

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT 10:00 A.M. ON TUESDAY, 14 JANUARY 2020 AT THE EXCHANGE, COUNTY HALL, PRESTON

Present:

Schools Members:

Primary School Governors

Ian Ball
Stephen Booth (Vice-chair)
Gerard Collins
Eleanor Hick
Lesley Millard
Michelle O'Neill
Robert Waring

Primary School Headteachers

Cathryn Antwis
Daniel Ballard
Sarah Barton
Jenny Birkin
Neil Gurman
Brendan Hassett
Deanne Marsh
Lucy Sutton

Secondary School Governors

Janice Astley
Brian Rollo
Lorimer Russell-Hayes

Secondary School Headteachers

Steve Campbell
Jan Marshall

Academy Governor

Helen Dicker
Chris McConnachie
Louise Shaw

Academy Principal/Headteacher

Gaynor Gorman
Alan Porteous

Alternative Provision Academy

Special School Academy

Special School Governor

Laura Brennan

Special School Headteacher

Peter Higham
Shaun Jukes (Chair)

Short Stay Governor

Sandra Thornberry

Short Stay Headteacher

Christine Mitchell (sub for Anne Kyle)

Nursery School Headteacher

Jan Holmes

Nursery School Governor

Thelma Cullen

Members:

Early Years - PVI

Sharon Alexander
Anne Peet
Philippa Perks (sub for Peter Hindle)

Observers

Nicola Bowering (Unison sub for Mark Evans)
Liz Laverty (ASCL)
Les Ridings (
Karen Stephens (NAHT sub for David Fann)
Sam Ud-din (LASGB)

Other Voting Members

CC Anne Cheetham

Observers - Members of the Public

Kathleen Cooper
CC Jennifer Mein

In attendance: Helen Belden
Paul Bonser
Sarah Callaghan
Matthew Dexter
Andrew Good
Christine Hurford
Neil Rogerson
Kevin Smith

For Item

Sarah Callaghan, Director of Education and Skills, was welcomed to her first Forum meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from: Chris Bagguley, Sandra Blight, Mark Evans, David Fann, Rosie Fearn, Peter Hindle, Mark Jackson, Angela Johnstone, Anne Kyle, Louise Martin, Laurence Upton, Tim Warren and Jill Wright.

2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following substitute members attended this meeting of the Forum:

- Karen Stephens, Headteacher of Upholland Roby Mill CE Primary school attended in place of Dave Fann for the NAHT;
- Nicola Bowering attended for Mark Evans on behalf of Unison;
- Phillippa Perks attended for Peter Hindle, representing Early Years PVI Providers;
- Christine Mitchel attended on behalf of Anne Kyle for PRUs.

The Forum:

- a) Welcomed the substitute members.**

3. FORUM MEMBERSHIP

A report was presented setting out the Forum membership changes since the last meeting.

The following members had resigned from the Forum

- Angela Holdsworth, from Tor View Specialist Learning Community;
- Ken Wales, Methodist Church/Free Churches Representative;
- Michelle Howard from the Lancashire Colleges.

The following new members have joined the Forum:

- Louise Parrish is the new Tor View representative, replacing Angela.
- Jonathan Walker, a governor at Chorley St James' Church of England Primary School has been appointed as the new Primary School Governor. This appointment was following an election took place in the autumn term 2019 to determine which of 3 primary school governor nominees should be appointed to the Forum. 49 votes were cast in the election process, representing an 11% turnout. Jonathan received 30 votes (61%).

The Forum:

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Thanked Angela Holdsworth, Michelle Howard and Ken Wales for their contribution to the Forum;**
- c) Welcomed Louise Parrish and Jonathan Walker to the Forum.**

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting held on 17 October 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2019.

6. CONSIDERATION OF THE SCHOOLS BUDGET 2020/21

a) Schools Budget 2019/20

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

c) Formal Forum Decisions relating to the Schools Budget 2019/20

The Forum consider the 3 Schools Budget sub items as a single report.

