

**FINANCE WORK GROUP
REPORT TO FORUM
FOR PRESENTATION
AT FORUM ON 8th May 2019**



Date of Work Group meeting: Monday, 4th April 2019

Items discussed (brief summary of key items):

- **TU Facilities Time Update – Adrian Cattell**

Adrian updated on the process of trying to get the per pupil cost down from its highest rate of £7.50 pp to a target of £5 pp. Working with the teachers' unions it had been possible to reduce to £6.50pp but difficulties had been encountered in switching the remuneration to schools who have teaching union reps from a full cost basis to a supply cost rate of £200 per day (£300 for Heads). Also attempts to get more Academies to participate had not proved fruitful so income to the scheme was likely to fall as more schools become Academies and do not buy back. Further attempts to persuade them are being made. Adrian doubted if a further reduction could be made in the short term, but warned of the likely impact of abolishing the scheme.

- **Update on Regrading Support Staff Pay Scales – Adrian Cattell**

Adrian reported that the original proposal to honour the pay award and at the same time reform the grading scales for support staff had raised concerns about the immediate impact on school budgets. Working with the Trade Unions and Local Authority a second proposal, which staged the payments but still honoured the pay award, had been tabled. This had yet to gain full approval, but Adrian was hopeful of being able to implement. This was welcomed and, when approved, needs to be communicated. Adrian also confirmed that all SMBC staff already receive the Government living wage as minimum.

- **School Catering Update - Yesrib Azam**

The School Catering service is a non-profit making service, with any surplus reinvested in the Service. The service is viable but faces serious challenges: higher costs associated with the living wage, increased food costs, schools looking to make savings, the underfunding of Free School Meals by the Government and it is becoming difficult to recruit and retain staff.

There is continued investment in maintenance and new equipment including electronic systems. Faced with rising costs and falling student numbers, the price of a school meal is due to rise to £2.20 in September 2019, which is still less than most Local Authorities. Most schools currently only commit to a one-year contract, which makes forward planning and investment difficult and the service is keen to encourage schools to extend to three or five years. Finally there is increased competition from firms who pay lower wages and who do not pay pension contributions.

Currently 3 secondary and 64 primary schools use the service, plus 22 Coventry schools. Solihull is a Silver Food for Life caterer.

- **Monitoring Out-turn DSG Statement 2017/18 – Steve Fenton**

The Final out turn figures for 2018-19 were still being finalised, so SF gave a verbal update of the likely final outcome. He reported there had been a further increase in the High Needs Block of £200k raising the deficit to @£3m; that the Schools Block would record a small deficit: that the Central Services Block would break even, and at the moment the Early Years Block was showing a deficit of £500k. This EY Block will receive its final grant in July and is not expected to be a problem. This generates an overall deficit for the year of @£3m on the DSG and High Needs budgets. With the use of LEA reserves, this year the deficit can be halved to about £1.6m which will be carried over to next year. However, as reported in February, these reserves are of a one-off nature and will not be available to cover future deficits.

- **Health and Safety Training, CLEAAPPS and Evolve – Mark Wills**

Mark presented a well-structured and informative report which gave evidence of widespread participation in all the above services in all sectors. With regard to **General H+S Training** the main activities are First Aid Training (including Paediatric), E-learning packages, induction and updating sessions and an emphasis on bespoke school-based training. Next year the emphasis will be on H+S training for Managers and Head Teachers and Risk Assessment Workshop training for those who carry out this work and site team training and continued support for schools in disability assessments. Training is available in a variety of modes from e-learning to formal courses, much of which is on-site. Training is available to all schools in Solihull, both Maintained and Academies. From April 2018 to January 2019 over 2,196 individuals received training with costs at £39,760. **CLEAAPPS** (H+S in Science provision) is an advisory service for all levels from Nursery to Sixth Form and costs £5,550 per annum. **EVOLVE** is an on-line system for schools to plan and manage educational visits, on-site activities, clubs and sports fixtures. Over 80 schools accessed it last year to cover 3,899 activities. It costs £7,000 per annum.

