SCHOOLS FORUM

Tuesday 22 January 2013
Lees Suite, Civic Centre, Oldham
at 5.30pm

Voting Members Present:

Mr Bruce Devenport (Chair)  Governor, Royton and Crompton School
Mr Mike Aston  Secondary Aided Sector Governor
Mr Kevin Fennelly  Governor, The Kingfisher Community Special School
Mrs Helen Halliwell  Headteacher, St Patrick’s RC Primary School
Mr John Meagher  Headteacher, Failsworth School
Mr Matthew Milburn  Headteacher, Saddleworth School
Mr David Mycock  Governor, Whitegate End Primary School
Mr Greg Oates  Headteacher, Beever Primary School
Mrs Mary Tomlinson  Academy Governor, The Blue Coat School

Non-Voting Members Present:

Ms Liz Caygill  Schools Finance Manager, People Communities and Society
Mr Jonathan Davies  Children’s Finance Manager, People Communities and Society
Mr Ed Francis  Joint Commissioning Manager, People Communities and Society
Ms Vicky Gibbons  Senior Accountant, Schools Finance Team, Performance, Services and Capacity
Mr Michael Jameson  Executive Director Commissioning, People Communities and Society
Ms Wendy Lees  Senior Accountant Schools Finance Team, Performance, Services and Capacity
Mr Steven Mair  Borough Treasurer
1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Mr Bruce Devenport (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Members for their attendance given the severe weather conditions. He also thanked Members for agreeing to the change in date for this meeting.

1.2 Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Carol Cawkwell, Mrs Sue Crowson, Mrs Julie Hollis and Mr Graham Quinn.

1.3 Declarations of Interest – Members were invited to declare any business or personal interests in the ‘Register of Declaration of Interest’ provided for this purpose.

No declarations were made.

2 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2012 were confirmed as a correct record subject. For recording purposes, it was confirmed that Mr Windeatt had not attended the last meeting.

2.2 There were no matters arising from the minutes.

3 2013-2014 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG) ALLOCATION

3.1 Ms Liz Caygill presented the report and stated that, in line with the schools funding reforms, Oldham would receive £212,572,000 DSG in 2013/2014.

3.2 The allocations had been broken down this year into notional blocks and covered:

- Schools block
- Early Years block
- High Needs block
- Post 16 High Needs
- Two Year Olds’ funding
- Transitional Protection for Removal of 3 Year Old funding; and
NQT funding

3.3 A breakdown of the individual budget requirement under the various headings was provided which amounted to a total of £190,575 being delegated to schools overall.

3.4 A total of £21,996 would be retained centrally. The individual amounts to be retained centrally under the various headings were listed.

3.5 There was no (Deficit)/Surplus amount.

3.6 Individual School Budgets – these were an estimated figure based on pupil numbers from the October 2012 census. The Finance Team were currently calculating the individual schools’ budget allocations and schools would be notified of the actual figure by the end of February 2013. It was not expected that there would be a significant change in this figure.

3.7 Early Years Funding – this remained the same as for 2012-2013 as the DSG was currently based on the pupil numbers taken from the January 2012 Early Years Census, however, the DSG would be revised during 2013-14 using the January 2013 census and the actual budgets would be adjusted accordingly.

3.8 Two Year Old Funding – the distribution of this funding was still to be agreed. The LA had a duty to secure provision in order to fulfil (from September 2013) the statutory entitlement for free early education for eligible two year olds. It was expected this funding would cover approximately 20% of two year olds in 2013-14 and be further extended to cover about 40% of two year olds in 2014-15.

3.9 Central Schools Services – under the new schools funding arrangements the Local Authority could retain funding from the Schools block to meet the cost of services as long as the expenditure did not increase from 2012-13.

3.9.1 The individual amounts to be retained centrally to meet the costs of the various services within the Schools funding block were listed and totalled £4,547,000.

3.9.2 Members were asked to note and approve the items and the amount of funding as listed for the central schools services.

3.10 Pupil Premium – the indicative allocation for 2013-14 had increased considerably to £11.153m. This covered payments of £900 per pupil for pupils who had been eligible for free school meals at any time during the last 6 years; £900 per pupil for Looked After Children; and £300 for service children. These amounts were in addition to the DSG.

3.11 Members’ questions/comments were invited and the following points were raised:

3.11.1 Clarification requested on the financial provision/future plans for the City Learning Centre. Officers reported the three-year financial support plan for the City Learning Centre would end this year with the building being vacated in June 2013 after which time the City
Learning Centre would become a mobile facility.

3.11.2 Clarification requested on the size and use of the figure allocated in the DSG for Building Schools for the Future (BSF)/Academies Team and PFI Schools Unitary Charge. Officers reported that these figures were the unitary charge for Blessed John Henry Newman, Radclyffe and Failsworth.

