

CUMBRIAN SCHOOLS FORUM – SCHOOLS’ BUDGET WORKING GROUP

Notes of the meeting of the Schools’ Budget Working Group held on Wednesday 29 June 2005 at Morton School, Carlisle

Present: Mr R Alston, (Foundation Secondary), Mr S Bowditch (Special Schools), Mrs J Blacklock (Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools) Mr P Chapplehow (CCC Conservative Group), Mr K Little (CCC – Labour Group), Mr A Rutter (Teacher Associations), Mr A Hodge (LEA), Mr H Slater (LEA) and Ms N Shiels (LEA).

Apologies: Mr C Clarke, Ms J Farebrother, Ms S Halfpenny, Mrs M Pickthall, Mr C Rafferty, Mr R Rogers, Mr B Thomas

1. <u>Notes of the Meeting held on 10 June 2005</u>	Action
<p>The notes of the meeting of the Schools’ Forum Budget Working Group held on 10 June 2005 had been noted by the Schools’ Forum in a meeting held immediately before this meeting.</p>	
2. <u>Matters Arising</u>	
<p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
3. <u>Formula Review – Proposed Methodology</u>	
<p>On 10 June the Schools’ Budget Working Group had considered a report that suggested a methodology for the review of the schools’ delegated funding formula. Since that meeting, Harry Slater had been working on a ‘model spend’ at class level and progress to date was now reported to the group.</p>	
<p>Work to develop the model would continue over the summer months and it was intended that final proposals would be presented to the Schools’ Forum on 13 September 2005. The group were asked to support the continued work and also for any views or suggestions that they might have that could contribute towards the work.</p>	
<p>It was felt likely that a further meeting of the Schools’ Budget Working Group would be required before 13 September. It was therefore agreed that the group would meet at 1.30pm on 19 July 2005. The meeting would be held at Robert Ferguson Primary School.</p>	NS
<p>Harry Slater (HS) went through the model and explained the assumptions on which the figures were based. Members of the group made points or had queries that were clarified during the course of the discussions. Some of the points raised included:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headteacher/Deputy – the model assumed 0.1 management time per class at group 2 average. An alternative could be to add a headteacher for every school but this would then become a school-based cost rather than a class based cost. The group agreed that the model should assume 0.1 management time.• Theoretical Model – the model school had to be better than the theoretical model – it had to be possible for the model to work. The model would not reflect current practice but would be a statutory minimum.• The model spend would show some schools to be unviable.• The School Size Working Group had been looking at falling rolls and recognised that the status quo could not be maintained. If a school was open, then it should be properly funded. This should be achieved through the suggested model. The model would also be transparent.	

- A similar exercise was underway looking at the special schools' budgets. Officers had been working closely with the five headteachers and a compromise had been reached on various aspects. It was noted that the five special school heads had expressed their view that certain parts of the model would be unworkable.
- Class Sizes – different average class sizes for the different key stages had been used in the model. It was suggested that the model be compared to similar benchmarking work. HS agreed to look at this data to see how it compared.
- It was recognised that schools used similar funding in different ways. Once the model spend had been agreed, this would continue to be that case, schools/governing bodies could move around within the model.
- There would be widespread consultation with schools and partners as well as the Schools' Forum before the model was finalised.
- Items not included in the model were SEN statements (statutory), school meals (not class driven) social deprivation and non-statemented SEN.
- Rates – these were included – there was some discussion as to whether or not they should be included – winners and losers.

In conclusion, the work that had been outlined was at an initial stage, a 'starter for 10'. There was much still to do before a final proposal would be made. The purpose of reporting to the group at this early stage was to explain the process and seek their support for the ongoing work. The group felt that this was an important piece of work that would be invaluable. The model would be transparent but would clearly illustrate the level of resources that were required to run a school effectively. The Schools' Budget working Group therefore supported the continuing work to produce a model of spending for mainstream, and special schools.

4. Any Other Business

There were no other items of business.