

SCHOOLS FORUM**WEDNESDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2019, 2:00pm – 4:00pm****ENGAGE****Attendees**

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| Wendy Cording (WC) | Chair |
| Heidi Price (HP) | PAPH representative |
| Ian Cording (IC) | PAPH representative |
| Aaron Meredith (AM) | PAPH representative |
| Heidi Price (HP) | PAPH representative |
| Anne Thorne (AT) | SHAP Governor representative |
| Anita Hemsli (AH) | PLT representative |
| Andrea Hemmens (ASH) | SHAP representative |
| Justine Mason (JM) | PLT representative |
| Julie Bevan (JB) | PLT representative |
| Ruth Westwood (RW) | AP representative |
| Ann-Marie Allchurch (AA) | CE Diocese representative |
| Kate White (KW) | RC Diocese representative (Reserve) |
| Maureen Taylor (MT) | Early Years representative |
| Pat Gould (PG) | PAG representative |
| Ben Manning (BM) | Post 16 representative |
| Nicky Walters (NW) | Nursery Representative |
| Sue Smith (SS) | Early Years representative |
| Judith Harwood (JAH) | Assistant Director, Education, Participation & Skills |
| Amanda Paddison (AP) | Education, Participation & Skills – Head of Business & Access |
| Jo Siney (JS) | Education, Participation & Skills – Head of SEND |
| Louise Jenkins (LJ) | Education, Participation & Skills – Finance Officer |
| Nadia Donald(ND) | Clerk to Schools Forum |

Apologies:

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| Lisa Hartley (LH) | CEO PLP |
| Matthew Corrigan (MCO) | PLT representative |
| Martyn Cox (MC) | PLT representative |
| Colin Randall (CR) | PAPH representative |
| Carrie Wills (CW) | Governor representative |
| Karen Cook (KC) | RC Diocesan Rep |

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| 1. | WELCOME & APOLOGIES | Action |
| | As above. | |
| 2. | MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING ON 16 JANUARY 2019 | |
| | Minutes approved as an accurate record of the meeting. | |
| 3. | SETTING OF 2019/20 MAINTAINED SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES BUDGETS | |
| | <p>Additional papers have been sent this week for this item. The 2019/20 school budget allocations were approved by Schools Forum on 16 January 2019. Budgets were approved on the basis of a late disapplication request being accepted by the ESFA. This request is to distribute the one off funding of £1.179 million (historic commitment funding) to all mainstream schools on a fair and equal basis. On 21st February 2019 a letter was received from the ESFA stating that this disapplication has not been approved. Therefore as previously agreed, if this disapplication was not agreed this funding would be delayed in order to come up with a way for it to be allocated fairly. The finance team have looked creatively at other ways of distributing this and have looked into distributing this via the High Needs Block and to allocate to schools via top up funding. Operational guidance has been checked which states that it is down to the Local Authority to allocate and this does not require approval via the ESFA.</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>It is therefore proposed to transfer £1.179m in the 2019/20 Central Schools Service Block to the 2019/20 High Needs Block and distribute this funding to mainstream schools on the basis already agreed by Schools Forum i.e. £34.07 per pupil.</p> <p>It could also be requested that schools submit a statement of spend at the end of 19/20 to confirm that they have spent this additional funding to support children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs.</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>The finance team were thanked for their hard work and creative thinking. Discussion followed as to the possible reasons why the dis-application was not approved.</p> | |
| 4. | SETTING 19/20 DSG BUDGET | |
| | A draft budget for 2019/20 has been costed and totals £198.127m which is a balanced budget. A detailed breakdown of the DSG budget can be found in appendices A and B. Paper 4 shows a breakdown of the DSG balance reconciliation and a surplus to be carried forward to 2019/20 of £601k. | |

