



# A G E N D A

## SCHOOLS FORUM

Stockport Academy  
Heath Bank Road  
Stockport

Meeting: Tuesday 22 June 2010  
At: 4.15 pm

### 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

### 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/SUBSTITUTIONS

### 3. MINUTES

(Enclosed)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 May, 2010.

### 4. MATTERS ARISING

- STOCKPORT SCHOOL FORUM RESPONSE TO THE FUNDING DISTRIBUTION CONSULTATION

(Enclosed)

### 5. LSS CONSULTATION OUTCOMES JAN-MAY 2010

(Enclosed)

### 6. REVIEWING AND EXTENDING MEMBERSHIP OF SCHOOLS FORUM. AN OPTIONS PAPER

(Enclosed)

### 7. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT OUT-TURN 2009/10

(Enclosed)

### 8. SCHOOL BALANCES UPDATE

(Enclosed)

### 9. PREMATURE RETIREMENT COSTS

(Enclosed)

### 10. DISCUSSION: THE COALITION PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

### 11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### 12. TIME DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

- 21<sup>st</sup> October 2010

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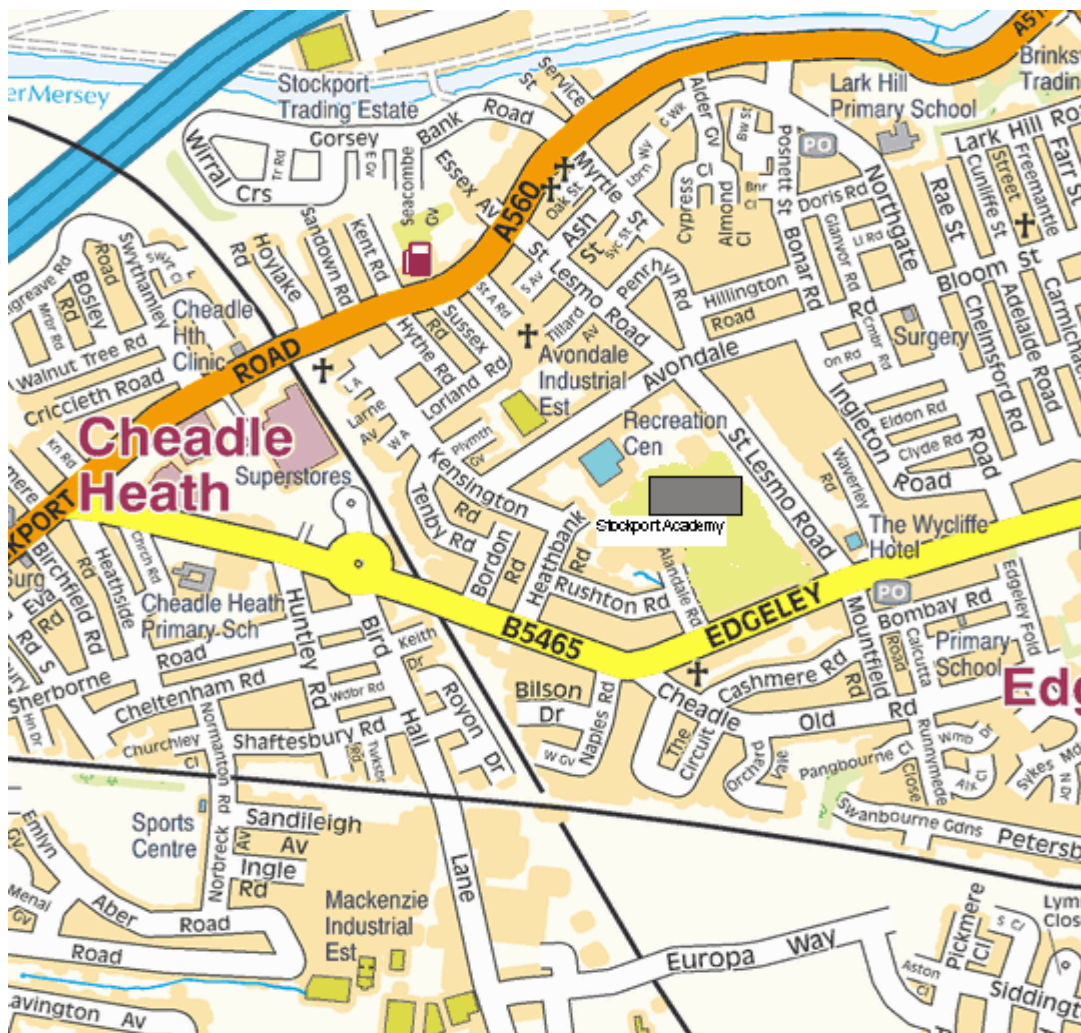
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**SCHOOLS FORUM**

Meeting: 13 May 2010  
 Held at: Stockport Academy: 4.15 pm

**PRESENT****Members****Non School Members**

- |                        |   |                            |
|------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Teachers' Panel        | - | Dawn Strachan              |
| Stockport Council      | - | Councillor Jenny Humphreys |
| PVI Early Years Sector | - | Renee Dickens              |
| Stockport Academy      | - | Tim McCarthy               |

**School Members**

- |                              |   |                      |
|------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| Primary School Headteachers  | - | Cathy Lyall          |
|                              | - | Bernadette Singleton |
| Primary School Governors     | - | Reverend Alan Bell   |
|                              | - | Malcolm Graves       |
|                              | - | Charles Nevin        |
|                              | - | Gillian Stunell      |
| Secondary School Headteacher | - | Charles Lowry        |
| Secondary School Governors   | - | Ian Roberts          |
|                              | - | Susan Palmer         |
| Nursery School Headteacher   | - | Joanne O'Raw         |
| Nursery School Governor      | - | Tropez Martin        |
| Special School Governor      | - | Terry Conlon         |

Observers

Councillor Mark Weldon - Executive Councillor (Children & Young People)

Paula Thomas – Business Manager, Harrytown Catholic High School

Andy Holt –Relationship Manager for Schools, Business Services Directorate, Stockport Council

OfficersChildren & Young People's Directorate

Donna Sager  
Richard Bates

Business Services Directorate

Simon Finch  
Reena Kohli

Communities, Regeneration & Environment Directorate

Darren Pegram

Chief Executive's Directorate

David Clee

**1. WELCOMES/ INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed Malcolm Graves, who had recently been appointed as a Primary School Governor representative on the Forum, and Simon Finch, who had recently taken up the post of Strategic Accountant in the Business Services Directorate. He also welcomed Paula Thomas, Business Manager, Harrytown Catholic High School, and Andy Holt, Relationship Manager for Schools in the Business Services Directorate, who were attending the meeting as observers.

**2. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Paul Beatty, Patricia Goodstadt, Jon Roper, Mike Harding, Mike Gledhill, Deborah Woods and Andrew Webb.

**3. MINUTES**

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 21 January, 2010 were approved as a correct record subject to the name of Deborah

Woods being recorded in the list of attendees as a Special School Headteacher.

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING**

##### **Charging Policy for Additional Hours in Nursery Provision**

It was reported that it had been agreed that the base rate charge for additional hours in nursery provision would be the same irrespective of the status of the provider and a letter was to be sent to all schools to that effect.

#### **5. REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) SUB-GROUP**

The Service Director (Strategy and Performance) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) in connection with the meeting of the SEN Sub Group which had been held on 16 April 2010.

It was noted that the key messages identified in paragraph 2 of the report needed to be discussed at meetings of the Primary and Secondary Heads Consortia.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

#### **6. SCIPS – FEEDBACK FROM THE SECONDARY HEADS CONSORTIUM**

The Chair reported that there were currently six SCIPs workers employed in schools, but that there was only funding for three to continue. A bid had been made to the Children's Trust to cover the shortfall of approximately £100,000.

It was reported that the Secondary Heads Consortium had considered funding for one year on a cluster basis, funding to be drawn down by primary and secondary schools in that cluster on a 'buy back' basis.

Further discussions and consultations would take place to see if any additional funding could be put towards the employment of the SCIPs workers.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

#### **7. DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES (DCSF) SCHOOL FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG) CONSULTATIONS**

A representative of the Corporate Director, Business Services submitted a report of the Corporate Director, Business Services and the Corporate Director, Children and Young People (copies of which had been circulated) outlining announcements from the DCSF, released on 15 March 2010, which covered schools funding to 2013 as follows:-

- Investing for the future: protecting the front line: school funding 2010-13;
- Consultation on the future distribution of school funding;

- Guidance for local authorities on managing surplus school balances.

Responses to the future distribution of school funding were required by 7 June 2010.

The Service Director (Strategy and Performance) proposed holding a one day workshop on efficiency and value for money working in schools.

RESOLVED – (1) That the announcements on schools funding 2010-13 be noted.

(2) That a one day workshop be arranged for all schools on efficiency and value for money working.

(3) That a working group comprising Charles Lowry, Gillian Stunell and Ian Roberts meet to consider the Forum's response to the implications of the consultation proposals and an e mail inviting comments on the Forum's proposed response be sent all members of the Forum. (Cathy Lyall and Joanne O'Raw to forward any comments particular to the primary and nursery sectors by e mail).