A report was presented setting out information about the Schools Budget for 2020/21. This included information from the original report to the Forum and subsequent information from the Chair's Working Group meeting held on 9 January 2020. The overall DSG allocations were provided as set out in the table below and the report provided further details on how the funding blocks were calculated using the DfE's national funding formulae.

Forecast DSG Income 2020/21	£m's
Schools Block	781.518
High Needs Block	135.479
Early Years Block	80.468
Central Schools Services Block	6.387
Gross Total forecast DSG Income	1,003.852
Total deductions for direct high needs payments made by the ESFA	-7.880
Net Total forecast DSG Income	995.972

An initial estimated of the Schools Budget 2020/21 was also provided, as set out in the table below:

Forecast DSG Expenditure 2020/21	£m's
Schools Block	779.518
High Needs Block	127.137
Early Years Block	82.468
Central Schools Services Block	6.387
Additional High Needs places to be paid direct by ESFA	0.462
Total forecast DSG Expenditure	995.972

In aggregate terms the 2020/21 Gross DSG allocation is some £55m higher than that received in 2019/20. This increase is due to:

- The increased £2.6b funding nationally made available by Government, including £700m for HNB;
- The increased £66m nationally for the Early Years Block;
- An increase in the numbers of pupils in the Lancashire calculations of all funding blocks compared to 2019/20.

Further information on the 2020/21 budget proposals were presented to the meeting:

Schools Block 2020/21

The Forum previously agreed that the Government's NFF methodology should be used to make allocations to schools and academies from 2018/19.

2020/21 NFF changes include:

- Mandatory Minimum Pupil Funding levels (£5,000 per pupil for secondary; 3,750 per pupil for primary)
- 4% increase in most factor values;
- Formulaic mobility factor allocations

Modelling follows Schools Block recommendations of an MFG of +1.84% with no cap on gains. The NFF can be implemented in full as the local formula and leaves circa £2m of headroom (0.26% of the Schools Block, from the Growth allocation). Following consultation with schools, the Schools Block, recommended that headroom be transferred to support pressures in the other funding Blocks in 2020/21.

In connection with the Growth Funding, it was noted that the policy agreed by Schools Forum in January 2019 provided that schools are funded at the relevant Minimum Pupil Funding (MPF) rate contained in the National Funding Formula (NFF). It was therefore proposed that new Growth Fund allocations from April 2020 are paid at the new NFF MPF rates:

- Primary £3,750 per pupil;
- Secondary £5,000 per pupil.

High Needs Block (HNB) 2020/21

DfE announcements provide an extra £700m nationally for HNB in 2020/21 and Lancashire's share equates to circa £17m additional funding. Modelling of the additional HNB funding suggests that the forecast growth in expenditure from April 2020 can be covered and a similar level of increase to funding rates as that applying to the Schools Block rates can be afforded.

Details of these uplifts included:

Weighted Pupil Numbers (WPN)

- WPN rates across all school and FE settings to be increased by 5%
 - 4% similar to Schools Block NFF 20/21 uplift
 - plus 1% similarly received by mainstream schools in the 2 year NFF implementation 18/19 & 19/20
- Rate from April 2020 will be £4,305

Special Schools Specific

- School Specific realigned to be more equitable and transparent
 - on a total basis equating to circa 5%

PRUs

- Rate for School Specific allocations uplifted by 4%
- Rate for Excluded Pupils, Medical and Other pupils uplifted by 4%, in line with NFF rates

Hospital Education

- As per HNB WG recommendations Hospital Education budget increased to £858k

– Commissioned Places 2020/21

It was noted that HNB proposals incorporated place numbers as per the report to HNB WG.

In connection with HNB in future years, no confirmation from DfE had been received about any additional HNB allocations. HNB projects would continue locally to ensure that best use is being made of the High Needs resources available and minimise as far as possible the current future years forecasted overspends, now revised down to £25m by 2023/24.

