

Lancashire Schools Forum meeting to be held on 2 July 2020 via video conferencing

Executive Summary

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting of the Forum will take place via video conferencing.

1. Apologies for Absence and 2. Substitute Members

To note any 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 scheduled for 24 March 2020 and any matters arising.

6. Schools Budget Outturn, School Balances and Clawback 2019/20

This report provides information on the 2019/20 Schools Budget outturn position, and on responses from the Forum working groups on matters arising from the report, including:

- Possible DSG contribution to the risks associated with the closure or forced academisation of schools in deficit;
- Clawback options for March 2021;
- Operation of the support staff element of the supply scheme in 2021/21.

7. Schools Forum Annual Report 2019/20

To approve the 2019/20 Schools Forum Annual Report for publication

8. Recommendations from the Schools Block Working Group

To consider the recommendations from the Schools Block Working Group, including

i. Urgent Business Outcomes - Supply Scheme update and alternatives to May 2020 schools census

This report provided information on two decisions taken using the Forum's urgent business procedure in relation to: Forum, using the Forum's Urgent Business Procedure. This request sought urgent views over 2 matters, relating to:

- An update on the operation of the Lancashire supply scheme;
- Actions to be taken in response to the Government's decision to cancel the summer term 2020 school census.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report.*

ii. Charging for the Operation of Schools Local Bank Account

In October 2019, the Forum supported revised bank account charges being introduced from April 2020. Members were reminded about the reasons behind the decision as charges for 2020/21 are about to be issued.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report.*

iii. Service De-delegations 2020/21 – School Financial Health Check Funding

This report provided information on options for the use of funding originally collected as part of the Support for Schools in Financial Difficulty (SIFD) de-delegation for the provision of financial health checks for schools. Other elements of the SIFD support remain unchanged.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report;*
- b) Expressed views about the options available for the funding within the Support for Schools in Financial Difficulty (SIFD) de-delegation relating to financial health checks for schools. There was no overall consensus and an analysis of the views expressed are shown below:*

<i>Feedback on possible options in connection with funding relating to the school financial health check element of the 2020/21 SIFD de-delegation funding.</i>	
<i>Option</i>	<i>No of responses</i>
<i>Hold the funding in the de-delegation reserve specifically earmarked for school health checks</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Utilise the funding as part of the wider Schools in Financial Difficulty support in 2020/21</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Use the health checks funding as a further DSG contribution to the 'structural deficits' reserve</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Reimburse the 'health check' element of funding to all schools on the basis that it was collected</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>No response</i>	<i>1</i>

One member raised concerns about the collecting of this money from schools for a potential purpose and as it has been found unnecessary suggested that this type of "speculative taking of funds" be avoided in future and should not have happened in the first place.

iv. Trade Union Facilities Agreement

An update report was provided about the use of Trade Union Facilities Time Agreement, which forms part of the 'Staff costs – Public Duties/Suspensions' de-delegation.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report;*
- b) Expressed views about the Trade Union Facilities Agreement in connection with the proposed 2021/22 de-delegation, with a majority favouring the 'Yes, and with a Forum recommendation that the TU funding is reduced to reflect a smaller workforce' option, as shown below:*

<i>Feedback on the updated facilities time agreement information being included in the 2021/22 de-delegation consultation with schools.</i>	
<i>Option</i>	<i>No of responses</i>
<i>Yes, and with a Forum recommendation that the TU funding is reduced to reflect a smaller workforce</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Yes and with a Forum recommendation that the TU funding continues at the 2020/21 levels</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Yes, but without any accompanying Forum recommendation</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>No, don't include the information in the consultation</i>	<i>0</i>

v. Scheme for Financing Schools in Lancashire

In April 2020, the DfE issued an 11th update to Statutory Guidance on schemes and details of the scheme updates introduced by the latest guidance were provided. No responses were received from schools during the consultation.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report and that no views were received from schools during the scheme consultation;*
- b) Supported the introduction of the proposed scheme amendments.*

This is a formal Schools Forum decision and approval will be sought to update the Lancashire scheme as part of the decision making process for the July Forum meeting.