## **8. CARBON REDUCTION COMMITMENT**

Representatives of the Corporate Director, Business Services and the Corporate Director, Communities, Regeneration and Environment submitted a report of the Corporate Director, Business Services and the Corporate Director, Children and Young People (copies of which had been circulated) relating to potential changes to the Schools Finance Regulations (England) in 2011/12 which would affect the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget from 2011/12. There would be a pressure on the 2011/12 DSG budget as a result of the Carbon Reduction Commitment Trading Scheme.

RESOLVED – That the potential implications of the Carbon Reduction Commitment be noted.

## **9. DRAFT FORWARD PLAN AND ROLE OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM**

The Service Director (Strategy and Performance) submitted a joint report of the Corporate Directors, Business Services and Children & Young People (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the reports to be presented to the Forum during 2010/11, and the roles and responsibilities of the Forum.

The issue of the greater representation of primary schools on the Forum compared to secondary schools was raised.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Service Director (Strategy and Performance) be requested to look at the balance between the representation of the different sectors on the Forum, and a report be submitted to the next meeting.

(3) That Lynn Merilion, Principal of Stockport College, be invited to fill the vacancy for the 14-19 Sector on the Forum.

## **10. ELECTRONIC INCOME COLLECTION FOR SCHOOLS IN STOCKPORT**

The Service Director (Strategy and Performance) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the business case for Stockport to procure a system which would enable parents and carers to pay online for school meals and school services using credit and debit cards, and seeking the views of the Forum in taking the proposal forward.

Members of the Forum generally felt that further work should be carried out in relation to the proposal, including a comparison of the cost of not procuring the system.

RESOLVED – (1) That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Forum containing further information on the proposal, including the comparative cost of not procuring the system.

(2) That discussions take place with the Business Managers of schools with regard to their views on procuring the system.

## **11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **(a) Early Retirement Costs**

The Chair reported on the funding available to support the one-off early retirement of teachers and the process undertaken to ensure the affect on the curriculum was minimised.

RESOLVED – That a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum.

### **(b) Susan Palmer and Reena Kohli**

The Chair advised the meeting that this would be the last meeting of the Forum which would be attended by Susan Palmer and Reena Kohli. Susan had resigned from her position as voluntary aided secondary school governor on the Forum, and Reena was leaving her post in the Accountancy Section of Stockport Council to take up a new post with Manchester City Council. On behalf of the Forum, the Chair thanked them for their work and contributions, and wished them well for the future.

## **12. DATE AND VENUE OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

RESOLVED – That future meetings of the Forum be held at 4.15pm at Stockport Academy on the following dates:-

- Tuesday 22 June 2010
- Thursday 21 October 2010
- Tuesday 18 January 2011
- Tuesday 15 March 2011.

The meeting closed at 5.58 pm.

g:\Minutes 2010\Schools Forum – May 2010

# Stockport School Forum response to the funding distribution consultation

11

May 2010

## Stockport Position

### 1. Background

**Stockport is considered to be the most 'typical' district in the country, closest to the national average across a range of indicators.**

Stockport is made up of a number of different neighbourhoods, which are grouped into seven areas, each with its own distinct characteristics and identity. There are 21 wards that stretch from the borders of the Peak District National Park to the outskirts of Manchester. Overall, Stockport is a relatively affluent area where local people experience a good quality of life. Stockport is the third most polarised district in the country in terms of the difference between the most and least deprived areas. This reflects the significant affluence of some areas, alongside four neighbourhoods where outcomes for local people are significantly below the borough average. Brinnington, Bridgehall and Adswold, Heaton Norris and Lancashire Hill, and the Town Centre (as shown in lilac on the map) are described as Priority 1 areas and contain at least one lower super output area (LSOA) which falls within the bottom 5% most deprived nationally. Population estimates show that approximately 281,000 people live in Stockport in 125,473 households (based on mid-year 2008 population estimates and household figures as at March 2009). The age profile of the local population is fairly typical of the national averages and the 2001 Census reported that there was a relatively small (4.3%) minority ethnic population primarily made up of Asian or British Asian residents. Unemployment at 5.6% of the working-age population is below the North West and national averages (based on the 2008 official measure of unemployment) and 78% of housing is privately owned, higher than regional and national averages. There are 67,200 children and young people in Stockport. Stockport council area is covered by one PCT and the residents are served by one Foundation Hospital Trust at Stepping Hill. The council has 315 children and young people in care and there are 170 children and young people with child protection plans. There are 88 maintained primary schools (including infant and junior), 13 maintained secondary schools (known as high schools), one Academy and six special schools. There are three pupil referral units. All of the high schools are for pupils aged 11-16. Post-16 education and training is provided by three sixth form colleges, one general further education college and five Stockport-based work-based training provider.

- 1.1 Overall Stockport School Forum fully welcomes the commitment to maintaining the current level of funding allocated for deprivation, but believe that deprivation in rural, suburban and smaller towns, as well as in the large inner city areas, must be recognised.
- 1.2 We welcome the change in distribution that now recognises that the incidence of High Cost Pupils is not strongly correlated with deprivation. This is a very big redistribution from the original formula. We particularly welcome the measure for Cognition and Learning: we think this is a much better measure than the one suggested for the AEN block. We support the use of the same social deprivation measure for both blocks.

## Response to the Government's questionnaire

## Chapter 1

### 1. Do you agree with the principles we are applying to the formula?

We welcome the recognition that, whilst 'fairness' does not mean that everyone will get the same, differences in funding between local authorities must be justified using robust evidence. In particular, where difficult choices have to be made, the underlying principle must be made explicit.

We welcome the distinction between the responsibility of central government to allocate national resources to local authorities and the responsibility of local authorities to assess and meet the needs of individual schools at the local level. Whilst the consultation document is clear in explaining the choices available, without local authority exemplifications, it is difficult to properly evaluate the proposals. We recognise the importance of having more detailed examples of the effect of various changes at local authority level.

We welcome the commitment to at least maintaining the current level of funding allocated for deprivation, but it is important that deprivation can clearly exist in pockets of areas of suburban, as well as in the large inner city areas, and this is particularly more pronounced in Stockport where we are a very polarised community with a clear mixture of comparative wealth and extreme disadvantage.

Whilst we recognise the importance of providing time to plan for changes to funding, a very tight transition protection might mean that changes in the distribution that are recognised as fair take a very unfair time to work through to authorities with the recognised need. Authorities that are, in the long term, likely to be winners are, at the present time, finding it difficult to meet the needs of their pupils and very difficult to find any 'slack' for efficiency savings.

### 2. Do you agree with the proposals to mainstream the grants specified into DSG?

We welcome the proposal to mainstream grants into the DSG and ultimately into the local authorities own fair funding formula for schools. Again, whilst transition arrangements may be necessary, these should not be over prescriptive and delay the development of a local authority formula for the whole Individual Schools Budget. Local authority formulae tend to be more stable and predictable than grants and, therefore, a reduction in the money allocated through grants will bring stability and predictability into school funding.

Including grants in the DSG makes sense if there is a single needs based formula. When a new need is identified, the funding to address the need can be channelled through the DSG formula. It will make the funding for any new initiatives transparent but does depend on the DSG formula having a clear connection to the cost of provision at school level.

### 3. Do you agree with the proposed elements of the formula?

Yes. Although the introduction of a block for the Early Years is an obvious improvement on the current grant system, there is still so much flexibility and variability in provision across the country, a single formula will cause some turbulence.

In addition, we will argue that our preferred choice of methodology for the basic entitlement suggests that there should be a distinct block for local authority central expenditure.

## Chapter 2

### **4. Which methodology for calculating the basic entitlement do you consider would enable the fairest and most practical distribution of funding?**

We welcome the clear definition of the purpose of the basic entitlement:

*“It covers base funding before any additional amounts for AEN, separate funding for high cost pupils, sparsity funding for the primary sector and the adjustments for area costs are added.”*

This has removed an ambiguity in the previous definition of basic entitlement that included a notional AEN within it.

The basic entitlement is at the centre of the funding system. It should be used to define the basic level of educational provision that the country can afford before the provision of resources to meet all additional needs. If, when the total of basic entitlement and additional needs is calculated, it cannot be afforded then there have to be reductions in all areas and not just in the basic entitlement. A system that launches a judgement of the balance between basic entitlement and additional needs before the calculation of costs is flawed: it tends to be based on historic patterns of expenditure and cannot be said to using robust evidence to justify differences in total funding between authorities.

We strongly support the basic entitlement, in its new and much improved definition, is at the heart of the funding system and must be based on robust evidence. Whilst the calculations from the bottom up approach are complicated and will require some judgements, we fundamentally believe this approach and strongly support the basic entitlement. We recognise that some calculations do not have to be very prescriptive but cover the main elements in schools expenditure, staffing, premises, occupation and supplies and services.

The discussion is around the basic entitlement in the DSG allocation to local authorities and not the basic entitlement to be used in a local authority formula. The local authority has to fund the central expenditure on pupils from the DSG and, therefore, all the blocks in the formula will contribute to these central costs unless an additional block is introduced to cover central expenditure. If the basic entitlement is calculated on an activity led basis, then there should be consideration of including an additional central block. The same argument applies to any formulae used in the other blocks in the DSG. There is not a complete relationship between, for example, the AEN funding in the DSG and the allocation for AEN in local authority formulae: a central expenditure block would make this much more transparent.