Early Years Block (EYB) 2020/21

2020/21 allocations for 2, 3 and 4 years olds increased had by 8p per hour by DfE, although it was noted that Lancashire still receives the lowest allocation of EYNFF nationally (along with about 1/3 of LAs).

There remains considerable strain on the sector as cost pressures increase (particularly wage costs). It was therefore proposed to transfer all the £2m headroom from Schools Block to EYB.

This would provide for one year only:

- support to enable the increase in Government funding for 2 year olds to be passed on in full, currently the 2 year old base rate is subsidised by the 3&4 year funding in 2019/20;
- an local increase to the 3&4 year old base rates of an additional 8p per hour, in addition to that provided by the increased Government funding;
- an increased of £200k to the SEN Inclusion Fund from April 2020, to provide a higher budget to support early years pupils with high needs.

Proposals would provide the following rates for 2020/21:

- 2 Year Old Base rate- £5.08 per hour (compared to £5.00 in 2019/20);
- 3&4 Year Old Base rate- £4.29 per hour (compared to £4.13 in 2019/20);
- SEN Inclusion Fund of £500k;
- Other elements of the Early Years formula remain unchanged from 2019/20 Early Years Block.

Central Schools Services Block (CSSB)

Information was presented setting out CSSB proposals for 2020/21

	Central School Services Block 2019/20	Central School Services Block 2020/21	Variance
	£m	£m	£m
ESG Retained Duties	2.591	2.591	-
Overheads	0.244	0.262	0.018
Copyright Licence	0.937	0.960	0.023
Pupil Access (Admissions)	0.937	0.937	-
School Forum	0.188	0.188	-
Early Intervention	0.350	0.350	-
PFI - Sixth Form	0.684	0.859	0.175
Prudential Borrowing	0.240	0.240	-
Total CSSB	6.170	6.387	0.216

The Forum have made considerable reductions to the CSSB Combined Budgets over recent years, in accordance with DfE requirements.

For 2020/21, Working Groups recommended continuation of 2019/20 allocations:

- MASH (£150k);
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service (200k).

In 2019/20, Forum reduced expenditure in part by ceasing a contribution to Domestic Abuse support as part of the DfE requirements. Subsequent to the Working Group meetings, correspondence was received from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire, asking that the contribution be reconsidered.

The report also contained information around commission services proposals from April 2020.

<u>Commissioned Services</u>	Approved Budget 2019/20	High Needs Budget	Early Years Budget	Central School Services Block	Total	Variance
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
PFI - Special	1.181	1.176	-	-	1.176	(0.005)
Commissioned Alternative Provision services	2.000	1.000	-	-	1.000	(1.000)
Hospital Provision	0.714	0.858	-	-	0.858	0.144
Out County - Specialist provision places	15.097	16.000	-	-	16.000	0.903
Out County - Mainstream / academies places	1.374	1.410	-	-	1.410	0.036
SEND Specialised Equipment	0.447	0.447	-	-	0.447	-
SEND Inclusion Projects	1.047	0.747	0.500	-	1.247	0.200
SEND Teachers & Support	4.264	3.464	-	-	3.464	(0.800)
Multi Agency Development	0.075	0.075	-	-	0.075	-
Support for Vulnerable Pupils - SI	0.908	0.899	-	-	0.899	(0.009)
Overheads	1.668	1.651	-	-	1.651	(0.017)
Total Commissioned Services	28.775	27.727	0.500	-	28.227	(0.548)

DSG Balances

Contextual information was provided showing the DSG reserve position across recent years

Year end	DSG Reserve	In year movement
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31.03.15	£27.94m	
31.03.16	£20.15m	-£7.79m
31.03.17	£20.69m	£0.54m
31.03.18	£14.40m	-£6.29m
31.03.19	£12.74m	-£1.66m

The forecast 2019/20 overspend is up to £3.6m.

