

## Minutes of the Finance Work Group Meeting held on Thursday, 27 April 2017 in Room 1, Civic Suite

### Present:

David Lewis (Chair)	TU Representative
Andrew Wilkins	Governor, Hazel Oak
Julie McCarthy	Coppice Juniors
Charlotte Shadbolt	Governor, Heart of England
Janet Marsh	Sharmans Cross
Chris Key	Tudor Grange
Mike Ison	Grace Academy
Rosemary Cotton	Langley Academy
Tracey Lake	Knowle CofE Primary
Antoinette Fisher	Governor, Dorridge Primary
Jane Hutchinson	Monkspath Primary
Steve Fenton	Business & Performance Manager, SMBC
Ian Murray	Financial Operations, SMBC
Linda Sheridan	Financial Operations, SMBC

### In attendance:

Ian Backhouse	NAHT
Darren Jakeways	Procurement, SMBC

Minutes taken by Alison McWilliam, Senior Forum Administrator

Item	Action
<p>1 <b>Apologies for Absence</b> Apologies were received from Lynda Mackay, Andrew Williams, David Miller and Lynn Clark.</p> <p>2 <b>TU Facilities Time – Ian Backhouse</b> <i>Reference 'Facilities Time in Solihull – Report to FWG 27 April 2017'</i> Forum annually agrees a de-delegation of £120k to fund TU Facilities Time (TUFT) for maintained schools. Academies can buy back the service and currently 25% do so. IB provided the following additional information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report highlights significant issues that have arisen over the past 12 months from an increasing number of members seeking advice.</li> <li>• Issues include financial pressures which are impacting on the number of Management of Change programmes, for which TUs are increasingly being involved; work with Catholic Schools on Diocese policy issues, challenges around the impact of increased workload and time spent reviewing disciplinary investigation processes.</li> <li>• Interventions range from a single call to support lasting many months. The high number of interventions at stages 1 and 2 indicates that early communication helps to prevent greater crises later on.</li> <li>• There is some caution around the GMB figures, which include some combined school/council issues.</li> <li>• It is clear that schools are currently a tough and pressured environment and often TUFT is supporting staff health and wellbeing.</li> </ul> <p>Members commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Union advice during a Management of Change process made a painful process more bearable.</li> <li>• Everyone is living in more challenging times, but the figures show that many issues are resolved early, indicating good relations and communication.</li> <li>• The ATL figures are for part-year only, as the local officer has only recently been appointed.</li> <li>• There is a proposal for NUT and ATL to merge, with ATL strongly in favour.</li> <li>• Why are employers expected to fund TUFT rather than through member</li> </ul>	

