

Schools Forum Key Decisions Log September 2014 and ongoing V1 October 2015

Issue and Decision	Schools Forum date	Schools Forum agenda item no.
Changes to Schools and Early Years Finance Regulations 2014 A number of changes were noted including: Schools Forum is now required to discuss places being commissioned by the LA and others in special schools, resource units and AP as well as arrangements for paying top ups; funding for each Alternative Provision place will increase from £8,000 to £10,000 per annum. It was agreed that a brief response to the consultation would be sent voicing concern about the overall funding pressures on the DSG and the impact on these overall on schools' budgets.	17/09/14	5
Centrally Held DSG Underspend It was agreed that: £60,000 from 2013-14 DSG underspend be allocated to the Slough Learning Partnership to cover operating costs and contingency until the end of August 2015 and £100,000 be allocated to enable the Slough Learning Partnership to deliver a range of additional school improvement services during 2014-15. The proposals regarding allocation to the High Needs Block and Schools Block were deferred until the blocks are agreed at a future meeting.	17/09/14	6
PFI It was noted that SBC had been accepted as one of only 4 LAs taking part in the DfE pilot to identify potential savings in PFI contracts.	17/09/14	8
Schools Funding levels - letter to Secretary of State Members noted a response from David Laws MP to the letter sent to the Secretary of State.	12/11/14	3
St Joseph's update An update was provided on the Schools Forum 2012 grant from headroom to support St Joseph's finance and development plan and financial stability over 3 to 5 years. It was noted that the school had been able to return £400,000 in 2013 and has utilised the remaining funding as was originally intended.	12/11/14	3
Amendment to previous minutes It was noted that the reference in the previous minutes to the increase in value of an Alternative Provision place is an increase to 'base funding'.	12/11/14	3
Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring It was agreed that a review of the Balance Control Mechanism would take place when the Schools Forum considers the Scheme for Financing Schools for 15/16.	12/11/14	4
Budget process / formula Schools Forum agreed: the introduction of a 'reception uplift' in 2015/16; the introduction of capping at 3% in 2015/16 and that the existing formula factors should remain for 2015/16.	12/11/14	5
Growth Fund 2015/16 Schools Forum agreed to create a Growth Fund for 2015/16. It was agreed that the fund should be based on full AWPU for the relevant part of the year for 2015/16.	10/12/14	6
Centrally Retained DSG Underspend The principle of distributing the final underspend by numbers on roll was re-affirmed.	10/12/14	7
De-delegated Budgets: SEBDOS (formerly known as the Behaviour Support Service) and Trades Union) With regard to the budget for SEBDOS (previously known as Behaviour Support), the relevant maintained schools' members of the Schools Forum voted to approve de-delegation in both phases at the unit costs proposed. Decision regarding de-delegation of the Trades Union budget was deferred until January 2015.	10/12/14	8
Membership		