## Chapter 3

### **5. Do you agree with the proposed methodology for distributing money for additional educational needs?**

**and**

### **6. Which is your preferred indicator for distributing money via deprivation? Why?**

The funding system should support schools and local authorities in raising the educational achievement of all pupils and ensuring that every pupil reaches their potential. We know that failure to reach potential is strongly correlated with social deprivation. It is also clear that

pupils from socially deprived backgrounds in Stockport do less well than similar pupils in affluent areas, despite many intensive support programmes and interventions from high quality teaching.

We welcome the recognition that not all additional educational needs are correlated with social deprivation and therefore welcome the wider range of indicators, including the flat rate per pupil.

The indicator of social deprivation used as a proxy indicator has to be sensitive enough to pick up deprivation wherever it occurs. Clearly a measure collected at pupil level meets this need best. However, the only measure suggested using pupil level data is the eligibility for FSM. This is not a very sensitive measure as it is a simple on/off count and does not pick up those pupils who are not quite eligible or who do not claim their meal.

In Stockport we have considered a wide range of proxy indicators to enable us to identify deprivation however we would strongly welcome an expert view on this.

The methodology of using FSM + IDACI hybrid is flawed. FSM is a threshold measure whereas IDACI is a graduated scale. The distribution through this formula grant can be changed dramatically by changing the number of pupils from the IDACI scale included in the measure. There is no justification given for choosing the particular number of pupils and therefore this measure cannot be said to meet the criteria that differences in funding between authorities should be based on robust evidence. We would be interested in receiving evidence for the choice of this measure.

**7. Do you agree with the indicators, other than for deprivation, that we have proposed for each need?**

Why have two very different measures been used for Cognition and Learning in the AEN block and the High Cost Pupil block? The measure used for High Cost Pupils is the incidence of low attainment in the authority and this seems to be a very good proxy indicator for cognition and learning difficulties. The same measure could be used in the AEN block with a different threshold level used.

Whilst underperformance in the groups identified remains a concern, a threshold measure for Cognition and Learning would pick up those pupils in these underperforming groups as well as any others. We welcome flexibility to identify additional underperforming cohorts of pupils that local needs analysis identify.

**8. Will the Local Pupil Premium mechanism help funding to be more responsive to changes in pupil characteristics?  
and  
9. Is it right that local authorities should each develop their own pupil premium mechanism?**

All local authority formulae already allocate funding on the basis of the overall social deprivation of pupils in a school. If all the pupils in a school who were eligible for FSM moved to a neighbouring school, the funding should follow. There is no need for a pupil premium that labels individuals as needing (or not needing) support on the basis of their take-up of FSM. However, there is a need for local authorities to make it clear to their schools how their funding formula works and in particular, how much of the formula is assigned to support whether the proxy indicator used is social deprivation, low prior

attainment, mobility or any of the other proxy indicators used by local authorities to reflect the needs in their authority.

The local authority should be able to develop its own pupil premium mechanism. A good example of the use of a good local proxy indicator that tackles need is the use of mobility. We recognise in some local authorities there is particularly high mobility in a few schools for a variety of reasons – seasonal workers and high family breakdowns, and in Stockport there is pressure in educational provision due to the high number of Looked After Children who are placed in the Borough. At a national level, mobility is not a high discriminator – all authorities have similar levels of mobility if for different reasons. However, an individual local authority might recognise that their mobility is strongly associated with social deprivation but use mobility as one of their indices as it measures a specific local need in a few schools.

The distribution of money to support additional educational need at national level is not attached to named individual pupils but reflects the overall need in the authority. The same principle should apply at local authority and school level. Schools are given money in proportion to the general level of need in the school, not attached to individual pupils. There is no need to label pupils or go through a bureaucratic assessment procedure to allocate this money. Once money is attached to named individual pupils there has to be some direct accountability (as in the resources allocated for a Statement) and this can lead to very specific methods of support being named which reduces the flexibility that leads to innovation.

We repeat the point made earlier – local authorities should ensure that their schools understand how the local formula works and how much money is allocated for pupil support. Schools can use this money flexibly but should be aware of how much is available, how it is spent and whether the expected outcomes are being achieved.

We would strongly recommend that any Pupil Premium allocation mechanisms need to be operationally responsive to immediate changes in pupil circumstance.

## Chapter 4

### **10. Do you agree with the methodology for distributing money for High Cost Pupils?**

Yes. We welcome the change in distribution that now recognises that the incidence of High Cost Pupils is not strongly correlated with deprivation. This is a clear issue for Stockport and one that has been widely debated at our School Forum. Whilst 50% of the total will be distributed by a flat rate per pupil, two of the other measures used, for cognition and learning and take-up of Disability Living Allowance, are both poor discriminators so that effectively almost 80% of the distribution will be by a flat rate per pupil. This is a very big redistribution from the original formula.

We particularly welcome the measure for Cognition and Learning: we think this is a much better measure than the one suggested for the AEN block. We support the use of the same social deprivation measure for both blocks.

### **11. Do you agree that the school census and Middle Super Output Area are the right data source and geography to use to assess the sparsity of an area?**

and

### **12. Which method for calculating the sparsity factor do you think will best enable additional funding to reach those local authorities that need to maintain small schools – the broad or narrow option?**

and

**Chapter 5**

Whilst this has limited direct relevance to Stockport, we recognise if it is more expensive to run an education system in rural areas then area cost must be recognised within the formula. The methodology for calculating the additional costs have concentrated on looking at the premium given to small rural primary schools, but this is an inadequate way of estimating the true costs of providing a comparable education system in sparsely populated areas. There needs to be a better analysis of the costs, including the transport costs in secondary schools. Whilst we recognise that the transport costs and funding come from a different part of the local authority budget, transport is integral to the running and funding of the education system in rural areas.

We welcome the use of the home postcode data in determining the sparsity of the pupil population as this measures far more accurately the distribution of pupils in maintained schools.

**Chapter 6****14. Which is the fairest method of applying the Area Cost Adjustment?**

We strongly support the hybrid model which is more easily explained. It enables there to be both a better link developed between pay bands and funding and recognition that support staff pay (at present) is more directly related to the general labour market. If or when support staff pay is under a single body, then pay bands for all staff could be better related to funding.

**Chapter 7****15. Do you support our plans for the transitional arrangements for mainstreaming grants?****and****16. Should floors be paid for by all local authorities or just the largest gaining authorities?****and****17. Do you have any suggestions as to how the Minimum Funding Guarantee could be improved?**

In a situation where local authorities will be reviewing formulae both to take into account the need to clarify social deprivation funding and mainstream grants, there needs to be more flexibility at local authority level – a bigger gap between the local authority increase per pupil and the school level MFG.

If the application of a new formula results in considerable re-distribution of resources, then there has to be a planned, measurable time for readjustments downwards at school or local authority level (where grants used for central services are expected to be given to schools). At school level the time for adjustments should be finite and progress clearly measurable – so that those who feel they were unfairly treated before but will get a fairer share at the end of the process can see the relative gains they need.

It is fairer to share the cost of the floors in the transition phase across all other authorities – because those who stand to gain most in the end were those who were most unfairly treated

before. This is assuming that the new funding formula meets our main criteria – that it should provide a fair distribution of whatever resources are available and enables all schools in the country to meet the aim of improving life chances for all children. Our schools would find it beneficial that if grants are being mainstreamed there should be some indication of the original source of funding.

Ian Roberts  
Chair  
Stockport School Forum

28.5.10



**Draft Report for Schools Forum: 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2010**  
**Stockport Learning Support Service in the Secondary Sector**  
**Consultation Outcomes Jan – May 2010**

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**Report of:** Judy Davies

**Date:** 03.06.10

**Subject:** The Outcomes of a Consultation about the Learning Support Service in the Secondary Sector in Stockport.

**1. Introduction**

The Learning Support Service (LSS) is an Inclusion team within Stockport, which provides specialist assessment, direct teaching and other interventions for children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. It is a 4–16 team with the major part of its work delivered through Stockport Primary, Secondary and Special Schools. The team comprises approximately 50 fte teacher posts and delivery is through a range of approaches and interventions (e.g. training and capacity building, support for parents, introducing new initiatives across Stockport, TA training and support, one to one and group assessment and teaching).

In 2002, the Local Authority delegated the budget (approx 1 million) for the Secondary LSS team, to Secondary Schools and since then, funding for this part of the service has been through a buy back agreement.

**2. Consultation Brief**

A discussion paper was presented at Schools Forum on 21.01.10, which outlined the declining trend in buy back, of the LSS in the secondary sector, with a proposal to alter funding arrangements so that the LSS in the secondary sector could develop its role and have a presence in every secondary school. Before Schools Forum could take a decision on this change to funding arrangements, a consultation was commissioned with stakeholders as follows:

- Secondary Schools
- Parents/carers
- The community of SEN professionals including the LSS secondary staff
- Professional Associations

The consultation considered the following points:

- The principle of equitable access for all children and young people in the Stockport maintained sector, who might benefit from the services of the LSS.
- The principle of partnership between schools and support services to achieve excellent outcomes through joined up working.
- The rationale for core services for vulnerable children and young people to change from a buy back system to a funded system.
- The practice of using part of the Age Weighted Pupil Unit to fund the LSS in the secondary sector.
- The confidence parents/carers have in their child's needs in reading, spelling, writing, number work, being met.
- The views of parents about what best meets their child's needs.