3.11.3 Clarification requested on the amount of additional money for the Year 7 catch up for secondary schools and it was confirmed that this money would come into the Authority at the end of January 2013 and would be allocated based on the formula notified as roughly circa £25,000 for larger secondary schools and circa £20,000 for smaller secondary schools. It was confirmed that schools should carry their allocations forward to the next financial year if any funds remain unspent.

**ACTION:** Liz Caygill to send out further information to schools once the authority is notified of allocations.

**RESOLVED:**

(i) Schools Forum noted the settlement of Dedicated Schools grant for 2013-2014; that the recommendations be approved;

(ii) approved the amount of funding for the central schools service of £4.5m; and

(iii) noted the estimated Pupil Premium Allocation.

4 HIGH NEEDS FUNDING REFORM

4.1 Ms Wendy Lees presented the report and updated Members on the implementations made so far in readiness for the new funding arrangements for high needs which would be introduced in April 2013 for schools and academies, and in August 2013 for further education (FE) institutions.

Main points highlighted:

4.2 As academies were funded on an academic year basis, the new funding arrangements would be slightly different for some academies so as to avoid disrupting funding mid-way through their funding year.

4.3 The new arrangements would be applied to Special and Alternative Provision (AP) academies in April 2013.

4.4 The different funding arrangements for the period between April 2013 (the introduction of the high needs reforms) and August 2013 (the end of the academic year 2012/13) appertaining to mainstream academies with special units and/or resources provision and mainstream placements of high needs pupils in mainstream academies were reported.

4.5 The three elements of base funding for pupils and students designated as high needs were:
Element 1 – Core educational funding – basic need funding
Element 2 – Additional support funding – first £6,000 of additional needs (notional SEN); and
Element 3 – Top up funding – where needs are costing more than £10,000.

Ms Lees agreed to email out a document giving more detailed information on the impact on the new funding arrangements on the various settings.

**ACTION:** Ms Lees

4.6 The implications and funding arrangements across various settings was reported as it applied to:

- Mainstream schools and academies – Pre 16
- Mainstream schools and academies – Post 16
- Specialist SEN and AP settings
- Pre 16 places in specialist settings
- Post 16 places in specialist settings
- All Pupil (AP) Referral Units places; short-term and part-time placements and very short term placements
- All settings
- Commissioned services
- Mainstream FE and specialist colleges

4.7 A summary table of key changes in the various settings in terms of type of provision and timeplan for change was provided.

4.8 Ms Lees highlighted the implications and work on-going in Oldham in relation to the following areas:

- **Special Schools** –

  A Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) would give the necessary protection to Special Schools along with Special Units and Resourced Unit in the first year 2013/14.

  The 2012/13 school budget share to be allocated to the identified schools/academies totalled £9,385,933.

  Special schools would no longer have a formula-based share. Instead they would receive an amount per pupil plus a top up amount. Budgets were currently in the process of being remodelled for 2013/14.

- **Resourced Provision** –

  2012/13 - the current budget provision and number of places funded in the identified schools/academies totalled £409,359.

  From 2013/14, in line with DfE Guidance, these schools/academies would no longer receive separate AWPU allocations for resources pupils.

  Work was currently being undertaken to finalise the figures for the Kingfisher School.
The PRU would get a delegated budget going forward. Work had commenced with the pupil referral unit and specialist units to remodel their budgets to allow further funding to be delegated under the three funding elements.

- **Out of Borough and independent special schools** –

  From April 2013 there would be no inter-authority recoupment and the LA would no longer be responsible for pupils placed in Oldham from other authorities. It would be the responsibility of the schools to agree top up amounts with the home authority.

- **Statemented funding** –

  Mainstream schools and academies would contribute the first £6,000 of additional educational support provision for each high needs pupils from their notional SEN budget with the LA moving an estimated £660k from the Schools Block into the High Needs Block (de-delegation) to fund all statements over £6,000.

- **High Needs Contingency** –

  Work was currently being undertaken on: the criteria for the new formula allocation; identifying which schools would be able to access this funding; and assessing the level of funding to be identified as a contingency for this purpose.

  A further paper would be brought to the next meeting of the Schools Forum.

**ACTION:** Ms Lees

- **Post 16** -

  From next year the LA would be responsible for further education colleges as well as post-16 in sixth form colleges and mainstream.

  The new reforms would bring together the three streams of funding – SEN block grant; high cost additional learning support budget; and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities budget.

  Oldham needed to ensure funding was passported to the various schools and colleges based on:
  - Element 1 – core funding estimated at £4,977 per place;
  - Element 2 – additional support at £6,000 per place; and
  - Element 3 – top up funding agreed on each student’s need.

