

## NORFOLK Schools Forum - 9th & 24th January 2006 - pre-minute note

### Members present:

Keith Weston	Ditchingham Primary School
Liz Pierce	Mulbarton First School
Jo Pedlow	Toftwood Infant School
Alison Kahn	Fred Nicholson Special School
Deborah Brown	NGN, Arden Grove First School
Lucinda Poliakoff, <b>(Chair)</b>	NGN, CNS High School & Avenue First School
Mandy White	NGN, Drayton First School
Geoff Best, <b>(Vice Chair)</b>	Oriel High School
Don Cameron	Broadland High School
Richard Moore	Fakenham High School
Gerard Batty	Acle High School
Ross Lambert	NGN, Smithdon High & Heacham Junior School
Jan Tanner	JCC, Lingwood Junior School
Rob Little	C of E Diocese, Colkirk Primary School
Martin White	substitute for Ashley Best
Paul Fisher	Children's Services - Asst Director - Resources & Efficiency
Benita Ogg	Children's Services - Finance
Hilary Bradshaw	Children's Services - Finance
Clare Briscoe	Children's Services – Finance
Michael Bateman	Assessment & Provision Manager (item 10)
Tim Newton	SEO School & LEA Effectiveness (item 13)
Bruce Connors	Children's Services Finance (item 12)

### Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

- The main directions of the Individual Schools Budget for Yr 06-07 (£324.3 M) were discussed at the December meeting, indicating an expected per pupil allocation of £3.4 K.
- The new money (£ 22.5 M) is estimated to be short by some £1.05 M to meet all the priority pressures. We took the December meeting and two meetings in January to consider in detail the officer's proposals. We agreed, in order not to budget for an overspend, to recommend that:
  - The contingency should be kept to last year's level.
  - Progress towards reduction of the post-16 abatement factor should be put on hold, except for any residual surplus after completion of the ISB calculations.
  - Redundancy costs for premature retirement where savings are at least equivalent to costs would be found from the Schools Block
  - The contribution (£54.6 K) required to allow the full allocation of the remaining Standards Fund (£2.26 M) should be found from within the Dedicated Schools Grant.

### SEN Pupil Specific Allocations

We considered further the implications of trying to contain the relentless increase in spending on SEN pupils. We agreed to support that:

- Pupil allocations be treated as a top up to the school's allocation, ie the first 5 hours in the primary and the first 10 hours in the secondary sector be found from the school specific allocation. .
- Lunch-time support be funded at MSA rates
- Aligning the funding for TAs in the primary and secondary sectors

#### Norwich PFI Project


The governors of 11 Primary and 1 Secondary school(s) are due to sign their School Agreement for their funding contribution next month, prior to the contract signing in March. Concern has been voiced over the implications of possible shortfalls in the projections of future pupil numbers involved in calculating expected income. To reassure governors, it was proposed to offer governors a safeguarding guarantee over any discrepancy (tapered over the first five years) Forum members were not in agreement that such a guarantee should be put in place.

#### Fair Funding Consultation

The recommended proposals for changes to the funding distribution formula were endorsed.

Forum members were concerned that the report to Cabinet did not reflect the debate and reasons why the Forum, in some circumstances, had supported a different proposal to the majority of schools. It was agreed that, in future, this report will reflect the underlying debate and reasons for the decisions made.

#### Schools in Financial Difficulty.

In the past, while there was no specific budget head for so doing, it had been possible to help schools that had difficulty resourcing their Improvement Action Plan when placed by Ofsted in Special Measures. The issue is likely to be the more serious and urgent as the Government's target time for success is to be reduced to a single calendar year. We agreed that an identifiable reserve should be established and criteria set for access to it. We asked for further thought to be given to the difficulty of judging whether or not  adequate resourcing prior to being listed as causing concern had been the result of funding being mismanaged or inappropriately directed.

The Forum next meets on Wednesday 22nd February 2006 at 10.00 am when the Government's funding allocations for 2007/08 will be considered. Requests for other items to be included in the agenda should to be forwarded to the Chair.

Queries on the foregoing, please, to < [ross.lambert@ngn.org.uk](mailto:ross.lambert@ngn.org.uk) >