### 3. Methodology

This consultation was undertaken over a period of five months from January to May 2010. It contained four phases:

- Pilot visits to 2 of the Secondary Head Teacher representatives of Schools Forum to discuss the consultation principles and process.
- Awareness raising through a discussion paper widely circulated, and discussion at LSS Management Committee, SMT, liaison meeting with the Professional Associations, Schools Forum, Education Partnership Board, Secondary SENCO network, Inclusion Services Meeting.
- Consultation visits with the 13 Stockport Secondary Schools.
- Written feedback from stakeholders.

The consultation visits to secondary schools were offered by letter (appendix 1), to the 13 maintained secondary schools in Stockport (excluding The Stockport Academy), and schools were asked to invite those members of their teams who they felt would be useful participants in the consultation, for example: the Head teacher, the Special Needs Coordinator or Inclusion Manager, the Chair of Governors, the SEN Governor, the Bursar etc.

The visits to secondary schools were carried out by the Head Teacher of the LSS, the Deputy Head Teacher of the LSS and the Head of Inclusion Services. They followed a pre planned format so that the consultation visit delivered the same range of information to each school. The financial data differed for each school (dependent on projected numbers on roll and current levels of LSS buy back), and was only made available to each school at their own visit.

Written feedback from stakeholders was collected through a short questionnaire (Appendix 2), designed to sit alongside the discussion paper for schools and services, and a more general stand alone questionnaire for parents (Appendix 3).

The parent consultation was carried out on our behalf by the Parent Partnership Service, a semi independent service managed by the Together Trust, and experienced in gathering and passing on parent's views on SEN issues. Parents/carers' views were surveyed using a three item questionnaire, designed to sample parent confidence. The parent sample was drawn from the Parent Partnership database of young people of School Action Plus or SEN Statement status, having a cognition and learning difficulty and living in

the Stockport area. All parents meeting the above criteria with children aged between 9 and 16 (attending current year 5 through to year 11) formed the sample.

#### 4. Response Rates

##### Consultation Visits

Consultation visits to secondary schools were attended as follows:

Head Teachers:	13 (including 1 Acting Head Teacher)
SENCOs/Inclusion Managers	11
Governors	1
Bursars	4

Written responses have been received as follows:

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Written response received</b>
Secondary schools	08 (62%)
Parents/carers	32 (18%)
The community of SEN/Inclusion teams	19 (61%)
Totals	59 (28%)

#### 5. Results

Of the 210 questionnaires sent out, 58 were received, representing a response rate of 28%. While feedback from parents is always interesting and useful, it was felt that the questions for parents were trying to contain an outline of the issue within the question, which might have produced a skewed response. For this reason the parent responses have been included in Appendix 4 and not in the main body of the report.

##### 5.1 Reponses from Secondary Schools

*Do you agree with the principle to secure equitable access for all children and young people in the Stockport maintained sector who might benefit from the specialist teaching and services of the Learning Support Service?*

There was strong agreement (6/7 respondents) with this principle:

- “Yes, there should always be equitable access for those students who have needs which would benefit from specialist teaching of LSS”.
- “Equitable access across Stockport as an LA is an agreed principle”

However, some (2/8 respondents) felt that specialist teaching could be achieved in other ways than through the LSS:

- “All young people should have equal access to high quality support services and teaching. This is not necessarily the same as saying it has to be provided by LSS!”

And some (2/8 respondents) were very concerned about a loss of choice:

- “In the past this has resulted in us buying into the service but we do not want this choice taking out of our hands”.

And concern was felt by a minority (1/8) of schools about the effect of this principle on their budget:

- “We have trained an excellent workforce in our SEN department which would have to sustain cuts if the proposal goes ahead”

*Do you agree with the rationale to change core services for vulnerable children and young people from a buyback system to a funded system?*

There was strong opposition (5/8 respondents) to this proposal, with the predominant view being that this would reduce the ability of schools to buy in provision that matched their needs:

- “No. Schools must have the flexibility to buy back according to need which changes on an annual basis”.
- “While we appreciate what you’re trying to achieve we would prefer to remain with a buy back rather than a funded service in order that we can make our own planning decisions and choices each year based on individual learner and school needs”.

1 school was happy with the status quo.

Also mentioned was:

- The Government agenda to increase delegation to schools.
- The further disadvantaging of schools already disadvantaged by SEN Formula Funding.

A small number (2/8 respondents) agreed with the proposal, adding:

- “We understand .... that a funded system would give more security and feasibility to the LSS”.

*Do you support using some of the SEN element of the AWPU (Age Weighted Pupil Unit) to fund future Learning Support Service input in the secondary sector?*

There was a spectrum of opinion expressed in the responses received. Some schools held strong opposition (6/8 respondents) to this proposal, as follows:

In relation to the AWPU in Stockport (3/8 respondents):

- “I do not support any top slicing of the AWPU. We are funded at the lower quartile!”
- “The AWPU is already one of the lowest nationally – schools are already facing financial hardship and this will exacerbate the problem”.

In relation to pressures on school budgets (2/8 respondents):

- “ the potential additional charges for this school would push us into deficit budget and/or cause us to look at redundancy”

A small number of schools (2/8 respondents) were in favour of the proposal:

- “We would support this proposal and we would seek to put in place alternative ways of maintaining the current levels of specialist teaching”.

Also mentioned by 1 school:

- “I would always value advice and support in ensuring that as a school we are spending an appropriate proportion of our resources on SEN and that the services we provide are of good quality”.

Of the schools that did not return a written response, a summary is given here of their verbal response during the visits made to their schools.

N.B. This may not reflect what they would have written but does give a view of the feeling at the time.

- Some schools felt that the paper and proposal did not fully recognize what schools were already doing to support SEN young people, and one or two talked about the changes they had made recently to develop their SEN departments. (2/5 schools)
- Some schools recognized that SEN needs are becoming more complex and drew out the link between learning needs, disaffection and NEET (2/5 schools). There was widespread positive recognition for the contribution of the LSS and concern that the LSS teacher and support of the service might be withdrawn (4/5 schools).
- Several schools recognized that the LSS teacher is fully embedded as part of their SEN departments and that partnership working has helped them demonstrate their positive CVA (3/5 schools).
- There was strong agreement for the principle that all young people should have in place what they need to succeed (4/5 schools).
- Several referred to the current concerns about budgets, and it was recognized that this proposal does represent a reduction in schools managing their own budgets (3/5 schools). However, for some schools it was agreed that the proposal would make financial sense (2/5 schools).
- CPD arrangements for school and service together was felt to be a good idea but some schools were concerned that LSS teacher time out of school and away from individual young people, was a worry (3/5 schools).

## 5.2 Responses from parents/carers

Can be found in Appendix 4.

## 5.3 Responses from the Community of SEN/Inclusion Teams

*Do you agree with the principle to secure equitable access for all children and young people in the Stockport maintained sector who might benefit from the specialist teaching and services of the Learning Support Service?*

There was irrefutable support for this question, with the following themes described in the responses from LSS teachers and Inclusion Teams:

### Access and entitlement (9/19 respondents):

- “All children should be entitled to specialist teaching provided by the service (LSS) if they need it”;
- “This goes to the heart of why a Local Authority exists. In the absence of a values driven set of public services, there is a risk that some of the most vulnerable and needy children and young people might not have their needs adequately met”.

2 other respondents felt that the LSS should be provided in the same way as other support services.

### Adhering to the Stockport wide criteria was mentioned by 3 respondents:

Several LSS teachers felt that eligibility criteria for access to their service, should apply to all young people.

- “The assessment criteria if applied rigidly, should make it fair to all pupils”.

Continuity of service delivery was mentioned by 2 respondents:

- “There should be no discrimination and a level of continuity must prevail across the authority from primary to secondary level”.

Impact (3 respondents):

- “We (LSS teachers) have access to resources, meet regularly to share ideas and seek advice, and receive regular training. LSS staff are highly qualified and committed to give high quality teaching”.
- “Absolutely but at a level that secures enough of a service to make an impact – not so distributed that impact is not possible”

Flexible delivery (2 respondents):

- “Not all secondary SEN provision is organized in exactly the same way ... simply deploying LSS teaching staff equally throughout the authority’s secondary schools will not necessarily ensure equal access to high quality teaching for SEN students.”

Loss of service to vulnerable young people was mentioned by 3 respondents:

- “We (LSS teachers) are concerned that the proposal is for only 12 LSS teachers, when currently 15.5 are employed and the figure was 22.8 in the not too distant past”

*Do you agree with the rationale to change core services for vulnerable children and young people from a buyback system to a funded system?*

There was strong support (17/19 respondents) for this question, with respondents feeling it would achieve the following outcomes:

To achieve equity of access (8/19 respondents):

- “the advantages of a funded system will be the ability of an overview to guarantee a more equitable distribution of LSS resources”;
- “absolutely. This seems to be the only way of ensuring consistent and appropriate provision for all children. It is unacceptable that a needy child in one school in Stockport might not be able to gain access to the same high quality support arrangements as in another .... This is an area where it is simply not appropriate to use market forces to determine the approach that is used”.

To maintain a high quality teaching intervention for vulnerable children (4 respondents):

- some schools “use teaching assistants instead who although good, are not qualified to assess, prepare individual lessons, evaluate effectively and monitor student progress”;

To maintain the service continuity (2 respondents):

- “yes, provided that the students who currently benefit, are not disadvantaged by any changes that take place”.

