



SCHOOLS' FORUM

Date and time	Thursday, 12 November 2020
Venue	Webinar – Virtual Meeting
Present	Beverley Gilbert – Brading CE Primary (Chair) Oliver Keyworth – Christ the King College Mike Hayward – Isle of Wight Education Federation Duncan Mills – Cornerstone Federation David Thornton – Carisbrooke and Newport CEPs Federation (nomination for renewal) Gordon Kendall – Bembridge CE Primary Lisa Nicholson – Haylands Primary Caroline Sice – Lanesend Primary Academy Sarah Hussey – Northwood Primary Academy Samantha Rooney – Isle of Wight College (substitute) 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 Tracey Sanders – County Education Manager (Inclusion) Chris Jones – SEN Service Manager Cllr Paul Brading – Cabinet Member for Children’s Services Diane Hiscock – Clerk
Apologies	Jayne Hill – Niton Pre-School and Brighstone Pre-School

Minutes

- WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**
Members, officers and observers were welcomed and introductions made. The chair welcomed Oliver Keyworth, who had replaced Nora Ward as Secondary School Representative.
- DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
No declarations of interest received.
- PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**
A point of clarification was received from the NEU Rep in relation to Paper C. Noted at Item 8.

4. MINUTES

4.1 RESOLVED :

That the minutes of the meeting held on [17 July 2020](#) be confirmed.

5. MATTERS ARISING

None noted

6. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

BG was nominated for election as Chair of the Schools Forum.

RESOLVED :

THAT BG be elected as Chair – all in favour

CS was nominated for election as Vice Chair of the Schools Forum.

RESOLVED :

THAT CS be elected as Vice Chair – all in favour

In accordance with the Terms of Reference the Chair and Vice Chair are elected annually.

MEMBERSHIP

DH gave an update on [membership](#) – nominations to be sought for Primary Governor Rep.

7. TERMS OF REFERENCE [Paper B](#)

The Terms of Reference were updated in line with the May 2020 version of the [Schools Forum Operational and Good Practice Guidance](#)

8. TRADE UNION FACILITIES TIME [Paper C](#)

BD reminded members that a template for recording Trade Union activity in schools had been agreed in 2019/20 to justify the level of budget allocation. Paper C showed activity since January 2020 for information.

The NEU Rep had noted that he had received no payment so far this year although payment has been made to NEU.

Action – Followed up with the Financial Management Team and NEU

- 8.1 Members asked if a union would receive the lump sum payment where there is no IOW representative. It was confirmed that no lump sum payment would be made in this case.

RESOLVED :

THAT the report on Trade Union Facilities Time be noted

9. 2020/21 SCHOOL BUDGET MONITORING AND FUNDING [Paper D](#)

BD reported a £1.8m forecast overspend at 30 September 2020. When added to the 2019/20 bought forward deficit of £2.48m, an overall deficit of £4.4m (4.4%) would be incurred.

9.1 EARLY YEARS BLOCK

There is slight variance shown in the Early Years Block. DfE issued temporary guidance and Autumn 2020 funding was based on January 2020 census. Providers were paid on the higher of Autumn 2019 activity or estimated Autumn 2020 activity. An underspend of £97,000 is possible but will change as numbers are confirmed.

9.2 SCHOOLS BLOCK

An expected £39,000 underspend is shown in the Growth Fund as no schools have come forward as eligible to claim this funding

The underspend resulting from the closure of All Saints Primary School was re-distributed to schools who had received pupils from the school. Funding which would have been allocated to All Saints will be distributed across schools within the DSG next year.

9.3 HIGH NEEDS BLOCK

Placements in Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS) were increased from 62 – 68 between March and September 2020, resulting in a forecast overspend of £752,000.

9.4 Special Schools have been subject to increased demand and complexity of cases which have led to an expected £282,000 overspend.

9.5 Top-Up Funding shows a forecast overspend of £167,000 due to rising applications for Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs).

9.6 Personal Budgets are difficult to predict and are subject to change – currently a £280,000 overspend is anticipated.

9.7 CENTRAL SCHOOL SERVICES BLOCK

Funding for Non-SEN placements shows an expected overspend of £10,000 although can change considerably due small numbers.

9.8 OTHER GRANTS

These include additional Covid 19 funding for schools and further payments are due. The outcome will become clearer at the end of the month.

9.9 Members asked how pressure has been reduced through joint placements with Hampshire. A new Commissioning Manager has been appointed and will be able to provide a report to Forum at the end of the Academic Year

Action – Add to agenda for summer term 2021 (date to be confirmed)

BP briefly explained the strategy to increase provision within mainstream schools and Post-16 education and the establishment of an Employability Hub. Further announcements are expected soon and a variety of work that is underway.