Forum members gave careful consideration to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations and the budget proposals for each of the 4 funding blocks, including the correspondence from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire. Some concern was expressed around the level of balances remaining in the DSG reserve, but members felt it was appropriate to allocate all the additional DSG income to schools, rather than bolster reserves.

The Forum:

- a) Noted the report, including the 2020/21 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations and the budget proposals for each of the 4 funding blocks;
- b) Noted the information from the Forum Chair's Group meeting on 9 January 2020;
- c) Noted the correspondence from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire;
- d) Voted on the 2019/20 Schools Budget Proposals, as follows:

Unanimously supported the 2020/21 Schools Block proposals:

- Set a 2020/21 MFG of +1.84% with no cap on gains ;
- Confirm the transfer of Schools Block headroom of circa £2m (0.26% of the Schools Block) once the National Funding Formula (NFF) methodology has been implemented in full as the local formula, to support Early Years Block;
- Confirm the use of the relevant 2020/21 Minimum Pupil Funding (MPF) rates contained in the NFF for any new Growth Fund allocations from April 2020:
 - Primary £3,750 per pupil;
 - Secondary £5,000 per pupil.

Unanimously supported the 2020/21 High Needs Block proposals:

- Support the increased HNB allocation being utilised to cover the forecast growth in High Needs expenditure from April 2020;
- Support the increase in HNB expenditure to broadly match uplifts in the maintained sector , including:
 - Increasing the Weighted Pupil Numbers (WPN) rate by 5% to £4,305;
 - School Specific realigned to be more equitable and transparent on a total basis equating to circa 5%;
 - Uplift the PRU School Specific rate by 4%;
 - Uplift the PRU Excluded Pupils, Medical and Other pupils rates in line with NFF rates;
 - Increase the Hospital Education budget to £858k.

Unanimously supported the 2020/21 Early Years Block proposals:

- Support the passporting of increased Government 2020/21 allocations for 2, 3 and 4 years olds by increasing base rates by 8p per hour;
- Support the transfer of all the £2m Schools Block Headroom to the Early Years Block, to provide:

- support to enable the increase in Government funding for 2 year olds to be passed on in full, currently the 2 year old base rate is subsidised by the 3&4 year funding in 2019/20;
- an additional local increase to the 3&4 year old base rates of 8p per hour, in addition to that provided by the increased Government funding;
- an increased of £200k to the SEN Inclusion Fund from April 2020, to provide a higher budget to support early years pupils with high needs.

Unanimously supported the 2020/21 Central School Services Block proposals:

- Note the correspondence from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire in connection with the Domestic Abuse service;
- Acknowledge the value of the Domestic Abuse service;
- Note the DfE requirements in Regulations and Operation Guidance relating to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 'historic commitments' funding;
- Agree the allocation of DSG Combined Budgets as follows:
 - MASH - £150k;
 - Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service - £200k;

e) Unanimously supported the Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve underwriting the uncertainties around the 2020/21 DSG Schools Budget, across Schools Block, High Needs Block, Early Years Block and CSSB.

f) Unanimously approved the budget lines requiring Forum agreement, as set out below:

