

The KIRKLEES SCHOOLS FORUM

(Schools Funding Consultative Group)

meeting Friday 11th December 2009

Item
2
08.01.10

Present:

Julie Helm	Nursery School Heads (1)
Graham Altoft, Kath Benetis, Carol Crossland, Michelle Lee (Chair), Paul Scrimshaw, Diana Wilson	Primary School Heads (6)
	Middle School Heads (1)
Lorraine Barker, Jackie Eames (acting vice-chair)	High School Heads (4)
Philip Gibbins	Special School Heads (1)
Jo Bailey-Taylor (NASUWT), Pat Colling (KGA), Gillian Collins (ATL), Sarah Ellis (pre-School Learning Alliance), Howard Roberts (NUT)	Non-school members (6)
Julie Bowdidge (Principal Improvement Manager, Learning Service) Angela Farmer (Senior Finance Officer, Resources & Support) Warwick Firmin (School Funding Strategy Manager, R&S); Clerk David Gearing (Financial Delegation Manager, R&S); Minute Clerk Rosemary Gibson (Acting Head of Resources & Support) Carole Hardern (Group Finance Manager, Children & Young People Service)	Kirklees Children & Young People Service Officers in Support
	Observers

1. Apologies for Absence

Chris Sadler (Kirklees College), Caroline Thompson (Middle Schools), Janet Tolley (KHSH)

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 4 December

Agreed as a true record.

3. Matters arising from meeting 4 December

3.1 Early Retirement [minute 3.2 of the 4 December meeting]

Concerns were reported to the meeting that some of the wording contained in the recent letter to head teachers about the early retirement scheme was written too restrictively. As it stands, it may lead to some genuine cases not actually being put forward by individual head teachers. R.Gibson agreed to look into the matter and report back.

3.2 Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) update [minute 9 of 4 December]

An update paper, together with a copy of a ministerial statement from Dawn Primarolo MP, was circulated to the meeting. The requirement to introduce the EYSFF has been postponed by one year to April 2011. However, those local authorities who are confident of being able to implement the change from the original April 2010 date can still do so via the pathfinder programme. The Schools Forum was asked for their views on how to proceed. There seemed to be general agreement that the postponement actually presents an opportunity to get things right; to have a proper look at Nursery Schools, to look at sufficiency issues, to better align nursery size with reception PAN size and to determine what is the ongoing effect of moving to a single point of reception entry.

The update paper briefs upon the last meeting of the Nursery School Review Group which had produced a suggestion that the EYSFF should recognise that nursery schools have significantly higher (whole) premises costs to carry than school nursery units which are just part of wider premises activity. The emerging proposal was to look at a block grant or a higher hourly rate to reflect the higher fixed costs in nursery schools.

There was general agreement that the subject should not be put 'on the back-burner' and that regular updates should still be brought to the Schools Forum throughout the year. The Nursery Schools Review Group should continue to meet as the challenges facing this sector are not wholly to do with the EYSFF.

3.3 Kirklees Children's Trust [minute 11.2 of 4 December]

The promised briefing document on the development of the Kirklees Children's Trust was circulated to the meeting. Andrew Pennington, Head of Planning, Performance and Commissioning for the Children and Young People Service is to be invited to a meeting in the New Year to help the Schools Forum consider the topic. The main thrust of the Children's Trust will be the better alignment of budget resources with those of other partner organisations to achieve the Every Child Matters outcomes. It is obviously important that schools engage effectively with the new Trust body. The Schools Forum will be seeking both reassurance and clarification about how the Trust's work relates to that of the Schools Forum and about the role of the head teachers serving on both the Trust and the Local Public Service Board. The reporting lines of communication and representation are currently felt to be less than clear.

4. DSG and Budget 2010-11

Version 3 of the 2010-11 DSG budget strategy list was circulated to the meeting. All the outstanding budget pressure figures are now included in the listing with each of the new amounts covered by a specific item on today's agenda. Where more than one option is presented within a proposal, the most costly of the options has been included, prior to a proper decision, within the budget strategy. Even if all the pressures listed were to be agreed it is likely that there will still be some uncommitted funds for the Schools Forum to consider.

