

Lancashire Schools Forum meeting of 14 January 2020 at County Hall, Preston

Executive Summary

1. Attendance and Apologies for Absence and 2. Substitute Members

To note attendance and apologies for absence and welcome any substitute members.

3. Forum Membership

To note the Forum membership changes since the last meeting.

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting and 5. Matters Arising

To agree the minutes of the last meeting held on 17 October 2019 and any matters arising.

6. Consideration of the Schools Budget 2020/21

a) Schools Budget 2019/20

To consider the report about the Schools Budget for 2020/21, including information on each of the 4 funding blocks:

- Schools Block;
- High Needs Block;
- Early Years Block;
- Central School Services Block

b) Recommendations from the Forum Chair's Group Budget Meeting

To consider the recommendations from the Forum Chair's Group on 9 January 2020, in relation to the Schools Budget for 2020/21.

c) Formal Forum Decisions relating to the Schools Budget 2020/21

To consider and vote on the formal Forum decisions relating to the Schools Budget 2020/21.

7. Recommendations from the Schools Block Working Group

To consider the recommendations from the Schools Block Working Group held on 10 December 2019.

i. School Block Funding 2020/21 and local modelling

Information was provided about Government school funding announcements, which indicated that £2.6b of additional funding will be available nationally in 2020/21. The report also included information on local modelling and school level data.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report and the uncertainties surrounding the 2020/21 School budget setting process.*

ii. Consultation on the Schools Block Funding Formula 2020/21 and Possible Transfer to the High Needs and Early Years Block

At the Schools Forum meeting in October 2019, members supported the issuing of a consultation to seek views on areas of local discretion available in the 2020/21 school funding arrangements. This report provided information on the consultation responses and comments.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report and the school consultation responses and comments;*
- b) *Recommended that the Forum support the 3 proposals set out in the consultation:*
 - *That the MFG and capping levels in the 2020/21 Lancashire Schools Block formula should mirror those in the NFF and be set at an MFG of +1.84% with no cap on gains;*
 - *That any headroom available in the Schools Block, once the NFF methodology has been implemented, should be transferred to support pressures in the High Needs Block and the Early Years Block in 2020/21;*
 - *that notional SEN is changed to remove the Basic Pupil elements from the calculation.*
- c) *Noted that the Schools Block transfer proposal was at this stage in principle only, as final details of any headroom availability and the pressures and priorities on other funding blocks could only be finalised when 2020/21 DSG allocations were confirmed by the DfE.*

iii. School Resource Management Advisers

The DfE/ESFA are taking an increasing interest in the financial position of maintained schools and Local Authorities, and are promoting a wide range of tools to support schools to maximise the use of resources and funding. As part of this process, the ESFA have made available a School Resource Management Adviser (SRMA) to work with maintained schools in Lancashire and the report provided some initial information.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Asked to be kept informed about the SRMA process and requested sight of the final reports, subject to any confidentiality issues*

iv. Split Site Policy Update

Since the last meeting two issues have arisen in connection with the split sites policy, including:

- *Split Site Appeal*
- *Additional Split Site Application*

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Supported the application of the split site policy in the cases received.*

v. High Needs Block Provision Task and Finish Group Report

The Working Group had received regular verbal updates about the work of the County Council's High Needs Block Task and Finish Group. This report provided an update around 7 projects that will be initiated to look at the key recommendations from the report and to develop proposals. The financial context would also be considered in the light of the increased HNB allocations.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report and the supplementary information provided at the meeting;*
- b) *Asked that volunteers to act as school project sponsors be considered alongside any nominations from High Needs Block working group and existing partnership Board representatives.*

vi. *Historic Commitments Combined Budget Funding 2020/21*

Members considered funding announcements for 2020/21 in connection with Historic Commitments Combined Budgets.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Recommend to the Forum that the 2019/20 DSG allocation levels continue from April 2020 for MASH and the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service.*

vii. *School Teaching and Support Staff Supply Reimbursement Scheme*

The report provides information on the School Teaching and Support Staff Supply Reimbursement Scheme.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Supported the option to increase both premiums and reimbursement rates in line with forecast pay increases, which are currently estimated at 3% for teaching staff and 2% for support staff.*

viii. *Healthy Pupil Capital Fund Update*

The Healthy Pupil Capital Fund is intended to improve children's and young people's physical and mental health by improving and increasing availability to facilities for physical activity, healthy eating, mental health and wellbeing and medical conditions. Information was provided about the use of this funding in Lancashire.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Requested that the Director responsible for the Healthy Pupil Capital Fund be invited to the Schools Forum.*

ix. *Academies advertising on the LCC Vacancy site*

BTLS are currently making the necessary arrangements to implement this decision to allow academies to access the LCC vacancy site.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report*

x. *Teachers Pensions Grant Supplementary Claims*

Information about submitting Teachers Pensions Grant Supplementary Claims was to be shared with all schools on the portal.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report*

The Forum are asked to ratify the Working groups recommendations.

8. Recommendations from the High Needs Block Working Group

To consider the recommendations from the High Needs Block Working Group held on 3 December 2019.

i. High Needs Block Funding 2020/21

Information was provided about Government funding announcements in connection with children for children with SEND in 2020/21.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report.*

ii. High Needs Block Commissioned Places 2020/21

The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations require that the Forum is consulted annually on the places to be commissioned by the local authority in different schools and other institutions, and on the arrangements for paying top-up funding. This report set out proposals for 2020/21.

