

SCHOOLS FORUM

Date of Meeting: 24 May 2017

For: Information

Matters arising from a meeting of the Schools' Forum on 22 February 2017

Purpose of the report:

1. To provide Schools' Forum with information related to matters arising from the minutes of meetings held on 18 January 2017 and 22 February 2017

Summary / background / update:

2. A detailed analysis of all central charges was requested at the meeting of 18 January 2017. These are provided in Appendix 1 of this report.
3. A request was made at the meeting of 22 February for clarification as to how senior leaders in schools would be consulted in the future regarding the provision of additional school places. School place planning is a statutory function for the local authority and ensuring every child has a school place is one of the three education duties for local authorities cited in Educational Excellence Everywhere March 2016. A primary place strategy was agreed by Executive on 28th January 2016. A secondary place strategy is being drafted (the last strategy ended in 2016). The local authority is committed to briefing schools on school place planning and will do this through the termly Head teacher briefings. The decision to expand a school or open a new school is taken by the Executive of Wokingham Borough Council.
4. At the meeting of 22 February it was reported that there was no significant over spend against redundancy costs. In 2016/17 the budget of £305,900, of which DSG contributed £30,000, was not exceeded.
5. At the meeting of 22 February clarification was sought regarding the inclusion of Just Around the Corner (JAC) as a placement provider. To the best of my knowledge Just Around the Corner is a registered charity but is not a registered education provider. If schools wish to use JAC then pupils would need to access this as an offsite provision and remain on the school roll. The school would retain all their legal responsibilities for the child/young person and would be responsible for ensuring that the provision is meeting the needs of their learner.
6. At the meeting of 18 January 2107 clarification was requested on SEN transport and no update was provided at the meeting of 22 February. The request was whether there were any instances where transport was funded **and** families also received Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to cover transport costs. The issue has been passed to legal services for clarification. Historically the view has been taken that DLA is provided for all transport costs other than those associated home to school transport. The DfE have clarified, through an answer in parliament, that in their view receipt of DLA does not disqualify an individual from benefiting from free transport to school. The duty to provide free transport is clearly established in the 1996 Education Act (as amended) and there is no provision in the legislation to take account of benefits received. We do though work with families to achieve transport arrangements that provide value for money and promote familial resilience and independence and this could lead to mileage payment to help a family use a Motability vehicle (funded by DLA) to get to

school. Under the Education Act 1996 requirements this payment would need to be agreed with the family.

Options / suggested actions:

7. The Forum is asked to note the contents of this report and work with the Councils colleagues to ensure an accurate and effective reporting.

Jane Winterbone
Interim Assistant Director Education
May 2017