Accountability (4 respondents):

- “A funded system would allow for greater monitoring and less students being lost in the system”
- “... the administration of all buy back schemes brings some cost, which would be best avoided at any time, and especially during a period of probable cutbacks such as now”.

Do you support using some of the SEN element of the AWPU (Age Weighted Pupil Unit) to fund future Learning Support Service input in the secondary sector?

3 responses to this question were made, for example:

- “yes. This would seem to be a good way of financing an equitable system”
- “I hope that schools will agree to this as they see the unquestionable impact of the high quality interventions accessed in primary”.

Any further comments?

The main themes arising from the further comments from LSS/Inclusion staff, are summarized as follows:

- Choice of school (4 respondents): some secondary schools who regularly buy back the LSS are attracting a disproportionate number of SEN students. This puts a strain on both the school and the LSS staff. Some students are travelling outside of their local area because of this.
- Building expertise (3 respondents): the provision offered to vulnerable young people, varies greatly across Stockport. A funded system would help to develop awareness and build expertise across all schools, especially at a time when the SEN gap has been identified as high in Stockport.
- Adhering to criteria (2 respondents): criteria to access the service in the future would need to be flexible as each secondary school presents a different context
- Maintaining continuity and relationship (6 respondents): some LSS teachers are concerned that their current close working relationships with their schools and recognised good practice might not be able to be maintained in the new system.
- Job permanency (2 respondents): LSS teachers are hopeful that, at the end of this consultation, full time permanent job contracts can be finally established so that the current job insecurity is ended.

6. Conclusions

There was broad and widespread agreement that access to the LSS for all those children and young people who might benefit from the service, should be available. Some respondents raised the issue that access to the service should relate to criteria and wherever those criteria are met, the service should be provided.

It was recognized though, that schools have developed a broad range of responses to meet the needs of vulnerable young people with learning

difficulties, according to their own contexts and requirements, and reliance on the LSS was greater or lesser according to those contexts.

There was irrefutable positive recognition of the LSS as a valued and valuable service, which works flexibly with schools, and helps through a creative partnership approach, to achieve excellent outcomes for young people.

While buy back continues to decline further, the inequity of access to learning support services in the secondary sector is becoming further entrenched.

While the community of SEN and Inclusion Services supported a change to a funded system, as did two schools, as being the only way of ensuring equity of access, this proposal was strongly opposed by several of the schools (6 schools/46%) on the grounds that choice would be lost and budgets would be compromised.

Similarly, there was opposition from the schools, to the use of the AWPU as a mechanism to achieve a funded system.

Parents were positive about the input of the LSS in their childrens' lives and in many cases referred to the partnership work between schools and LSS service.

One to one support was rated as the most helpful intervention and parents supported the idea that the specialist help needed by their children should be available in all schools.

## 7. Consultation Outcome

Schools Forum to note the outcome of the Consultation:

- That the change from a buyback to a funded system for the LSS, using the AWPU as the funding mechanism, is not recommended.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

Dear <named Headteacher>

#### **Learning Support Service (LSS) in the Secondary Phase**

A paper (attached) was presented to Schools Forum on January 21 2010 and an agreement to commence a consultation process was secured. We write therefore with further details of that consultation.

We would suggest concluding the consultation – visits and return of written comments – **by the end of April 2010** with a view to reporting outcomes at a subsequent Schools Forum.

In the first instance, we would like to propose a visit to each of the **Secondary Headteachers** in the Borough to outline both the proposal and the individual implications for that specific school. The visit, of about one hour, will give time for discussion, questions and an opportunity to air any opinions. Heads are welcome to invite Chair of Governors, SEN Governor, SENCO or any colleagues they wish. The outcome of the meeting will be to leave a proforma for the Headteacher and colleagues to record their comments for return by the above date. We will be more than happy to answer any further general or specific questions at any point during the process.

Secondly, we would like to gather opinion from the group of **SEN professionals** who would also be subject to the implications of any change in LSS service delivery. This group would include secondary SENCOs and in-school teams, the LSS staff themselves, partner Inclusion Teams and local authority SEN and School Improvement officers.

Thirdly, we would like the views of **young people and parents/carers** likely to have, or need, access to the LSS. In order for this to be manageable and independently representative, we intend to ask Parent Partnership, if possible, to organise and collate opinion.

The proposal will also be presented to relevant **Unions and Professional Bodies** to ensure compliance with due process.

We trust this is an acceptable outline of the next steps which need to be taken and look forward to contacting you to arrange a convenient time to visit within the next few weeks.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely

Martin Wakeling      Headteacher, Learning Support Service

Appendix 2**STOCKPORT LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICE IN THE  
SECONDARY SECTOR CONSULTATION**

*Thank you for your valued comments. Please use further sheets for additional comment if you wish*

1) Do you agree with the principle to secure equitable access for all children and young people in the Stockport maintained sector who might benefit from the specialist teaching and services of the Learning Support Service?

Comments
----------

2) Do you agree with the rationale to change core services for vulnerable children and young people from a buyback system to a funded system?

Comments
----------

3) Do you support using some of the SEN element of the AWPU (Age Weighted Pupil Unit) to fund future Learning Support Service input in the secondary sector?

Comments
----------

Name of Service /Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Designation \_\_\_\_\_

Please return by **May 14 2010** to: Judy Davies, Head of Inclusion Services, Stopford House, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Town Hall, Stockport SK1 3EX [judith.davies@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:judith.davies@stockport.gov.uk)

Appendix 3**STOCKPORT LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICE IN THE  
SECONDARY SECTOR CONSULTATION**

*Thank you for your valued comments. Please use further sheets for additional comment if you wish*

1) Do you agree with the principle to secure equitable access for all children and young people in the Stockport maintained sector who might benefit from the specialist teaching and services of the Learning Support Service?

Comments
----------

2) Do you agree with the rationale to change core services for vulnerable children and young people from a buyback system to a funded system?

Comments
----------

3) Do you support using some of the SEN element of the AWPU (Age Weighted Pupil Unit) to fund future Learning Support Service input in the secondary sector?

Comments
----------

Name of Service /Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Designation \_\_\_\_\_

Please return by **May 14 2010** to: Judy Davies, Head of Inclusion Services, Stopford House, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Town Hall, Stockport SK1 3EX [judith.davies@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:judith.davies@stockport.gov.uk)

#### Appendix 4 Parents/Carers responses

##### Are you and your child confident that specific needs in reading, spelling, writing and/or number work are met by schools and specialist teachers from the Learning Support Services working together?

There was strong agreement with this question, with 23/32 responding 'yes' (7 responded 'no' and 2 were unsure). Comments included:

- "I think it's a wonderful thing that my child gets all the help he does from the learning teachers."
- "Yes, my son receives LSS in his current school and has come on in leaps and bounds."
- "At present the school and the specialist teacher are working together extremely well, giving (my child) the support she requires. I am very impressed with the help (my child) receives."

However, 4 respondents felt that although the support was good, additional help was needed for example:

- "We still have problems with writing and these are not/have not been fully addressed."

3 felt that the basic support was provided but extra LSS time would be useful, for example:

- "Obviously I think more hours support for each child would help, but I am realistic."

3 were unhappy with the amount of support their child had received.

- "Myself and my son feel let down by the amount received in secondary school."

##### What do you feel best helps your child or young person with needs in school?

The responses covered a variety of measures which parents felt helped their child the most, including:

One to one support (7).

Expert help from LSS. (6).

Teachers/teaching assistants (4)

Tailored approaches (2)

Not being singled out/treated differently (3)

Somebody to check they understand (3)

Support in the classroom (2)

Small classes

Confidence/self-esteem building

Comments included:

"One to one support from people who understand his ASD, but who also understand the gaps in his basic skills and are committed to helping to address these issues."

"The fact that (my child) has support and if things become difficult he is able to discuss the matter. The teachers he has are understanding of his requirements but very firm in dealing with him."

“I have found that the extra support that my son received from LSS has had a tremendous effect on his learning and he is now using his full potential.”  
 “When he goes to secondary he would benefit from LSS teaching and LSS support to the same standard.”

*The Learning Support Service works in every Primary School (age 5 – 11) in Stockport. Would you feel reassured if you knew that you could access the service in every school, whether it was Primary or Secondary (age 11 – 16)?*

There was strong agreement with this question; with 31/32 parents responded ‘yes’ and just one responding ‘no’. Comments included:

- “My child goes to secondary school in September and I would like to think he will still be getting the same help he does now. It should be in every school.”

8 respondents commented on the need for specialist help, for example:

- “All children who need specialist help need this service available in whichever school they attend. I would certainly like it to happen in other schools.”

3 respondents were unsure about the level of support provided at secondary school, for example:

- “My child attends (x) school and I don’t feel he or we get the support we should, so having the LSS in the secondary school would I think be beneficial.”

2 respondents felt that the help given at secondary was exemplary:

- “I would have liked (my child) to be statemented at primary school then he would have had the education and support he needed instead of wasting 4 years. Parents need to know that they can access this resource.”
- “My child received very little support (I’d say none at all) at primary school, despite my voicing my concerns. At secondary school she has much more support.”

As Secondary Headteachers we are well aware of the value placed on proper consultation with stakeholder voice.