	<p>subscriptions, is this double funding? There is a misconception that union support for members is paid for by member subscriptions. Those subscriptions pay for the infrastructure that exists nationally and regionally. Facilities Time is to meet employment law that requires consultation and negotiation with representatives of the employees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The service provides value for money by preventing bigger issues later on.</li> <li>• Union involvement in negotiating collective key policies is invaluable and saves a lot of time.</li> <li>• Some private insurance schemes provide the option to include TUFT, however this significantly increases the premium. SF agreed to look into this.</li> <li>• From April 2019 the funding will be delegated to schools who will have to buy in their own TUFT, as academies currently do. This may raise some capacity issues for unions. In the meantime, funding is available for 2017/18.</li> <li>• Members felt it would be useful to circulate the paper to all schools and present it at SSSAB. AMc and IB to take this forward.</li> <li>• NB. More accurate figures would be available if the report was delivered slightly later in 2018. AMc/DL to look consider dates for 2018.</li> </ul>	<p>SF</p> <p>AMc/IB</p> <p>AMc/DL</p>
3	<p><b>Minutes of Previous Meeting (7.3.17)</b></p> <p>The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
4	<p><b>Matters Arising (7.3.17)</b></p> <p><b>Page 1 – Admissions Service</b> – Consideration will be given to taking this to Forum as an information item, particularly linked to the issue around housing developments.</p> <p><b>Safeguarding Training</b> – In the recent audit of Council services, safeguarding was highly regarded and schools indicated they would be prepared to purchase the service. Following a request for Early Years training figures, these will be circulated under separate cover once available.</p> <p><b>Page 3 – High Needs NFF</b> – At Forum Derek Sheldon had objected to the wording ‘generally we are happy with the HN NFF’ on the basis that Solihull would receive static funding which, when faced with an increasing number of SEND pupils, would effectively mean less money to spend. However, DL stressed that the ‘general happiness’ referred to Forum’s response to the questions posed in the HN NFF consultation and not to the actual sums of money involved.</p>	<p>DL</p> <p>LL/AMc</p>
5	<p><b>NFF Update/Meeting with Julian Knight MP – David Lewis</b></p> <p>On 31 March representatives from Knowle, Dorridge and Peterbrook schools (all Ofsted outstanding schools that stand to gain funding under the NFF) and DL met with Julian Knight MP. Reps stressed that although Solihull secondaries stand to gain funding, they were poorly funded to start with and the increase was insufficient. JK was aware of the overall losses at primary level and the Birmingham border issue. JH also met with JK and found him to be receptive to her own school’s difficulties.</p> <p>Caroline Spelman MP appeared on Sunday Politics and again spoke about the Birmingham border issue. She had also arranged for 6 head teachers from the Meriden Constituency to attend a meeting with Nick Gibb at the DfE on 2 May, however this has subsequently been cancelled due to the General Election.</p> <p><b>Apprenticeship Levy</b></p> <p>At the 31 March meeting, JK had indicated that schools could access funding from the Apprenticeship Scheme. However, it seems highly unlikely that this would provide a financial solution for schools as a) a school can only claim if it employs an apprentice, b) very few roles within a school setting would be suitable for apprenticeships and c) there are more costs involved than benefits. Although MI provided an overview of how the Scheme works, it may be helpful to have a short presentation on this in the future.</p> <p><b>Capital Funding Update</b></p> <p><i>Reference Briefing Note and DfE Press Release</i></p> <p>The announcement of an additional £2.4b funding nationally is not good news for Solihull. Solihull has received no additional Basic Need funding for the period up to 2019/20, despite a significant increase in new housing, for reasons unknown.</p>	<p>DL/SF</p>

