

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 July 2022 at 4.00 pm

Present:-

Geoff Cherrill – Chairman

Present: Mark Avoth, Jon Chapple, Andy Connell, Linda Duly, Phillip Gavin, Brigid Hincks, Sue Johnson, Marie Lane, Nadine Lapskas, Dorian Lewis, Sean Preston, Cllr N Greene and Cllr M White

41. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Kate Carter, Jacqueline Page, Sian Thomas (Andy Connell attending).

42. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received on this occasion.

43. Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) 2022/23

The Head of School Planning and Admissions presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The recommendation reflected the position of the Schools Forum and acknowledged the support to early years providers which balanced the risks of overspending funding allocated by government for early years and making appropriate provision for children identified as needing extra support in mainstream settings.

BCP Council received the ring-fenced dedicated schools grant (DSG) to fund the separate early years and mainstream schools funding formulae. The content of each formula was highly regulated by the Department for Education (DfE) and stakeholders must be consulted. Consultations were undertaken with each sector in the autumn, Schools Forum considered the outcomes on 13 January 2022 and made recommendations to the Council about the use of the surplus funding in the schools block of £0.751 million.

It was agreed that the surplus be transferred to support pupils with high needs, potentially to include an allocation of up to £0.4 million to the early years' inclusion fund. This allocation would release funds to increase the hourly EYSFF funding rates beyond those otherwise affordable. The decision was to be made after the outcome was known of the mainstream school top up funding banding review. Although the review has not yet concluded with consultation currently underway, the financial impact of the proposed new banding system is designed to be cost neutral in 2022/23.

Options to support the early years inclusion fund are presented in the report.

It was discussed that the rate was set in January 22, and that things had changed significantly since then. If it was to be based on a 2p an hour increase, at 15 hours a week child's attendance, the increase of £2.40 a week was not particularly helpful. However, Option D, at an increase of £10.80 a week would make a difference. The money was needed now, as Early Needs was in crisis.

It was agreed that the impact of not being in early years, as evidenced during the Covid lockdowns, impacted on children's first year of mainstream school.

RESOLVED that the Schools Forum agreed option D as its preferred option, to utilise the schools block funding transferred to high needs to support growth in the budget for the SEND inclusion fund paid to providers.

Voting: unanimous

The meeting ended at 4.20 pm

CHAIRMAN