

Unconfirmed minutes – subject to approval/amendment at the next meeting of the Children and Young People’s Services Select Committee

Children and Young People’s Services Select Committee: Task and Finish Group to Review Proposed Changes to School Funding

8 February 2018 – At a meeting of the Task and Finish Group (TFG) held at 10.00am at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr High (Chairman)

Mrs Dennis	Mr Marshall
Mrs Jones	Mrs Pendleton

Apologies for absence: Mrs Mullins

Declaration of Interests

1. In accordance with the code of conduct the following interests were declared:

- Mr High declared he has two children of school age
- Mr High declared a member of his family has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Mrs Dennis declared she had recently been appointed as Chair of Governors for The Gattons Infant School

Purpose of the Meeting

2. The TFG previewed the Cabinet Member decision regarding the Proposed Changes to School Funding for 2018/19. This included the outcome of a disapplication request for a transfer of allocated funds from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

Proposed Changes to School Funding

3. The TFG considered a draft report by Jeanmarie Long, Principal Manager, Compliance, and Andy Thorne, Strategic Finance Business Partner, which was supported by a PowerPoint presentation. A summary of the key points included:

- On 31 January 2018 the Council received notification that the appeal to the Secretary of State for Education had been upheld, meaning there will be a one-off transfer of approximately £2.2m from the Schools Block to the High Needs block.
- Although the transfer has resulted in a financial balance for the High Needs block in 2018/19, the shortfall in overall funding will continue to increase over the coming years. This means further consultation and engagement will be required to enable future provision, and savings options are likely to be highly controversial.
- The NFF will be phased in, with full implementation by 2020.

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4. A summary of the key points raised in response to the report and presentation include the following:

- The sustainability of small, rural schools continues to be of great concern. An agenda item on this topic will be discussed at a future meeting of the Children and Young People’s Services Select Committee.
- A national arrangement for funding does not reflect the nuances in funding requirements for West Sussex schools.
- The TFG feel that West Sussex children are being disadvantaged under the NFF. This continues to be a major concern, particularly for the High Needs block capability.
- Work and relationships with MP’s should continue, as should the WorthLess campaign to lobby a better funding situation for West Sussex children.
- The TFG was very grateful to the Principal Manager, Compliance, and the Strategic Finance Business Partner for the development of a working financial model to alleviate the pressures associated with insufficient school funding.

Recommendation

5. Resolved – That the TFG endorses the Cabinet Member decision as follows:

- i. Agree the proposals affecting the High Needs block in 2018/19 as set out in section 2.15 of the report.
- ii. Agree the proposals in relation to the local funding formula for mainstream schools as set out in section 3.9 of the report.

The meeting ended at 12.00 Noon.

Chairman