5. School Workforce Census

The Schools Forum had previously agreed £24,500 of temporary budget provision for Resources and Support Staffing admin to complete the work entailed by the 2009-10 pilot year of the new Schools Workforce Census requirements. The Schools Forum is asked to give a view on how the census tasks should be approached from 2010-11 onwards. Eventually, the SWC will replace a number of current census data collection forms, such as the 618G return, but only once the DCSF is assured that the SWC is being completed correctly by authorities.

The pilot work this year has revealed two main things – firstly, that the initial estimate of the amount of work entailed was quite wide of the mark and secondly, that much of the data needed for the return has been held in ways which are problematical for the census return (manual records, LA systems that don't communicate easily with school systems in certain crucial respects).

January 2010 will see the first 'live' return of census data. After this initial collection the census date will move to sometime in the Autumn and recur on an annual cycle. The report puts forward three possible approaches for collecting and submitting the data to the DCSF in future. Because of where some of the data is held all three options involve schools in some administrative work to varying degrees. There is also a need to involve ITCAS in the processes to ensure that technical problems with the data collection and transfer are overcome. The options presented are set out below: -

Option 1: The return is completed centrally by the local authority. [£81,100 per annum]

The majority of the data would be input by authority staff but schools would still have to provide Absent on Census Day information, data about the curriculum and information held about teaching assistant qualifications.

Option 2: The return is completed by school [£19,600 in 2010-11, £8,200 thereafter]

The information held by the authority would have to be sent to each school via AnyComms. The school would have to incorporate this and the information held in school into the census report. There will still be an amount of admin work for the

authority in terms of checking and approving returns, assisting with queries and necessary IT /software system support

Option 3: The return is completed partly by schools and partly by the LA. [£62,200 in 2010-11, £50,800 thereafter]

Each party would input the information that their own systems hold. Schools would input basic name, address, date of birth and information on equalities, curriculum, qualifications and staff absences on census day. The authority would provide contract, salary, additional payment and absence information. The majority of the information input by schools would be “one-off” in nature in that first year. This option is preferred by the authority.

Concerns were voiced about the ability of the authority to successfully overcome the technical problems encountered in the interface with school systems. Also the difference between options 1 and 3, in terms of what schools would be asked to contribute, was felt to be less than clear. Further information to clarify the difference was requested.

6. Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) – Cleaning staffs

The estimated costs of taking cleaning staffs through the five-year ISA registration period were circulated to the meeting. The picture is not too dissimilar to that already outlined for catering staffs. The cleaning analysis is a bit more complex due to the presence of around 240 cleaners employed by the PFI Facilities Management Contractor. An overall summary of the projected ISA registration costs was also tabled. This shows that increased resources need to be committed in each of the next three financial years. In 2012-13 and 2013-14 some of these resources can be released back into general funding although there will still be an ongoing commitment regarding new staff / new volunteers from that point.

It is understood that the Government is looking again at aspects of the new vetting and barring regulations, particularly with regard to volunteers / visitors. In the absence of any firm information it is proposed to continue to use the projection figures as drafted and adjust later should it be proven necessary.

7. Repair & Maintenance Traded Service [Jonathan Quarmby, Principal Asset Management Officer, attended the meeting for this item]

The traded service for revenue repair and maintenance is under increasing financial pressure. The account was overspent at the end of financial year 2008-09 by around £190,000. Measures have been taken to redeem this deficit during 2009-10 by suspending the security budget and considerably cutting back provision related to temporary classrooms and unplanned work. Increasingly, the focus of the budget is turning more to legislative health and safety requirements in terms of systems and equipment servicing and repairs and emergency provisions for things like winter maintenance, boiler safety and urgent requirements for temporary classroom provision.