vi. Split Site Funding Appeal

Information was provided about an appeal to the split site funding allocation for 2020/21.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report;*
- b) Expressed views about the split site appeal. There was no overall consensus and an analysis of the views expressed are shown below, with rejecting the appeal marginally the most popular view:*

<i>Feedback on a school appeal against the application of the split site funding policy</i>	
<i>Option</i>	<i>No of responses</i>
<i>Reject the appeal as the school does not meet the distance threshold for split site criteria 1</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Support the appeal and award criteria 1 level funding due to the exceptional case made in the appeal</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Support a reduced distance threshold for criteria 1 so that the school qualify</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>No response/not sure</i>	<i>2</i>

9. Recommendations from the High Needs Block Working Group

To consider the recommendations from the High Needs Block Working Group, including:

- i. Developing the Approach and Provision for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities*

This report provided a brief update on developments, particularly in connection with Additionally Resources Mainstream Schools (ARMS).

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report*

ii. *Urgent Business Outcomes - Supply Scheme update and alternatives to May 2020 schools census*

This report provided information on two decisions taken using the Forum's urgent business procedure in relation to: Forum, using the Forum's Urgent Business Procedure. This request sought urgent views over 2 matters, relating to:

- An update on the operation of the Lancashire supply scheme;
- Actions to be taken in response to the Government's decision to cancel the summer term 2020 school census.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report.*

iii. *Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) Claim from supplementary fund for specialist settings*

This report provided information about the TPECG) Claim from supplementary fund for specialist settings.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report.*

iv. *Charging for the Operation of Schools Local Bank Account*

In October 2019, the Forum supported revised bank account charges being introduced from April 2020. Members were reminded about the reasons behind the decision as charges for 2020/21 are about to be issued.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report.*

10. Recommendations from the Early Years Block Working Group

To consider the recommendations from the Early Years Block Working Group, including

i. *Future of Maintained Nursery Schools*

During the current COVID-19 pandemic, the review of Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS) financial stability has been put on hold.

The Working Group noted the information.

ii. *Schools Forum Urgent Business Process - Alternative arrangements following the cancellation of the May 2020 school census*

This report provides information about the urgent business decision taken about the cancellation of the May 2020 schools census for the Early Years Block.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report.*

iii. Funding Agreement for the Provision of Early Education Funding 2020/21

For 2020/21, the LA is not proposing to make any changes to the agreement beyond updating the dates to reflect the 2020/21 year.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report.*

iv. Early Years Block Autumn Term 2020 Payments

Whilst no information is yet available from the DfE, the LA is preparing a paper around possible options for funding early years providers in the autumn term 2020.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report*
- b) Supported the proposal to hold a virtual meeting on this issue.*

Any update from the virtual meeting will be reported to the Forum.

v. Funding for PVI and Childminders with additional Costs associated with COVID-19

Mainstream Schools may be able to request support directly from the DfE to assist with additional COVID-19 costs including increased premises related costs and additional cleaning costs, subject to certain conditions. The County Council has asked the DfE if this scheme can also be made available to EY PVI providers and Childminders.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the information;*
- b) Noted that any responses from the DfE will be shared at the virtual meeting if it has been received.*

Any update from the virtual meeting will be reported to the Forum.

vi. Local Authority Discretionary Fund

A statement from NDNA was shared with the group about support for childcare providers (In Lancashire, it is district councils that deal with business rates).

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the information;*
- b) Noted that this information could be discussed as part of the virtual meeting.*

11. Recommendations from the Apprenticeship Levy Steering Group

To consider the recommendations from the Apprenticeship Levy Steering Group, which was updated on the school apprenticeship levy developments.

12. Urgent Business

Matters considered using the Forum's Urgent Business Procedure since the last Schools Forum meeting have been included within the relevant working group summery reports.

13. Forum Correspondence

There is no Forum related correspondence to consider at this meeting.

14. Any Other Business

a) School funding: exceptional costs associated with coronavirus (COVID-19) for the period from March to July 2020

To note the information about recent DfE 'exceptional costs' announcements.

15. Date of Future Meetings

To note that the next scheduled Forum meeting will be held at 10.00am Thursday 17 October 2019 at County Hall, Preston, subject to COVID-19 implications.