

**Schools Forum Funding Group Meeting**  
13 November 2015, The Outen Room, Green Park  
Meeting opened: 9.30am  
Meeting closed: 1.30pm

**Present**

*Members*

Pete Rowe, Tessa Haddon, Alan Rosen, Katherine Douglas, Michael Moore, Jinna Male (substituting for Steven Sneesby).

**Officers**

Emma Wilding, John Huskinson, Jonathan Carter, Melanie Coyle, Sandy Ayton, Sylvia Kershaw

**Contributors**

Debra Rutley

**1. Apologies for Absence/ Changes in Membership**

Sue Stamp, Wendy Terry and Steven Sneesby

**2. Declarations of Interest**

The following declarations of interest were made:

- Pete Rowe as students from Princes Risborough School use Aspire facilities
- Debra Rutley as a member of Schools Forum
- Jinna Male as Head of Alfriston School
- Tessa Haddon as School Governor

**3. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 9 October 2015 were agreed as a correct record. An executive summary of the minutes is to be produced for Schools Forum.

**4. School Support Staff pay increase – Sandra Ayton/Sylvia Kershaw**

There were three elements for consultation with Schools management:

- Annual percentage increase across all ranges – from April 2016
- The new National Living Wage – from April 2016
- The withdrawal of the National Insurance rebate for employers and those employees in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) - from April 2016

The National Living Wage (NLW) is being introduced on the 1 April 2016 at £7.20 for all workers aged 25 years and over.

Of the 4,854 (239 FTE) Bucks Pay-Schools employees paid through the BCC payroll, range 1A and 1B make up a significant proportion of the non-teaching workforce.

- Range 1A x 1,120 (239 FTE = 23% of employees (10% of FTE)
- Range 1B x 1,842 (908 FTE = 38% of employees (38% of FTE)

The two options suggested to address the impact of the NLW for this group of employees are:

- *Option A – delete Range 1A and contract Range 1B to a two point scale by 2020*
- *Option B – retain Range 1A (in line with NLW) and contract range 1B to a two point scale by 2020*

## **Members of Schools Forum Funding Group AGREED;**

1. that the paragraph 4.1 Annual Increase 2016/17 of the report should be amended to the following:

**Schools management are asked to confirm their proposal on a percentage pay increase for all pay ranges in April 2016.**

**1% Yes / No**

**Other - please state:**

2. that **Option B – retain Range 1A (in line with NLW) and contract Range 1B to a two point scale by 2020 be recommended for agreement by Schools Forum.**

A brief paragraph is to be put on the Schools Bulletin in the format of a consultation document with two questions.

### **5. Modelling of the Formula changes**

Following discussions at a meeting of the Working Group, modelling took place on the current formula with every factor pro rata to 98.5%. Modelling also took place in comparison with figures two years ago. The four new models were:

- Model 6 - Prior Attainment Balance
- Model 7 - AWPU Balance
- Model 8 - AWPU Balance retaining ratio
- Model 9 - Secondary Increased Lump Sum AWPU Balance

Following discussions model 6 was discounted as the move to the figure of £386 for Prior Attainment was felt to be too large; model 7 was discounted due to the primary/secondary ratio of 1:1:24; model 9 was discounted as it was felt unnecessary to increase the secondary lump sum in Bucks.

A spreadsheet would be produced identifying the top 10 winners and losers for model 8.

**Action: Melanie Coyne**

**Members of Schools Forum Funding Group recommended that Model 8 is used as the model for Formula Changes.**

### **6. Capital Programme and funding from DSG**

A meeting of the Working Group took place on the 9 November 2015 to discuss the capital programme. Further meetings have been arranged to discuss this in more detail, to understand any issues, the implications of the gap and the priorities.

### **7. Licences**

Members of the SFFG were advised that in 2015/16 a budget of £250k was set to cover Licencing costs. However, after the budgets had been agreed, a further 4 licences were added to the list giving an additional cost of £126k.

The licences listed in the report are a statutory requirement.

The EFA were asked to confirm if there would be further new licences added to the list. The response received was no new licences were expected although settlement has not been received as yet.