The supporting paper asks for additional, above-inflation funding to be injected into the delegation factor to help with the process of satisfying legislative requirements, meeting demand for emergency works and still being able to perform more pro-active works such as the painting programme and security installations. A 2% increase in budget would be worth £32k, with 4% delivering £64k extra income.

The briefing paper raised several issues.

- Why was so much being spent on caretaker's accommodation?

The stock of caretaker's houses is gradually being phased out as individuals leave and the house is sold on or converted to other uses. However, there are R&M liabilities covered by current tied accommodation contracts which have to be honoured.

- What are the implications of suspending the security budget?

Security measures such as fences generally save money in the long run. Suspension of the security programme must prolong the financial risks faced by certain schools.

However, the Risk Insurance Manager is still making 'invest to save' contributions to security schemes in the current absence of a contribution from the R&M traded service.

- The traded service is largely tied to Design & Property Services which is not always felt to provide value for money?

The advantage of using D&PS for building works is that "after-sales" support to schools extends long beyond the typical 12 month defects liability applied by private contractors.

The problem with the account seems to be that it is exposed to unpredictable patterns of demand. The severe winter weather last year caused significant internal pressure in the account. It is hoped that there isn't a repeat of the harsh conditions this time. Three years ago the budget had to respond to a spate of lead thefts from school roofs. This has now subsided due to the recession and the slow down in the number of building schemes.

J.Quarmby was thanked for attending the Schools Forum to explain the difficulties faced by the service.

8. BSF Finance update [Alison O'Sullivan, Director for Children & Young People and Margaret Parker, Programme Director for Building Schools for the Future attended the meeting for this item]

The Director attended the meeting to give the Schools Forum an introductory overview of the financial aspects of the North Kirklees Building Schools for the Future programme. The intention is to engage with the Schools Forum more fully on the issues in the Spring Term. This agenda item is intended to bring the issues into view. All the financial aspects need to be gathered together to demonstrate that there is financial certainty to the proposals before the £200m investment can be secured. The Outline Business Case to secure the investment has to be submitted in March 2010.

There are six distinct themes to the financial framework: -

- 1) The impact on the Schools Revenue funding system.** Lots of work has been taking place to map out the potential internal effects within the Individual Schools Budget of a different pattern of schools and buildings during the transition period and beyond. In some years there will be additional costs to be supported, in others there will be savings and this ebb and flow needs to be understood.
- 2) Specific Capital allocations re N Kirklees BSF.** In several instances the design work is still being developed for some of the individual changes and there is some commercial sensitivity governing the sharing of information. The DCSF have to be assured of the scheme's overall affordability by the end of March 2010 or this funding will not be approved.
- 3) The Primary Capital Programme** - another flow of capital allocations with a different shape and lesser scale in comparison to BSF capital. The programme duration is 15 years. The first four years have been planned out with work on an outline programme in progress. There is connectivity with the BSF changes for some schools, with a particular inter-dependency with the BSF proposals for provision in Cleckheaton.
- 4) Traditional Capital allocations for maintaining the school estate.** There are capital allocations to the authority for maintenance, refurbishment and replacement of school buildings and schools themselves also receive Direct Formula Capital (DFC) allocations. These normal capital allocations still amount to significant sums. The difficulty with these allocations is that they respond to the changes implemented, ie once the estate is improved or replaced, capital flows reduce as a consequence. It is important that the sequencing and prioritisation of the capital programme is done effectively to blend in with the bigger picture.
- 5) Wider Council Capital funding.** The Council will be committing some of its capital allocation to top up the BSF programme funding. There will also be a certain amount of prudential borrowing taking place and the revenue debt charge effects of this need to be factored in also.
- 6) Other budgets and flexibilities.** There are other budget provisions that have been set up in connection with BSF and other existing budgets that will need to support the transition

arrangements – BSF admin team, change management strategies, school reorganisation support budget, protection of employees and early retirement.

In addition to the above there are also the financial implications of BSF requirements in respect of the ICT managed service and the Hard Facilities Management service to consider as well.