Function	LA proposals 2020/21	Proposed Expenditure: 2020/21 £m
Consultation on Formula Changes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals around possible changes to the discretionary payment elements in the EYNFF were the subject of consultation with the all providers in the autumn term. 	In accordance with the majority of consultation responses, the Forum meeting of 17 October 2019 agreed that that no changes to the 2020/21 EYNFF should be made. Final EYNFF proposals are contained in Schools Budget 2020/21 report	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjustments to the notional SEN calculation were subject to consultation in the autumn term 	Consultation responses are provided in the Forum papers, and in accordance with responses and recommendations from the Schools Block, the notional SEN is changed to remove the Basic Pupil elements from the calculation in the Schools Budget 2020/21	
De-delegation for mainstream schools	LA proposals for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools in financial difficulty; • Museum service (primary only); 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Costs Public duties/Suspensions; • Primary Inclusion Hubs <p>Approved by the Schools Forum on 17 October 2019</p>	
Movement of up to headroom from the schools block to other blocks	<p>Consultation responses are provided in the Forum papers, and in accordance with responses and recommendations from the Schools Block, proposals to transfer headroom from Schools Block are built into the Schools Budget 2020/21.</p> <p>Arrangements to transfer the headroom to the Early Years Block are subject to confirmation as part of the final proposals for the Schools Budget 2020/21</p>	2.000
Contracts (where the LA is entering a contract to be funded from the schools budget)	No Proposals at this time	
Financial issues relating to:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arrangements for pupils with special educational needs, in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding 	Proposals contained in the High Needs Block Working Group recommendations for Forum report for 14 January 2020	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arrangements for use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school, in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding 	Proposals contained in the High Needs Block Working Group recommendations for Forum report for 14 January 2020	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arrangements for early years provision 	Proposals contained in the Early Years Block Working Group recommendations for Forum report for 14 January 2020. Central funding level presented as part of the Schools Budget 2020/21 report	0.500
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • administration arrangements for the allocation of central government grants 	No Proposals at this time beyond passporting DfE allocations to schools	

Minimum funding guarantee (MFG)	Consultation responses on MFG and capping are provided in the Forum papers, and in accordance with responses and recommendations from the Schools Block, the MFG and capping levels mirror those in the NFF and are set at an MFG of +1.84% with no cap on gains in the Schools 2020/21	
General Duties for maintained schools Contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for maintained schools	No Proposals at this time	
Central spend on and the criteria for allocating funding from:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> funding for significant pre-16 pupil growth, including new schools set up to meet basic need, whether maintained or academy 	<p>Policy previously agreed by the Schools Forum. Proposal to increase the growth fund unit values in line with increased NFF Minimum Pupil Funding levels for 2020/21</p> <p>Final budget proposals are contained in the Schools Budget 2020/21 report</p>	2.000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> funding for good or outstanding schools with falling rolls where growth in pupil numbers is expected within three years 	No Proposals at this time	-
Central spend on:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> early years block provision funding to enable all schools to meet the infant class size requirement 	No Proposals at this time	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> back-pay for equal pay claims 	No Proposals at this time	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> remission of boarding fees at maintained schools and academies 	No Proposals at this time	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils 	No Proposals at this time	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> admissions 	Final budget proposals are contained in the Schools Budget 2020/21 report	0.937
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> servicing of schools forum 	Final budget proposals are contained in the Schools Budget 2020/21 report	0.188
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for all schools 	No Proposals at this time	
Central spend on:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> capital expenditure funded from revenue: projects must have been planned and decided on prior to April 2013 so no new projects can be charged 	No Proposals at this time	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contribution to combined budgets: this is where the schools forum agreed prior to April 2013 a contribution from the schools budget to services which would otherwise be funded from other sources 	Final combined budget proposals are contained in the Schools Budget 2020/21 report	0.350
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> existing termination of employment costs (costs for specific individuals must have been approved prior to April 2013 so no new redundancy costs can be charged) 	No Proposals at this time	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> prudential borrowing costs – the commitment must have been approved prior to April 2013 	Final prudential borrowing proposals are contained in the Schools Budget 2020/21 report	0.240
Central spend on:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> high needs block provision 	2020/21 funding level presented as part of the Schools Budget setting proposals	27.727
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> central licences negotiated by the Secretary of State 	2020/21 funding level presented as part of the Schools Budget setting proposals	0.960
Carry forward a deficit on central expenditure to the next year to be funded from the schools budget	No Proposals at this time	

Any brought forward deficit on de-delegated services which is to be met by the overall schools budget.	No Proposals at this time	
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7. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SCHOOLS BLOCK WORKING GROUP

A report was presented setting out 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.*

Information and recommendations from this report had been incorporated in the Schools Budget 2020/21 report.

