

THE KIRKLEES SCHOOLS FORUM

meeting held on **Friday 2nd December 2016**

10:00am at the Tolson Museum, Huddersfield

Present:

Julie Helm	Nursery School Heads (1)
Lynn Hill	Primary School Heads (5)
Gary Johnson	Middle School Heads (1)
Ian Ellam, Loz Wilson	High School Heads (2)
Nicky Rogers	Special School Heads (1)
Sarah Wilson	Special Academy Heads (1)
Michelle Lee [Chair], Ann McCall	Academy Heads (3)
Martin Ridge	Pupil Referral Units (1)
	Kirklees Governors (1)
Hazel Danson (NUT), Sarah Ellis (Pre-school Learning Alliance), Paula Wescott (NASUWT)	Non-school members (5)
Angela Farmer (Senior Finance Officer) David Gearing (Financial Delegation Manager); [Minute Clerk] Liz Singleton (Deputy Assistant Director, Learning)	Officers in Support
	Observers

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Gillian Collins (NASUWT), Catherine Jubbs (Academies), Marcus Newby (Primary Heads) and Diana Wilson (Primary Heads).

2. Minutes of the Schools Forum Public meeting held on 21st October

The minutes were agreed to be a true record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising from the Schools Forum Public meeting 21st October

3.1 Confirmation of Academy Special School representation

Sarah Wilson, head teacher of Joseph Norton Academy is the new representative to Forum from the Special academy sector. Welcome was given to Sarah attending her first meeting today.

3.2 Education Services Grant (ESG) update / Autumn Statement

Yesterday the Education Funding Agency at last issued an updated version of the operational guidance document for schools revenue funding 2017-18 and also released supplementary guidance for local authorities about historic commitments funded from the DSG. The main new points were summarised in a briefing paper for Forum.

The EFA has confirmed that the Education Services Grant general funding rate (currently £77 per pupil in maintained schools) for Councils will end at 31st March 2017. A transitional lower rate of around £50 per pupil will be paid for the period April to August 2017 – this equates to about £20 per maintained pupil over the financial year 2017-18.

School improvement

Following the withdrawal of the ESG general duties funding, there will be several different ways that school improvement can be funded in future: -

- A new **School Improvement Grant** to local authorities will be introduced from September 2017 to cover monitoring and commissioning of school improvement and intervention in failing schools. The allocation, from a national pot of £50m, will largely be based upon the numbers of pupils in schools maintained by the Council.
- There will also be a new **Strategic School Improvement Fund** (£140m nationally) created for academies and maintained schools *“aimed at ensuring resources are targeted at the schools most in need of support to drive up standards, use their resources more effectively and deliver more good school places.”* Further information on the operation of the fund will be released shortly.
- School Improvement services have been **added to the list of potential de-delegated arrangements**. Maintained schools could choose to de-delegate a pot of funding in addition to the statutory duties provided for by the new School Improvement Grant.
- The **school improvement commissioning fund budgets** currently retained within the DSG Schools Block under the heading of ‘Combined Budgets’ cannot continue into 2017-18. The EFA has clarified what can still be retained as ‘historic commitments’ going forward and the definition does not permit funds to be retained for this purpose in future. (This would not preclude the potential to move to some sort of trading arrangement to pool funding if schools and academies felt it was worth doing. However, more detail is needed about the operation of the new SI Grant and SSI Fund before a sensible way forward can be plotted).

Officers have a meeting with the Regional Schools Commissioner next week which might further clarify roles and responsibilities for school improvement under the new approach being taken.

Retention of schools funding

The Regulations will permit local authorities to propose to retain DSG funding towards the cost of the continuing statutory and regulatory duties previously funded by the Education Services Grant.

The retained duties grant (a rate of £15 per pupil educated in local schools and academies) will be moved into the DSG from April 2017. Table 6 in the guidance document specifies the duties which fall to be discharged from the near £1m to be added into the DSG. The local authority will bring a proposal to Forum to retain as much of this sum as is needed to fulfil those duties on behalf of all schools.

The general duties grant is to disappear next year (alternative school improvement arrangements excepted) but, unlike the retained duties, no funding will transfer into the DSG. This was intended to happen against a background of Councils losing responsibility for running schools. The bill to enact that change has recently been withdrawn but the £600m national saving from the removal of ESG general duties still stands. It is grossly unfair that Councils keep all the same duties to discharge but the funding to support them has not been reinstated. Local authorities are free to make a case to their maintained schools to retain funding to cover statutory duties previously funded by the general rate ESG.

Any retention proposals arising out of the removal of ESG will be brought to Forum at the earliest opportunity.

Historic Commitments

Following clarification from the EFA of what can still be retained within DSG as 'historic commitments' we will no longer be able to run the school improvement commissioning funds via the DSG (see under School Improvement heading above). The School Safeguarding Officer post also cannot be funded by retained DSG in future – a traded service arrangement will instead need to be put in place from April 2017.

