



Minutes

Name of meeting	SCHOOLS' FORUM
Date and time	Thursday, 20 January 2022
Venue	Webinar – Virtual Meeting
Present	Beverley Gilbert – Brading CE Primary (Chair) Mike Hayward – Isle of Wight Education Federation Kevin McDermott – Christ the King College Duncan Mills – Cornerstone Federation Steve Fairclough – Brighstone CE Primary Lisa Nicholson – Haylands Primary Caroline Sice – Lanesend Primary Academy Sarah Hussey – Northwood Primary Academy Jayne Hill – (JH) Niton Pre-school and Brighstone Pre-school Samantha Rooney – Isle of Wight College Julie Stewart – Medina House School Jackie Boxx – Island Learning Centre Sue Bowen – Church of England Diocese
Officers	Brian Pope – Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion Barry Downer - Senior Finance Business Partner Irina Rowan – Finance Business Partner Jane Howarth – (JHo) Cllr Debbie Andre – Lead Councillor for Children’s Services and Education Diane Hiscock – Clerk
Apologies	None received

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Members were welcomed to the meeting and informed of re-appointments of Academy, Secondary Governor and Early Years Representatives. SR had been elected as the new Post-16 Representative, replacing FW.

Action – BG to send a note of thanks to FW

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest received.

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions received

4. MINUTES

4.1 RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on [11 November 2021](#) be confirmed.

5. MATTERS ARISING

- 5.1 Confirmed that BD had included in an update to headteachers, information on the DfE intention to transfer funding for the School Improvement Monitoring Grant from LA to school budgets. Schools would need to 'buy-back' this support as a de-delegated service. BP had followed up with an explanatory letter to headteachers. (Item 9.23)
- 5.2 Confirmed that Trade Union Representatives had received e-mail communications on submission of returns. (Item 9.24 (4))

Action – Clerk to check with JM that reminders were sent re non-returns

6. 2022/23 SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA [Paper B](#)

- 6.1 BD reported that discussion and decisions made at the Schools Forum Meeting on [11 November 21](#) and early consultation with headteachers had contributed to establishing the funding formula principles in good time for receipt of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocation on 16 December 21.
- 6.2 In comparison to the indicative allocation of £81,503,363 – the actual amount received was £80,901,375 due to an overall reduction in pupil numbers in the year up to the October 21 Census.
- 6.3 Changes in pupil characteristics such as increased Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility and Mobility (pupils who joined, left or moved school during the academic year) have led to affordability issues. The impact of FSM and Mobility changes incurred a £340,000 cost to the funding formula.
- 6.4 The final funding formula, which uses the National Funding Formula (NFF) values is outlined in Appendix A of [Paper B](#). This was agreed by the IW Council Cabinet on 13 January 22. The formula includes –
- An average increase of 3% to 21/22 values
 - Minimum per-pupil funding protection increased by 2%
 - Increased sparsity factor, to protect small schools
 - 0.5% Minimum Funding Guarantee – historic arrangement being worked out of the system – only 1 school remains eligible
 - Transfer of up to 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. Scaled back to 0.26% due to the reduction in overall DSG allocation
 - Use of the Growth Fund as a balancing item – unaffordable due to the reduction in overall DSG allocation. No schools are likely to be eligible for this funding in 22/23.
- 6.5 The funding formula will be submitted to DfE on 21 January 22 and schools will be made aware of their budget shares for 22/23 from the week beginning 31 January 22.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Isle of Wight local school funding formula for 2022/23 be noted.

7. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG) BUDGET 2022/23 [Paper C](#)

- 7.1 DSG allocations were received by LAs on 16 December 21 and budget setting has been informed by decisions made at forum meetings and consultation with headteachers in the autumn term 21.
- 7.2 A breakdown of allocations between blocks was shown, compared against funding received for 2021/22. A late addition of £744,740 to the High Needs Block was

included, although the reduction in pupil numbers impacted the overall funding received.

- 7.3 An additional Schools Supplementary Grant of around £2.3m is expected, for schools general cost pressures and will not form part of the DSG.