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| | <p>Actions Required</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To approve the 2019/20 budget, as per appendix “4.2 Paper B3 - Extended DSG report 2019/20” (Transfer to High Needs Block). Forum should recognise that future adjustments may change the total DSG allocated. 2. To approve that the current in-year forecast underspend of £601k is taken forward into 2019/20; to be used to offset future DSG pressures. 3. To approve the carry forward of historical overspend outstanding and residual DSG balances, total nets off to - £20k. <p>Agreed</p> | |
| 5. | <p>BUDGET MONITORING 18/19</p> | |
| | <p>The current forecast is an overall underspend of £574k. The previously reported underspend was £241k. The main changes for this are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plymouth received £550k additional High Needs Block Funding, which has offset further increases in demand on High Needs Block funding. • Reduction in forecast for Early Years Block expenditure related to demand. <p>Further detailed information can be found in appendices 5.1 papers A and B.</p> <p>Maintained Schools Health Check</p> <p>There are currently 4 schools rated red, 14 with some concerns and 11 with no concerns. Of the four reds, 1 is being monitored under a licensed deficit agreement and the remaining 3 are being closely monitored.</p> <p>Short term risks & Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High needs – Anticipated overspend in 2018/19 continues to grow. BMG work continues. • Early Years initiative – Remains uncertain. Liaising with DFE and HMRC to clarify the position. <p>LJ confirmed that the Early Years 2017/18 DSG allocation adjustment takes place in July. This year we benefited, but in previous years we have not. This is based on Census data and we are looking at better ways to forecast.</p> | |

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| 6. | <p>EARLY YEARS NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA</p> | |
| | <p>Consultation of Early Years Funding hourly rates for 2019/20 was sent to all settings on 25 January 2019. Early Years providers are required to be notified of 2019/20 rates by 28 February 2019. 4 consultation responses were received, three from maintained settings and one PVI. Paper 6 provides further detailed information and shows the hourly rate to be provided to providers of £4.14.</p> <p>Comments that were received in the consultation have been responded to directly. It was noted that since 2016/17 £224k of savings has been identified from the Early Years Team. JAH added that 11 members of staff have not been replaced from the Early Years Service, due to the removal of posts. Appendix 2 shows the total cost of the Early Years Team compared to the proposed deduction for central expenditure.</p> <p>WC noted the low number of responses to the consultation, which recognises that they are no concerns.</p> | |
| 7. | <p>GROWTH FUND POLICY</p> | |
| | <p>A tracked change document (7.) has been provided to show the changes required in the policy. The changes recognise that growth funding should be allocated to schools based on AWPU plus other funding factors, that the LA will align the funding allocation to take into consideration adjustments made by Central Govt. (for academies) and that schools which have expanded should not suffer a financial loss</p> <p>Approved</p> | |
| 8. | <p>HIGH NEEDS UPDATE</p> | |
| | <p>The funding Plymouth requires through the High Needs Block to meet the current level of need in the city is £30.728m, however we are only receiving £30.058m, this is a variance of £670k. As such, savings targets have been factored in to the budget in order to balance. Whilst ongoing BMG recovery actions and commissioning decisions and will meet some of these savings targets, it is not anticipated that this level of savings will be achievable in full</p> <p>Plymouth has received an additional £550k through the High Needs Block, this was notified to the LA in the January allocation.</p> <p>The forecast for the High Needs Block is now an overspend of £431k; this is a decrease since the previous report of £240k. This includes the additional funding.</p> <p>The main changes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional places required to be purchased at special schools since position last reported, and additional high level top up funding for these pupils have increased the overspend in this area (£133k). Also assumptions for | |

savings from higher band reviews have now been removed, although this work is imminent.

- There is an emerging pressure at Alternative Provision due to continued high level of primary bespoke pupils. The forecast had assumed a similar level to 17/18 financial year, but the primary provision has been full most of the year. Compared to 17/18 the financial impact is £162k.
- Further late notifications for starters at post-16 providers and places required to be purchased over expected level.

Plymouth's High Needs Allocation is a fixed and finite pot of money, so where need is higher than the money available to fund it, there will be an overspend. However we still need to ensure there is strict governance over the decisions that result in High Needs Block expenditure.

BMG

WC noted the high number of BMG meetings that have been taking place and thanked members for their commitment to this programme of work.

The three areas of work that JS is reporting back on today are:-

- Funding Framework for Specialist Provision review and recommendations
- Early Years SEND Funding
- Funding for Communication Aids and AAC

Funding Framework for Specialist Provision review and recommendations

The Task & Finish Group took the approach to consider special schools, support centres and alternative provision in turn, considering the same set of questions for each. (See paper 8.6)

Special Schools

The exercise into establishing and applying basic costs for Special School top-up funding has been completed and findings reviewed. The group noted that changing the banding model would have no positive impact on the budget, and would result in large funding swings for specific schools.

Modelling changes to funding to reduce or increase banding increments (including introduction to £2k banding increments) did not bring any positive benefits to the budget and a disproportionate bureaucratic burden.

- The group propose no change to the current top-up funding model for special schools.
- PCC will clarify the expectations of special school provision to assist with shared understanding and monitoring together.

