

EAST RIDING SCHOOLS' FORUM

16 JULY 2020

PRESENT:

School Members

Representing Head Teachers of Primary Schools: Mr P Richardson
Representing Governing Bodies of Primary Schools: Mrs C Bunker
Representing Head Teachers of Secondary Schools/Academies: Mr G Cannon
Representing Governing Bodies of Secondary Schools/Academies: Mrs M Coates
Representing Nursery Schools: Mrs C White

Non-School Members

Representing Early Years Sub-Group: Mrs V Pooleman

Advisers

Ms D Myers, Head of Children, Young People, Education and Schools
Mrs G Bristow, Financial Planning and Reporting Manager
Mrs S Tompkins, Inclusion and Access Manager
Mr L Wilkinson, Early Years and Family Information Services Manager

Support Officers

Mr J Fisher, Finance Manager
Miss J Dale, Senior Committee Manager

The meeting was held via video-conference.

872 CHAIRMAN - Resolved that due to the resignation of the previous Chairman, Claire Bunker agreed to act as Chairman for this meeting.

873 APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Mrs S Bone, Mr G Cannon, Mr G Chappell, Mrs S Japp (Secondary Heads), Mr A Hall (Special Schools), Mr P Richardson (Primary Head), Mrs P Foster (Non-Teaching Trade Union) and Eoin Rush (ERYC).

874 MINUTES - Agreed - That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2019 be agreed as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING -

875 Resignation of the Chairman - further to minute 864, Derek Shepherd had emailed to offer his services as Chairman of the Schools Forum. It was agreed that the Chairman for 2020-2021 be appointed at the AGM.

876 Schools Budget 2020-2021 - Further to minute 869, it was confirmed that the Head of Finance had informed the Cabinet of the request for business rate relief for the early years settings. However, the Government has exempted nurseries until March 2021 to support businesses through the covid pandemic. The proposal would be carried forward into next financial year.

877 Purpose of the School Forum - Claire Bunker asked whether members could do anything to bring value and help them have an impact on the budget setting before being presented at the Forum. Deborah Myers welcomed the question and informed the members that from September 2020, Sam Tompkins, would be lead officer of the Schools Forum and would be working with the Chairman and Democratic Services in line with the Constitution to support the more effective operation of East Riding Schools Forum.

878 FINANCIAL IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MAINTAINED NURSERY SCHOOLS - Claire White presented a report on the financial impact of Covid-19 maintained nursery schools. This outlined the unique challenges which were faced during the pandemic with a significant loss of income from places not taken up by parents; 100% of wages still being paid; reduced income and additional costs of keeping nurseries open. Unlike schools, nurseries were not eligible to claim for exceptional costs associated with coronavirus.

Numbers on roll were expected to be low in September.

Agreed - That Lee Wilkinson help co-ordinate a response to be put to the Government in relation to the lack of support for nursery providers.

879 SCHOOLS BUDGET OUTTURN 2019-20 - The Directors of Children, Families and Schools and Corporate Resources submitted a joint report on the Schools Budget for 2019-20 which informed the Forum that the schools budget overspent by £1.3m which included the transfers from specific reserves (excluding the general schools reserve) of £0.2m. After excluding variances funded by reserved, the adjusted position was an overspend of £1.5m. The total school reserved at the end of 2019-20 was £6.2m, an in-year decrease of £2.1m (25.7%) due to balances transferred to academies as well as the in-year budget overspend. Within this reserve, individual school balances stood as £9.5m (including central balances) as in-year increase of £1.3m (15.2%) and non-Individual Schools Budget balances stood at a deficit of £3.3m, a reduction of £3.4m.

The non-Individual Schools Budget element of the schools had a deficit of £3.3m at the end of 2019-20 and the Education and Skills Funding Agency had confirmed that any local authority in deficit at the end of the financial year must co-operate with the Department for Education in helping eliminate this deficit. Twelve schools were currently in deficit and the Council were working with those schools to ensure plans were in place to bring their budgets back into balance. The recommendation to carry forward the overspend on the Dedicated Schools Grant at the end of 2019-20 to 2021-22 was deferred until the next meeting of the Schools Forum. It was noted that the Council intended to make representations to the Government through local authority networks and local MPs on this issue, asking that the DfE funds this deficit which represents an unavoidable increase in pupil needs during the year that cannot be recovered through reduced spending on demand-driven service provision.

No additional support has been provided by the DfE for centrally managed services, relating to Covid-19, although the DfE will provide additional funding to schools for any exceptional costs incurred and these include increased premises related costs; support for free school meals for eligible children who are not attending school and additional cleaning. Schools had been asked to meet exceptional costs initially but then recover them from the DfE. Guidance on how to claim funding from these additional costs had been provided by the ESFA on 24 June.

Agreed - That the School Forum defer the recommendation to support the proposal to carry forward the overspend on the Dedicated Schools Grant (non-ISB) of £3.319m at the end of 2019-20 to 2021-22 in the report until the next meeting of the Schools Forum.

880 SCHOOL AND SERVICE ISSUES - IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOLS DURING COVID-19 - Deborah Myers, Head of Children, Families and Schools informed the Forum that the Council had been supporting all schools throughout the last four/five months. Schools closed on the 23 March with the exception of keyworkers' children and those children deemed vulnerable. Following the Secretary of State's announcement that schools could open from the 1 June, this local authority decided to support schools opening from 8 June if they chose to delay opening to better prepare to follow the LA guidance. Throughout the lockdown period there were approximately 2,000 keyworker children in school daily. Schools had coped well with reduced staffing levels and had remained in contact with pupils not in school. Safety Services had been working with schools and the education team to create appropriate risk assessments in consultation with trade unions.

Deborah thanked the school and academy education workforce for their resilience, tenacity and dedication during this very challenging time.

It was also noted that two schools were currently going through the academisation process. St Josephs RC Primary would be joining Bishop Konstant MAT and Swinemoor Primary would be joining TCAT. Dates were proposed for the Autumn term of 2020 however these were likely to subject to change.

Agreed - That the update be noted.

881 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING - The next virtual meeting was the AGM scheduled for Thursday, 8 October 2020 at 3pm.