

Minutes of the Schools Forum Extraordinary Meeting held on 11 January 2017

Present: Steve Barr (Chairman)

Attendance

Lesley Wells	Jonathan Jones
Alison Gibson	Kevin Allbutt
Philip Tapp (Vice-Chairman)	Steve Swatton
Sara Bailey	Derek Watson
Chris Wright	Judy Wyman

Observers: Ben Adams, Richard Hinton and Liz Threlkeld

Also in attendance: Alison Barnes, Will Wilkes, Julie Roberts, Tim Moss, Helen Riley and Stuart Lane

Apologies: Wendy Whelan, Philip Siddell, Richard Redgate, Stuart Jones, Karen Dobson, Wendy Horden, Ally Harvey, John Francis and Claire Evans

PART ONE

38. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2016

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Schools Forum meeting held on 7 December be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

39. Implementation of the Department for Education's Education Services Grant Guidance

At their meeting of 7 December 2016 Forum had agreed to hold an Extraordinary Meeting to consider the amount of funding to be retained centrally by the Local Authority (LA) to fund statutory and regulatory duties that would have previously been funded notionally through the Education Services Grant (ESG). Forum had also agreed that a Working Group of officers and members should be set up to consider this matter and feed back to the Extraordinary Meeting. Members were informed that a great deal of work had been undertaken by officers since the December meeting.

The ESG had contributed to funding central services to education. The total cost of these functions in 2016-17 was £13.856m and had been funded by a combination of Council Tax, ESG and Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The Teachers Pensions Added Years had been funded through Council Tax, which was an annual liability of around £7.1m. The County Council would continue to fund this in 2017-18. From 2017-18 onwards the ESG would cease to exist in its current form and alternative arrangements now needed to be put in place.

Members considered a list of the functions which were provided to all schools and previously funded by the retained duties ESG rate, along with an estimate of the total funding to be added into the schools block for retained duties. Schools Forum was asked to approve an allocation of £1,768,917 to fund these services.

The functions provided to maintained schools only and previously funded by the general duties ESG rate could be split into two sections: functions performed by the LA, and functions that could be provided by the LA or delegated to schools. Members considered a list of the functions performed by the LA for maintained schools, and were informed that it would need to levy £1 per pupil from maintained schools in addition to the transitional funding in order to cover the cost of these services. Schools Forum members representing maintained schools were asked:

- If they agreed with the list of general duties;
- If they agreed with a levy of £24.46 to fund the costs associated with the general duties; and
- If they agreed with proposals to utilise the 2017-18 transitional funding to fund the general duties, reducing the levy required from maintained schools in 2017-18 to £1 per pupil.

Members were informed that the transitional funding would be lost in 2018-19, which could have a significant affect on school budgets. It was suggested that it would be helpful if potential issues could be flagged up as soon as possible and agreed that an update on the position for 2018-19 should be included on the Work Programme for the July 2017 meeting of Forum.

In relation to the list of functions that could be performed by the LA for maintained schools or could be delegated to schools, Schools Forum members representing maintained schools were asked:

- If they would approve a levy of £23.74 per pupil to fund Asset Management; and
- If they would approve a levy of £21.90 per pupil to fund 30% of redundancy lump sum costs.

Members again expressed concern that consultation on redundancy arrangements was still ongoing with Trade Unions, and the uncertainty that this caused in setting their budgets.

RESOLVED – That:

- a) the amount of £1,768,917 to fund services previously funded by the ESG retained duties be approved;
- b) that the rate of £1 per pupil in 2017-18 (after taking the transitional funding into account) to fund statutory duties performed by the Local Authority and previously funded by the ESG general duties rate be unanimously approved by Schools Forum members representing maintained schools;
- c) that a levy of £23.74 per pupil to fund Asset Management and a levy of £21.90 per pupil to fund 30% of redundancy lump sum costs be unanimously approved by Schools Forum members representing maintained schools; and
- d) that any further decisions on this matter be delegated to the Director of Finance and Resources in consultation with the Chairman of Schools Forum and the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities.

40. Date of next meeting

RESOLVED – That the next Schools Forum meeting be scheduled for **Monday 27** March 2017, 2.00 pm, Kingston Centre, Stafford.

Chairman