EARLY YEARS

- 7.4 An increase in LA funding rates for 2-year olds (21 pence) and 3/4 year-old (17 pence) was reported, but overall funding reduced by £38,000 due to lower take-up than previously. The LA is required to pass on 95% of the funding for 3/4 year-olds directly to providers. The remaining 5% is used for Central Services; the wide-ranging support provided by the Early Years Advisory Team (EYAT).
- 7.5 A central budget of £306,553 was proposed – an increase on 2021/22 of £34,000 due to inflationary and incremental increases and additional work streams.
- 7.6 An increase in funding will be added to the base rates in both cases, resulting in an increase of 17 pence for 2 year-olds and an average 13 pence for 3/4 year-olds. EYAT Officers will meet with EY providers and discuss increased funding rates, which will be confirmed at the Schools Forum meeting on 24 March 22 and payable from April 2022.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Confirmed that the 79 providers supported by EYAT includes childminders and pre-schools.

Providers receive payment through a mix of government funding and private paying parents.

[Published information suggests that the government pays £6.90 per hour to settings? Not confirmed.](#)

Action – CS to check information.

[Settings are providing services for funded children at a loss, as the cost of provision is greater than the low rates payable and cannot be topped-up.](#)

RESOLVED:

THAT the Early Years Central Team budget of £306,553 for 2022/23 be approved.
Unanimous (13)

THAT the proposed increases for the early years funding rates be endorsed.
Unanimous (13)

SCHOOLS BLOCK

- 7.7 The Schools Block is mainly distributed through the funding formula outlined in [Paper B](#).
- 7.8 As noted in item 6.4, there will be no allocation to the Growth Fund, which could have been used as a balancing item. No schools are currently eligible for this funding and none are expected to become eligible through 22/23.
- 7.9 Continuation of De-delegated services provided through the LA was agreed at the forum meeting on [11 November 21](#).

Action - A break-down of Trade Union Facilities Time, with a draft for distribution of funding, using Quarter 3 data, to be given at the next meeting on 24 March 22.

- 7.10 Maintained school representatives agreed in November 21, a minor increase to charges for Education Functions by £1, to £58 per pupil.

- 7.11 As noted in item 5.1 the School Improvement Grant is to be withdrawn from LA and transferred to school budgets. The grant will be reduced by 50% in 22/23 and removed for 23/24. School Improvement support will be offered as a de-delegated service, at an additional cost of £7.50 per pupil for 22/23, bringing the total cost for Education Functions to £65.50. Paper C, Appendix B shows the impact on school budgets, with an average charge of 0.15% to their budget (post MFG). The DfE decision was made following a brief consultation and has caused some frustration. More information is expected soon, in the publication of a white paper.

The School Improvement Grant includes Leading Learning Partner termly visits and support for schools, support for headteacher recruitment and support and follow up for Ofsted inspections.

It was noted that special schools didn't receive the communication mentioned in Item 5.1.

Action – BP to arrange for letter regarding School Improvement Grant to be sent to special schools and the Island Learning Centre

- 7.12 Appendix B also shows estimated School Support Grant allocations for maintained schools only. For special schools the Top-Up rate may be reviewed and these factors will be taken into account in the review of SEND Banding rates.

RESOLVED:

THAT the 2022/23 education functions charge of £65.50 per pupil (including funding for school improvement at £7.50 per pupil, detailed in appendix B) be agreed – maintained school representatives – Unanimous (8)

- 7.13 Members agreed to continue with discussions and early planning in preparation for the following year's budget.
- 7.14 JHo has oversight of the Special Needs Service and High Needs and was introduced to members. She gave a brief summary of her experience and work to be undertaken with IOW schools and colleagues.

HIGH NEEDS BLOCK

- 7.15 The allocation of £19.187m to this block confirms an 8% increase (£1.385m) per head in ages 2 – 18. A slight difference of £31,000 to estimated funding was shown due to pupil numbers in special schools. With the extra £744,740 received to support additional costs, the total increase was £2.13m.
- 7.16 An overall shortfall of £1.333m remains, with ongoing increases in demand and incidence in SEND. The agreement to transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block could not be achieved due to the reduction in pupil numbers and increased movement of pupils. A 0.26% transfer of £210,555 will be made, with further savings of £1.123m to be identified.
- 7.17 DfE has identified £150m funding for a 'safety valve programme' to support LAs with the largest DSG deficits. The IOW does not currently meet the threshold for required discussion with DfE. It is hoped that further information will be available when the SEND Review is published – expected Spring 2022.

