

## Lancashire Schools Forum meeting of 20 October 2020 via video conferencing

### Executive Summary

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

#### 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 2 July 2020 and any matters arising.

#### 6. Recommendations from the Schools Block Working Group

To consider the recommendations from the Schools Block Working Group from 22 September 2020

##### *i. Schools Budget Outturn, School Balances and Clawback 2019/20 – Update report*

This report provided further detailed analysis of the outturn position at 31 March 2020, including detailed budget monitoring tables along with a commentary on key issues.

*The Working Group:*

*a) Noted the report and the additional 2019/20 outturn information provided.*

##### *ii. Schools Block Funding 2021/22*

An update was provided about the key DfE announcements about school funding for 2021/22, including:

- Rolling grant funding into the schools NFF;
- Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index 2019 update.

Information about the level of Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) proposed for the local funding formula in 2021/22 was also provided including the consultation with schools.

*The Working Group:*

*a) Noted the report and the information provided*

***Subsequent to the meeting the MFG consultation closed and the final consultation analysis and comments received via the eform are provided in the report.***

***The Forum are asked to make a final recommendation on the level of MFG to be used in the Lancashire funding formula for 2021/22.***

### *iii. Service De-delegations 2021/22*

This report provided information on a consultation seeking views about which services should be de-delegated for 2021/22 are:

- Staff costs – Public Duties/Suspensions;
- Heritage Learning Service (Museum Service) - Primary Schools Only;
- Support for Schools in Financial Difficulty;
- Primary Inclusion Hubs - Primary Schools Only

#### *The Working Group:*

- a) Noted the report and the interim consultation information provided;*
- b) Suggested that PHiL and LASSH colleagues could be contacted and asked to promote consultation responses;*
- c) Individual members agreed to encourage responses from their own schools and clusters;*
- d) Requested that further Inclusion Hub impact analysis be presented to a future meeting, when time allowed;*
- e) Supported the proposed eform voting arrangements for the de-delegations, following an opportunity for discussions at the Forum meeting on 20 October 2020.*

**A copy of the final de-delegation consultation analysis is provided in the report, together with comments that have been received**

**This report also provides an appendix with updated information on Inclusion Hubs and on the future proposals.**

**As agreed by the Working group, an eform will be issued after the meeting enabling relevant members to vote on the 2021/22 de-delegations, following an opportunity for discussions at the Forum meeting on 20 October 2020. Only maintained primary school representatives and maintained secondary school representatives may vote on the de-delegation proposals relating to their phases.**

### *iv. Financial transparency of local authority maintained schools and academy trusts: Government consultation response*

A government response to the Transparency consultation has now been published this report highlights the key areas.

#### *The Working Group:*

- a) Noted the report;*
- b) Noted that information had been provided to schools where implementation of the DfE requirements was imminent;*
- c) Noted that further information would be provided to schools and the Forum on other requirements and local proposals.*

*v. Scheme for Financing Schools in Lancashire*

In August 2020, the DfE issued a 12th update to Statutory Guidance on schemes. Information was provided on the local scheme amendments being introduced in response to the guidance and on the consultation that was held with schools.

*The Working Group:*

- a) Noted the report.*

***Subsequent to the meeting the Scheme consultation closed but no responses were received.***

***Maintained School Members of the Forum are asked to formally approve the revised Scheme for Financing Schools in Lancashire.***

*vi. Coronavirus (COVID-19) catch-up premium*

In July 2020, the Government have announced a £1b Covid catch-up package for the 2020/21 academic year and this report provided details.

*The Working Group:*

- a) Noted the report.*

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

An updated was provide on the latest DfE Information around 'School funding: exceptional costs associated with coronavirus (COVID-19), including allocations for Lancashire schools.

*The Working Group:*

- a) Noted the report.*

*viii. School Finance - School Visits*

During the COVID pandemic School Finance have continued to deliver a traded service to schools, but now access school systems remotely and meet with school colleagues virtually. Views were sought on the continuation of this approach

*The Working Group:*

- a) Supported the continuation of the virtual service offering from Schools Finance as the default position.*

**The Forum are asked to ratify the Working groups recommendations.**

**7. Recommendations from the High Needs Block Working Group**

To consider the recommendations from the High Needs Block Working Group from 29 September 2020.

*i. Schools Budget Outturn, School Balances and Clawback 2019/20 – Update report*

This report provided further detailed analysis of the outturn position at 31 March 2020, including detailed budget monitoring tables along with a commentary on key issues.