The main point is that there needs to be an understanding of all the financial issues across the piece. It is important that the Schools Forum is engaged with the issues and the detail along the way. Everything within items 1 to 6 above needs to be brought into view as the strands are interwoven. Although Capital funding does not formally fall within normal Schools Forum responsibility the dependency of the whole programme upon capital monies means that that side of things cannot be ignored.

As might have been expected with such a far-reaching development there were lots of concerns raised. These included: -

- Worries that the raised expectations within the managed ICT Service might not actually be affordable.
- Concerns over the human costs of the programme – redeployments, early retirements, severance, the effects of structural changes.
- Problems due to the ongoing uncertainty of various parts of the proposals.

Work is ongoing on the Human Resources implications. The HR framework has now been adopted by all the North Kirklees schools affected by the proposals. Staff preferences are being identified by the use of questionnaires. New staffing structures are being worked on with each school to be reorganised. CPD/retraining needs are being identified. A significant amount of officer time is being invested in the programme.

Uncertainty is acknowledged as a problem for everyone but there is a real need to plan for the core of the intended changes, for the most likely scenarios but to also have contingency plans in place should changes happen. Because of the timescales involved we cannot wait until there is complete certainty before making progress.

The BSF programme will be a standing item on the Schools Forum agendas from January 2010 onwards. The meeting scheduled for Friday 22nd January is intended to be largely BSF-related.

9. Admin costs of DSG Psychological Services

Recent scrutiny of both the Children & Young People Service budgets and those retained centrally within the Dedicated Schools Grant has revealed a technical error relating to some Psychology Service budgets already placed within the DSG. The activities in question are...

- **Portex.** A specialist teaching service for children within the Foundation Stage and KS1 who have complex special education needs
- **Butterfly.** A support service to schools (and families) targeted at young children who have significant emotional, social and behavioural difficulties.
- **Autism Outreach.** This service supports schools and other settings in meeting the needs of children (from Foundation through to KS4) who have been diagnosed as having an autistic spectrum disorder or who have significant social and communication difficulties.

The technical error relates to the admin costs of these three activities. These costs should be declared within the DSG as overheads on the direct budgets of the three units. Currently the specific admin costs are being charged to the ChYPS Psychology Services budget. A technical adjustment is needed to unite the costs within retained DSG. To do this the DSG has to find new base provision of £30,000

10. Psychology and Specialist Outreach

A late business case submission has been received from the Psychology and Specialist Outreach Service. Base provision is sought from the DSG of £47,500 in respect of a specialist multi-sensory support teacher. There is an increasing number of children who are both deaf and blind and who require specialised support. Until recently there was only a 0.6 fte teacher with this particular specialism within Kirklees. An additional full-time teacher is now required to meet the growing need/demands. This will ensure that the children's needs can be met within the authority without the need to resort to expensive extra-district provision.

It was questioned whether the amount proposed would be sufficient to meet the salary costs of the teacher and it was pointed out that people with the necessary skills are quite scarce. The new multi-sensory teacher is actually already at work within Kirklees on an agreed salary level supported by temporary funding. The £47,500 would allow the teacher to be retained permanently.

The general feeling was that there was little choice in the matter – the alternative of extra-district placement stands to be much more expensive.

11. Westfields Pupil Referral Unit – error in base provision

An error of £39,000 has come to light within the base budget provision of Westfields Pupil Referral Unit. It can be traced back to the work carried out for the Schools Forum last year to put the budget on a sounder footing going forward. A copy of the financial summary for Westfields presented to the Schools Forum last year was circulated to show that the problem had arisen in the Support Staff budget line. Budget provision of £39,000 should have been declared within this line as the original budget figure was correct. The budget problem will not surface in the current financial year thanks to delayed appointments (because of their specialist nature) to the two new teaching posts approved last time. These posts have now been filled so the gap needs to be closed from next financial year. Apologies were given to the Schools Forum for the error.