It was suggested the section about rates reserve be removed from the licences paper and added to other papers about central spend and savings.

**Action: Emma Wilding**

The rates reserve was within the formula for the forecast overspend. The value of the rates for each school needed to be set. There had been an issue with some academies not sending rate returns to the EFA and in turn, the Local Authority not being informed of the payment amount required. A figure had been set aside for two years in anticipation of this payment.

**Members of Schools Forum are asked to agree whether a 2% increase in cost assumption for the cost of licences is sufficient, and therefore to agree to top slice an additional £140k for licences**

### **8. Growth Fund**

Following agreement at the last Schools Forum meeting that the Diseconomies Funding would be discussed by the Contingency Group, Michael Moore, Tessa Haddon, Sue Stamp, John Huskinson and Jonathan Carter attended a meeting at Lace Hill Primary Academy to discuss the figures and principles of the funding.

The key points highlighted were:

- It is a DfE requirement that the local authority will use its Growth Fund to fund any new Academies or Free Schools and the associated start-up costs including diseconomy of scale costs.
- The provision of funding is for a period of 4 years or until the school is at 90% pupil capacity. In the case of Lace Hill Academy, this equates to £250-£280k over a 3 year period.
- Following discussions on the predicted budget, the IT figures quoted will be looked at in further detail.
- There is currently no broadband facility at the academy or on the housing estate where it is located.
- It was agreed that the financial modelling and outcomes would be reported twice a year to the local authority for review (at the end of the financial year and the academic year).
- It was agreed that a specific percentage of surplus could be retained to allow the academy to build up reserves.

**Members of Schools Forum Funding Group recommended that:**

- **The amount to be deducted over a three year period.**
- **There is a ceiling amount of funding of £262k**

A payment schedule would be produced.

**Action: John Huskinson**

### **9. Contingency for Deficits**

A model was produced sharing the 618k on an equal basis between lump sum and AWPU. A paper outlining the model will be tabled at the SF meeting.

**Members of the Schools Forum Funding Group recommended agreement of the model.**

## **10. Surplus balances at Aspire schools**

Following agreement by members of Schools Forum that those schools showing a surplus balance of 20% or above will be asked to provide an explanation for the surplus, Debra Rutley, Headteacher, Aspire attended the meeting to give clarification of the surplus position of The Wycombe Grange at the end of March 2015.

Debra made the following points:

- The previous Headteacher of The Wycombe Grange had an excessive overspend but was never challenged.
- The previous Headteacher of Blueprint also had an overspend which was inherited when the budgets merged.
- Aspire became a buy back service. The organisation needed to be run like a business.
- A new school 'The Chiltern Skills and Enterprise Centre' was opened in September 2014 which sold services to schools.
- The surplus from The Wycombe Grange was invested in schools in the north of the county (Blueprint). The deficit of £300k has now been reduced to £140k. The Wycombe Grange invested heavily into Blueprint by increasing teaching and support staff, changing the building and improving resources.
- Aspire has running costs of £5.2m
- £2.43m is funded by the Local Authority via a Service Level Agreement.
- The organisation has 61 places for permanently excluded children which are funded by the Local Authority.
- Base funding is for 192 places
- The organisation has an income target of £2.79m per year. It operates as a Traded Service similar to Bucks Learning Trust.
- The excess surplus allows the organisation to operate year on year without worrying about staffing costs etc.

**Members of the Schools Forum Funding Group recommended in principle that Aspire is treated as other maintained schools.**

## **11. Central Costs**

Schools Forum approval was required on a line by line basis of Central Costs.

**Members of the Schools Forum Funding Group recommended the following:**

- **The modelling of the figures takes place based on 95% (5% is to be removed from early years and high needs areas).**
- **Central Costs are agreed on a line by line basis provided the figures were not higher than last year.**
- **A fundamental review of Central Costs would take place in 2017/18**

## **12. Any other business**

None

## **13. Date of the Next Meeting**

Friday 11 December 2015, 9.30am, Green Park, Aston Clinton