

The KIRKLEES SCHOOLS FORUM

(Schools Funding Consultative Group)
meeting held on **Friday 19th March 2010**
at the Deighton Centre

**Item
2**

07.05.10

Present:

Julie Helm	Nursery School Heads (1)
Kath Benetis, Carol Crossland, Michelle Lee (Chair 2009/10), Diana Wilson	Primary School Heads (6)
	Middle School Heads (1)
Lorraine Barker, Jackie Eames (acting Vice-chair), John McNally	High School Heads (4)
Philip Gibbins	Special School Heads (1)
Pat Colling (KGA), Gillian Collins (ATL), 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 Carole Hardern (Group Finance Manager, CHYPS) Margaret Swinden (Finance Manager, CHYPS) Lynne Nickson(Principal Improvement Manager Inclusion, Learning Service) Eunice Cox (Safeguarding Officer Schools & Learning, CHYPS) Vicky Dumbrell (Environment Officer, Environment Transportation Property) Katie Sutton (Environment Officer, Environment Transportation Property)	Kirklees Children & Young People Service Officers in Support
	Observers

1. Apologies for Absence

Graham Altoft, David Gearing, Rosemary Gibson, Chris Sadler (Kirklees College), Paul Scrimshaw, Caroline Thompson, Janet Tolley

A letter has been received from Christine Spencer resigning her position as a member of the Schools Forum with immediate effect. The vacancy has been filled by John McNally, Headteacher at Shelley College. The Schools Forum members wish to record their thanks and appreciation to Christine for all the hard work and support she has provided to the Schools Forum during her time both as member and Chair. She will be missed and the Schools Forum wish her well for the future.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February

The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising from meeting 5 February

3.1 Excess balance claw-back [minute 3.1 of the 5th February meeting]

The Chair has replied to the letter of appeal, stating that the Schools Forum had noted the appeal but agreed to uphold their original decision to claw back the monies.

3.2. DSG 2010-11 matters (Ref 2.3 PPP1 – contractual benchmarking of services costs)

The Chair reported that a letter was in the process of being drafted to the Chief Executive to pass on the concerns of the Schools Forum.

3.3 (Ref 1.2 ISA Registration)

A query was raised as how Foundation schools would receive this funding as they deal with their own registration. This funding is allocated within the formula factors for the (delegated) budgets for personnel admin, school cleaning and school catering.

3.4 BSF Funding Matters (Ref 5.1 Feedback from KSHH re BSF Hard FM Strategy)

Ref: Item C

Following the meeting of KSHH their view has moved from a position of the LEP being their favoured provider to the LA. This decision was helped by the Partnership for Schools accepting the LA as provider.

Ref: Item D

Schools have expressed concern with the letter they have received regarding hard FM, ICT and capital. The documents have been late in arrival and the arrangements are felt to be inflexible leading to some Governors being unwilling to sign as there are too many caveats. Whilst schools may use some of their DFC for emergency purposes there is no specific mention of this including ICT. It was felt that the letter needs re-drafting to help allay these concerns and it was agreed that Jackie Eames and Michelle Lee would meet to discuss a way forward.

Ref: Item E

It was reported that copies of the briefing paper prepared for north Kirklees heads which provides more explanation about the assumed financial flows of the overall BSF/PCP scheme, has not yet been circulated. KSHH have concerns as to whether the plan is still affordable as there have been a number of changes such as the successful Castle Hall appeal and 6th form provision.

4. ChYPS Budget 2010/2011 Update

Carole Hardern (Group Finance Manager) presented this item. A reminder of the national context in which the 2010/11 budget had been set was explained, together with the council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The budget was finalised at the council meeting on 24th February and Council tax has been set at 2% for 2010/11 and 2.5% for the next two years.

Due to cost pressures, budget increases have been made to the following areas in ChYPS for 2010/11:

- **Safeguarding & Specialist Provision:** - Increased volumes in safeguarding, residential agency staff and SEN
- **Planning Performance & Commissioning:** - Extra provision for Child Protection Review Unit
- **Resources & Support:** - Additional provision for transport
- **Localities:** - Budget provision been increased to cover the loss of grant funding

Carole Hardern then outlined the future budget position of the Council. Kirklees is anticipating 20% budget reductions over the next 5 years. Whilst the MTFP already requires savings of 1% + ½% + ½% over the next 3 years, additional targets include further savings of £1.6m for ChYPS over the same period.

Existing service reviews where savings are already built into the 2010/11 and 2011/12 plan include a review of psychology, YPAT, Extended Learning, School Improvement and Adult Learning.

New budget reductions included in the MTFP have been identified as follows:

- **Safeguarding & Specialist Provision:** - Implementing a new accommodation strategy which includes an additional residential home for LAC, adaptations to foster carer properties and a community approach to family assessments
- **Planning Performance & Commissioning:** - Reductions are planned in the learning & development budget and media & communications budget. Efficiencies in commissioning

for teenage pregnancy and substance misuse, savings in ICT and commissioning work for the children's fund.