9.10 Members noted the increasing number of EHCP tribunals and asked how these are funded. It was confirmed that this lies within the Statutory functions and tribunals are funded from the LA budget. A brief explanation of the 2 separate elements of costing was given and included within the cost of placements in the budget paper.

RESOLVED :

THAT the September 2020 forecast on the 2020/21 budget position be noted.

10. 2021/22 SCHOOL FUNDING [Paper E](#)

BD explained that the Funding Formula and Schools Budget would be covered in one paper. For 2021/22 the LA will set a Local Funding Formula in consultation with schools. DfE will work with LAs on transition to the hard National Funding Formula (NFF) (where funding will be paid directly to schools) later in the year.

10.1 A table at para 6 showed the elements of funding included in the NFF. BD explained changes across the funding factors, including –

- Increases in factors – minimum per pupil funding
- Teachers pay and pension protection

- Income Deprivation Affecting Children (IDACI) Data 2019 (2020 data came out too late to be included, but will be updated next year)
 - Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) – highest protection increased to 2.0%
 - Increases in primary sparsity factors (small schools)
- 10.2 BD reiterated that all figures are indicative and final allocations will be based on the October 2020 Census data, which is expected in December.
- 10.3 Early Years funding arrangements will be finalised when DfE Operational Guidance is received later in the Autumn Term.
- 10.4 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG) ACCOUNT
- A £4.4m deficit in the DSG is predicted, as noted in [Paper D](#). BD explained how DfE acknowledge the pressure on LAs and intend to enter into individual discussions to plan recovery.
- 10.5 IWC Officers were engaged in the design of a DSG Management Template, which was circulated for LAs to complete and submit. An example of information used is shown at Appendix E. BD confirmed that officers are keen to have longer term recovery discussions with DfE.
- 10.6 It was also confirmed that LAs will need to achieve an in-year balance in forthcoming years, but acknowledged that the earliest this may be achieved is expected to be 2022/23. A full report on the national SEN review is expected in summer 2021. Historically, funding for High Needs has not been sufficient to meet demand and the IW has a higher population of children with EHCPs.
- 10.7 It was proposed to continue working towards the full implementation of the NFF by using the exact values for the formula factors. A breakdown of values and comparison with 2020/21 are shown in Appendix A. This move is expected to lead to an average increase of 1.9% across school budgets. The impact of variances and changes to IDACI banding has been discussed with Headteachers and School Business Managers (SBMs). Final budget shares will be confirmed when final October 2020 census data is received.
- 10.8 MINIMUM FUNDING GUARANTEE
- It was proposed that the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) remain as last year, at 0.5% in order to work the historic arrangement out of the funding system as soon as possible. The higher limit allowed has been increased to 2.0%. Consultation with Headteachers and SBMs ([Appendix C](#)) came out in favour of the proposal.
- 10.9 GROWTH FUND/FALLING ROLLS
- The element of Growth Fund to be included in the DSG has been estimated at £460,000 and is included in this year's modelling of the budget for 2021/22. This should resolve the confusion incurred last year.
- It currently seems unlikely that any school will be eligible for growth funding or falling rolls funding. It was proposed to use the remaining Growth Fund, after allowing for other required costs (estimated at £386,000) to balance the DSG.
- 10.10 RECONCILIATION OF INDICATIVE DSG SCHOOLS BLOCK
- If agreed, the proposals made in [Paper E](#) would result in an indicative overall DSG allocation of £79,714,000 as shown in the table in para 32.
- 10.11 DE-DELEGATED SERVICES
- Maintained schools can de-delegate funding for services to be provided through the LA. Special schools and academies can buy into these services and are charged accordingly, as shown in the table in para 33.

Services offered are -

- Licenses that are procured centrally on behalf of schools
- Trade Union Facilities Time – discussed in 2019/20 and paid on an agreed lump sum/per pupil basis. Time used in schools is reported quarterly (see [Paper C](#))
- Free School Meal (FSM) checking – a significant rise in applications received during the Covid 19 crisis, is expected to continue.

Members were asked to agree the continuation of de-delegation of services, subject to an expected inflationary rise in Licenses and confirmation of the final DSG allocation.

10.12 EDUCATION FUNCTIONS FOR MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

A proposal was made to continue the retention of funding from maintained schools to cover LA statutory duties at £57 per pupil to minimise turbulence in this area.

10.13 CENTRAL SCHOOL SERVICES BLOCK

It is anticipated that the IOW will receive an indicative £594,000 for statutory services that are carried out on behalf of schools - £15,000 reduction on last year. A table at para 42 shows the proposed budget for 2021/22, using the statutory functions as a balancing item.

10.14 HIGH NEEDS BLOCK

An increase of approximately £1.6m is expected, which will bring this funding to £17.819m and will be subject to change following receipt of the October 2020 census data and import/export adjustment in July 2021. However, a shortfall of £1.87m is expected in 2021/22, due in part to increased demand and complexity of incidences.

