

## Formula Review Meeting

### Minutes

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Microsoft Teams Meeting

#### Present:

Patti Jones	Secondary Governor
Dave Bevitt	Primary Governor
Dominic McKeon	Secondary Head Teacher
Stephen Gribbon	Secondary Head Teacher
Jo Briggs	Primary Head Teacher
Claire Whalley	Primary Head Teacher
Julie Cheung	Primary Head Teacher
Susan Tailor	Special Head Teacher
Adeel Sahi	Secondary Business Manager
Joan Saunders	Primary Business Manager
Matthew Wilkinson	Union Representative
Lisa Butcher	Head of Finance
Julie Edwards	Schools Finance Manager
Helen Joseph	Schools Finance Officer

**In attendance:** Tanya Johnson (HR)

**Apologies:** Apologies were received from Alex Devaney

#### 1. Welcome

JB agreed to chair the meeting and welcomed everyone.

#### 2. Appointment of Chair

JB agreed to be Chair of the group – for the duration of this year.

#### 3. Minutes 27<sup>th</sup> November and 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Minutes were agreed. JE mentioned to the group that there were a couple of outstanding pieces of data to be provided for the 27<sup>th</sup> November meeting which would be actioned.

#### 4. High Needs National Funding Formula DfE Consultation

LB has to leave the meeting early so this agenda item 7 was brought forward. JE updated the group on the consultation that has just been released by DfE. This is only to temporarily adjust the funding for 22-23, a larger change will follow the SEN Reform Review. Six week consultation from 10<sup>th</sup> February to 24<sup>th</sup> March. Previously, 50% of funding was based on historic data (2017/18 planned expenditure) and 50% on characteristics. This method was used to protect historic funding, temporarily. In future the actual expenditure from 2017/18 will replace the planned

expenditure. This would benefit Bolton as actual expenditure exceeds planned expenditure in 2017-18, the consultation document states Bolton would have gained £1.3 million had the formula changed in 2021-22. In addition, the consultation will also look at the funding formula which has an element of low prior attainment – data used for 2019-2021 will be based on 2019 due to the postponement of testing during the pandemic. DM asked where the possible additional funding would be utilised. JE confirmed that it would be part of the High Needs Block settlement so could be used to reduce the current deficit or on a different option.

A further question in the consultation going forward asks what should be included in the funding formula. Currently includes prior attainment, population, DLA, bad health, free school meals and IDACI.

ST mentioned that the Special heads group would like to feed into the consultation.

**Action : – include consultation on the next School Forum agenda**

**Action : – JE to be available to meet with Special School Heads**

## **5. Analysis of School Budgets**

It was reported that the DSG budget report, including the funding formula, was approved by the Executive Member on 8<sup>th</sup> February.

DfE have confirmed that all requirements were met and thanks were passed on to the Formula Review group for their input.

JE presented budget information for each school. The information included the list of schools with pupil numbers, % FSM and amounts per pupil (excluding protection, including protection and including PPG). The lump sum affects the amount per pupil funding depending on the size of the school. Schools were identified if they required protection on their funding and schools that received additional funding to meet the minimum funding level of £4,180 per pupil in Primary and £5,415 in Secondary.

LB left the meeting.

## **6. Impact of Covid – School Funding**

JE outlined the impact of covid on the following:

**School Meals** – meals charges needed to be reviewed again due to the latest lockdown plus introduction of the additional £3.50 charge per week for food parcels (which can be reclaimed from DfE) and the national voucher scheme. Funding received by schools in the formula (free school meals) and by a grant (universal infant free school meals) is passed on to the provider to protect staffing etc. Schools who have had an increase in FSM numbers will receive an additional Supplementary FSM grant some of which is also passed on to the provider.

JC asked what the expectation is going to be for provision of FSM vouchers during the Easter Holidays and beyond, would the cost be funded by schools? JE said that she didn't think that it would be as schools haven't been funded for this.

**Additional Grants** – exceptional costs claims have been limited to summer term 2020 only and only for certain items. £500K was claimed by Bolton schools. The furlough scheme is ongoing until the end of April 21. Covid catch up grant is being paid in instalments based on pupil numbers and

still awaiting further details on the most recent funding that was announced last month. Supply teacher funding had several conditions attached before schools would qualify. DM said that there were hidden costs attached to the testing that was taking place in schools, e.g waste, staffing etc.

**Action : – JE to confirm any additional funding was available for testing.**

**Early Years –** JE explained the Early Years funding cycle. If the numbers increase in summer term, there could be an issue as funding will be based on January 21.

JB noted that Helen Shearer and the EY team did a great job informing schools about funding the remote learning offer. Bolton seemed to be proactive in this approach compared to other LA's.

#### **7. DSG - Monitoring Report Quarter Three 2020-21**

JE presented the monitor spreadsheet and explained the variances. School balances are projected to increase by £2m. Unspent grants (sport and catch up) have contributed to this. The surplus balance mechanism has been relaxed this year.

#### **8. National Update (verbal)**

JE provided an update to the group from her meetings with DfE. Pupil premium funding is now based on October census instead of January. SFVS deadline has been extended. The LA expect schools will still submit by the original date of 31<sup>st</sup> March as it is included in the governing body agendas. NFF consultation due soon, implementation of hard formula currently planned for 2025-26. Business rates should be paid centrally in future directly from DfE. JB commented that JE involvement in DfE meetings was very useful with the information that was provided.

#### **9. School Forum Agenda**

JE mentioned that the number of forum meetings that were currently held each year seemed higher than some other LA's. JE will speak to the Chair for his opinion on whether Bolton should reduce these in the next academic year.

#### **10. Forward Plan**

High Needs and NFF consultations. Feedback from joint Inclusion and Engagement/Formula Review group meeting.

#### **11. Any Other Business**

None.

#### **12. Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021

MS Teams