We have all been through a consultation process with LSS to ask our views about the proposed changes in funding arrangements.

It has come to our notice at the end of the process that there has been a consultation with parents and we have recently had sight of this survey.

We would like to make clear our concerns about the validity of this parental voice activity for the following reasons:

- There is no indication who the parents are. Are they parents of secondary children who have experienced the support given in high schools? Are they parents of children with special needs currently receiving support solely/mainly from LSS staff? Were primary parents surveyed?
- How many parents have been surveyed?
- Which areas/schools were they from?
  
- In particular we have grave concerns about the results of a survey where the questions are so weighted as to guide parents to positive responses. If we were to use such questions for parent voice activities and include them in evidence for Ofsted we feel that they would be disregarded as skewed towards the interests of the school:

**Question 1:**

Are you and your child confident that specific needs in reading, spelling, writing and/or number work are met by schools and specialist teachers from the Learning Support Service working together?

Yes

No

**How can a parent answer this question? They have experience of only one or two schools. The question can only elicit a response about the school the parent knows. How do parents know that their child is being supported by LSS and not a school employee?**

**Question 2:**

What do you feel best helps your child or young person with needs in schools?

**What needs? Could be anything**  
**Question so vague as to be meaningless.**

**Question 3:**

3) The Learning Support Service works in every Primary School (age 5 – 11) in Stockport. Would you feel reassured if you knew that you could access the service in every school, whether it was Primary or Secondary (age 11 – 16)?

Yes

No

**The parent is asked a question which is couched in such terms as they are almost certain to want to say that they would like to be 'reassured'. Would they be so reassured if they understood the effect of the top-slicing of secondary school budgets on some of the excellent in-house SEN provision in High Schools? There is no mention of what the proposals are and what the implications may be.**  
**No parent is going to answer NO to this as it would make them sound as though they don't care**

**STOCKPORT METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL****SCHOOLS FORUM****22 JUNE 2010****REVIEWING AND EXTENDING MEMBERSHIP OF SCHOOL FORUM.  
AN OPTIONS PAPER.**

Report of the Service Director, Strategy and Performance, Children and Young People's Directorate

Author: Donna Sager  
Tel: 0161 474 3801

**1. Background**

- 1.1 At the last School Forum meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2010, Members of the School Forum asked for a revision regarding current membership representation on School Forum. It was noted the differences between primary headteacher and governor representation (currently four of each) and secondary representation (3 of each).
- 1.2 The original determination of membership was outlined in a paper to the Executive entitled Schools Forum – Reconstitution and Membership Arrangements from 01 September 2006, at that time the terms of reference of School Forum were explained to the Executive and the proposals for recruiting membership. These were fully endorsed.
- 1.3 Since the original membership however the DCSF as was, encouraged local authorities and school forums to extend their membership to reflect the change in the nature of Children and Young People's funding, in particular the work around the early years sector and the 14 – 19 agenda. Consideration of the new academy requirements were also included.
- 1.4 The current membership of School Forum is detailed in Appendix 1.
- 1.5 It is important to note that the School Forum Governance is regulated by the Schools Forum Regulations 2002 as amended in 2004, 2005, 2007 and 2008. The general definition of a School Forum is a forum as a decision making and consultative body in relation to matters concerning schools' budgets. Members will be aware that originally the Schools Forum was an advisory body, but now has additional powers which are detailed in the paper presented at the School Forum held 13<sup>th</sup> May 2010.
- 1.6 The Regulations state that membership should have at least 15 members, no maximum is stipulated but there is an agreement that with over 30, the effective management of meetings become difficult. We have always been keen to ensure that all members are fully engaged in the meeting and have an active voice in the meeting so numbers of members are important to Stockport School Forum.

- 1.7 The Regulations state that School Forum must have both school members and can also appoint non school members. The non school members are a maximum of a third total membership (this was a fifth but it was changed in the 2000 amendment,) and must include representatives from the 14 – 19 Partnership and the PVI Early Years providers.
- 1.8 The Local Authority decides which body should be asked to nominate non school members and this has always been done in consultation with the Schools Forum.
- 1.9 The regulations also require the School Forum to consider nominations from Local Authority Members and they consider non school members from vulnerable groups, and also Professional associations or representatives. All of these are currently on School Forum.
- 1.10 The regulations state that representatives from primary and secondary schools should be proportionate to the ratio of pupils in each phase.
- 1.11 If middle schools exist it is good practice to include them in separate groups on the membership structure. Local Authorities have the powers to divide membership between the governors and headteachers and as we have followed, it is good practice to have an equal proportion of the two groups. The main aim must be to have a level and mix of membership that represents a profile of schools across the Authority.

## 2. **Election and Nomination of School Members**

- 2.1 School Forum will be aware that we have an election process which is based on procedures determined when the School Forum was formed. Previous papers have indicated the agreed process for election and nomination of each of the School Forum groups. The terms of office length of time must be defined by the Authority at the time of the appointment.
- 2.2 The School Forum regulations state that a replacement member on the Forum must be electing according to process determined by the constituents represented by the members of that group or sub group. This could for example be a Headteachers' forum.
- 2.3 Therefore a vacancy amongst secondary Headteachers must be led according to a process that has been determined by secondary Headteachers. In Stockport for period of consistency, it has been agreed that the Chair and the Vice Chair of the Consortium are both members. The voting procedures are always reported to School Forum.
- 2.4 These following cannot be members of School Forum: The Elected Members who have an Executive role and other officers employed by the Local Authority who have a strategic role.
- 2.5 As colleagues will be aware, observers can attend meetings but they cannot vote.

2.6 Representation substitutes: The 2008 amendments gave an option for Headteachers to be represented by senior members of staff i.e. deputy, bursar or other responsible for financial management of schools. The local Authority are expected to consult on School Forum arrangements for substitutes who may attend and vote at the meeting on behalf of the school members and School Forum should consider all faith bodies member observers. There is nothing in the Regulations which replaced trust schools.

### 3. **Options for Future Membership**

3.1 Increase the number of Governors representing secondary schools. Members will be aware that the Principal of Stockport Academy is on School Forum, making 4 Headteachers but only 3 Governors.

3.2 Offer the Headteacher and/or Governor of Reddish Vale Trust School membership of School Forum, to ensure there is representation from Trust Schools.

### 4. **Recommendations**

School Forum are asked to comment on the proposed options.

## STOCKPORT SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP AS AT MAY 2010

<b>Total Membership</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Overall %</b>	<b>Prim:Sec %</b>
<b>Constitution of Membership</b>			
<u>Non School Members</u>			
Early Years Child Care (EYCC)	1		
Teacher Liaison Panel (TLP)	1		
Diocese (CoE/RC)	1		
Vulnerable Child	1		
LA Member	1		
Academy	1		
14 – 19 sector	1		
	<u>7</u>	<u>28%</u>	
<u>School Members (Heads and Governors)</u>			
Special	2	8%	
Nursery	2	8%	
Primary	8	32%	58%
Secondary	<u>6</u>	<u>24%</u>	42%
<b>TOTAL SCHOOL MEMBERS</b>	<u>18</u>	<u>72%</u>	
<b>TOTAL MEMBERSHIP</b>	25	100%	100%

To achieve ratio of 1:5 primaries to 1:0 secondary would mean that primaries have to increase numbers.



## APPENDIX 1

## SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP LIST – 14.5.10

HEADTEACHER REPRESENTATIVES	REPRESENTING	EMAIL
<b>NURSERY</b>		
Joanne O'Raw	Nursery School Headteachers	headteacher@larkhill-nur.stockport.sch.uk
<b>PRIMARY</b>		
Cathy Lyall	Primary School Headteachers	headteacher@ladybridge.stockport.sch.uk
Mike Harding	Primary School Headteachers	headteacher@allsaints-pri.stockport.sch.uk
Jon Roper	Primary School Headteachers	headteacher@allsaints.stockport.sch.uk
Bernadette Singleton	Primary School Headteachers	headteacher@st-philips.stockport.sch.uk
<b>SECONDARY</b>		
Evelyn Leslie	Secondary School Headteachers	headteacher@offerton.stockport.sch.uk
Charles Lowry	Secondary School Headteachers	headteacher@st-jamescatholic.stockport.sch.uk
Mike Gledhill	Secondary School Headteachers	headteacher@kingsway.stockport.sch.uk
<b>SPECIAL</b>		
Deborah Woods	Special School Headteachers	woodsdeborah@hotmail.com headteacher@lisburneschool.stockport.sch.uk

GOVERNOR REPRESENTATIVES	REPRESENTING	EMAIL
<b>NURSERY</b>		
Tropez Martin	Nursery School Governors	tropez.martin@ntlworld.com
<b>PRIMARY</b>		
Allan Bell	Primary Governors	vicaralanbell@aol.com
Malcolm Graves	Primary Governors	malcolm.graves@btinternet.com
Charles Nevin	Primary Governors	charlesnevin@ntlworld.com
Gillian Stunell	Primary Governors	stunellgm@aol.com
<b>SECONDARY</b>		
Paul Beatty	Secondary School Governors	paul.beatty@manchester.ac.uk
Vacant		
Ian Roberts (Chair)	Secondary School Governors	toryladi@ntlworld.com

<b>SPECIAL</b>		
Terry Conlon	Special School Governors	<a href="mailto:terryandsusan@talktalk.net">terryandsusan@talktalk.net</a>

<b>NON SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES</b>	<b>REPRESENTING</b>	<b>EMAIL</b>
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## STOCKPORT METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

### SCHOOLS FORUM 22<sup>ND</sup> JUNE 2010

#### Report of Corporate Director, Business Services and Corporate Director, Children and Young People

Officer Contact: Simon Finch (4019)  
Strategic Accountant

#### Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Out-turn 2009/10

##### **1.0. Purpose of Report**

1.1. To update the Schools Forum with the final position on the DSG for 2009/10.

##### **2.0. Introduction**

2.1. The final DSG for 2009/10 reported to the Schools Forum in October 2009 was £152.404M. In addition, £0.719M was received from the Learning Skills Council, an overall total of £153.123M. Of this £133.606 was delegated to schools (ISB) and £19.517M was retained (RSB) by the Local Authority for specific services as set out in the School Finance (England) Regulations.