As discussed in previous meetings, the IOW has a higher incidence rate than statistical neighbours. 4.4% of IOW pupils have an EHCP in comparison to 3.1% nationally.

- 10.15 DfE Operational Guidance allows for 0.5% of the schools budget to be transferred to the high needs budget with the support of Schools Forum. Any proposal to transfer more than 0.5% would require DfE approval. As with most other LAs who made an application, the IOW proposal to transfer 1.5% was rejected for 2020/21 and the same strict ruling will apply for 2021/22.

A 0.5% transfer is the maximum allowable within remit of Schools Forum, but still likely to leave a budget gap in the region of £1.4m. Two other options were considered and outlined at para 57 but were not considered viable and would have a negative effect on school budgets. The consultation shown at [Appendix C](#) shows support from schools for this proposal.

10.16 LOCAL FUNDING FORMULA CONSULTATION

A short window was available for consultation with headteachers and SBMs on the Funding Formula for 2021/22. The consultation closed on 11 November 2020.

BD was pleased to report that 43 responses were received and gave an overview of the summary shown at [Appendix C](#)

- Almost 98% were in favour of maintaining the MFG at 0.5%
- 91% were in favour of the 0.5% transfer to the High Needs Block

Comments made on how high needs funding is insufficient to meet demand in schools will be useful to support discussions with DfE.

10.17 NEXT STEPS

Final DSG allocations are expected around 17/18 December 2020 and schools should receive individual budget share by the end of February 2021.

BG gave thanks to BD and all involved in engaging schools and compiling information.

10.18 An enquiry was made on the following adjustments

- St Francis Catholic and CE Primary Academy – correction in DfE data required.
- The Bay CE School – conversion to an all through school – expiry of entitlement to additional lump sum.

10.19 Members asked about funding for TU Facilities Time that is unused. Any underspend in the area is offset against the DSG. It would be difficult for academies to re-claim any unspent funding in this area, but could be an item for discussion at the end of the financial year.

Action – Clerk to add to agenda for 25 March 2021

10.20 A question was raised on whether funding allocations take account of the differences in requirements between operating new and old buildings. This would be difficult to evidence and contribute to a more complicated funding system. The NFF is a simplistic formula designed to meet the national requirement. LAs have less discretion on elements of funding and any deviation would be short-lived, as implementation of the hard formula is approaching

It was confirmed that the LA is absorbing some costs to promote stability in the schools budget.

It was felt that it would be useful for schools to receive a communication, including thanks for their engagement in the consultation, a response to key themes and an explanation to assist their understanding of the requirement to move towards the NFF.

Action – BD to produce a response to the consultation

BG also gave thanks to Headteacher Reps who supported dissemination of information in the papers and engagement with schools.

Members asked about the lag in funding due to changes in pupil numbers between the October 2020 census and funding allocations for 2021/22. There is no mechanism to resolve this and it remains a short-term pressure on maintained schools. Some academies may have a clause in their funding agreement to allow for recovery of funding, but have to pay back if pupil numbers are less the following year.

RESOLVED :

THAT the proposal to determine the Isle of Wight 2021/22 School Funding Formula using the National Funding Formula values listed in Appendix A be supported – school and academy members only – all in favour.

THAT continuing minimum funding guarantee (MFG) at the lowest level of protection (+0.5% in 2021/22), working historic arrangements out of the system as quickly as possible be agreed – school and academy members only – all in favour.

THAT the principle that the balancing of the formula (after accounting for any differences in protection costs and final DSG schools block allocations) is achieved by any remaining funding being held within the growth fund budget (currently estimated at £386,000) be agreed – school and academy members only – all in favour.

THAT primary schools continue to de-delegate funding for the services in the table in paragraph 34 – primary schools representatives only (4) – all in favour.

THAT secondary schools continue to de-delegate funding for the services in the table in paragraph 34 – secondary schools representatives only (2) – all in favour.

THAT a continued contribution from maintained schools of £57 per pupil (remaining at the 2019/2020 & 2020/21 level), to meet the cost of statutory services provided by the council for maintained schools – maintained schools only – All in favour.

THAT the proposed central school services block budgets for 2021/22 detailed in paragraph 42 be approved – all in favour.

THAT the update on high needs funding, including the draft budget plan for 2021/22 and the work in progress DSG management plan be noted.

That Schools Forum a continued transfer from the schools block of 0.5% (currently estimated at £388,000) to the high needs block for 2021/22 financial year be agreed – all in favour.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday, 14 January 2021 – virtual meeting, from 8.30am

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

All at 8.30am

25 March 2021 – expected virtual meeting

Provisional dates for confirmation

15 July 2021

11 November 2021

20 January 2022

24 March 2022