **Reduction in Formula Factors** - In order to balance the budget and in line with the preferred option from the consultation with all schools the AWPU rate has been reduced. For 2021/22 it was proposed that the rate would be reduced by 0.35% across all sectors (2020/21 had a reduction of 0.51%).

The APT was due for submission on 21 January 2021 and as a result final checks would be completed up until this date and also by the ESFA after this date.

Annex C detailed the rates proposed in school budgets for 2021/22.

Annex A detailed the DSG income and it was further pointed out that the Central Services allocation was £1.654m, calculated at a single rate of £35.92 (£34.88 2020/21) plus £2.47 (pension costs relating to centrally employed teachers) per pupil headcount on the October 2020 census.

Early Years included a funding rate increase of 8p per hour for 2 year olds and 6p for 3 and 4 year olds.

The initial High Needs block allocation was £48.794m for 2021/22. This block was now calculated based on the national funding formula and would no longer be fully based on a historical allocation. The new funding formula would include a historic baseline plus proxy factors (population, deprivation, health and low attainment) giving an initial allocation of £44.195m. The following adjustments had then been made:

- Basic allocation (£4,864.71 per pupil funding) £4.388m
- Import/export adjustment is nil - the import/export adjustment is provisional and would be adjusted based on January 2021 data
- Hospital education, alternative provision teachers' pay/pension and supplementary funding factor £0.212m.

The DSG allocation of £291.989m for the purposes of setting the budget for 2021/22, as detailed in Annex A, was noted by Schools Forum.

Annex B1 - Central Schools Expenditure, Growth and De-delegation

This annex advised Schools Forum of the central school's expenditure, growth and de-delegation for the financial year 2021/22.

Sonia explained there had been no change from the CSSB central expenditure budget that was agreed at the December meeting with a £106k addition due to the teachers' pay and pension contributions, now these figures were known. Therefore, a total budget of £1.701m was required and the funding allocation of £1.654m would leave a shortfall in funding of £0.047m. This shortfall would be funded from a re-charge to the high needs block to reflect their use of these services (as was the case in 2020/21).

Growth Funding would be based on 30 secondary contingency places, a reduction from the 90 included in the December draft budget.

Votes were required on the primary and secondary de-delegated school insurance proposals. Other de-delegated budgets had been agreed at the October meeting and were noted.

Results of the consultation survey carried out with all maintained schools were included in the report. RPA charges for 2021/22 were confirmed at £19 per pupil.

Schools Forum asked if Covid-19 testing could be claimed on this insurance. It was thought to be the case but officers would confirm this.

RESOLVED

2.4 Schools Forum voted on delegation of Schools Insurance Services from 2021/22 for maintained secondary schools:

In favour	0
Against	2
Abstentions	0

RESOLVED

2.4 Schools Forum voted on delegation of Schools Insurance Services from 2021/22 for maintained primary schools (including Nursery schools as a shared vote):

In favour	5
Against	0
Abstentions	0

Annex B2 – Growth Summary was noted.

Annex C – School Budget Share Rates

Michelle Hibbert advised Schools Forum of the primary and secondary school funding formula budget shares for the financial year 2021/22.

For 2021/22 the rates would increase to at least £4,000 for all primary schools (2020/21 £3,750) and £5,150 for all secondary schools (2020/21 £5,000). The MFG would be set at 0.5%. Attention was drawn to the tables included in the report detailing percentages of the school population attracting funding under each of the formula factors and unit rates and number of funded units to be used in 2021/22.

Schools Forum noted the unit rates for the Primary and Secondary School Funding Formula for 2021/22.

Annex D – Early Years

The purpose of this annex was to advise Schools Forum of the Early Years block funding for the financial year 2021/22.

Sonia explained that there had not been funding increases in 2018/19 and 2019/20 but there had been a small increase in the 2020/21 funding rates of £0.08 per hour for 2, 3 and 4 year olds. For 2021/22 there was a further funding rate increase of £0.08 per hour for 2 year olds and £0.06 per hour for 3 and 4 year olds. The local authority hourly funding rate was shown in the table in the report (3.2).

Local authorities with maintained nursery schools (MNS) continued to receive supplementary funding in 2021/22. This funding was provided in order to enable local authorities to protect their 2016/17 funding rates for MNS (that is, the rates that existed before the EYNFF) and the Government expected it to be used this way. The MNS 2021/22 allocations use the part time equivalent (PTE) pupil counts from the January 2020 school census for maintained nursery schools. The total allocation for 2021/22 was provisionally £0.117m (£0.127m was the original 2020/21 allocation, before being revised for a decrease in take up). There was no indication of funding beyond 2021/22.

The EY Pupil Premium (EYPP) gave providers additional funding to support disadvantaged 3 and 4 year old pupils. The EYPP budget for 3 and 4 year olds in 2021/22 was £0.096m, payable at a rate of £0.53 per hour per eligible children up to a maximum of 570 hours per year. The calculation was based on the January 2020 census and these indicative allocations would be reviewed in spring 2021.

