

Forum Newsletter

**SOLIHULL SCHOOLS FORUM met on 7th December 2016,
the following is a précis of business undertaken**

Cabinet Member's Items

Councillor Ken Meeson reported that Cabinet had discussed the controversial 'Schools that Work for Everyone' consultation paper and agreed to scrutinise it further to assess implications for Solihull when the White Paper comes out in 2017.



Further Education Update

Solihull College is financially Outstanding and robust with a turnover of £32m.

- A market is emerging at Solihull College to run university level studies, providing local solutions without the high cost of a university placement.
- The college is building up its technology education and facilities and has invested £5m in engineering facilities, including virtual reality flight simulators and robotics.
- A significant number of A level students are considering higher and degree level apprenticeships.
- Colleges will benefit from the Apprenticeship Levy (Solihull College will pay £90k), which must be spent on apprenticeships or be lost as a tax.
- New professional apprenticeships are appearing, including for public sector jobs, such as nurses and police officers. Birmingham and Solihull's funding has reduced by £1m and there are likely to be some significant funding issues on the horizon.
- 60% of learners come from Birmingham, this is a consistent figure.
- There has been a rise in students studying STEM subjects and fewer studying art/softer subjects.
- There is currently modest provision for age 16-24 with SEND and more work can be done in this area.

Early Years National Funding Formula

Steve Fenton briefed the meeting on the outcome of the DfE's recent Consultation, the headlines of which are:

- From 1 April 2017 Solihull will receive an increase in funding for Early Years.
- There will be a Disability Access Fund of £615 for each eligible child, regardless of the time spent at a setting, increasing emphasis on inclusivity.
- A SEN Inclusion Fund will be mandatory for all settings for 3 and 4 year-olds. Emphasis will be on supporting pupils in settings rather than through support services and must form part of the Local Offer. Further discussions around the level of funding and how it is deployed will take place through stakeholder groups.

School Funding 2017/18

Forum formally approved the following areas of funding for 2017/18:



- Pupil Growth Fund – for growth in maintained schools and academies, will remain at £250k.
- Centrally Retained Services – for School Admissions and Schools Forum at the same level.
- Early Years Block – funds the EY Advisory Team and Family Information Service at the same level
- Capital Expenditure Funded from Revenue – for Prudential Borrowing and Excellence in the Community (items that do not meet the DfE criteria for continued funding have been removed)
- Combined Services – The Key does not meet the DfE criteria for continued funding and has been removed; the remaining services will continue to be funded at the same level.
- De-delegation for Maintained Schools – funds TU Facilities' Time and Primary Contingency which has been reduced by £30k to £100k.

Retained Duties Previously Funded by the Education Services Grant (ESG)

The LA receives an annual grant of £566k. As part of the NFF plan, from April 2017 a new Central Services Block will be created within the DSG and Forum was asked to agree to the grant being moved into this Block to support a number of services provided to all schools and academies. Forum members agreed to this.

General Duties Previously Funded by the Education Services Grant (ESG)

The Government has cut the LA's ESG grant that applies to maintained schools of £1.4m from 1 April 2017. (Academies receive this grant as well, but directly from the EFA). The LA must continue to provide statutory services, funded instead by top-slicing maintained schools' budgets to cover only the amount of grant lost. Maintained representatives of Forum were asked to agree to the top-slice of their 2017/18 budgets by £60pp (1.5%) and £150pp for PRUs and special schools. Members reluctantly agreed to this top-slice.

The LA currently provides a number of additional (discretionary) services and discussions will take place with schools around the viability and cost of continuing to provide these as traded services.

Members raised great concern at the prospect of further reductions in funding and stressed the likely impact will be staff reductions and reduced standards of education.



Full minutes and papers, including work group reports, are available to view and download on the Solihull Schools Forum website at: <http://socialsolihull.org.uk/schools/forum/schools-forum>