12. Uncommitted funds within the 2010-11 DSG

Views need to be gathered from constituent groups about how to use any uncommitted funds within the 2010-11 DSG. If all the identified pressure bids are approved as listed, there would be £177k remaining. Some suggestions were floated as to how the funding might be directed: -

- **Early Retirement** – some of the uncommitted funding could be used as contingent provision in the DSG ER budget against early pressures arising from the Building Schools for the Future proposals for North Kirklees
- **Deprivation Funding targets** – the uncommitted resources could be used to take a further step nearer the specified deprivation funding target within the overall DSG
- **Projected DSG deficit 2009-10** – it might be prudent to set aside some or all of the uncommitted resources to help deal with the expected deficit in the 2009-10 retained DSG budget which will come back to the Schools Forum as an issue next May/June.

Other suggestions are requested.

13. Standards Fund 2010-11 – school grant allocations

Julie Bowdidge circulated a précis of the Standards Fund allocations to schools and the LA expected for 2010-11. Because next year is the final year of a three-year comprehensive spending review period much of the detail has been published before. General Standards Fund allocations to schools will have to demonstrate at least a 2.1% increase per pupil in comparison to 2009-10 allocations.

- **1.2 School Lunch Grant** - no change to the overall allocations
- **1.3 Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant** - no change to the overall allocations

- **1.4 Targeted School Improvement Grant** - the total allocated depends upon the shape of projects agreed.
- **1.5 Grant for One to One Tuition** - the new name for the Making Good Progress grant. Funding in 2010-11 will be £2.21m compared to £1.07m in the current year. The grant is intended to deliver upon two guarantees: that every pupil aged 7-11 who has fallen behind national expectations and is not making good progress receives one to one tuition in English and mathematics to get them back on track; that every pupil beginning secondary school behind national expectations in English and mathematics receives one to one or small group tuition and their learning is assessed through a progress check reported to parents.
- **1.6 Extended Schools Grant** will increase from £1.17m to £1.65m in 2010-11 as a result of funding transferring across from the authority's Area-based Grant allocation. In addition there is a new element (1.6a comprising £1.55m) – subsidiary Extended Schools funding for disadvantaged children and young people – for schools to use within “clusters”. The successful pilot arrangements trialled in 2009-10 will be rolled out more widely. The outcomes of the pilot will be circulated amongst all schools soon.
- **1.7 Primary Strategy, School Targeted Support** has been announced in part. There are further announcements to come in May 2010 for the elements of ‘Every Child Counts’, ‘Every Child a Reader’ and ‘Every Child a Writer’. A similar May announcement is expected in 1.8 Secondary Strategy in respect of the Science Consultants Programme.
- **There is a new KS4 grant, 1.14 Foundation Learning** (incorporating the KS4 Engagement Programme), with allocation details still to be announced. Depending upon the terms and conditions of this grant, The Schools Forum might need to be involved in determining an allocation method for 2010-11.
- **1.15 National Challenge Grant** - an announcement is still awaited for 2010-11.
- Updates will be given on all outstanding school grants as information becomes available.

14. Decision Day 8th January 2010 – consultation materials for constituent groups

The meeting discussed what documentation would be needed to help constituent groups consider the identified 2010-11 budget issues.

The most obvious need relates to those items of business where decision options are involved – the School Workforce Census, the revenue Repairs & Maintenance traded service and the PPP1 Schools benchmarking gap (a succinct summary of the issues here would also be helpful. So too would the analysis of energy costs asked of Andrew Jessop last time).

Other documentation / information requested: -

- A concise summary of all the 2010-11 issues considered by The Schools Forum
- An update on deprivation funding requirements and the latest estimate of Kirklees' position in relation to the target
- In order to help schools consider a possible boost to the Early Retirement provision, an indication of the average first year cost of a teacher retirement would be useful

15. Any other business

Nothing was raised.

Date and Time of next meeting

Friday 8 January 2010, 9:00am to 3:00pm at the **Textile** Centre, Huddersfield