2.2. Reports to the Schools Forum in October and December 2009 forecast a deficit on the RSB element of the DSG in the region of £0.5M relating to support to schools for pupils deemed as 'exceptional' with a statement of Special Education Needs (SEN) in addition to funding in school budgets. Schools Forum approved the following funding strategy:-

- (i) Use of £0.160M of excessive balances which had been previously clawed back
- (ii) Top slice £0.340M from 2010/11 school budgets

2.3. The report on the 2010/11 DSG provided to the Schools Forum in March 2010 updated that the £0.340M had been top-sliced for SEN in setting schools budget shares but it would only be necessary to deploy £0.090M to finance the 2009/10 deficit as a new funding source, a one-off windfall rebate on non-domestic rates liabilities, had arisen.

##### **3.0. DSG Out-turn**

3.1. The final out-turn position at the end of 2009/10 for the DSG was unspent grant of £8.946M. Within the total, £8.720M relates to schools (including £0.220M of remaining clawback after deducting the contribution to SEN), £0.125M are the balances of closing schools before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 and miscellaneous earmarked balances and £0.101M the position on the RSB after applying recommendations

approved by the Schools Forum, and this primarily relates to earmarked funding for known prior year non-domestic rates liabilities to be billed in 2010/11.

#### **4.0. Centrally Retained DSG**

4.1. Although the final position, an over-spend of £0.489M, is in line with forecasts reported to the Schools Forum, the financing of the deficit is subject to an improved position arising from work undertaken on schools non-domestic rates liabilities which has resulted in a significant rebate in excess of £0.300M, higher than original expectations. This together with the use of clawbacked balances approved by the School Forum brings the DSG into balance for 2009/10 without applying any of the £0.090M top sliced funding from 2010/11, which is recommended to be held as a contingency.

4.2. The significant variances within the retained DSG are as follows:-

##### **(i) SEN support to Schools, equipment and external placements (£0.684M)**

An overspend on independent schools fees (£0.219M) relates in the main to the financial impact of the closure of Lambs Grange House and also Hire of Seashell Trust to accommodate Heaton Special School Pupils.

The overspend on the SEN support to schools (£0.440M) was due to demands from schools for in year additional support for pupils to be paid for from Exceptionality, greater use of supply staff in areas such as learning support assistants and the charges arising from service level agreements with the PCT in areas covering speech therapy and physiotherapy.

##### **(ii) School Meals (£0.190M)**

Winter closure of schools resulted in loss of income by SSK for which the local authority accepted additional charges were consistent with the contractual arrangements. In addition, the school meals service has had to face a number of exceptional costs including the restructuring of the pay scales.

##### **(iii) Schools Organisation (£-0.142M)**

Schools Organisation covers both the team set up to deal with schools reorganisation and the budget set aside for coping with the residual costs of school closures as a result of reorganisation. In 2009/10, the saving arises from consultancy fees originally earmarked for the Building Schools for the Future programme (£0.055M) and a saving on the budget for protected salaries of teachers who have transferred schools. as the protection is gradually phased out over a three year period ((£0.087M)

##### **(iv) Maternity in Schools (£-0.089M)**

The level of call on the budget has reduced this year.

**5.0. School Balances**

- 5.1. School balances have increased by £0.228M between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 and now stand at £8.845M. This balance takes account of £0.309M of previously clawed back excessive balances which were distributed to schools in year and £0.041M of excess balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 which were subject to clawback and the contribution to SEN. A separate report provides additional information in relation to the balance control mechanism used to identify those schools with balances that are in excess of the permitted level and the provisional 2009/10 position by schools sector.

**6.0. Recommendations**

- 6.1. The Schools Forum is requested to note and comment on the detailed information.



## STOCKPORT METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

### SCHOOLS FORUM 22<sup>ND</sup> JUNE 2010

#### Report of Corporate Director, Business Services and Corporate Director, Children and Young People

Officer Contact: Simon Finch (4019)  
Strategic Accountant

#### School Balances

##### 1.0. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To update the Schools Forum on the level of school balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 including a provisional assessment of excess balances.

##### 2.0. Introduction

- 2.1. Revenue surplus balances held by schools, as permitted under the Stockport MBC scheme, are subject to rules which were first implemented with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007. The relevant extract from the Scheme is attached at Appendix A. Members are asked to note that an update to the wording was approved at Schools Forum in March 2010.
- 2.2. The level of school balances continues to attract significant interest at both a national and local level. In March 2010, DCSF published new guidance (non statutory) following extensive survey work with 119 local authorities. At this time there is no information on whether the Coalition Government will endorse the guidance. However, in the context of public sector funding announcements, it seems likely that further action will be taken, possibly backed by statutory powers, against local authorities and schools which allow substantial excessive balances to persist.

##### 3.0. Stockport School Balances

- 3.1. The total schools' balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 are provisionally £8.845M. Within this total, £8.721M relates to schools and £0.124M is a combination of the balances of closing schools before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 and miscellaneous earmarked balances. An Analysis over the last four years by sector is shown in table 1 below.

Table 1 – Total schools balances (before clawback)

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Nursery	988	1,049	651	553
Primary	6,676	7,590	5,652	5,053
Secondary	384	1,812	2,020	2,731
Special	660	592	198	384
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,708</b>	<b>11,043</b>	<b>8,521</b>	<b>8,721</b>

- 3.2. Within the £8.721M, £0.220M relates to the balance on the clawback account, £0.144M relates to capital commitments and £0.197M relates to balances held re Banker School arrangements, leaving £8.160M within individual schools, shown in the table below.

Table 2 – Number of schools with surplus/deficit balances (before clawback)

	<b>Total 2009/10 Balances</b>	<b>No. of Schools</b>	<b>Total Surplus Balances</b>	<b>No. of Schools</b>	<b>Total Deficit Balances</b>	<b>No. of Schools</b>
	<b>£000's</b>		<b>£000's</b>		<b>£000's</b>	
Nursery	405	9	432	8	(26)	1
Primary	4,903	92	5,021	84	(118)	7
Secondary	2,474	13	2,488	13	(14)	1
Special	378	6	377	6	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,160</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>8,318</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>(158)</b>	<b>9</b>

- 3.3. There are 9 schools with a deficit balance and 111 schools with a surplus balance. The position remains closely matched to that at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009, at which time there were 8 schools with a deficit and 112 with a surplus.
- 3.4. Excessive balances are generally defined to be any balance above 5% (secondary) or 8% (primary, special and nursery) of the current year's budget share. Stages (i) to (iii) of the excessive balances rules (Appendix A) are used to determine a provisional indication of excessive balances. Table 3 below provides this information, again by sector.

Table 3 – Provisional excess balances

	<b>Number of Schools with Excess Balances</b>	<b>Excess Balances</b>	<b>Number of Schools with Excess Balances</b>	<b>Excess Balances</b>	<b>Number of Schools with Excess Balances (provisional)</b>	<b>Excess Balances (provisional)</b>
	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
		<b>£000s</b>		<b>£000s</b>		<b>£000s</b>
Nursery	8	689	2	34	0	0
Primary	30	1,398	14	413	27	600
Secondary	1	62	0	0	3	334
Special	3	140	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>2,289</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>934</b>
<b>Final Claw Back</b>		<b>653</b>		<b>41</b>		<b>TBC</b>

NB Schools Forum has agreed that Nursery Schools will be exempt from the balances control mechanism in 2009/10 as part of transitional arrangements around the Early Years single funding formula. £0.206M has been excluded from the above table accordingly.

- 3.5. It is this analysis which forms the basis of a discussion with each school Governing Body over the autumn to determine whether further adjustments are required to earmark a proportion of balances (up to 100%) which may be assigned for specific purposes permitted by the Authority, and which the Authority is satisfied are properly assigned. The remaining balances therefore being subject to the claw back rules.
- 3.6. The current balance on the claw back account is shown in table 4 below.

Table 4 – Clawback account of excess balances

	<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>Re-Distributed to Schools</b>	<b>Clawback</b>	<b>SEN Funding</b>	<b>Total as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010</b>
	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2008/09</b>		
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Nursery	288	(100)	0	(40)	148
Primary	299	(143)	41	(125)	72
Secondary	62	(62)	0	0	0
Special	4	(4)	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>(309)</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>(165)</b>	<b>220</b>

- 3.7. The balance on the account at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 was £0.653M. During the year, £0.309M of balances relating to 2007/08 was returned to schools. A further £0.041M of balances from 2008/09 have been added. In addition, Schools Forum endorsed the proposal from the Primary and Secondary consortia to allocate £0.165M to contribute to meeting the centrally held DSG deficit reported in year, i.e. SEN and this has now been actioned.

