

Cabinet Member's Briefing for Children's PDS, 21 November 2017

Schools Funding

The Department for Education is introducing a new National Funding Formula for Schools by April 2020. For the next 2 financial years the DFE will use the NFF to allocate the funding to the LA but will allow flexibility to retain our existing local formula arrangements should the transition to the NFF be difficult and the LA would like time to transition. A single member decision will be needed to determine the way forward. All schools have been consulted and the results considered by the Schools Forum, which has recommended that I decide to move to the national formula from 1 April 2018. Many schools are feeling under financial pressure and the choice of formula will affect individual schools in different ways, although it is important to note that the overall 'pot' for B&NES is increasing by 3.9% in 2018-19 (3rd highest increase in the country) and is unaffected by the choice of formula – and that every school is guaranteed a 0.5% per pupil uplift. The growth has been given because our mainstream schools have received less overall than many other local authorities so the national formula has been used to achieve consistency. The 0.5% guarantee has been given to protect schools across the country that would have actually seen a reduction as a result of the formula. The counter argument to moving straight to the national formula is that a small number of schools, including some of those serving our more vulnerable communities, will miss out on the short term opportunity of greater increases in funding which they could have received during the coming two years, under the local formula. No school budget will therefore be cut. Other pressures on budgets for schools will still cause pressure for them but these funding increases have to be welcomed.

Cabinet member priorities for the service

Having come into this role in July, I have now had chance to get a good sense of the work of our children's services and the challenges and issues that they face. I am beginning to describe a set of priorities that I want to focus on with the service in the coming year and would welcome feedback on these.

Context	Potential priorities
<i>Budgets vs Standards</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget Plans monitoring• Unavoidable overspends• Growth in demand• Sensitive cuts to achieve savings• SEND growth pressures• Accountable budgets• Using benchmark data for high cost areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Further review of key spend areas to ensure VFM• Agree achievable targets• Examine demand solutions, including where possible promotion of Early Help/Early Intervention to prevent escalation to specialist services• Promote actions to address growing demand pressures in SEND, including development of an investment business plan• Manage within DSG high needs budgets, but be clear about financial risks• Agree budget adjustments to take into account unavoidable growth but retain downward pressure on costs• Prepare short, medium and long term budget plan to be monitored with cabinet member.

<p><i>Deal with demand /growth</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing growth will create greater numbers in the system at all levels • Ongoing duties to secure sufficient school places remains. • Staffing review required in key areas • Budget pressures create a risk re the future • Explore buying in specialist capacity • Plan for complexity issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a clear priority plan to focus service priorities • Promote parent 5 placement options system to ensure all school places are filled within the existing school network with a Banes first policy. • Continue to plan for school expansion/build projects • Work with MATs to reduce demand re SEND
<p><i>Implement Ofsted children services review</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children in need of help and protection requires improvement re systems • Care leaver pathways and experiences require improvement • Adoption is outstanding • Looked after children good but numbers growing and expensive care packages apply • Care workers at maximum capacity • Partnership working and quality assurance is a strength • Leadership, Management and Governance is good - Strategic director balance between two largest spending functions remains good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a SMART plan and monitor • Promote extending local fostering network. • Prepare for further potential inspections. • Examine total services costs • Work with YMCA for short term issues. • Research health/care commissioning coordination? • Visit with care workers to understand their pressures. • Develop an agreement with the College to promote local solutions.
<p><i>Value added education for the best and least</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct controls over academies • Good educational results mask issues • Where you live matters (12% in poverty) • Target services in areas of concern • Good education performance, but not as good as we could be (especially secondary and post-16) • L.A. Services to MATs being reduced • Numbers appropriate for area. • School funding changes/pressures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up and run an excellence campaign - broaden the Education Excellence Board to engage MATs • Develop the role of the LA as a champion of the parents' voice • Promote MAT self assessment • Publicise value added/progress measures table • Promote schools additional funding and benefits for students • Promote MAT/Parent focus group

<p><i>Changing Role of LA in Education</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 50% schools are now academies • Review MAT performance in public • Ensure all traded services provided are at full cost plus 5% • Compete with private providers where viable/desirable. 	<p>Prepare a delivery plan to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote academies by 2020 • Target withdrawal of all uneconomic and non-statutory services by year 2018/2019 • Positive plan to the regional commissioner
<p><i>Working in partnership</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the corporate structure • Other local Authorities • FE • HE • Businesses • Small Local Authority • CCG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore HE research opportunities • Explore partnership delivery options for specialist and uneconomic services. • Offer “excellent” services to others at a commercial rate. • HWB board proposals. • Links to WECA Skills agenda • Deliver Adoption West regional agency by April 2018 • Promote Joint commissioning with CCG • Coordinate with private sector on common issues.
<p><i>Seek innovation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment opportunities • Partnership to share overheads • Combine health and care functions • Service delivery arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a service group to discuss • Identify issues that benefit health and care • Explore options to provide statutory support to last few remaining non-academy schools • Positively seek in county opportunities with partners for new SEND provision • Examine joint commissioning costs of child and adult services post YCYW. • Develop a trusted social care provider model

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