The Disability Access Fund (DAF) was introduced in April 2017 to support disabled children's access to the entitlements for 3 and 4 year olds. This would continue in 2021/22 and the initial allocation was £0.067m. Providers would receive £615 per eligible child per year, but this must be claimed and was not paid out automatically.

Further guidance from the DfE on the block allocation and top-up was awaited. The provisional allocations (as outlined in the DfE settlement) had been used for the purpose of setting the 2021/22 budget. Any changes in take up would affect the funding.

There was no change to the central funding request of £0.514m.

The pass-through rate for 3 and 4 year old funding plus inclusion grant to early years providers for 2021/22 was 97.36% (2020/21 96.78%). This was above the DfE threshold of 95%.

Provider rates for 2 year olds would be paid at £5.34 per hour, an increase of £0.04 per hour from the 2020/21 rate. For 3 and 4 year olds the rate would be paid at £4.71 per hour, an increase of £0.03 per hour from the 2020/21 rate. The same rates would be payable to all provider types.

The increase represented 50% of the funding increases that the DfE were giving to local authorities, the remaining 50% would be held back to manage the volatility within the block as a result of lower January census numbers on which funding was based. It was expected that take up would increase later in 2021 and the DfE had confirmed that they would protect local authorities by applying a top up but only to the value of 85%.

Rates would be reviewed in June 2021. The block remained volatile and Covid-19 had impacted on this further.

Schools Forum noted the final Early Years central expenditure budget for 2021/22, as agreed at the December Schools Forum meeting, and the remainder of the Early Years budget for 2021/22.

Annex E – High Needs

The purpose of this annex was to advise the Schools Forum of the High Needs budget for the financial year 2021/22.

Jordan Mcdougall explained that the High Needs budget was reported as draft as it was still subject to approval by Cabinet and Council in February (along with the rest of the council's budget). Any changes would be reported back to Schools Forum. Expenditure totalled £48.8m, an increase of £4.2m on 2020/21 with a total DSG allocation of £48.8m. Included within the additional funding was the teachers' pension amount of £0.748m which was paid outside of the allocation in 2020/21, making the true increase in the allocation £3.540m for 2021/22.

A summary of the changes in budgets from 2020/21 to 2021/22, with movements explained was included in the report with a more detailed breakdown in Annex E2.

Annex E1 detailed the high needs places.

Top-up funding for providers was included in section 5 of the report.

Funding for future high needs and SEND demand remained uncertain due to the impact of Covid-19. Rates would be reviewed for the 2022/23 budget once clearer information on future funding was known.

Schools Forum asked how more funding would be distributed to schools via the top-up to support education for vulnerable children. It was explained that due to the vulnerability of the block now it was ring fenced, (it was overspent in 2019/20), funding had not stopped and all top up funding would continue to be paid, even if young people were not attending school, but there had been a slow-down in spend in non-statutory SEN support (typically adhoc, short term interventions or support in schools while children are awaiting plans) and this was due to Covid-19.

Schools Forum asked for clarification on the process for seeking additional funding to support children during Covid 19. This query would be passed to Caroline Marriott, Head of Delivery SEND, for a response in due course.

Schools Forum noted the High Needs budget and place numbers for special schools, special units/departments and alternative provision for 2021/22, together with the central expenditure for high needs pupils and students in 2021/22.

Annex F – Government Grants

This annex detailed the government grants for 2021/22, which Schools Forum noted.

Annex G – 2021/22 Budget Summary

This annex gave a full summary of the 2021/22 budget.

SF788 FUTURE SCHOOLS FORUM (Marie Denny) *Item 2.3*

Marie raised the point that different ways of delivering the statutory requirements regarding Schools Forum could be discussed as the opportunity had been given to working differently by having online meetings, which had experienced good engagement and attendance. Officers were aware of how busy members were and the question raised was how to get high quality business done in an efficient way.

Schools Forum membership had been frozen in the expectation of a hard National Funding Formula being introduced and moving ever closer to the NFF had changed the nature of business. The DfE were expected to change the statutory guidance on Schools Forums as a result of the NFF (officers continued to raise this) and there were other schools' groups that met that included discussion on finance and could keep all engaged.

Schools Forum members comments on this included:

- Found meetings useful and the papers provided a wider perspective on financial matters
- Using MS Teams was more efficient
- Travel was eliminated using online meetings, saving time
- Timing of meetings for non school members was discussed but the majority consensus was that 3.00pm meetings were mostly convenient

Members were thanked for their comments.

SF 789 UPDATE FROM SUB-GROUPS OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM *Item 3.1*

None of the reference groups had met.

SF 790 MEMBERSHIP AND CONSTITUTION *Item 3.2*

The constitution and new membership was noted.

SF 791 FORWARD PLANNING *Item 4.1*

For the foreseeable future, Schools Forum meetings would continue to be held virtually and take place via MS Teams.

- **18 March 2021**
Forecast Outturn 2020/21
Government Updates and 2021/22 Budget Setting

Sonia explained that this meeting would just involve a circulation of reports and any questions could then be submitted to officers.

Dates for future meetings are:

8 July 2021

14 October 2021

9 December 2021

13 January 2022

All to begin at 3.00pm.

The meeting closed at 4.10pm