The only historic commitment that can still be funded from the Retained account is the cost of ongoing pension commitments taken on by the DSG prior to April 2013. When the pupil-driven Central Schools Block comes into being it is expected that around £170k of additional funding will be added to Kirklees' allocation to cover these pension costs.

3.3 Early Years National Funding Formula update

Further information about the Early Years National Funding Formula was also released yesterday by the Education Funding Agency. This included an operational guide to the new arrangements and updated indicative figures for our Early Years funding block. Officers will meet with the Early Years working group to shape the revised funding arrangements to apply from 2017-18. Forum will be updated about progress at the January briefing meeting.

3.4 Exceptions applications – meeting of submission deadline

It was confirmed that the agreed exceptions applications were uploaded to the Education Funding Agency portal a few days in advance of the submission deadline of 30th November.

4. De-delegation decisions 2017-18

Officers in Support attended the 23rd November Kirklees High School Heads (KHSH) meeting to explain the de-delegated budgets for maintained schools and the need to decide upon the arrangements for financial year 2017-18. There were no dissenting voices to the proposal to de-delegate to the same pattern and the Secondary maintained sector Forum reps confirmed they had received no feedback from colleagues following the meeting.

The same opportunity for comment will be given to maintained primary heads at head teacher meetings in early January. If a proposal is made to de-delegate funds for school improvement following the new guidance received it will need to be considered by both maintained school sectors.

Although the maintained secondary school heads have accepted the current pattern of de-delegation for 2017-18, this will once again not include Trade Union Duties. This was claimed to be a somewhat unusual position – the NUT national office contends that de-delegation of TU duties has not been agreed in just 21 local authorities. There was some discussion around the absence of some sort of Service Level Agreement to set out what 'benefits' schools could expect to receive for their purchase. This was certainly raised by one head teacher at the KHSH meeting. It is questionable whether a formal SLA would actually work for TU Duties. It was suggested that a precis of previous advice to schools on the matter be made available again to explain the benefits for schools of taking a local approach to TU facilities time. The inclusion of a TU Duties page in the Partnership brochure was also suggested. School Governors need to be provided with the same guidance on the topic. It

would also be helpful if some explanation could be given to explain the differences between regional union official roles and those of the local facilities time officials.

5. Centrally-retained Budgets 2017-18

The DSG centrally-retained account also has to be agreed with Forum via annual review. The issue needs to be raised at the January head teacher meetings. The table below details the 2016-17 retained account.

Budget heading	2016-17 £	Comments re 2017-18
Pupil Growth Fund	600,000	Continue
Falling Rolls Fund	100,000	Continue
Servicing of Schools Forum	31,000	Potential to reduce by £10k?
School Admissions, Planning etc	833,500	Continue
National Copyright Licences	293,400	Continue. Inflation + pupil volume increase to provide for
School Safeguarding Officer	48,400	Remove. Traded Service to create
Primary Commissioning Fund	171,500	Remove. Consider as part of school improvement review
Secondary Commissioning Fund	278,800	Remove. Consider as part of school improvement review
Historic Pension Commitments	170,400	Continue
Provision for missing LAC/NEET	45,100	Continue
TOTALS	£2,572,100	

The updated EFA guidance indicates that funding freed up from disallowed historic commitments should be recycled to either schools or high needs. It would make sense for the former School Safeguarding Officer funds to be added into base AWPU funding for 2017-18 to support the new traded service. The route for the disallowed commissioning funds is less clear cut and requires further consideration.

It was requested that the £833,500 figure in the above table be broken down into its component budgets for the admissions service and the school organisation and planning team. It was noted that the regulations have now been amended to remove the cap on retained schools admissions budget provision.

6. Kirklees Council Cabinet paper on Schools Funding 2017-18 - timescales

Officers have pulled together an initial draft of a Cabinet paper to report to Council the changes to School funding arrangements for 2017-18, including formal decisions from the maintained sectors about de-delegation and centrally-retained budget provisions made on behalf of all school types. There is scope to revise the paper up to 19th December to include updates for recent announcements. The key dates for the remainder of this year's schools funding business are: -

6 th January	Head Teacher Briefing
11 th January	Kirklees High School Heads (KSHS) meeting
12 th January	Kirklees Primary Heads (KPH) meeting
13 th January	Schools Forum briefing meeting
17 th January	Cabinet consideration of the report about 2017-18 Schools Funding
20 th January	EFA schools funding pro forma submission deadline

7. Any other business

No other business was raised.

8. Dates and times of next meetings [start times to be confirmed]

Friday 10 th March 2017	Venue: Tolson Museum
Friday 16 th June 2017	Venue: Tolson Museum

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