



Minutes

Name of meeting	SCHOOLS' FORUM
Date and time	Thursday, 25 March 2021
Venue	Webinar – Virtual Meeting
Present	Beverley Gilbert – Brading CE Primary (Chair) Mike Hayward – Isle of Wight Education Federation Steve Fairclough – Brighstone CE Primary Lisa Nicholson – Haylands Primary Caroline Sice – Lanesend Primary Academy Fidelma Washington – Isle of Wight College Julie Stewart – Medina House School
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	Kevin McDermott – Christ the King College Jackie Boxx – Island Learning Centre

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The chair welcomed member and noted that this meeting clashed with the Headteachers’ Forum, hence low attendance.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest received.

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A note of thanks was conveyed from Unison for LA efforts in support of COVID vaccines being offered to school staff as part of zero-waste strategy.

4. MINUTES

4.1 RESOLVED :

That the minutes of the meeting held on [14 January 2021](#) be confirmed.

5. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising

6. 2021/22 SCHOOL BUDGET MONITORING [Paper B](#)

6.1 IR gave an overview of the updated budget position at 31 January 2021, showing a forecast overspend of £1,950,000.

6.2 The total budget allocated through the dedicated schools grant, and other schools related grants for 2020/21 was £90,441,000.

6.3 EARLY YEARS

The Early Years (EY) block has a forecast overspend of £18,000. Pressure on this budget is mostly due to the free EY hours entitlement. It is slightly offset by a £6,000 underspend in the Central Services Team. The January 2021 Census will impact the final funding allocation, due in July 2021. DfE are consulting on use of different funding methods for future terms.

6.4 SCHOOLS BLOCK

This majority of this funding is passported directly to schools.

6.5 The Growth Fund has a forecast underspend of £92,000 as no schools were eligible for this funding during 2020/21.

6.6 In answer to an enquiry raised during the Schools Forum meeting on [12 November 20](#) (item 10.19) – funding for de-delegated services is required to be consistent between maintained schools and academies and unused funding returned to the DSG. So, any refund to academies for unused Trade Union time, would not be appropriate.

Question – Confirmed that this would amount to approximately £60 for the year.

6.7 HIGH NEEDS BLOCK

Placements at Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools have increased from 62 – 71 in 2020/21 and led to a forecast overspend of £793,000.

6.8 The provision of 12 additional places at St Georges Special School and an increase in complexity of cases has incurred a £270,000 overspend.

6.9 A further overspend of £154,000 is due to additional SEN support required for pupils in mainstream schools.

6.10 The number of children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) is expected to increase by 10.59% in 2021/21.

6.11 Post-16 Top up funding was increased to support 12 additional students from September 2020 – 188 overall – contributing to a forecast £175,000 overspend.

6.12 Over-occupancy at the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) has incurred an expected overspend of £102,000.

6.13 Pressures continue to grow in Personal Budgets, with increasing complexity in cases – a £266,000 overspend is forecast.

6.14 CENTRAL BLOCK

An overspend of £23,000 is expected as the small number of Non-SEN placements has increased.

6.15 OVERALL SCHOOLS BUDGET

The current deficit of £1,950,000 with the brought forward deficit from previous years of £2,488,000 will form a forecast cumulative deficit of £4,438,000. A DfE recovery plan is underway and will be discussed with Schools Forum after the final 2020/21 budget outturn is finalised.

RESOLVED :

THAT the budget monitoring position as at January 2021 be noted.

7. 2021/22 SCHOOL FUNDING UPDATES [Paper C](#)

7.1 SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA

BD reminded members that the formula had been discussed in detail at previous meetings. Political ratification confirmed compliance with DfE requirements at the beginning of February 2021 and budget shares were distributed to schools on 8 February 2021. LA Officers met with School Business Managers (SBMs) to provide further information and respond to queries.

7.2 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG) BUDGET SETTING

The budget, also discussed in the last Schools Forum meeting, has since received political ratification and is now set for operation from April 21 until the July 21 update is received.