- **Resources** –

  A table summarising the total estimated resources available in 2013/14 within the High Needs Block under the various headings totalling £23,014,486 was reported.
4.9 Members’ questions/comments were invited and the following points were raised:

4.9.1 Assurance that a ‘buffer’ system was in place to protect schools whose budgets might go down. Officers confirmed that in mainstream the minimum funding guarantee would apply. In special schools there would be a transitional period of one year. A guarantee of a one-year protection that schools will get the same level of funding as last year.

4.9.2 Mrs Hill noted that as part of the SEN strategy there should be a working up an agreed expectation of what the first £6,000 of funding should buy.

4.9.3 A separating out of what the PRU would deliver for the money allocated.

4.9.4 With regard to high needs contingency - an understanding that not all schools have a budget on this.

4.9.5 Requirement to work out what the SEN baseline will look like. Oldham will only pay top up to Oldham children therefore need for schools with children from other authorities to negotiate what that top up figure should be. These schools would require advice on how they would do this. Officers currently working across AGMA to prepare a statement on mechanism for schools to access this.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

5 CENTRALLY HELD SCHOOL BALANCES

5.1 Mr S Mair presented the report ‘Centrally Held School Balances’. It was reported that the overall retained schools Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) balance was down from £7.199m (in June 2012) to £4.949m (at January 2013).

5.2 It was noted the major changes in local government funding received from Central Government effective from April 2013 will mean that there will be substantial transfers of risk to the Council as a result as well as significantly reduced and reducing funding levels over the foreseeable future.

5.3 The uncommitted money in retained balances of £4.949m had mainly come from the 2008/9 and 2009/10 financial years where there was an underspend on the centrally retained schools budget in the Dedicated Schools Grant. It was proposed to commit the centrally retained balance as advised.

5.4 The proposal was to split the available monies (£4.949m) into:

£2.029m – retained by the Authority to assist with the impact on Council service budgets;

£1.920m added to individual school budgets; and
£1m added to the TIF to support Children’s services as previously agreed with Schools Forum

5.5 A Member queried whether there would be projected balances going forward, the Forum was advised that given the forecast funding restraints this was unlikely. It was also confirmed that utilisation of the TIF monies would be undertaken fully in consultation with schools and would be reported.

5.6 A Member representing the secondary sector commented that because of the short timescale there had been no opportunity to discuss the options with colleagues prior to a decision being required, and Officers agreed to try and avoid this happening in the future.

5.7 Mr Mair reported that the Finance Team needed to know as soon as possible whether schools (across both sectors) would prefer the £1.920m to be distributed in 2013/14 or 2014/15 and requested Members to consult their colleagues and take a joint line on this point.

**ACTION:** Ms Caygill to send out an appropriate letter to primary and secondary sectors by the end of the week.

5.8 Members were asked to approve the utilisation of the reserves.

**RESOLVED:**

(i) £2.029m be retained by the Authority to assist with the impact on Council service budgets;

(ii) £1.920m is added to individual school budgets either in 2013/14 or 2014/15 as still to be agreed jointly by primary and secondary schools; and

(iii) £1m is added to the TIF to support Children’s services as previously agreed with the Schools Forum.

6 SCHOOL BALANCE CONTROL MECHANISM 2013-14

6.1 Ms Caygill presented the School Balance Control Mechanism 2013-14 in order to update Members on the revised surplus balance control mechanism for 2013-14 for reducing school balances.

6.2 The proposals for the new scheme which had been received at the last meeting of Schools Forum aimed to reduce schools balances which in some schools had continued to rise despite the approval of commitments to spend monies for approved purposes.

6.3 Schools showing balances at the end of 2013-14 in their budget plan in excess of 8% of the current year’s School Budget Share (Primary and Special Schools) and 5% (Secondary Schools) would be seen as a surplus balance.

6.4 The revised utilisation of balances proforma (Appendix 1) showed the three allowable purposes for which surplus balances could be used. Schools were required to meet the deadline date of 30 June 2013 for returning the proforma to the LA with no exceptions, therefore governing bodies needed
to have the requisite approvals in place in order to meet this timescale.

6.5 The implications for schools for non compliance with the revised mechanism was reported.

RESOLVED: that the contents of the report be noted.

7 PENSION AUTO ENROLMENT

7.1 Mr Mair presented the report Pension Auto Enrolment and updated Members on this initiative which was designed to encourage more people to save for their retirement by requiring all employers to enrol their employees into a pension scheme.

7.2 Employers would be required to implement the Pension Auto Enrolment at the earliest by 1 March and at the latest by 1 June 2013.