It is recommended that the same level of funding of £52,350 continues.

- **School Funding 2019-20 – Steve Fenton**

Steve confirmed that the Solihull School budgets had been signed off by the DfE and Cabinet Member.

- **LSCB Arrangements – David Lewis**

Under the Children and Social Care Act 2018, the Local Safeguarding Children Board has changed its name to Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP). It had been anticipated that a representative would attend to renew the £26,000 annual Safeguarding Training grant, however this had not proved possible and this will now be delayed to the 11 June meeting, when a representative of the LSCP will also be invited to talk about the work of the Partnership.

- **Procurement update – Chris Lowe**

An update on procurement contracts about to be renewed was tabled and attention was drawn to a rise of up to 10% in energy prices.

- **Date of next meeting 11th June 2019**

DWL 4/4/19

**CAPITAL WORK GROUP
REPORT TO FORUM
FOR PRESENTATION AT FORUM
ON Wednesday, 8 May 2019**



Date of Work Group meeting: 26 March 2019

Items discussed (brief summary of key items):

Solihull Schools' School Asset Management Plan – Anthony Watson

The AMP was circulated and AWa raised some key points, including:

- The AMP is based on three key aspects – sufficiency, condition and suitability to deliver the curriculum; these are tied in with the Council Plan's five priorities.
- Part of the AMP is separated into Collaboratives and individual school AMPs have highlighted issues around suitability.
- Government funding for School Condition Allocations is reducing, linked to budget reductions and an increase in the number of academies.
- The Condition Data Collection Survey is intended to drive maintenance funding for 'responsible bodies' from 2020; to date around half of Solihull schools have been surveyed. In the meantime, Solihull received £1.5m for 2018-19 and there will be a formulaic allocation for 2019-20.
- Based on the LA's own surveys, £5m pa could be spent on the school estate, actual funding available will only address critical issues.
- The capital programme for 2018-21 is currently £30m, ie. £10m per annum, however this is declining due to cuts in central funding and school academisations.

School Place Planning – Ann Pearson

- The Commissioning Strategy has now been finalised and will be updated annually as requirements change.
- There is a requirement for an additional 525 primary school places by 2020. Plans are on-going to expand St Augustine's and Cheswick Green, the latter in response to new housing at Blythe Valley, and to add a further 300 places at Alderbrook and St Peter's.
- Work is taking place to establish a sponsor for the new Special Free School; it is hoped this will be in place by Christmas.
- There is an increasing need for capital funding relating to SEND, including for the new Free School.
- Alternative plans are being put in place for the children currently attending Auckland Education Centre, which is due to close at the end of the academic year.
- The Early Years 30-hour extended offer and provision for 2-year-olds is not currently being met within the Borough.
- Despite the birth rate plateauing, where there are significant housing developments, inevitably there will be an increased need for school places.
- A range of strategies are being implemented to reduce exclusions and meet the needs of young people who are at risk of exclusion.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 25 June 2019.

Andrew Wilkins
Chair, Capital Work Group
10 April 2019

**REPORT BY SSSAB
FOR PRESENTATION AT THE
FORUM MEETING HELD ON
8th May 2019**

Date of SSSAB meeting: 19th March 2019

Items discussed (brief summary of key items):

Update from the Interim Assistant Director – Children, Young People and Families

Frank McSheffrey gave an update on the Family Support Service. Members of SSSAB expressed the importance for schools to know and understand how to access additional support for families.

Membership - Vice Chair Nominations

There was a discussion about practical difficulties around the requirement for the Vice Chair to also have responsibility for the SSSAB and Partnership budgets (which can only be managed by a maintained school). It was agreed to split the responsibilities so that Greswold would take on the financial aspect, making it possible for Jacque Nicholls to take on the role of Vice Chair.

Update from Councillor Ken Meeson

- The new EP Service was up and running and will operate as a traded service.
- The Free School had been given the go ahead. They are now seeking sponsors and looking at potential sites.
- The amount of buy back for the Music Service has dropped off so they are reviewing the structure to ensure it continues to thrive and qualifies for the funding received from the Arts Council.

