

**LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT 10:00 A.M. ON TUESDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2020**  
**(Virtual meeting via Zoom)**

Present:

**Schools Members:**

**Primary School Governors**

Ian Ball  
Stephen Booth  
Gerard Collins  
Eleanor Hick  
Michelle O'Neill  
Karen Stracey  
Robert Waring

**Primary School Headteachers**

Daniel Ballard  
Sarah Barton  
Neil Gurman  
Deanne Marsh  
Keith Wright

**Secondary School Governors**

Janice Astley  
John Davey  
Brian Rollo

**Secondary School Headteachers**

Steve Campbell  
Ivan Catlow

**Academy Governor**

Helen Dicker  
Kathleen Cooper  
Chris McConnachie  
Louise Shaw

**Academy Principal/Headteacher**

Gaynor Gorman  
Matt Eastham  
James Keulemans

**Alternative Provision Academy**

Stephanie Carter (sub for Holly Clarke)

**Special School Academy**

**Special School Governor**

**Special School Headteacher**

Peter Higham  
Shaun Jukes (LSF Chair)

**Short Stay Governor**

Sandra Thornberry

**Short Stay Headteacher**

Anne Kyle

**Nursery School Headteacher**

Jan Holmes

**Nursery School Governor**

**Members:**

**Early Years - PVI**

Sharon Alexander  
Peter Hindle  
Anne Peat

**Observers**

David Fann (NAHT)  
Stephen Jones (NASUWT)  
Phil Hart (ASCL)  
Les Ridings (NEU)  
Ian Watkinson (NEU)  
Sam Ud-din (LASGB)

**Other Voting Members**

Rosie Fearn  
Sam Johnson

**Observers - Members of the Public**

Paul Hannant  
Alison Knight  
CC Jennifer Mein

In attendance: Paul Bonser  
Alex Brown  
Sarah Callaghan  
Matt Dexter  
Susanne Edwards  
Christine Hurford  
Sally Richardson  
Jane Rimmer  
Kevin Smith  
Lorraine Stephen

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from: Jenny Birkin, Laura Brennan, Thelma Cullen, Mark Jackson, Angela Johnstone, Louise Martin, Lydia Mannion, Alan Porteous, CC Jayne Rear, Lorimer Russell-Hayes and Laurence Upton.

### **2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Stephen Jones (NASUWT) was present as a substitute for Eric Harrison. Stephanie Carter represented Coal Clough Academy.

### **3. FORUM MEMBERSHIP**

The Forum noted a number of membership changes since the last meeting, including:

#### *New Members*

##### Academy representatives

- Kathleen Cooper, a governor at Bishop Rawstorne Academy
- James Keulemans, Headteacher of Clitheroe Royal Grammar School
- Matt Eastham, Headteacher at Penwortham Priory Academy

##### Primary Headteacher

- Keith Wright, Headteacher at Westgate Primary School

##### NEU

- Sarah Troughton, Branch Secretary
- Ian Watkinson, Branch Chair

##### ASCL

- Phil Hart, the new ASCL Regional Officer for the North West

#### *Members leaving the Forum*

##### Secondary Governor

- Lorimer Russell-Hayes

##### NEU

- Julie Gordon

##### ASCL

- Liz Laverty. (Liz intends to continue as a co-opted member of the Forum High Needs Block Working Group in her capacity as a short stay school governor).

#### RC Diocese

- Tim Warren

#### Head of Schools Finance

- Andrew Good, Head of Service for Development and Schools

#### School Forum Finance Support Officer

- Christine Hurford, School Forum Finance Support Officer is to retire shortly and the Forum meeting on 20 October 2020 will be her last. Christine has worked for the county council for over 17 years and has supported the work of the Forum since 2011. It is due to Christine's professionalism and efficiency that the Forum operates smoothly and effectively.

#### The Forum

- Noted the report,**
- Welcomed James Keulemans, Matt Eastham, Keith Wright, Ian Watkinson, Sarah Troughton, Karen Stephens and Phil Hart to their first Forum meeting;**
- Welcomed Kathleen Cooper back to the Forum;**
- Thanked Lorimer Russell-Hayes, Tim Warren, Julie Gordon, Liz Laverty and Andrew Good for their contribution to the Forum;**
- Thanked Christine Hurford for her contribution to the Forum and wished her well in her retirement**

#### 4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting held on 2 July 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

#### 5. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the minutes of 2 July 2020 that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

#### 6. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SCHOOLS BLOCK WORKING GROUP

A report was presented setting out the recommendations from the Schools Block Working Group held on 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.

For the Schools Block, it was noted that:

- The Schools Block outturn position for 2019/20 shows an underspend of £3.969m;
- The underspend in the Schools Block is related to a number of variances including DSG income caused by adjustments in relation to schools becoming academies, underspend on growth allocations, income from rate and appeals, etc.;
- Now that Lancashire has agreed to adopt the National Funding Formula (NFF) as the local funding formula, there is limited variance on other aspects of this funding block,

as budgets for Lancashire mainstream schools use the same methodology that is applied to calculate our DSG Schools Block allocation.