- The group recommends the exploration of a similar model for special schools (as with support centres) to have SLAs for commissioned places.
- The group recommends that there is a review of the types of needs of children who are requiring special school provision. Work around profiling will also assist with forward planning to accommodate in the school estate.
- Band 8 and Band 8+ audits have already been commissioned by Forum. The group recommends that these audits of the use of resources for high needs children continue. The group also recommend that there is there is moderation of Band 8 pupils and close monitoring of provision and progression against EHCP's for high cost children. The moderation framework will include consideration of cohort funding to reduce costs where possible.
- An emerging issue was raised regarding the need of pupils at Woodlands School. The group agreed that there was an urgent need to understand the health requirements for the children and explore whether joint commissioning would offer different options.

Support Centres

The Support Centre T&F Group has asked for a review of basic costs and funding in a similar way to Special Schools – this will be completed by the finance officer as soon as possible.

The review will aim to understand the way in which support centres use allocated funding against their models of delivery.

Outcomes and recommendations:

- The group has asked the finance officer to carry out a review of support centre funding, in a similar way to the Special School review.
- The group recommends that Support Centre SLA's/Contracts are reviewed to update outcomes and input where appropriate.

Alternative Provision

The group looked closely at the current Alternative Provision funding arrangements. An emerging pressure was identified due to the consistently high numbers of pupils in ACE's primary provision.

Outcomes and recommendations:

- The groups recommends a review of the Primary Funding Model for ACE, arising from the change in demand that has occurred.
- The group notes the need to refresh the commissioning framework for Alternative Provision (summer 2019) including reviewing the monitoring framework for outcomes.

Other Outcomes

It has been noted and agreed that greater transparency across specialist provision is helpful and assists with a shared understanding for the budget pressures.

Monitoring frameworks allow us to evidence the outcomes being achieved with the HNB allocations for children. It enables us to be clearer about the reasons for the gap between needs and resources

Post 16

Task & Finish Group has been established to consider Post 16 model and will include the new Schools Forum Post 16 Rep.

Exceptional Cohort Funding

This has been reviewed and Exceptional Cohort funding will not be automatically provided to schools in 2019/20. Schools that feel they need extra funding for their cohort should apply for funding and the existing model will be applied on a case by case basis.

WC concluded that comprehensive and wide thinking pieces of work have taken place. Given the financial pressures it is positive to see that we are not looking to disadvantage certain sectors and the pieces of work have been looked at from a benefit to all perspective.

Early Years SEND Funding

Paper 8.7 outlines the work that has been undertaken to review the impact of the changes to Early Years SEN Funding. A range of questions have been explored which has provided re-assurance that there is no cause of concern. 1-1 funding is still taking place if required and cluster funding is creating benefits for wider groups of children. This piece of work has linked to School Readiness Review. There are no recommendations from this piece of work and just provides Schools Forum the re-assurance they were seeking.

Funding for Communication Aids & AAC

Paper 8.8 provides a progress report on this area of work. This work has not yet been completed as there will need to be a meeting with CCG Children's Commissioner to consider the threshold for health funded provision of Communication Aids. The role of Bristol Communication Aids Service is a significant financial benefit as takes away the need for tri-partite funding issues. The paper outlines the responsibility that school's take for low tech Communication Aids and the use of charity funding. Areas for follow up are:-

- Sustainability of current system and funding for the next period
- Can we predict the requirement of low tech Communication Aids through local data? The STP balance system will produce a rich dataset and will aid us with knowing the profile of our young people. It was noted that any data to pass on to schools is valuable.

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| 9. | PLYMOUTH SCHOOLS SPORTS PARTNERSHIP | |
| | JB provided an impact report of the Plymouth Schools Sports Partnership from September 2017-August 2018. (Paper 9.) This is a historic commitment and it was agreed that that provides good value for money and is a good investment for pupils. | |
| 10. | Dates of future meetings | |
| | <p>2019</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 19 June 2019 – 2pm – 4pm at Engage ▪ 6 November 2019 – 2pm – 4pm at Engage (Changed from 16 October 2019) ▪ 11 December 2019 – 2pm- 4pm at Engage <p>2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 15 January 2020 – 2pm-4pm at Engage ▪ 26 February 2020 – 2pm-4pm at Engage ▪ 10 June 2020 – 2pm-4pm at Engage ▪ 11 November 2020 – 2pm-4pm at Engage (Changed from 14 October 2020) ▪ 9 December 2020 – 2pm-4pm at Engage | |