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.*

Information and recommendations from this report had been incorporated in the Schools Budget 2020/21 report.

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

Objectives for the SRMA visit is to work collaboratively the LA and the school, providing peer-to-peer support to develop strategies to eliminate or prevent a deficit and consider different ways schools could make the best use of their resources.

Following discussions a small number of Lancashire schools were identified to receive a SRMA visit, at dates towards the end of November and early December.

Feedback from a school that had received a SMRA visit was that the process had been a positive one, although it was noted that no final reports had been prepared from Lancashire visits, so it was too early to comment on the overall value of the process.

Members asked to be kept informed about the process and requested sight of the final reports, subject to any confidentiality issues.

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*

Subsequent to the Working Group, final school and LA level reports had been received from the SRMA, and it was intended that further information would be presented to the next working group.

The Forum:

- a) ***Noted the report;***
- b) ***Ratified the Working Group's recommendations.***

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.*

The Forum:

- a) ***Noted the report;***
- b) ***Ratified the Working Group's recommendations.***

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.*

Since the Working Group meeting, volunteers from Schools Block and High Needs Block have come forward and are being reviewed.

The Forum:

- a) ***Noted the report;***
- b) ***Ratified the Working Group's recommendations.***

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.*

Information and recommendations from this report had been incorporated in the Schools Budget 2020/21 report, including the correspondence from the Police and Crime Commissioner.

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.*

The Forum:

- a) ***Noted the report;***
- b) ***Ratified the Working Group's recommendations.***

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.

Funding had been allocated across 5 building projects 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.*

After the Working Group meeting, the relevant Director has been contacted in connection with the Forum request but it was noted that the 2018/19 funding had been allocated and no new funding had been notified. Officers had agreed with the Primary Heads in Lancashire (PHiL) that schools would be consulted around the future use of the Healthy Pupil Capital Fund if additional allocations were received.

It was confirmed that funding allocations had been agreed through the LCC Capital Board and Cabinet and were compliant with the Healthy Pupil Capital Fund Conditions of Grant.

Members indicated that they did not necessarily disagree with the way this funding has been utilised but felt the consultation and communication around the allocation had caused frustration from schools.

The Forum:

- a) *Noted the report and the further information provided;*
- b) *Requested that officers consider how best to improve consultation and communication processes if future funding of this kind was made available.*
- c) *Requested that the Conditions of Grant be made available to members.*

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*

At the Forum meeting it was reported that work on implementing the decision is nearing completion and the charge for academies would be equivalent to that charged to maintained schools that did not buy the BTLS payroll service. A formal notification would be included in the HR bulletin to schools to confirm the availability of the service.

Officers asked to be informed if this delay caused any immediate issues to academies.

The Forum

- a) *Noted the report and the further information provided.*

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*

It was noted that a number of Lancashire mainstream schools had successfully submitted supplementary claims, assisted by the information provided, and a few were in direct contact with DfE to resolve outstanding queries, as the 17th January 2020 deadline approached.

A separate claims round for special schools and PRUS was expected to open in April 2020 and further details would be provided once available.

The Forum

- a) ***Noted the report and the further information provided.***

8. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE HIGH NEEDS BLOCK WORKING GROUP

A report was presented setting out 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.*

Information and recommendations from this report had been incorporated in the Schools Budget 2020/21 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.

Discussion also took place about the termly budget redetermination process for special schools.

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.*

Budget/commissioned places information and recommendations from this report had been incorporated in the Schools Budget 2020/21 report.

After the Working Group, the Chair of the HNB Working Group wrote a letter to the LA about the termly budget redetermination process. A response had been received from Sarah Callaghan, Director of Education and Skills to indicate that:

- ***The LA are in discussions with our suppliers about the problems, and they are working on a fix;***
- ***As an interim solution, the LA are working to implement local workarounds and procedures to help improve the accuracy of the redetermination;***
- ***The response was copied to the Special Schools Business Manager Network who had also expressed concern about the process.***

At the Forum meeting it was confirmed that officers were looking attribute some timescale to the solutions.