#### **4.0. Opportunities**

- 4.1. The net balance available from claw back balances is £0.220M and this is expected to increase further following the 2009/10 process. Options for using available funding (based on DCSF guidance) include:-
- (i) The balance is held as contingency until further notice
  - (ii) VfM Initiatives – energy efficiency, pump priming federation and partnership arrangements, co-ordination costs of a developing a schools VfM programme
  - (iii) Supporting training and development of school business managers
  - (iv) Adaptations to schools to enable them to admit more pupils with SEN, avoiding expensive out of authority placement
  - (v) Earmark to support schools in financial difficulty

Schools Forum is invited to comment on these options and its applicability to Stockport.

- 4.2. Further work is also needed to improve the Scheme for Financing Schools in relation to excessive balances and enable Schools Forum to agree a clearer definition of what can be counted as an assigned sum to be deducted from excess balances prior to clawback. A report on this subject will be scheduled for the autumn.

## **5.0. Conclusions**

- 5.1. The level of total schools balances has increased over the last twelve months especially in the secondary sector. In relation to excessive balances (above 5% or 8%), the balances control mechanism is operating as intended. However in practice the absence of rigorous definitions of what can be assigned for specific purposes has resulted in significant balances, provisionally flagged as excessive, being returned to schools.
- 5.2. The provisional excess balances calculation has determined £0.934M of provisional excess balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 and this excludes £0.206M in relation to Nursery Schools, which are exempt for 2009/10. Schools affected will be contacted over late summer/autumn to determine and agree any assigned amounts to be deducted before finalising the claw back calculation for 2009/10.
- 5.3. A further review of the excess balances element of the Stockport Scheme for Financing Schools will be undertaken as soon as possible and informed by any relevant announcements by the Coalition Government.

## **6.0. Recommendations**

- 6.1. Schools Forum is invited to note and comment on the report.

## Appendix A

### Extract from Stockport Scheme for Financing Schools – Surplus Balances

- (i) The Authority shall calculate by 31 May each year the surplus balance, if, held by each school as at the preceding 31 March. For this purpose the balance will be the recurrent balance as defined in the Consistent Financial Reporting Framework.
- (ii) The Authority shall deduct from the balance income from facilities, recorded as I08 for CFR purposes and any donations, recorded as I013 and 5/12's School Development Grant for the previous financial year.
- (iii) If the results of steps (i) and (ii) is a sum greater than 5% of the current year's budget share for a secondary school, 8% for primary, special and nursery schools , or £10,000 (where that is greater than either percentage threshold), then the Authority deems the school to have an excess balance.
- (iv) The Authority shall then deduct from the school the resulting excess any amounts unless which **the Governing Body of the school has declared to be assigned for specific purposes permitted by the Authority, and which the Authority is satisfied are properly assigned.** To count as properly assigned, amounts must not be retained beyond the period stipulated for the purpose in question, without the consent of the Authority. In considering whether any sums are properly assigned the Authority may also take into account the current year's projected year-end balance and any previously declared assignment of such sums, but may not take any change in planned assignments to be the sole reason for considering that a sum is not properly assigned. Schools would need to demonstrate the commitments through Governing Body minutes, quotes and orders already in place. This would need to be in place by the end of December in the financial year the balance in question relates to.
- (v) Funds held in relation to a school's exercise of powers under s.27 of the Education Act 2002 (community facilities) will not be taken into account unless added to the budget share surplus by the school as permitted by the Authority.
- (vi) The total of any amounts deducted from schools' budget shares by the Authority under this provision are to be applied to the Schools Budget of the Authority.



**STOCKPORT METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL****SCHOOLS FORUM  
22<sup>ND</sup> JUNE 2010****Report of Corporate Director, Business Services and Corporate Director, Children and Young People**

Officer Contact: Simon Finch (4019)  
Strategic Accountant

**Schools Premature Retirement Costs (PRC)****1.0. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1. To improve the transparency of PRC arrangements and strengthen the process for approving funding from the central Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget.

**2.0. Introduction**

- 2.1. Arrangements for managing staff reductions are already clearly set out in a policy statement and procedural document for Schools (Panel A). A refresh of the policy is underway and will be subject to consultation with the Unions and the Senior Management Partnership in July. The Council's newly revised Policy document on Redundancy, Voluntary Redundancy and Retirement in the Interests of the Efficiency of the Service, also outlines additional policy information and specifically, provides School Governing Bodies with discretion in relation to awarding enhanced severance, i.e. double statutory redundancy payment. This information will also be included in the refreshed procedural document for Schools.
- 2.2. Redundancy costs and early retirements on the grounds of either redundancy or in the interests of the efficiency of the service will give rise to both one-off lump sum payments and if there is early access to pension entitlements, on-going lifetime liabilities. Typically average costs incurred for a teacher are approximately £29k lump sum £3k per annum lifetime on-going pension costs.
- 2.3. Funding of PRC has evolved over time. Within the Council's cash limit budget (outside of DSG) £1.075M is currently funding on-going liabilities dating back a number of years and is fully committed. In addition, Schools Forum has previously agreed top-slice funding within the DSG and £0.551M is currently built into the 2010/11 budget. The original intent of this DSG funding was to pay for the salary costs of teachers, pending redeployment, so reducing the need for supply cover. However, in practice it now being used for PRC and there is a general perception that this is its purpose, albeit restricted to redundancy costs only.
- 2.4. Looking back over the last few years and funding arrangements in practice, some schools have built PRC costs into budget recovery plans either in part or total and others have been funded 100% from the central DSG budget. Over time there have

been a range of responses utilised by Schools to fund redundancies. In part this has arisen from a genuine steer to encourage Schools to self-fund the impact of their decisions from their budget shares, with the central budget used only as a last resort.

- 2.5. Looking forward over the next three to four years, the anticipated reduction in pupil numbers, especially in the Secondary Sector, will result in more Schools having to manage reductions in the staff establishment and increasing budget pressures from redundancy costs. This is expected to be a significant funding issue. It is therefore an opportune time to review how the central budget is used and ensure arrangements for Panel A are robust and produce a clear business case which considers both finance considerations and impact on the delivery of the curriculum. Clearly each Panel A process should be owned by the School Governing Body.
- 2.6. The arrangements below are not intended to alter existing procedures where schools are closing or subject to review initiated by the local authority, which by their nature require far more detailed work and local authority involvement.

### **3.0. Funding Proposals**

3.1. The proposals are intended to ensure:-

- (i) Financial assistance is targeted at as many schools in need as possible
- (ii) Governing bodies continue to be clearly accountable for the funding implications of their decisions
- (iii) Fairness and transparency in the system

3.2. The following are the funding proposals for Schools Forum consideration

- (i) The norm is it is expected that schools will fund their own PRC as part of their budget plan.
- (ii) Allocation of funding from the central budget will be restricted to schools in a deficit which is unrecoverable over 3 years without this financial support. The deficit budget plans will be subject to appropriate challenge from the Local Authority to give the School Forum assurance DSG funding is being used appropriately.
- (iii) A sliding scale of funding from the central budget will be introduced over two years. Schools approved for funding in 2010/11 will receive 75% of costs. Schools approved for funding in 2011/12 will receive 50% of costs. Future years to be reviewed at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012. This will apply to both lump sum payments and any on-going liabilities from early access to pension.
- (iv) The fund is restricted to costs arising from redundancy situations only.
- (v) Where School Governing bodies have discretion to offer enhanced severance, i.e. double the statutory redundancy payment, and exercise that discretion they will be required to fund 100% of the enhancement.

(vi) Any surplus funding at year end will be ring fenced and the Schools Forum will be updated annually on the balance on the account.

3.3. Managing staff reductions is critical to schools efficiency and VfM. In May, Schools Forum agreed that a VfM conference would be a very useful forerunner to placing significant focus on efficiency programmes. A PRC element to the conference will be developed.

#### **4.0. Panel A – Introduction of Business Case Template**

4.1. In order to assist Governing Bodies to undertake the Panel A process, the new policy statement and procedural document for Schools will include a business case template which should be considered as recommended practice. Where funding is requested from the central budget, the business case will be mandatory as the information source to trigger the funding mechanism outlined above. In such cases, following receipt of the business case, the Council will convene a Panel to review the information and impact of the proposal and, where appropriate, allocate funding from the central budget. The composition of the Panel is proposed as follows

Service Director Strategy and Performance  
Strategic Accountant  
HR Adviser  
School Improvement Adviser  
Schools Forum Representative

Schools Forum is invited to consider a representative for this Panel

#### **5.0. Conclusions**

5.1. The existing arrangements for funding some/all PRC through a central DSG budget needs to be reviewed and clarified especially as demands on this budget are expected to increase significantly over the next few years.

5.2. The refreshed proposals are aimed at fairness, improving transparency and ensuring funding is targeted at Schools with most need.

5.3. In order to improve the quality of information supporting Panel A decisions, a new business case template will be developed for implementation and its use will be mandatory where funding is requested from the central DSG budget.

#### **6.0. Recommendations**

6.1. Schools Forum are invited to discuss the above proposals and agree / amend with a view to implementation from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010

6.2. .