The Working Group is asked to:

- a) Noted the report;*
- b) Supported the proposed High Needs Block Commissioned Places in 2020/21, (a copy of the proposed HNB Commissioned Places for 2020/21 is attached at Appendix A to the report);*
- c) Requested that the HNB Chair write to the LA to express concerns about the data validity issues associated with the termly redetermination process.*

iii. Hospital Education Report

This report set out a request for increased Hospital education funding, required due to:

- increased demand as a consequence of increased capacity in the Cove;
- Increased demand (3 year trend) in home tuition provision for pupils medically unfit to leave the home/ attend school or unit.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report;*
- b) Support the recommendation for additional funding of £135,000 in total to provide the level of education required for the LA to meet its statutory duties to provide good quality education for pupils with significant medical needs.*

iv. Historic Commitments Combined Budget Funding 2020/21

This report provided information on proposed Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) contributions to 'combined budgets' for 2020/21.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report;*
- b) Recommend to the Forum that the 2019/20 DSG allocation levels continue from April 2020 for MASH and the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service.*

xi. High Needs Block Provision Task and Finish Group Report

The Working Group had received regular verbal updates about the work of the County Council's High Needs Block Task and Finish Group. This report provided an update around 7 projects that will be initiated to look at the key recommendations from the report and to develop proposals. The financial context would also be considered in the light of the increased HNB allocations.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report and the supplementary information provided at the meeting;*
- b) *Asked that volunteers to act as school project sponsors be considered alongside any nominations from Schools Block working group and existing partnership Board representatives.*

xii. *Consultation on the Schools Block Funding Formula 2020/21 and Possible Transfer to the High Needs and Early Years Block*

At the Schools Forum meeting in October 2019, members supported the issuing of a consultation to seek views on areas of local discretion available in the 2020/21 school funding arrangements. This report provided information on the consultation responses and comments.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report and that final information would be presented to the Forum in January 2020.*

xiii. *School Teaching and Support Staff Supply Reimbursement Scheme*

The report provides information on the School Teaching and Support Staff Supply Reimbursement Scheme.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Supported the option to increase both premiums and reimbursement rates in line with forecast pay increases, which are currently estimated at 3% for teaching staff and 2% for support staff.*

The Forum are asked to ratify the Working groups recommendations.

9. Recommendations from the Early Years Block Working Group

To consider the recommendations from the Early Years Block Working Group held on 5 December 2019.

i. *SEN Inclusion Fund*

After the last meeting, a copy of the guidance documentation and proforma arising from the SEN inclusion fund consultation, were circulated to Working Group members and it was indicated that the information had been circulated to providers.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted that SEN Inclusion Fund information had been circulated after the last meeting;*
- b) *Requested that the information be recirculated to all areas as some members did not recall seeing the original circulation.*

ii. *Payments for Social Services Supported Children*

Following notification to providers after the last meeting one or two settings got in contact with the LA about outstanding payments for social services children, but these had subsequently been resolved. Some members at the meeting reported that they still had payments outstanding for social services children. It was also noted that no contract information had been introduced to provide

evidence of the agreed hours and requirements and assurance that funding would eventually be paid.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the update around payments for Social Services Supported Children;*
- b) *Supported the follow up with the relevant service.*

iii. *Early Years Block Funding 2020/21*

The DfE have indicated that an additional £66m has been made available for early years funding from April 2020. This report provided further information about the Lancashire implications.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Supported the decision to passport the additional 8p per hour directly to 2 year olds and 3&4 year olds;*
- c) *Asked to be alerted when the Nursery School cabinet report was in the public domain.*

iv. *Early Years Funding Benchmarking Tool 2019/20*

The funding benchmarking tool includes the projected spend on early years providers to deliver early years places for two, three and four-year-olds. The benchmarking tool showed information for Lancashire, compared to data from our statistical neighbours.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report.*

v. *Consultation on 2 year old discretionary payments*

The final analysis of consultation responses and comments received were reported to the Schools Forum on 17 October 2019, with over 60% of responses supporting a continuation of the current arrangements. The Forum ratified the Working Group's recommendations to continue to current discretionary payments policy.

A copy of the final analysis of consultation responses were provided for the Working Group, and included additional comments received after the last working group meeting.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report.*

vi. *Supplementary Claims Process for Maintained Settings*

The Lancashire early years funding arrangements include processes to make supplementary claims after the official termly headcount has closed. There are currently different systems for maintained settings and PVI settings to make supplementary claims. Options are being considered about the possible introduction of a second supplementary data collection point each term for maintained providers

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Supported the introduction of a second maintained supplementary claim each term.*

The Forum are asked to ratify the Working groups recommendations.

10. Recommendations from the Apprenticeship Levy Steering Group

To consider the recommendations from the Apprenticeship Levy Steering Group held on 5 December 2019.

Information was provided on:

- School Engagement
- Training Provision
- Update on Levy Transfer
- Frameworks
- Financial Position
- New Apprenticeship Starts
- Looking Forward

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the information*
- b) Requested that the views expressed be considered in AL developments.*

The Forum are asked to ratify the Working groups recommendations.

11. 2019/20 High Needs Block, Central School Services Block and Central Items Monitoring

To consider latest High Needs Block, Central School Services Block and Central Items budget monitoring relating to the 2019/20 financial year, which is based on data from the autumn term 2019.

12. Forum Correspondence

On this occasion, Forum related correspondence has been included within the relevant Working Group reports.

13. Urgent Business

No decisions have been taken using the Forum urgent business procedure since the last meeting.

14. Any Other Business

There are no items of AOB.

15. Date of Future Meetings

To note that the next scheduled Forum meeting will be held at 10.00am Tuesday 24 March 2020 at County Hall, Preston.

A draft Schedule of Forum meetings for the 2020/21 academic year is provided for consideration.