PRU representatives also expressed some concern about the communications around the commissioned place process. Officers agreed to review this process.

The Forum

- a) ***Noted the report and the further information provided about the termly budget redetermination process for special schools;***
- b) ***Noted that officers would review the process around the PRU commissioned place 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.***

Information and recommendations from this report had been incorporated in the Schools Budget 2020/21 report.

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.***

Information and recommendations from this report had been incorporated in the Schools Budget 2020/21 report.

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.*

This item had been covered under the Schools Block report.

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.*

Information and recommendations from this report had been incorporated in the Schools Budget 2020/21 report.

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.*

This item had been covered under the Schools Block report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EARLY YEARS BLOCK WORKING GROUP

A report was presented setting out 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.

Some members indicated that they did not seem to have received this information.

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.*

Subsequent to the meeting information about the SEN Inclusion fund criteria had been recirculated to all providers.

The Forum

- a) **Noted the report.**

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.*

Subsequent to the meeting, the Chair of the EYB WG had written to the relevant Head of Service about Payments for Social Services Supported Children in Early Years, setting out:

- **Concern about some outstanding payments;**
- **Concerned that no actual documentation between provider and LCC exists about what has been commissioned and the rate;**
- **Request that a representative from the service attend the next EY meeting to enable us to discuss the systems and processes with you to ensure the arrangements related to the payment of Social Services supported children run smoothly going forward.**

The Forum

- a) **Noted the report;**
- b) **Ratified the recommendations of the Working Group.**

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.*

Information relating to the funding element of the report and recommendations had been incorporated into the Budget report.

The Cabinet report about the future of maintained nursery schools was published on 8 January 2020 and a communication had been issued to EYBWG members alerting them to the report

<http://council.lancashire.gov.uk/documents/s161545/Report.pdf>

The Forum

- a) ***Noted the report;***
- b) ***Ratified the recommendations of the Working Group.***

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.*

The Forum

- a) ***Noted the report;***
- b) ***Ratified the recommendations of the Working Group;***
- c) ***Noted that Schools Block transfer had provided additional £200k for the SEN Inclusion Fund, which***

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.*

The Forum

- 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

- a) ***Noted the report.***

10. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE APPRENTICESHIP LEVY STEERING GROUP

A report was presented setting out 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

Key concerns were around the loss of some level 2 qualifications that were previously available to assist some school leavers and the risk that some school levy funding would be returned to the Government as it had not been utilised in the required timeframe.

The Working Group:

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

The Forum

- a) ***Noted the report;***
- b) ***Noted that Apprenticeship Levy colleagues had been invited to the next Schools Forum meeting.***

11. 2019/20 HIGH NEEDS BLOCK MONITORING

A report was presented setting out the latest High Needs Block budget monitoring relating to the 2019/20 financial year, which is based on data from the autumn term 2019.

Latest monitoring showed a forecast HNB overspend of £3.6m at 31 March 2020 and incorporated comments on key variances.

The Forum

- a) ***Noted the report.***

12. FORUM CORRESPONDENCE

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

13. URGENT BUSINESS

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

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) Communication via the Schools Portal

A number of items on the agenda had made reference to the communications with schools and members raised an item of AOB to request that the utilisation of the Schools Portal be reviewed, to assess if the portal was fit for purpose or if it could be replaced or improved.

It was noted that the portal had been in operation for a number of years and as we approach the end of the current BTLS IT contract now may be an opportune time to review the portal operation.

Officers agreed to consider this request.

The Forum

a) *Supported the requested to review operation of the Schools Portal.*

15. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

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.

The Forum

a) *Noted the date of the next meeting;*

b) *Agreed the 2020/21 academic year schedule of meetings.*