- **Resources & Support:** - Phasing out clothing grants, reduction of heads of service from 5 to 4 plus efficiencies in methods of working
- **Localities:** - New funding arrangements for Duke of Edinburgh award centres and the outdoor adventurous team. Efficiencies in grant budgets and ensuring the supply of LA nursery places is linked to demand.
- **Learning:** - Adult learning moving to a partnership model, restructuring the school improvement team and reducing the subsidy to the music school

Carole Hardern explained that the above savings are also before the implementation of the innovation and efficiency programme. Whilst the risks associated with these budget reductions have been identified, the future outlook for the ChYPS budget is very challenging.

Schools Forum members expressed their concern regarding the removal of clothing grants. Carole Hardern explained that some 60% of LAs have discontinued clothing grants. Schools Forum members questioned whether any of the LAs that had discontinued clothing grants had included funding elsewhere in the system to compensate for this.

Members of the Schools Forum stated that there is unease in schools that budget decisions are being made in isolation and they are not involved in the process. Schools need to know what the Council's new structure looks like and have input into the process. A few members have had sight of the council's new structure and the outline proposals for the ChYPS structure, but many have not.

5. Week 44 DSG Monitoring report

Since the agenda papers had been despatched, week 48 monitor was now available and a copy was circulated at the meeting. Whilst this is showing a reduced deficit of £591,900, further budget pressures have since been identified in the reimbursement of the UPS threshold payments (£50,600) and SEN contingency (£60,000). This would bring the DSG overspend to £752,500.

6. Carbon Trading

Vicky Dumbrell and Katie Sutton from Environment Services attended for this item. From April 2010 all LAs will be required to monitor and report on their carbon emissions annually, and will have to purchase allowances for each tonne of carbon emitted. LAs will be able to buy and surrender carbon allowances to cover actual emissions, initially at fixed prices and eventually as part of an auction process. Kirklees plan to buy allowances worth £0.6m each year.

Foundation, VA and VC schools are included within the scheme, however at the moment PFI schools are included only as part of their PFI operator and not as part of the LA. The Environment Agency is currently discussing this with lawyers and the verdict as to whether they are to be included or not within the scheme should be known within the next few months. The Schools Forum requested that they be informed as soon as a decision has been reached.

As from April 2010, schools will need to start recording energy use and collating an evidence pack. This will include annual statements, copies of invoices and meter readings. Schools will be required to read their meters regularly and submit the information to the utility companies directly. The reason for this is that the scheme does not allow estimated readings to exceed a 6 months period, the penalty for which will be a 10% fine.

Within Kirklees, schools represent 44% of the council's emissions arising from buildings energy use. Schools should have already received information about the scheme from Asset Management together with a questionnaire regarding the number of meters on site. The council needs to establish a base line of information for all its buildings. The Environment unit will then target buildings including schools which are costly and direct any investment to these premises.

The cost of carbon emissions comes into effect from April 2011. Whilst schools will not be charged for the allowances the LA purchases on their behalf, there is a possibility schools may be charged for any losses incurred due to the school's inability to reduce its emissions. Likewise they may receive a bonus if the LA performs well as a result of the schools reducing their

emissions. The DCSF is currently examining the legislative position as to whether this is legal within the existing School Financial Regulations framework. If so, it will be left to each LA to decide how this will be done.

7. Implementation of the New School Admissions Procedures 2010

A paper was circulated seeking approval for funding for 3 additional staff to administer the new in year school admission arrangements, and to carry out other statutory functions and duties which are currently not being met. A list of the duties currently not being met was included in the paper.

From September 2010, the School Admissions Code requires all LAs to deal with in year admissions; these are currently dealt with in schools. Over the past year, Kirklees schools dealt with 6,423 requests for admissions and in the 2007/08 academic year there were 2,892 in year admissions to Kirklees schools. This latter figure does not take account of general enquiries from parents about changes of school which also require a response. In addition the admissions team will be required to keep waiting lists for all year groups throughout the school year, and re-allocate places as and when vacancies arise. To be able to do this, the admissions team will need to set up and maintain a database to keep track of pupils at each school and the number of vacant places.

Further changes in the 2011/12 academic year will require the home LA to co-ordinate all admissions to primary schools even if the parent's choice of school is located in another LA. Currently the team only deal with requests for Kirklees schools.

As the admissions process for September 2011 will commence in July 2010, the request is for an additional team leader from May 2010 plus two additional admissions administrators from September 2010. The part year cost of these posts in 2010/11 is £50,700 with full year costs of £76,000 in 2011/12.

The Schools Forum have asked that further information be provided before this request can be fully considered:

- How many of the 2,892 in year admissions go to appeal?
- How large is the current school admissions team and do the 3 additional posts represent best value?