SSSAB Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan was reviewed as follows:

Priority One - Mental Health & Well-Being

- An update on the SMILE research project would be given at the June Heads' Partnership meeting.
- Whilst not all schools have a Health and Well-Being Policy they do have something similar in place.

Priority Two - Inclusion Strategy

- Monitoring out of borough placements is work in progress.
- Development of the Inclusion Strategy is on track.
- A recent Ofsted judgement had flagged up the lack of protocol for when an out of borough provision goes in to special measures.

Priority Three – Transition

- The draft Transition Policy had been shared at Heads' Conference and was due to be finalised.
- Arrangements were in hand for the set Year Six transition day in 2020.

Priority Four - Leadership

- A task and finish group had been set up for Heads' Partnership.
- There was a discussion about progressing school to school support and it was agreed that collaboratives should contact the trainer direct for further information if interested.
- It was clarified that SSSAB had agreed to contribute £200 for backfill in respect of Headteachers carrying out peer reviews from September 2018.
- SSSAB members agreed to offer Headteacher support for any LA reviews that take place.

Monitoring Statement – Update

LR circulated the latest monitoring statement. The money for SMILE might have to be carried forward to next year.

LA Update

- Headteacher recruitment was taking place at three schools.
- An Ofsted inspection for Triple Crown had been deferred due to illness.
- Ofsted training had included a session on pupil off-rolling and curriculum had also been a focus. There had been a safeguarding update and work on peer on peer abuse.

NAHT Update

Jane Davenport gave an update and stated that the NAHT has four major areas of concern:

- The rise in violent behaviours in schools – the NAHT is working with the LA Safety Team to update policies.
- Concerns around budgets which might impact violence in schools due to the lack of trained staff.
- Bullying in the work place is an issue and JD urged colleagues to talk to the NAHT if they have any concerns. CMc stated that the LA can only deal with issues that are raised through the correct channels.
- The NAHT is driving an improvement in the health and well-being of Headteachers. It was agreed that CMc would liaise with Natasha Chamberlain about potentially offering a shortened version of the Mental Health First Aid Course for governors. This may be something that SSSAB or the LA could support financially.
- JD suggested that the NAHT or SSSAB could fund her to attend training with a commitment to then 'train the trainer'. SSSAB could agree to fund this as long as there was a commitment for governor training.

Social Housing Strategy

JG explained that following discussions recently about the changing landscape in terms of new housing, it transpired that there had been a lot of new housing development in Meriden quite quickly. It had not been shared with the school that a decision was made to prioritise the social housing element of the development for troubled families. The school was unprepared because the requirements for the social make-up of their school changed very quickly with no prior discussion or additional resource/funding. The impact was significant and subsequently some of those families have found it very isolating and difficult to live there as they were separated from the way they used to be supported. The concern was that this strategy is not public knowledge and it would appear that schools were not part of any conversation or prepared/supported for the decisions made at a higher level. It was agreed to invite an appropriate council officer to a future SSSAB meeting to inform the group about Solihull's housing strategy.