7.3 EARLY YEARS FORM

EY providers were consulted on 2 proposals for 3/4 year-old funding. 46 responses were received, with 57% of respondents in favour of Option 1. This option included a slightly higher base-rate and minimal change to the deprivation factor.

Budget shares will be issued to providers for the beginning of the financial year.

7.4 2022/23 FUNDING DEVELOPMENTS

Officers will continue to update members on funding announcements and consultations and will report back on the outcome of the 2021 spending review.

7.5 A consultation is being carried out on sparsity funding as first steps towards increasing support for schools that are both small and remote. Proposals are to

- change the distance measured between schools from a straight line to the length of the journey by road.
- Increase maximum sparsity factor values by £10,000

The indication is that there will be no change to the small number of IOW schools eligible for this funding.

7.6 A further consultation is out to seek views on a proposal to pay business rates for schools centrally, direct from DfE, instead of schools receiving funding and paying rates individually. This is not likely to affect school administration processes.

7.7 HIGH NEEDS FUNDING FORMULA CONSULTATION

A short consultation was held to consider changing the 'historic spend' factor from planned spend in 2017/18 to actual spend. BD noted that 38% of IOW funding is based on this factor. DfE are also considering changing the significance of pupil weighting along with other factors. This is a consultation on formula rather than funding amounts.

Questions – Noted that the LA convened with other LAs to provide a national response and encourage use of criteria to ensure fair funding across the board.

Noted that the outcome of [McArdle Review](#) of support for children with SEN is due in the summer term.

RESOLVED :

THAT the local authority approach (using option 1) to the 2021/22 early years funding formula be endorsed. (All in favour)

THAT the wider funding updates be noted.

8. SCHOOL FUNDING POLICIES UPDATE [Paper D](#)

BD gave an update on minor changes to the [School Funding Policy Pack](#) and the [IOW Scheme for Financing Schools](#)

8.1 SCHOOL FUNDING POLICY PACK [Appendix A](#)

Minor housekeeping changes, links to updated DfE guidance and updated examples in relation to current Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) values.

8.2 Schools Forum members are required to agree criteria for the Growth Fund and Falling Rolls, which are reviewed annually. There is no change for either item and the Growth Fund budget was agreed in the meeting held on [12 November 20](#)

8.3 IOW SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS

The scheme applies to maintained schools. Schools Forum and maintained schools were consulted on the updated scheme in summer 2020. Further DfE mandated updates related to Covid 19 were made in August 2020, but do not require consultation.

8.4 Maintained schools are required to submit a 3-year budget plan. This is already in place for IOW schools and will have no impact on current arrangements. IOW budgets are due for submission in May.

8.5 Schools with a deficit greater than 5% will be required to have a recovery plan. The LA is already working with schools in this category to develop recovery plans. Documentation is likely to be reviewed to develop a more standardised process for IOW schools.

Questions – Confirmed that the Growth Fund is set at £376,000 for 21/22 and will be used to offset high needs pressures against the DSG outturn, if not required.

RESOLVED :

THAT continuation of the existing criteria for growth and falling rolls for 2021/22 detailed in Appendix A be approved. (All in favour)

THAT minor housekeeping updates to the policy pack in Appendix A, which will apply from 1 April 2021 be noted.

THAT the mandated update to the Isle of Wight Scheme for Financing Schools applicable from 1 April 2021 be noted.

9.0 PUBLIC HEALTH GRANT

The LA has worked closely with Public Health, forging good relationships throughout the pandemic and have managed to secure additional Covid-related grant funding for schools. Funding is to be allocated for 2020/21 on a pupil number basis at between £8,000 and £18,000.

Noted that this will be useful to support cashflow for the current year.

KMcD joined the meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday, 15 July 2021, from 8.30am

Meeting arrangements to be confirmed, subject to DfE guidance

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS All at 8.30am

11 November 2021

20 January 2022 (*This date could be subject to change, depending on the date for submission of funding formula to DfE*)

24 March 2022