	<p>(Birmingham received £33m).</p> <p><u>General</u></p> <p>Very disappointingly, Solihull's ASD Free School bid was unsuccessful, for reasons unknown at present. None of the Midlands' bids were successful. A great deal of work has been undertaken, a potential site identified and Solihull has a strong need for places, so momentum will continue to be maintained.</p> <p>It seems likely that the Government's response to the Stage 2 Consultation will be delayed from the Summer to late Autumn 2017.</p>	
6	<p><b>DSG and High Needs Out-turn Statements 2016-17 – Ian Murray</b></p> <p><i>Reference 'Non-delegated DSG 2016/17 Out-turn' and '2016/17 Non-delegated High Needs Block Out-turn'</i></p> <p>Although expected to achieve an underspend, the HNB achieved a year-end overspend of £142k. Key factors included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An overspend against top-up funding for primary and secondary (in and out-of-borough places) of £680k. This is due to a significant increase in the number of EHCPs in response to rising numbers of SEND pupils within a rising population and statements being issued for higher values due to more complex needs. Members requested a breakdown of in and out-of-borough top-ups, separated by year for the June meeting.</li> <li>• An in-year allocation of £295k running costs for ARCs currently in operation.</li> </ul> <p>The budget headings will be reviewed and realigned for 2017/18.</p> <p>On the Non-delegated DSG, changes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An overspend of £142k on Schools and Sixth Form delegated, largely due to the re-evaluation of business rates.</li> <li>• An overspend of £394k against a Contingency of £250k due to funding allocated to cover pupil growth costs. This is expected to be 'caught up' in the 2018/19 budgets.</li> <li>• Overall the DSG achieved an underspend of £27k.</li> <li>• Funds carried forward to 2017/18 are earmarked as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- £1.218m for capital building works for ARCs</li> <li>- £0.256m school funding requirement</li> <li>- £0.054m for 2 year-old trajectory funding, which will end next year</li> <li>- £0.018m HN contingency</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	IM
7	<p><b>Special School Funding Bands – Steve Fenton</b></p> <p>Following work to update the banding descriptors for each level of additional need, there is the opportunity to map this to funding. SF briefly explained the way SEND funding currently works. He suggested that by reworking the current funding, we could achieve a standardised top-up by band so the top-up rate would be the same per child whatever school they attended, with consistency from one year to the next. SF has yet to meet collectively with special school heads to explain the plan and ask for their agreement to move overnight to the new system, whilst protecting each school in-year. Following this meeting, SF will bring the proposal back to SEND and FWG.</p> <p>Although it was appreciated that this change could result in winners and losers, SF had modelled some figures and the biggest change for a single school was £30k (out of a £2.5m budget and equivalent to 2 places). There is a wish to avoid a system where small changes have a big impact, but it is anticipated that this proposal will bring clarity to a currently complicated funding process. SF will bring a further report in due course.</p>	SEND WG FWG
8	<p><b>Procurement Update – Darren Jakeways</b></p> <p><i>Reference 'School Contracts April 2017'</i></p> <p>A recruitment process is currently in place to replace Gaynor McGarry. In the meantime, schools' procurement work is being spread across the Procurement team. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The non-domestic waste contract with Veolia expires on 31 May 2017 and discussions are taking place around extending this for a further 12 months, with the view to re-tendering next year.</li> </ul>	Fwd Plan

9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SMBC recycling contract with Amey has been removed (including the withdrawal of local recycling plants). Veolia has already turned down an approach from a consortium of schools to provide the service. Veolia would help, but only on an individual school basis and for a fee. <i>(Subsequent to the meeting, Veolia has agreed to meet Procurement to discuss a group discount structure by mid-May 2017. It would therefore be appreciated if schools could inform Gary McBean at <a href="mailto:gary.mcbean@solihull.gov.uk">gary.mcbean@solihull.gov.uk</a> as to the size of current bins individual schools use for recycling and the frequency of collections currently undertaken).</i> Amey would also provide the service to schools for a fee.</li> <li>• The home-to-school transport contract expired on 31 March 2017, although a short-term arrangement has been put in place until the new Dynamic Purchasing System commences (for which there is a live tender, ending 8 May). DJ will bring an update on this to the June meeting.</li> <li>• Schools can continue to use the schools' cleaning framework. Following discussion with a number of schools, DJ felt it would be useful to undertake a consultation with the school community to gain feedback around value for money and best solutions.</li> <li>• There are extension options for the school grounds maintenance contract which ends on 31 May 2017.</li> <li>• It was noted that no schools (maintained/academies/MATs) are obliged to use these contracts. The Procurement team has negotiated each contract against a standard specification in order to reduce risk and achieve value for money.</li> </ul> <p>MI and CK sought assurance that using SMBC negotiated contracts continued to provide quality, value for money and that due diligence had been undertaken, particularly in the current competitive market and bulk opportunities afforded through collaboratives and MATs. In addition, they felt that if these contracts were available for other MAT schools to access it would add purchasing power to the framework and save individual schools a lot of work.</p> <p>DJ will update the schedule and bring it to the June meeting.</p> <p><b>Date of Next Meeting – 9.30am Wednesday, 14 June 2017 at Room 1, Civic Suite</b></p>	<p>DJ/GMcB</p> <p>DJ</p> <p>DJ</p> <p>Fwd Plan</p>
---	--	--