

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
DERBYSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM
Minutes of the Meeting Held on 13th June 2016
At 6.00 pm County Hall

Present

Barbara Arrandale, Linda Du-Roe, Shirley Harvey, Stephanie Marbrow, Gordon Hart, Liz Moorsom, Bridget Hanley, Sue Kennedy, Gill Hutton, Martin Brader, David Baker, Kam Grewal-Joy, Tracey Burnside, Pauline Wensley, Julien Scholefield, David Channon, Andrew Large, Cathy Tattersfield,

Substitutes

Philip Sunderland, Alan Thomas

Observers

Cllr Caitlin Bisknell,

Officers/Others

Chris Allcock, Karen Gurney, Ruth Lane, Jane Parfrement, Russ Barr, Kathryn Boulton

Apologies

Lindsey Page, Angela Lindley, David Plummer, Lisa Key, Deborah Turner, Cllr Coyle, Andrew Wild, Adana Godden, Carey Ayres, Joe Birkin

Martin Brader chaired the meeting which was quorate.

16/7 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were given as noted above.

16/8 Minutes of the previous meeting – 11th February 2016

No matters of accuracy.

Matters arising

Page 3 - Julian Schofield thanked the Local Authority (LA) on behalf of all special schools for the decision to delegate the Early Help Offer funding to special schools.

Page 6 - Chris Allcock said that 5 Forum representatives had met with LA colleagues to discuss the Forum's future work plan and agreed three priorities;

- a) Funding issues for schools
- b) Small 6th forms
- c) Additional Educational Needs in Mainstream, Enhanced Resource (ERS) and Special Schools.

These areas would be the subject of reports to future Forum meetings.

16/9 National School Funding Changes - Schools Block

Chris Allcock presented the paper to update the Schools Forum on the government's progress towards implementing a National Funding Formula (NFF) for mainstream schools.

Liz Moorsom asked if schools will know how much money the NFF would allocate to them. Chris replied that he expects the DfE will publish what the NFF would have allocated to schools for 2016-17 i.e. this year's pupil and other data. He agreed that schools will compare these allocations with their actual 2016-17 budgets and that these comparisons are likely to generate some issues locally.

The Forum noted the report and agreed with the recommendation that once the second consultation is available, a Task and Finish group is set up to look at the proposals in more detail. The Forum also agreed that, depending on the timeline, an additional meeting may be needed to provide an opportunity for the Forum to respond to the government's proposals.

16/10 National School Funding Changes – High Needs Block

Chris Allcock presented the paper to update the Schools Forum on the government's proposals for reform of the High Needs Block (HNB) funding arrangements.

The proposal is for the DfE to move towards a formulaic model of distributing funding to LAs rather than the current, largely historic, approach. This is expected to take at least five years during which time historic spending levels will still be a factor in determining LAs' allocations. The DfE recognise that the changes need to be phased in gradually to ensure that services to vulnerable children are maintained.

Encouragingly, LAs would still have a major role to play in determining the basis for calculating funding to individual institutions. Following a question by Julian Schofield, Chris Allcock clarified that the LA will still determine the allocation methods e.g. the profile top up funding.

The Forum agreed to note the report.

16/11 30 Hours of Early Education – Capital Investment from DSG

Amanda Gordon presented the paper which sought Schools Forum approval to use the remaining funding designated for the creation of places for two year olds within the DSG to fund capital projects to help meet the requirement for 30 hours of nursery education for three and four year olds.

Tracey Burnside asked if the LA had enough places for two year olds. Amanda replied that the LA is delivering to 65% of two year olds and the capital projects were withdrawn in areas where sufficient provision is available.

The Forum approved the re-designation of the DSG capital resource as requested.

16/12 – Use of additional funding to support a collaborative approach to reducing exclusions in secondary schools 2015-17

Russ Barr presented the paper to report on the impact of the additional £1m funding previously approved to promote a collaborative approach among secondary schools to try and reduce the level of exclusions.

Russ provided up to date information that 2015-16 exclusions currently total 80 in the secondary sector and 13 in the primary sector; at the end of 2014-15 the figures were 72 secondary and 10 primary.