*The Working Group:*

*a) Noted the report;*

*b) Requested additional information on a couple of specific areas rating to:*

- o the significant rise in out-county expenditure in 2019/20 (over £5m) and the number of children that were placed in independent provision;*
- o any update on the development of special educational needs units attached to mainstream schools, particularly in the secondary sector.*

*ii. High Needs Block Monitoring 2020/21*

Due to the cost and demand led pressures on the High Needs Block budget, arrangements were introduced from 2018/19 to provide the Forum with termly budget HNB monitoring. The HNB budget is currently forecasting a circa £2.4m underspend at 31 March 2021.

*The Working Group:*

*a) Noted the report.*

*iii. High Needs Block Funding 2021/22*

This report provided information on 2021/22 funding announcements for the HNB. Members considered the initial DfE information for 2021/22 and commented that it would be helpful if Inclusion Service colleagues could attend future meetings provide the opportunity to discuss SEND and AP strategies and the financial consequences in more detail ahead of deliberations around the High Needs Block budget for 2021/22.

*The Working Group:*

*a) Noted the report;*

*b) Asked that the Chair of the Working Group formally invite Dr Sally Richardson, Head of Inclusion Service, to the next HNB meeting.*

*iv. HNB Indicative Commissioned Place Numbers 2021/22*

As part of the process agreed with the Schools Forum earlier this year, the county council wrote to all Lancashire special schools and PRUs at the end of the summer term 2020 with an early notification of the indicative number of places we expect to commission in 2021/22, to allow a longer opportunity for representations.

Representations from a number of schools and PRUs are being considered.

*The Working Group:*

*a) Noted the report.*

*v. Representations from Lancashire Short Stay Schools*

Correspondence to the Forum and LCC officers has been sent by Lancashire Short Stay Schools. The letter makes representations about the financial impact on Short Stay Schools due to Coronavirus and some wider issues about the PRU funding, including the commissioned place methodology.

*The Working Group:*

- a) Noted the report and the correspondence from PRU headteachers;*
- b) Supported the proposed protections for PRUs to base autumn term 2020 redeterminations on the higher of October 20 and October 19 census data, to mitigate the impact that COVID-19 may have had on PRU NORs;*
- c) Supported the extension of this autumn term 2020 redeterminations methodology to special schools;*
- d) Noted that the additional costs of this protection were not yet known but that the risk would need to be underwritten by the DSG reserve;*
- e) Welcomed the establishment of the Alternative Provision Governance Group to consult with the sector and support the implementation of the Alternative Provision Strategy;*
- f) Welcomed the appointment of PRU headteachers to sit on this group.*

*vi. DSG Historic Commitments: Emotional Health and Wellbeing Commissioned Early Help Service Performance Update*

DfE announcements make clear that DSG Historic Commitments allocations will continue to reduce to zero across future years and include confirmation that the historic commitments element of the Central School Services Block (CSSB) will decrease by a further 20% from April 2021.

In order to aid Forum consideration of these allocations, a report was provided from the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Commissioned Early Help Service providing a Performance Update for the previous year

*The Working Group:*

- a) Noted the report;*
- b) Agreed to be aware of this report when considering the DSG 'combined budget' contributions as part of the budget setting process for 2021/22*

*vii. Financial transparency of local authority maintained schools and academy trusts: Government consultation response*

A government response to the Transparency consultation has now been published this report highlights the key areas.

*The Working Group:*

- a) Noted the report;*
- b) Noted that information had been provided to schools where implementation of the DfE requirements was imminent;*

- c) *Noted that further information would be provided to schools and the Forum on other requirements and local proposals.*

*ix. Scheme for Financing Schools in Lancashire*

In August 2020, the DfE issued a 12th update to Statutory Guidance on schemes. Information was provided on the local scheme amendments being introduced in response to the guidance and on the consultation that was held with schools.

*The Working Group:*

- a) *Noted the report.*

***Subsequent to the meeting the Scheme consultation closed but no responses were received.***

***Maintained School Members of the Forum are asked to formally approve the revised Scheme for Financing Schools in Lancashire.***

*x. Coronavirus (COVID-19) catch-up premium*

In July 2020, the Government have announced a £1b Covid catch-up package for the 2020/21 academic year and this report provided details.

*The Working Group:*

- a) *Noted the report.*

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

An updated was provide on the latest DfE Information around 'School funding: exceptional costs associated with coronavirus (COVID-19), including allocations for Lancashire schools.

*The Working Group:*

- a) *Noted the report.*

*xii. School Finance - School Visits*

During the COVID pandemic School Finance have continued to deliver a traded service to schools, but now access school systems remotely and meet with school colleagues virtually. Views were sought on the continuation of this approach

*The Working Group:*

- a) *Supported the continuation of the virtual service offering from Schools Finance as the default position.*

**The Forum are asked to ratify the Working groups recommendations.**

## **8. Recommendations from the Early Years Block Working Group**

To consider the recommendations from the Early Years Block Working Group from 6 October 2020.