Action – BP will report to Schools Forum when the review is published.

CENTRAL BLOCK

- 7.18 Funding for the Central Block is also linked to pupil numbers, which resulted in £4,000 less than expected. LA statutory duties are used as the balancing item, so that the difference in funding is absorbed.

OVERALL SCHOOLS BUDGET

- 7.19 The LA sets the budget, following Council approval of the funding formula. NNDR Business Rates will be deducted at source and paid directly to LAs. This change will have no impact on the overall budget.

SCHOOL SUPPLEMENTARY GRANT

- 7.20 This is a new grant of £1.6b for mainstream schools and high needs and is not included in the DSG. Schools will receive £1.2b for costs associated with [the](#) Health and Social Care Levy in 2022/23. It is likely that the grant will be rolled into the main funding thereafter.
- 7.21 BD gave details and an example of how the grant would be distributed. This funding will bring an estimated increase of 3%, additional to the 3% increase noted in item 6.4 – to be confirmed later in Spring 22.

SR joined the meeting.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

- 7.22 [Members asked about changes that may be expected following the SEN Review.](#)

Anticipated areas of discussion include -

- Strengthening the expectations of schools and parents
- Ensuring thresholds are transparent
- Stronger SEND support at school level – linked to the Ofsted Framework
- Prevalence of SEND through the Ofsted Framework
- Review of considerations leading to tribunal decisions
- Support for more children to remain in mainstream schools, so that special schools can provide for specialist needs

[Noted - funding is inadequate across the board.](#)

- 7.23 LA Officers have met with a group of headteachers to discuss work that may be needed to strengthen SEND support in schools.

[Noted that there seems to be a spike in EHCP applications leading up to transition to secondary school \(yrs 5, 6 and 7\).](#)

Schools need confidence to work with children who do not need an EHCP.

High Needs funding may be released to strengthen the following areas through LA/school partnership projects.

- transition and routes to internships or apprenticeships
- transition from EY to primary
- work in Speech and Language therapy (SPLD)
- Occupational Therapy for small children

Plans should be finalised from end of May 22, with a view to release for Sept 22 and tie into the overall SEN strategy.

[Request that headteachers from mainstream and special schools and EY providers are included in work on an SEN strategy.](#)

Working on inflationary increase for special schools, as they do not receive the School Supplementary Grant.

Noted that strengthened transition from EY to primary may support children in moving on from EHCPs by Year 5.

Noted concerns on use of High Needs budget with the rising number of EHCPs following tribunal decisions, since 2014.

LA/schools project will focus on parental perceptions and engagement with parents. IOW is in top 5 nationally in relation to percentage of children with EHCPs.

Enquiry on progress with planning for additional EY SEN EY Hub?

Actions – Information on SEN strategy and a summary of budget decisions to be presented at the next headteacher forum meeting on 17 March 22. BG will follow up with secretary.

BP to follow up on enquiry re EY SEN Hub.

Post meeting note – Planning and procurement issues led to delays, but a contractor is being appointed and the current programme indicates completion of work by the end of March 22.

- 7.24 Members noted that the IOW DSG deficit will bring the overall deficit to around £6m. 0.26% transfer to High Needs block, allowed funding to be retained in school budgets. Discussion with DfE will most likely be required in due course.

RESOLVED:

THAT the proposed budget allocations for 2022/23 set out in appendix A be noted.

- 7.25 Request that EY provision for 2 year-olds is clarified as 'funded' not 'free' as it is misleading and incurs considerable cost to providers.

Action – BD to follow up.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – All meetings will be virtual through Teams.

Thursday, 24 March 2022, from 8.30am

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS All at 8.30am

14 July 2022

10 November 2022

19 January 2023

23 March 2023