LM/JW

**EDUCATION SEND GROUP
REPORT TO FORUM
FOR PRESENTATION
AT FORUM ON 8 May 2019**

Date of meeting: 6 March 2019

Brief Summary of Items Discussed

- **Alternative Provision (Bev Petch)** – The outcome of the consultation to close Auckland Education Centre is expected shortly; in the meantime an Interim Executive Board is in place to ensure provision for children placed there is safe and effective until the Centre closes. The new AP Medical Pathway has been launched to ensure the right children access appropriate support when they need it, supported by medical evidence. A new AP website is being developed which will cover a number of areas, with links to the Local Offer. BP provided an update on exclusions. For secondary, the overall trend is a reduction in both permanent and fixed term exclusions, however primary fixed term exclusions have increased slightly. The number of permanently excluded children with some level of additional need remains very high. The key driver for secondary permanent exclusions is physical assault. For Elective Home Education, the priority is to manage the backlog of visits resulting from a lack of staff to do them; information for parents will be produced in due course. The Government is currently considering a Home Education Bill which, if passed, will have significant implications for the LA's capacity to deliver the requirements.
- **High Needs Block Monitoring (Steve Fenton)** – At Period 9 the HNB was showing a £2.6m overspend, with the largest overspend on Independent Out-of-Borough Fees. An emergency plan is being formulated as a one-off solution for 2018-19 which could reduce the overspend by £1-1.5m. It is anticipated that there will be a similar overspend in 2019-20.
- **Non-traded Offer to Support Pupils with SEMH Needs (Paula Thompson)** – Access criteria is being developed for this service which will sit alongside the Inclusion Strategy, enhanced provisions and also form part of the SEMH and Free School AP Pathways.
- **Head of Service Update (Ann Lowe)** – The Education Psychology service will be fully staffed by September 2019 and a specialist SEND solicitor has been appointed. Both services will provide much needed support for the EHCP and tribunal processes. The number of EHCPs being processed within the statutory 20 week period has reduced significantly, but it is hoped that additional funding will be made available to expand the team to better meet demand. More work will be done on the formal process in place for schools and parents when Plans are turned down. There is currently no formal corporate procedure for responding when external provisions go into Special Measures and a meeting is planned to draw up a process which will link in regionally with other authorities purchasing places at the same provisions.
- **SENDIAS Bid Outcome (Hazel Clarke)** – SENDIAS has been successful in achieving additional funding and is now waiting to hear how much they will receive.
- **Specialist Assessment Service (Louise Minter)** – Additional staff have now been appointed and it is hoped the waiting list will be back to 18 weeks by January 2020. Although this is a long time to wait, the group felt it was better to achieve secure assessments than rush them through.
- **EdSEND Sub-group Update (Louise Minter)** – The Sub-group discussed Union involvement in the rise of physical assaults on teaching staff and received a presentation from representatives of the Parent Carer Forum about Reasonable Adjustments made for children with SEND in schools (the presentation will be made to EdSEND Group on 19 June).

**REPORT BY SSSAB
FOR PRESENTATION AT THE
FORUM MEETING HELD ON
8th May 2019**

Date of SSSAB meeting: **Thursday 7th February 2019**

Items discussed (brief summary of key items):

Membership – Vice Chair

Lynne Russell's retirement at the end of the academic year would mean there would be an opportunity for someone to take on the role of Vice Chair. Nominations were invited for the role which carries a responsibility for SSSAB and Partnership budgets.

Teaching School – SEND Proposal

Louise Minter reported that Andy Simms felt that the HOSTA proposal had become much bigger and less manageable than intended. He proposed returning to the original plan of managing it within HOSTA with a view to SSSAB potentially providing some funding in the future if successful. This was agreed.

Monitoring Statement – Update

The monitoring statement for SSSAB and Heads' Partnership was reviewed and some queries resolved.

School Support Staff Pay Awards

Adrian Cattell shared the background to the move towards a modified pay awards structure for support staff. Following feedback the structure had been reviewed and resulted in discussions about a transition period to phase in the structure for Band D. SSSAB stated that the changes would have serious cost implications for schools. Whilst they were accepting of the changes, they felt that the cost would have a big impact on future recruitment and affordability of staff. The grades having the greatest impact on cost were C and D and AC was asked to consider transitional arrangements for Band C as well as Band D.

Heads' Conference

Feedback had been very good and LM thanked everyone that had contributed and helped to make the event successful.

Heads' Partnership

It was planned to continue the curriculum theme at the Heads' Partnership Meeting on 27th June 2019 by inviting Nick Waters. However this may not be possible and LM asked for alternative suggestions.

Update from Councillor Ken Meeson

- Representatives from one of Solihull's twin towns, Main-Taunus-Kreis (MTK) in Germany, had visited the borough. They are keen to develop links between schools in MTK and Solihull.
- Solar aim to have a four week limit for child referrals with urgent cases being referred much quicker.
- The outcome of Solihull's bid for a special autism school was still awaited from the government and was due in the Spring.

