



Minutes of the Schools Forum

28 June 2012

-: Present :-

Iris Butler, Maurice Codd, Sue Foot, Roger Hughes, Colin Kirkman, Mike Lock, Debbie Main and Frances Ward

(Also in attendance: Sandy Urban, Matt Redwood, Lisa Finn)

495. Apologies/Changes to Membership

Apologies were received from David Theobald, Gill Battye, Jeanne Cook, Cathy Gilfillan (who was represented by Daneian Rees), Roy Pike (who was represented by Andrew Medhurst). The Chairman welcomed Frances Ward to the Forum.

496. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Schools' Forum held on 22 March 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

497. Matters Arising

Item 491 2012/13 DSG Allocations – It was confirmed that the Carbon Tax is to be paid for by schools and this will continue into next year. The formula is set by the Government and is charged per carbon tonne.

Action:

Details of energy usage for the last two years to be circulated to schools so they can benchmark costs. **(Matt Redwood/Andrew Pedrick)**

498. Standing Item: Statementing Contingency 2011/12

A verbal update was provided by the Finance Manager. Overall there is a small underspend for 2011/12. School Forum recorded their thanks for the work of the Finance Team in managing the budget.

499. School Funding Formula Changes

Local Authorities have been instructed by the DfE to change the formula for distributing money from the DSG to schools. Pages 7 and 8 of the report show the current formula. These have to be reduced to 10 factors with the large majority of funding for Torbay being distributed to schools on one of four:

- Age weighted pupil unit

- Eligibility for free school meals
- Income Deprivation Affecting Children index
- Prior attainment as measured by the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and Key Stage 2 test results

Primary and Secondary Schools

Two groups were formed (FAR (Formula and Review Group) and SFAR (Special Formula Review Group)) with representatives from Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Special Schools, Church Schools and Academies to meet to discuss how funds could be reallocated. Appendix 3 of the report shows the suggested allocations. An analysis of how funding would have been allocated for 2012/13 using the new factors will form the basis of a consultation for schools and stakeholders in late September. Lisa Finn and Rob Parr from the Finance Team were thanked for their work on this. The Minimum Funding Guarantee is set at - 1.5% and there will be ceiling set on school gains to make changes affordable.

Statemented Pupils

The majority of funding will be distributed by formula using a combination of the four factors above.

Special Schools

Funding will change to a flat rate of £10,000 per pupil plus a specific top up depending on the child's educational needs and the school they are attending. Concern was raised for those schools where all places are not taken.

The PRU

Funding will be allocated on the same methodology as special schools with a flat rate of £8,000 plus a specific top up.

Early Years

An Early Years Group to be set up in early September to review the funding formula.

Further work is to be undertaken during the summer to prepare the consultation documents. The consultation time will be over a 6-8 week period.

Actions:

- (i) An additional meeting of the Schools Forum to take place during late September to discuss formula changes. (**Matt Redwood/Sandy Urban**)
- (ii) Schools to be advised when the consultation papers will be available to enable them to programme their discussions and responses. (**Matt Redwood**)

500. School Forum - Changes in Business Practices

The letter from the Education Funding Agency advises that the legislation relating to Schools Forums has been reviewed and changes proposed.

Action:

- (i) Discussion on membership to take place with the Chairmen of TASH and TAPS prior to discussion at Schools Forum. (**Roger Hughes**)
- (ii) A paper to be presented at the next meeting to discuss membership and changes to Schools Forum arrangements. (**Matt Redwood**)
- (iii) A check of the website to ensure that agendas and minutes are available. (**Sandy Urban**)

(Up to date agendas and minutes are available on the Torbay Council website at: www.torbay.gov.uk – Your Council – Councillors and Decisions – Outside Bodies – Schools Forum)

501. Schools Budget Return 1 (SBR-1)

With the agreement of the Chairman a revised page 19 was circulated to the meeting.

Schools are required to return a completed Budget Return by the end of May each year (SBR1). The return details their carry forwards and how they intend to spend this balance. Concern was expressed at the size of some of the balances. Schools with large balances will be contacted asking for additional information if this has not been included on the SBRI.

502. Central Expenditure Limit

The information currently shown on the DfE website indicates that the central expenditure limit has been exceeded. This is due to the fact that it is not possible to compare the last two year's figures as funding for academies are not shown this year. The DfE are aware of this and the Forum were advised that the limit has not been breached.

503. Future Meeting Dates

Thursday 8 November 2012 – CANCELLED
Thursday 27 September 2012 - NEW
Thursday 6 December 2012 - NEW
Thursday 7 February 2013
Thursday 21 March 2013

504. Notification of the 2012/13 Final Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

With the agreement of the Chairman an additional supplementary paper was circulated to the meeting.

In accordance with DfE School Finance Regulations, the final DSG has to be discussed at Schools Forum. This allows the Chief Finance Officer to confirm that this grant has been used to support the Schools Budget.

The Schools Forum noted the final DSG for 2012/13 of £84.254 million.

It was agreed that the increase in DSG funding of £19,000 be allocated to the Schools General Contingency in the first instance.