*i. Schools Budget Outturn, School Balances and Clawback 2019/20 – Update report*

This report provided further detailed analysis of the outturn position at 31 March 2020, including detailed budget monitoring tables along with a commentary on key issues and noted some underspends on the SEN Inclusion Fund.

*The Working Group:*

- a) Noted the report and the supplementary analysis provided;*
- b) Requested that a meeting be requested with the Head of the Inclusion Service, to discuss SEN related issue that were impact on early years providers, including the underspends on the SEN Inclusion Fund;*
- c) Requested that the Maintained Nursery School Federation be invited to any discussions.*

*ii. Urgent Business - Early Education Funding Principles and Methodology for Autumn 2020 Term*

Information was provided on the urgent business process seeking Forum views on the proposed funding principles and methodology to be used in Lancashire for the Autumn 2020 Term.

*The Working Group:*

- a) Noted the report.*

*iii. EY Sustain*

This report provided feedback on the lessons learned from the first round of EY Sustain consultancy. A summary of key findings were set in the report.

*The Working Group:*

- a) Noted the report.*

*iv. Executive Recovery Board*

The Working Group Chair represents PVI providers on the Executive Recovery Board, which is a weekly meeting of school and early years representatives with LCC Directors dealing with COVID-19 related issues. Maintained nursery schools are represented by the Maintained Nursery School Federation. The Chair provided feedback from recent Executive Recovery Board meetings.

*The Working Group:*

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Welcomed the early years representation on the Board and the response that had been received in respect of the specific SEND concerns raised;*
- c) *Requested that the distribution list for the communication to be issued to providers be checked, as many settings had not received earlier correspondence.*

*Individual members agreed to feed back any relevant issues to the Chair for raising at future Board meetings and to give consideration to any other mechanisms that could be used to encourage wider feedback from the sector.*

**The Forum are asked to ratify the Working groups recommendations.**

## **9. Recommendations from the Chair's Working Group**

To consider the recommendations from the Chair's Working Group meeting held on 22 September 2020.

i. *Schools in Financial Difficulty (SIFD) – Bid for one off financial support for a Lancashire primary school*

A report was provided in connection with a bid for one off financial support from a Lancashire primary school.

*The Working Group:*

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Supported the allocation of £36,000 from the Schools in Financial Difficulty budget to assist with the recovery at a Lancashire primary school.*

ii. *Schools in Financial Difficulty (SIFD) – Bid for one off financial support for a Lancashire special school*

A report was provided in connection with a bid for one off financial support from a Lancashire special school.

*The Working Group:*

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Supported the allocation of £64,000 from the Schools in Financial Difficulty budget to assist with the recovery at a Lancashire special school.*

iii. *Schools in Financial Difficulty (SIFD) – Revised Categorisations*

This report provided information on the recent review the SIFD categories in light of the publication of the DfE's response to the financial transparency consultation.

*The Working Group:*

- a) *Noted the report;*

- b) Supported the revised SIFD categorisation names, descriptions and financial indicators*
- c) Supported the publication of the SIFD categorisation on the Forum website.*

**The Forum are asked to ratify the Working groups recommendations.**

**10. Lancashire County Council Area Position On Paying Staff In Schools**

To note the communication issue to schools in connection with the paying staff in Lancashire schools and possible future representations to central government.

**11. Supply Cover Insurance and Maternity Scheme for Lancashire Schools – Late Joining**

To consider the report on allowing in year changes to school cover options for the supply scheme

**12. Urgent Business**

To note the response to the Forum Urgent Business Procedure (UBP) conducted on updates to the Supply Cover Insurance and Maternity Scheme for Lancashire Schools for September 2020.

**13. Pupil Premium Grant + for looked after children 2020/21**

To note the PPG+ Policy for 2020/21, which provides information on the use of distribution of funding held centrally.

**14. Schools Forum Operational Arrangements Document**

To consider the updated Schools Forum Operational Arrangements document, which now incorporate the new Schools Forum Regulations.

**15. Forum Correspondence**

To consider the Forum related correspondence received since the last meeting, from HMRC. Other correspondence to the Forum has been included within working group reports.

**16. Any Other Business**

No notified items of AOB

**17. Date of Future Meetings**

To note that the next scheduled Forum meeting will be held at 10.00am Tuesday 12 January 2020 at County Hall, Preston, subject to COVID-19 implications.