7.3 The eligibility criteria for Auto Enrolment to be:

- Aged under State Retirement age (currently age 65);
- Earn £8,105 or more per year; and
- Not currently in a pension scheme.

7.4 Employees would be ‘opted in’ by default, with the enrolment process ‘refreshed’ every three years on the anniversary of the staging date.

7.5 The LA’s proposed approach and engagement with schools was reported and the finance team was currently visiting schools that buy its service to ensure that schools were aware of the financial impact for the next financial year.

7.6 The financial implications of Auto Enrolment amongst the schools with staff eligible to be enrolled amounted to a fraction over one million pounds over all the schools.

7.7 Employers had the option to postpone the date of implementation for Auto Enrolment for up to a maximum of three months. Oldham was therefore recommending that the staging date was postponed to 1 June 2013 which would result in a saving to schools of approximately a quarter of a million pounds.

7.8 Members were in agreement with the contents of the report.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (as notified 24 hours before the meeting)

8.1 OLDHAM SCHOOLS PAY AND GRADING REVIEW

Mrs Kath Butterworth welcomed the opportunity to present the report to Schools Forum.

8.1.1 Mrs Butterworth reported an overview of the process, outcomes and the implementation of the Pay and Grading Framework for Local
Government Services employees of Oldham's schools.

8.1.2 The report would be presented to the meeting of Oldham Council on 6 February 2013, and agreement sought to incorporate the arrangements within the existing Collective Agreement.

8.1.3 Extensive consultation with employees, Headteachers and the Trades unions had been carried out with formal staff consultation until 24 September 2012.

8.1.4 The following points with regard to the job evaluation exercise were highlighted:

- The department had worked closely with trades unions in order to reach agreement on the Council’s collective agreement on job evaluation.
- At the request of UNISON, a ballot of the UNISON membership had been conducted, with agreement being reached with them and the other Single Status Unions, GMB and UNITE.
- All changes would be backdated to 1 September 2012.
- The job evaluation achieves single status for all the Council’s non-teaching staff and now makes the Council and schools legally robust.
- It also makes the Council as an employer more flexible in its workforce.
- The report adopts for schools the same grading structure as for all the Council’s directorates.
- The effective date for implementation of the schools pay and grading review was 1 September 2012 although the likely change over date would be March 2013.
- Schools would be entitled to the same element of 2 years’ protection. The protection to cease on 31 August 2014.

8.1.5 Following discussion, Mrs Butterworth confirmed the following:

- There would be no impact on Council budgets.
- There was no concern about the report as there had been extensive contribution and consultation with schools, including Headteachers, school support staff and trades union colleagues in the development of the framework.
- Local conditions within the report that were particular to Oldham.
- All local frameworks had been agreed consistently across the board.

8.1.6 Appendix 1 gave a list of the affect of job evaluation on the individual participating schools.

8.1.7 In response to Members’ questions/comments, Mrs Butterworth further clarified the following points:

- All historical settlements had been cleared generally for the future.
• There would be no crossover.
• The number of queries had been minimal.
• There was common acceptance and the number of queries had been minimal.
• Agreement from UNISON that it had been a positive experience.
• There would be a small percentage of ‘losers’ in the schools.
• Exercise used as an opportunity to rationalise some terms and conditions.
• Protective payments would cease after two years and this would ultimately be a saving for schools.
• Non-participating governing bodies had been informed of the likely potential risks.
• Headteachers needed to be clear about the revised Special Educational Needs Allowance scheme which was not as universal as previously.

8.1.8 Schools Forum was requested to note that the recommendation will be to approve the agreement reached with the trades unions to implement the Pay and Grading Framework for NJC Local Government Services employees in Oldham Council’s Schools by including them, as agreed following consultation with the Trades Unions, under the existing council collective agreement and with the additional school led terms and conditions of service as reported.

RESOLVED: that the recommendation as stated in 8.1.8 be noted.

8.2 FORMAT FOR FUTURE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETINGS

8.2.1 The Chair reminded Members that as the Schools Forum moved forwards into a different era of consultation, Members would further challenge Officers on issues brought to the Forum, late papers etc., and there was a paramount need to elevate the Schools Forum in its transparency of working and decision-making. To this end, future meetings of the Forum would be open to the public and there would be a positive change to arrangements with the minutes of meetings being put on the Council website.

8.2.2 It was noted that the advertisement informing the public of the next Schools Forum would be placed by 6 February 2013.

8.2.3 Ms Caygill reported that a representative from the Education Funding Agency would attend the next meeting.

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 13 February 2013 at 5.30pm and not 6 February 2013 as previously stated.

(There being no further business, the Members of the Schools Forum were thanked for their attendance and the meeting was closed at 6.30pm.)
Schools Forum 22.1.13
Jae
23.1.13