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Maggie Stacey had stood down from Schools Forum and thanks was given for her long service and valuable contributions. Schools Forum also thanked Mary Sparrow, who is leaving Slough, for her valuable contributions to the Forum. It was agreed that academy proprietors be asked to fill the three academy member vacancies and Schools Forum suggested a primary member and two secondary members in order to maintain an appropriate phase balance. A replacement maintained secondary school member is also to be found.	10/12/14	9
Membership		
Angela Mellish (St Bernard's Grammar School) was welcomed to the Schools Forum as the new maintained secondary school member.	14/01/15	1
Minutes of previous meeting 10th December 2014		
It was reported that confirmation had been given by the LA (Joseph Holmes) that no monies would be top-sliced from the DSG in future without a request to Schools Forum and its subsequent approval.	14/01/15	3
It was noted that Louise Lund was no longer a member of Schools Forum as she is no longer in a PVI setting and therefore not eligible and that a replacement was being sought.	14/01/15	3
Centrally Retained DSG Underspend		
Schools Forum agreed that the £998k underspend be redistributed to schools but not that the pensions deficit owed be netted off; schools to be notified of their pensions liability and billed separately from any underspend payment.	14/01/15	5
Centrally Retained DSG 2015/16		
The centrally retained DSG 15/16 budget figure for Cambridge Education was agreed. Further detail is to be brought back to Schools Forum of the allocation of the individual strands of funding and the associated justification for spend. LA retained element: the bottom line figure of £241,034 was agreed. A report will be brought to the March Schools Forum of 14/15 anticipated spend and what the budgets are likely to be spent on in 2015/16. This will be a matter for final decision in March. The £241,034 to be held in reserve pending the further report in March.	14/01/15	6
2015/16 Budget Process		
Schools Forum noted the 2015-16 formula factors and timetable (factors and budget pro-forma are predicated on the recommendations of the Schools Forum 5-16 formula Task and Finish group). To be submitted to the DfE following Council ratification.	14/01/15	7
2015-16 DSG Schools Block and de-delegation of Trade Union support budget		
Schools Forum noted the Schools Block budget for 2015-16. De-delegation of Trade Union support: the 3 maintained primary schools' members present voted unanimously in favour of de-delegation at the current unit cost. Both secondary maintained schools members present voted in favour of de-delegation at the current unit cost.	14/01/15	8
2015-16 DSG Blocks (High Needs Block)		
Schools Forum agreed to carry forward £600,000 from 2014/15.	14/01/15	9
Membership		
Sally Eaton attended the meeting as an observer, with a view to taking on the role of member representing the PVIs. Maggie Waller thanked Jean Cameron for her valuable contributions and support to both the Schools Forum and the Early Years Task and Finish Group over many years as this was her last meeting. A new member to represent Children's Centres is being sought (<i>since meeting advised: Emma Slaughter, Interim Head of Children's Centres</i>).	25/03/15	1
PFI		
It was noted that the £500,000 previously removed from the DSG in 2014/15 in respect of PFI had been returned and would be distributed to all schools and academies imminently. The £500,000 for 2015/16, removed in error, will also be returned.	25/03/15	3
Commissioning of Places in Special Settings		
It was noted that an annual review of places should take place (report to Schools Forum)	25/03/15	4

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Early Years		
Schools Forum agreed the 2015/16 Early Years centrally held budgets and noted the summary of the Early Years block budget.2015/16 including forecast growth.	25/03/15	6
Membership		
John Constable is to write to academy proprietors regarding the three membership vacancies, following a review of the January 2015 census.	25/03/15	12
Membership		
New members, Emma Slaughter (new Children's Centres' member) and Sally Eaton (new PVI member), were welcomed to the meeting.	06/05/15	1
Schools Forum suggested Eddie Neighbour and Jo Matthews as potential members for academy proprietors to consider.	06/05/15	3
School Improvement Budget 2015-16 Update from Cambridge Education		
The revised funding for 15/16 was noted as £932,905 which is a reduction of £310k. It was agreed that Schools Forum, at the July meeting, will consider the business cases put forward and decide which of the the priorities identified will be funded from the £310k.	06/05/15	4
PFI 2015/16		
It was noted that the £500,000 (part of SBC's PFI contribution for 15/16) that was not added to the DSG in 15/16 and given to schools would be returned to schools. Appendix A noted that the £500k will be part of the future budgets whatever decisions are made. Beverley Pennekett (EFA) advised that once schools have their budgets they cannot be re-determined in-year and if such an adjustment is required in-year to the Schools Budget an application can be made to the Minister to dis-apply this regulation. It was agreed that a joint letter would go from the LA and the Schools Forum seeking to re-distribute this year and to distribute based on numbers on roll .	06/05/15	5
PFI School Improvement Savings		
Schools Forum was asked to consider using £200k of the savings identified in the centrally-retained budgets for School Improvement (minute 411 above) to contribute to SBC's funding of the School's PFI scheme in 2015-16. It was agreed that this proposal would come back to the Schools Forum meeting in July along with any other proposals (supported by a business case) for consideration and decision. Note the 2 PFI reports are both noted here as item 5 as one had been omitted from the agenda list.	06/05/15	5
Growth Fund Out-Turn 2014 - 15		
Schools Forum agreed to carry forward an additional £88,000 to the Growth Fund for 2015 - 16. It was confirmed that the 2015 - 16 total Growth Fund was now approximately £1.25 million.	06/05/15	6
High Needs Block		
Schools Forum noted the detail of the High Needs Block centrally retained budgets for SBC and Cambridge Education, as set out in the two appendices to the report.	06/05/15	7
2014/15 EarlyYears Block Carry Forward		
Schools Forum noted that the Early Years DSG is currently forecast to be under-spent by £1,492,487 and approved the carry forward of this sum to ensure compliance with statutory duties through the spending outlined in Appendix A of the report.	23/09/15	4
Centrally Retained Budgets Out Turn		
Schools Forum agreed that the 14-15 underspend of £60,010 in the Schools Block be carried forward into the Growth Fund in order to reduce the 16-17 budget topslice for growth. Schools Forum agreed that the Early Years block underspend 2014-15 of £6,597 should remain within Early Years. Schools Forum noted that the High Needs Block underspend will be used to fund expected growth in High Needs places and top ups in 2016-17 plus any outstanding prior commitments. For Cambridge Education underspend it was agreed that proposals would be brought to Schools Forum at the next meeting. It was noted that the Early Years element had already been agreed in item 4 of the agenda (above).	23/09/15	6
School Improvement Underspend		