Update from the Director of Children's Services and Skills

- Sally Hodges introduced Louise Rees who had been appointed to replace Sally in the role of DCS. Louise was invited to attend SSSAB meetings on a termly basis.
- SEND continues to face significant budgetary pressures this year.
- The Family Support Service goes live on 1st April 2019. Frank McSheffrey will control targeted services for young people and Alison McGrory will oversee localities.
- There has been increasing pressure from the numbers of looked after children which have increased significantly in the last year. The council were able to provide some additional funding from the business rate windfall money.
- The budgets for next year and the coming three years have been set. Children's Services are now going to come in on budget at the end of March and it has been confirmed that additional money will remain in Children's Services for next year. This will give colleagues the opportunity to look at possibly investing in some SEND services.

LA Update

- Andrew Warren had been appointed to the post of Regional Schools Commissioner West Midlands.
- A third Education Psychologist had started in post on 4th February 2019.
- The LA's annual meeting with the Regional Lead for Ofsted in the West Midlands and senior HMIs had taken place.
- The Young Carers' Promise had been renewed.

Pre Key Stage Standards and Development Wall

Amanda Mordey introduced a tracking system that had been developed with schools to support SEND children. SSSAB members were keen to explore the possibility of funding the system for all schools for English and Maths initially.

SLA and Examples of Data Sharing

Kate Sirrett circulated a Data Sharing Agreement which had been drawn up following the November 2018 SSSAB meeting. This was an update to the agreement that all schools currently have with the LA as it gives permission for the LA to share data earlier with Teaching Schools. Currently, the LA has to wait until data is published before sharing and then not at the level that Teaching Schools need to help schools. The document sets out principles in terms of sharing data with Solihull Teaching Schools, and the specific responsibilities of each of the partners. SSSAB members agreed that they were happy with the new agreement and acknowledged that it was up to individual schools to decide whether or not they wanted to sign up. Collaborative leads were asked to share this with their colleagues and encourage them to sign up.

Solihull Education Safeguarding Strategy

- Lorraine Lord shared the updated Solihull Education Safeguarding Strategy. There was discussion about representation at the Education Sub Group at the LSCB and dissemination of information back to collaboratives.
- LL agreed to attend SSSAB on a termly basis to provide an update.
- There was an update about the Single Central Record and LL confirmed she is writing a guide for Headteachers so they are aware what administrators have been told.

LM/JW

February 2019

**FINANCE WORK GROUP
REPORT TO FORUM
FOR PRESENTATION
AT FORUM ON 8th May 2019**



Date of Work Group meeting: Tuesday, 5th February 2019

Items discussed (brief summary of key items):

- **Matters arising – David Lewis**

Attention was drawn to a number of announcements – The Secretary of State announced on December 16th 2018 an extra £350m for special needs (£250m for LEAs of which Solihull has obtained £495k for 2018-19 and will receive a further £495k for 2019-20); extra funding for school support £100m; and support for new free schools for SEND. Details of the last two are yet to emerge.

Kate Joseph has been appointed Director of Funding for the ESFA with a remit for look at overall Education funding of £63b – school funding may change in 2021.

Mike Ison has resigned from the Finance WG as Grace Academy has merged with Tove Learning Trust and he is leaving. Chair was asked to write to Mike to thank him for his valued contributions.

- **Monitoring Out-turn DSG Statement 2018/19 – Reference 2018/19 Non-delegated High Needs Block Out-turn**

January budgets for both the non-delegated DSG and High Needs were tabled, with the budget now presented in the 4 blocks that now make up funding provision – Schools, High Needs, Early Years and Central. The figures for the DSG continue to give great concern with an anticipated deficit for the year ending 31st March anticipated to be £2.879m. This mainly arises from the High Needs Block with a deficit of £2.631m. The other 3 blocks are running to budget apart from a carry-over deficit on the Schools Block of £246k.

As last period within the High Needs Block, deficits were recorded against contracted services (£51k), home tuition (£17k), transport (£55k), EAL (£9k), Post 16 (£161k), and out of borough provision (£2,677,955) plus a carry-over deficit of £199k. There were savings against SISS, Education Extra, and Solihull Schools top ups, but overall the High Needs budget continues to run a considerable deficit reflecting the national trend where 80% of LEAs are running deficits on High Needs.