*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 Working Group meeting the MFG consultation closed and the analysis of responses were provided for the Forum, as set out below:*

<b>Question 5: Do you agree that the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) level should be set at +2.0% in the Lancashire formula in 2021/22?</b>				
	<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not sure</b>
<b>Primary</b>	156	108	7	41
		<b>69%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Secondary</b>	12	9	0	3
		<b>75%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>25%</b>

*Comments received during the consultation relating to the MFG rate were also provided for members.*

**The Forum:**

- Noted the consultation analysis and comments;***
- Unanimously recommended that the level of MFG to be used in the Lancashire funding formula for 2021/22 be set at +2.0%.***

## **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.

Subsequent to the Working Group meeting the De-delegation consultation closed and the analysis of responses were provided for the Forum.

Thanks were expressed to Forum, PHiL and LASSH colleagues for promoting the consultation and overall responses were now higher than for last year's consultation.

The final Service De-delegations 2021/22 consultation analysis is shown below

<b>Question 1: What is your preferred de-delegation option for the Staff Costs - Public Duties/Suspensions in 2021/22?</b>						
	Total Responses	Continue at the 2020/21 levels	Continue but reduce Trade Union Facilities Time contribution	Continue but no Trade Union Facilities Time contribution	Completely discontinue	Not sure
<b>Primary</b>	156	105	28	2	6	15
		<b>67%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Secondary</b>	12	4	7	0	0	1
		<b>33%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Total Pri &amp; Sec</b>	168	109	35	2	6	16
		<b>65%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>10%</b>

<b>Question 2: Do you support the de-delegation of the Heritage Learning Service (Museums Service) in 2021/22? (Primary schools only)</b>				
	Total Responses	Yes	No	Not sure
<b>Primary</b>	156	112	27	17
		<b>72%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>11%</b>

<b>Question 3. Do you support the de-delegation of Support for Schools in Financial Difficulty in 2021/22?</b>				
	Total Responses	Yes	No	Not sure
<b>Primary</b>	156	123	22	11
		<b>79%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Secondary</b>	12	9	2	1
		<b>75%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>8%</b>

<b>Question 4. Do you support the de-delegation of funding for Primary Inclusion Hubs in 2021/22?</b>				
	<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not sure</b>
<b>Primary</b>	156	98	39	19
		<b>63%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>12%</b>

*Comments received during the consultation relating to de-delegations were also provided for members. This included a suggestion that, in future, it may be more appropriate to have a separate Facilities Time de-delegation (and separate public duties and suspensions de-delegation) to enable greater consistency with the standalone Facilities Time buy-back option that is available to academies.*

*In addition, a paper was presented providing an update on Inclusion Hubs and on the future proposals.*

*It was noted that the normal range of evaluation and impact data sets for 2019/20, including exclusions and attendance, cannot be trusted to be reliable, nor to be necessarily attributable to any involvement the Primary Inclusion Hubs have had in schools. A revision of the reporting requirements of the Primary Inclusion Hubs was proposed to include a widened and more specific range of impact data. An initial example set of suggestions was included in the report.*

*The report also included feedback from the majority of Primary Inclusion Hub Lead Head teachers and incorporated examples of actions that have made a positive impact and issues that had been raised that could be improved.*

*Members considered the consultation responses and the supplementary information provided and debated each of the de-delegation proposals for 2021/22.*

*It was noted that the Alternative Provision strategy be considered for Lancashire could impact on the Inclusion Hub proposals. Some members expressed concern about the current Inclusion Hub arrangements and favoured a more flexible approach where schools could perhaps buy-back a service as required, others spoke positively about the impact hubs were having in their district.*

*As recommended by the Working Group, an eform was issued after the Forum meeting enabling maintained primary school representatives and maintained secondary school representatives to vote on the de-delegation proposals relating to their phases. The eform link was circulated with a report to the Children, Young People and Families Partnership Board October 2020, which provided the latest Exclusions data.*

**The Forum:**

- a) Noted the de-delegation consultation analysis and comments;**
- b) Noted the supplementary information relating to Inclusion Hubs;**
- c) Primary school members voted on each of the possible de-delegations affecting primary schools and secondary school members voted on each of the possible de-delegations affecting secondary schools, as set out below. :**