8. Contribution to Safeguarding

A briefing note was circulated requesting additional resources for membership of the Kirklees Safeguarding Children's Board (KSCB) and an additional safeguarding officer (Schools and Learning).

8.1 KSCB

Following the Lord Laming review of child protection, the Government is proposing that schools have formal membership of the Local Children's Safeguarding Board. The Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB) receives funding from partner agencies who are board members eg the police and ChYPS. In the summer term, schools will be invited to be members of the Board and the cost of the membership is calculated at £76,000 per year for the next 2 years, which is equivalent to £400 per school. The funding received by the Board is used for a number of things including infrastructure, multi agency training and serious case reviews. However, if schools do not agree to make a contribution to the funding, there will be a charge for the multi agency training which is likely to exceed the £400 equivalent contribution per school.

The Schools Forum members felt that it is not clear how the Board works, who is represented and what is its status. Lynne agreed to look into this and report back to the Schools Forum.

8.2 Additional Safeguarding Officer

Kirklees currently has 1 safeguarding officer which is funded by the LA. Schools are positive about the support and guidance they receive from the post holder and would benefit from further support if it were available, with particular reference to OFSTED inspection requirements. The LA would be willing to appoint an additional officer provided this could be funded from the DSG. It is felt that the contract should be for a period of 2 years in order to attract the right calibre of applicant. The cost of an additional post for the 2 year period is £96,800.

It was noted that whilst LA staff have worked with some secondary schools, a number of schools do have their own officers. It was suggested that an SLA should be drawn up which would enable schools to know how many days of support they are entitled to. It was agreed that a draft SLA will be brought to a future Schools Forum meeting.

9. Unexpected Sure Start Resources at Year End 2009/10

During the year, the council makes payments to the West Yorkshire Superannuation Fund in respect of all single status employees who are members of the superannuation fund. Since the introduction of Financial Reporting Standard 17 in 2003, all councils are required to show the operating costs of providing retirement benefits to employees in the accounting period in which the benefits are earned by the employees, even though the actual giving of these benefits may be years into the future. During 2009/10 the estimated FRS17 rate applied through the payroll was 19.6%, however an actuarial review of the FRS17 superannuation rate last month reduced the rate to 11.8%.

Adjustments have been made to the ledger in week 48 to bring the budgets and expenditure into line, however the impact of this reduction in salary costs on the Sure Start Grant has meant there will be an underspend of £440,000 at the end of 2009/10. As the LA does not want to have to return any of the grant to the DCSF, it has been looking at ways to legitimately charge further costs to the grant.

The DSG makes an annual contribution to the central KEYS budget towards the cost of early years education and so a logical option is to charge some of these costs to the grant which would result in the DSG having savings of £440,000. The savings on the DSG would then be rolled forward into 2010/11.

This paper proposes that these savings be used to pay for the funding requests already outlined above for the next 2 years:

7. School Admission Officers:	£126,700
8.1 KCSB	£152,000
8.2 Additional safeguarding officer	£96,800

TOTAL	£375,500

This would leave £64,500 remaining to be allocated.

Agreed: To appoint an additional safeguarding officer for a fixed term of 2 years at a cost of £96,800, with the focus of the new post holder to be Early Years. The balance of £343,200 to be transferred to the DSG to help cover the 2009/10 DSG overspends.

The other 2 funding proposals will be taken to constituent groups.

9. Future Agenda Items

7th May – I&E, VER, Centralisation of services, Intech Broadband, Calendar 2010/11

John Edwards, new Assistant Director (Learning) will be attending the meeting on 11th June. It is important that he is made aware that consideration be given to the needs of schools and learning when the council looks at the centralisation of certain services.

Audit Commission's document "valuable lessons". WF suggested a small group of Schools Forum members to discuss this document and report back to the June or July meeting.

10. Any Other Business

10.1 A letter had been received from Unison stating they had not received a response to their letter dated 16th February 2009 questioning why they were not allocated a seat on the Schools Forum. It was noted that at the time a holding letter had been sent, pending the outcome of the Schools Forum meeting in September where membership is considered each year. However following this meeting, a formal response where the membership was agreed had not been sent. WF agreed to write to Unison stating the Schools Forum decision.

10.2 The DCSF has recently placed 2 new documents on the website:

“Investing for the future, protecting the front line: School funding 2010-13”
(www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications)

“Consultation on the future distribution of school funding”
(www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations)

A précis of the documents will be sent out with the minutes.

10.3 It was noted that

- not all papers had been sent out in advance with the agenda
- the Schools Forum are being asked to make funding decisions after “decision day” in January
- do officers need to attend meetings to present papers - it is sometimes difficult for full and meaningful discussions to take place when they are present.

Date and Time of Next Meeting

Friday 7th May 2010, **8:30am to 11:30am** at the Deighton Centre, Huddersfield