The LA has an ambitious target of zero exclusions. Russ felt that the pressure on schools is greater than ever with the 'coasting schools' agenda and the KS4 curriculum changes. There would also appear to be a correlation with deprivation although it is not absolute. These factors may have contributed to the figures for 2015-16. Disappointingly, the level of exclusions is worse this year; however it is impossible to say whether or not the level would have been even higher had the investment not been made.

Tracey Burnside commented that some of the Learning Community plans have so far been short term and the longer term benefits are still to be realised. Russ Barr agreed to a certain extent, however he felt that the KS4 curriculum changes have also had a big impact. Historically year group exclusions do vary; however, there have been six exclusions in KS1 which has never happened before, possibly due to testing pressures.

Kam Grewal – Joy felt that the lack of other central services e.g. bereavement services is effecting exclusions. Russ Barr said that problems in the recruitment of experienced staff, reduced mental health support and testing in schools all contribute towards a very challenging position in schools.

The exclusions data can be broken down to identify those which are as a result of one-off events and others which are 'slow burners' where a number of more minor incidents eventually lead to an exclusion. Exclusion is often down to school policy, but it is generally the slow burners which account for the majority of exclusions. The statistics also show that academies exclude proportionately more pupils than LA schools, with sponsored academies having the highest rates.

Kathryn Boulton said that one-off incidents received different responses from schools across the county and a potential piece of work was to compare actions and how collectively help could be provided to those pupils and families.

Cathy Tattersfield was concerned that no evidence was provided in the report as to the reasons behind each exclusion and that it would be good to have this information in order to assess the impact of the funding, although she acknowledged this could be time consuming.

The Chair, Martin Brader, asked if we could compare Derbyshire with other LAs. Kathryn Boulton replied that the national data is always historic, the latest being for 2013-14 at which point we were in line with the national average for primaries and above average (i.e. worse) for secondaries.

Pupil exclusions is an area the LA is very concerned about. However, this is an interim report and a further more detailed report will be provided at a later stage. The Education Psychology Service has been commissioned to complete a piece of work around the reasons behind exclusions. The Strategic Director, Jane Parfremment, added that she had been looking at the data and Derbyshire is amongst the worst nationally for exclusions of pupils with Additional Educational Needs (AEN).

The Forum noted the report and agreed to receive further reports in the autumn term.

16/13 – Use of additional funding to support under-performing secondary schools 2015-17

Russ Barr presented the paper to report on the impact to date of the additional £1.5m funding previously approved by the Schools Forum to help address under-performance in targeted secondary schools.

The paper included a table of data monitoring performance. However, as the funding was only approved in February 2015, there had been little, if any, time for it to have had an impact on the 2015 exam results; the real test will be the summer 2016 exam results.

Schools have decided how to utilise the funding and although the general position in secondary schools has improved there is still a long way to go.

Martin Brader asked about the recent report naming the East Midlands as being the poorest performing region in the country. Kathryn Boulton replied that we know about the challenges within Derbyshire and the report mentioned Derbyshire twice, both times in a positive light. Kathryn felt that the notion of complacency within the report was just not accurate and that we are making progress and know what has to be done.

Jane Parfremment added that she meets regularly with Ofsted and they are not interested in whether a school is an LA school or an academy. In reality the LA has the responsibility for schools, but we also need to engage with the Regional Schools Commissioner to challenge and improve academies' performance too.

16/14 – DSG 2015 – 16 out-turn

Chris Allcock presented the paper to report the final revenue out-turn position for the DSG for 2015/16 and to report the position in respect of pooled (de-delegated funding) for 2015/16 and seek approval to retain the funding for 2016/17.

No questions were raised. The Forum agreed to note the report and retain centrally the surplus in respect of de-delegated funds.

16/15 – Criteria for the allocation of Contingency Funding to Schools

Chris Allcock presented the paper to ask for Schools Forum approval to measures to strengthen the criteria for allocating contingency funding to schools from the 'Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Contingency' and the de-delegated 'Schools Block (SB) Contingency'.

No questions were raised and the report's recommendations were approved.

16/16 – Dates of future meetings

The dates were noted. Should an extraordinary meeting be required to consider the government's funding proposals, as set out in minute **16/09**, details of the additional meeting would be e-mailed to Forum members.

Notwithstanding the above, the date of the next scheduled meeting will be 6th October 2016 at 6pm in Committee Room 1 at County Hall.

The meeting closed at 7.25pm.