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<p>Schools Forum agreed to allocate £35,000 of these savings to support Our Lady of Peace Infant and Nursery School and Our Lady of Peace Junior School in amalgamating to establish an all-through primary school.</p> <p>Schools Forum agreed to allocate an initial £70,000 to support the Headteachers' collaborative request regarding Recruitment and Retention.</p> <p>Schools Forum did not agree to support the use of £200,000 of the School Improvement savings to contribute to the Council's funding of its contribution to the schools' PFI scheme.</p> <p>It was agreed that, following the allocations above, the remaining balance of the underspend would be considered at the next meeting alongside the Cambridge Education underspend (see agenda item 6 above).</p>	23/09/15	7
Schools Forum Self Assessment Review and Updated Constitution		
<p>Schools Forum supported the suggested changes in the self-assessment review (Appendix A).</p> <p>Schools Forum noted the updated Constitution (Appendix B) and commended this to the LA for approval.</p>	23/09/15	8
Review of Scheme for Financing Schools		
<p>Schools Forum agreed two amendments to the Scheme for Financing Schools:</p> <p>Schools should make a register of business and other interests publicly available e.g. on a publicly accessible website (2.9 of Scheme)</p> <p>New wording to clarify borrowing by schools, for example, in relation to financial leases (3.6 of Scheme)</p> <p>Schools Forum requested that the wording of the proposed change regarding the revenue Balance Control Mechanism be clarified and brought to the next meeting (4.2 of Scheme).</p>	23/09/15	9
Minutes of previous meeting 23rd September 2015		
<p>It was noted that the LA Democratic Services have confirmed that no further formal approval is required of the Schools Forum Constitution, following its approval by the Schools Forum at the 23rd September meeting.</p>	06/10/15	3
Schools and Early Years Finance regulations 2015 - DfE Consultation		
<p>The LA is to respond to the DfE consultation and it was agreed that the response would be shared with the Chair and that Schools Forum would also respond. The Chair will circulate to members of the Forum for input.</p>	06/10/15	4
School Improvement Underspend		
<p>Final decisions were made to allocate the remaining balance of the £308,000 2015/16 underspend in the centrally retained school improvement budget. Following allocations agreed at the 23rd September meeting - see above - to support teacher recruitment and Our Lady of Peace amalgamation, a further £13,000 was agreed to offset the £26,000 commitment of secondary Headteachers to recruitment research.</p> <p>It was agreed that the remaining £190,000 will be transferred to the High Needs Block to contribute to the easing of anticipated pressures on expenditure.</p> <p>From the final Cambridge Education School Improvement underspend for 2014-15 of £210,000, it was agreed to support the LA proposal for an allocation of £20,000 to fund a piece of work to scope out future school improvement options.</p> <p>Funding of £35,000 was also agreed for a project with Rising Stars focussed on boosting performance for Year 6 pupils, related to the new testing requirements.</p> <p>Further proposals for the remaining £155,000 balance will be brought to Schools Forum in December.</p>	06/10/15	5