Financial strategy for 2018-19 - it is proposed to reduce the deficit this year by using reserves and the funds set aside from the DSG for future ARPs. These total £1.521m. Using these one off funds the deficit for 2018-19 is reduced to £1.358m. This compares with a carry forward last year of £1.202m

NB attention is drawn to the fact that this strategy eliminates the reserves and this tactic will not be available again next year when any deficit from this year will have to be carried forward.

- **Termly report on Out of Borough Placements and HNB Funding Pressures – Steve Fenton**

SF spoke to his paper which showed that since November 2017 there were another 10 pupils out of Borough at a cost of £839,869. So for January 2019 this totalled 149 pupils at a total cost of £5,682,998 and transport costs of £778,175

- **School Funding 2019-20 Application of NFF Outcomes (School Budgets) – Steve Fenton**

Steve outlined in broad terms that the new school budgets for 2019-20 would include the funding guarantees laid down in the government documents and Solihull's early adoption of the NFF. The figures would not exactly match the figures per school in the original government tables which were based on old data and included a number of errors. Schools will receive their final budgets by late February or early March. Figures were submitted to the DFE on Jan 22nd for approval and once approved will be authorised. Schools can go on SMBC Solgrid to see the workings and modelling data.

- **Sports Federation, Sports Development – Julie Chrysostomou**

Julie gave a PowerPoint presentation concerning the depth and high quality of the Schools Sports Programme in Solihull. It is by any standards exceptionally good and it is recommended that all schools have a look at the presentation. Funding is in three tranches: £10k for South Solihull School Sports Partnership, £7500 – secondary (£6k) and £1500 for Primary PE Associations, and £9k for Facilities usage across the Borough. In addition schools contribute not only staff and time but each Primary in the North gives £400 and Secondaries pay 40p per pupil. Julie who is based at Lode Heath School (very Supportive) is assisted by Chris Davis for 10 hours a week.

Considering what is delivered we regard this as great value for money.

In broad terms the service is divided between the North and South of the Borough and supports schools in delivering school games, competitions up to national level, non-school games competitions; organising large events, affiliations, facilities, trophies, supply costs, equipment, first aid, toilets etc. plus providing inclusive events for mainstream and special schools. There is a strong emphasis on achieving one's "personal best", alongside health education.

In 2018-19 there are competitions in 28 events. Over 10,000 pupils participated at all levels and sectors including Sixth Form. At county level Solihull medalled in 42 out of 51 competitions entered. In 2017-18 only one school did not participate in a School Games or area competition.

Challenges facing the service in 2019 are: The costs of facilities hiring is rising, Uncertainty of future funding under NFF reforms, safeguarding issues and timing of events, Secondary School access and participation in competitions under the pressure of the changing curriculum.

The service could not function without the active support of schools and receives **an annual grant of £26.500 which it is recommended is renewed.**

- **Servicing of Solihull School Forum - Steve Fenton**

This is to cover the statutory costs associated with running the School Forum. In broad terms it covers the administrators' salaries and on-costs, members' expenses, meeting room expenses, refreshments, and Office sundries. The Administrators service all Forum, Ed Send and SSSAB meetings but expenses are only paid for Forum and its work group meetings at an unchanging rate. In 2017-18 it paid expenses for 25 meetings and 127 participants. These have reduced considerably in recent years as we no longer pay expenses for Ed Send and have never paid expenses for SSSAB, though they do receive admin support. It has an annual budget of £70,200 (based on the DfE formula) with a surplus of £39,457 (at Feb 19). There was discussion about reducing the budget, but on balance it is not recommended to reduce the budget as this gives the capacity to run special investigations etc.

- **Procurement update – Chris Lowe.** Chris in a written and non-verbal submission updated the WG on the procurement contracts about to be renewed.
- **Date of next meeting 4th April when items will include H+S training, and Safeguarding training**

DWL 6/02/19