i.	Primary school members voted to de-delegate <b>Staff costs – Public Duties/Suspensions</b> for primary schools in 2021/22, at 2020/21 levels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 Votes for de-delegation at the 2020/21 levels;</li> </ul>
----	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Vote for de-delegation but with a reduced Trade Union Facilities Time contribution;</li> <li>• 0 Votes for de-delegation but with no reduced Trade Union Facilities Time contribution;</li> <li>• 0 Votes for completely discontinuing the de-delegation</li> <li>• 0 Abstentions</li> </ul>
ii.	<p>Secondary school members voted to de-delegate <b>Staff costs – Public Duties/Suspensions</b> for secondary schools in 2021/22, at 2020/21 levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Votes for de-delegation at the 2020/21 levels;</li> <li>• 1 Vote for de-delegation but with a reduced Trade Union Facilities Time contribution;</li> <li>• 0 Votes for de-delegation but with no reduced Trade Union Facilities Time contribution;</li> <li>• 0 Votes for completely discontinuing the de-delegation</li> <li>• 0 Abstentions</li> </ul>
iii.	<p>Primary school members voted to de-delegate the <b>Heritage Learning Service</b> for primary schools in 2021/22:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 Votes for de-delegation</li> <li>• 1 Vote against de-delegation</li> <li>• 1 Abstention</li> </ul>
iv.	<p>Primary school members voted to de-delegate <b>Schools In Financial Difficulty</b>, for primary schools in 2021/22:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 Votes for de-delegation</li> <li>• 1 Vote against de-delegation</li> <li>• 0 Abstentions</li> </ul>
v.	<p>Secondary school members voted to de-delegate <b>Schools In Financial Difficulty</b>, for secondary schools in 2021/22:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 Votes for de-delegation</li> <li>• 0 Votes against de-delegation</li> <li>• 0 Abstentions</li> </ul>
vi.	<p>Primary school members voted to de-delegate the <b>Primary Inclusion Hubs</b> for primary schools in 2021/22:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14Votes for de-delegation</li> <li>• 2 Votes against de-delegation</li> <li>• 1 Abstention</li> </ul>

d) Requested that consideration be given to having a separate Facilities Time de-delegation and public duties and suspensions de-delegation in future years.

#### ***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 and this report highlighted the key areas.

The new requirements to be implemented over the coming years largely aimed at LAs but there are some implications for schools. However, some national requirements are already operating in Lancashire, which minimises impact for Lancashire schools. Further information will be provided in due course

Schools need to be aware that from 1 January 2021, schools must publish additional financial information on their website:

- *how many school employees (if any) have a gross annual salary of £100,000 or more in increments of £10,000 (DfE recommend using a table to display this information)*
- *a link to the webpage which is dedicated to your school on the DfE's [schools financial benchmarking](#) service (DfE advise to follow the prompts to find your school's specific page)*

*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.

Two of the three sections that have changed are revisions that are 'directed' by the Secretary of State, following earlier consultations. These relate to:

- *Section 4.3: Submission of financial forecasts;*
- *Section 6.5: Planning for deficit budgets.*

The third section included in the revised guidance relates to *Section 12: Insurance*, which has already been introduced in Lancashire.

*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 unanimously approved the revised Scheme for Financing Schools in Lancashire.**

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

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



- Catch-Up Premium - Schools' allocations will be calculated on a per pupil basis, providing each mainstream school with a total of £80 for each pupil in years reception through to 11, with the funding being paid in 3 tranches. First Tranche has now been paid.
- National Tutoring Programme

*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 provided on the latest DfE Information around 'School funding: exceptional costs associated with coronavirus (COVID-19).

The DfE have processed the first batch of school claims relating to the exceptional COVID-19 costs. These payments cover claims made under the three standard categories and that did not exceed the claims limit. DfE are giving further consideration to claims for other costs. 122 maintained schools received a payment in this round, totalling circa £600k.

*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 ratified the Working Group's recommendations.**

**7. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE HIGH NEEDS BLOCK WORKING GROUP**

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

*Sally Richardson, Head of Inclusion Service joined the Forum for this item and provided some background to the current challenges facing the service and the actions being taken to respond to the key issues. This included the further development of special educational needs units attached to mainstream schools, and it was noted that a second letter was to be issued to schools seeking interest in the initiative. The long term aim of this strategy was to provide more local placements for children with SEND, which would reduce the out-county expenditure over the longer term.*

**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.

There remained significant concern around the ongoing financial pressures facing this block despite the current monitoring position, as forecasting based on summer term data is uncertain due to COVID-19 implications and the demand and costs could continue rise beyond the growth provision that was able to be included in the budget.

*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.*

*Subsequent to the Working Group meeting, the WG Chair wrote to the Head of the Inclusion Service inviting her to the next working group meeting and the invitation was accepted.*

**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 had been considered.

*The Working Group:*

a) *Noted the report.*

*Subsequent to the meeting, some increases have been agreed by the Service to commissioned place numbers for short stay schools, but at the present time, the Inclusion*

*Service have not recommended any changes to commissioned place numbers in special schools beyond the places calculated on the agreed methodology. The Forum report included the current commission place proposals for 2021/22.*

**v. Representations from Lancashire Short Stay Schools**

Correspondence to the Forum and LCC officers has been sent by Lancashire Short Stay Schools. The letter made 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 group debated the correspondence and possible options for responding to the issues raised.

*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.*

*Subsequent to the working group, the initial meeting of the Alternative Provision Governance Group has taken place and begun to develop terms of reference and an action plan to address the short and medium term actions in the AP strategy.*

*PRU representatives welcomed the discussions on the AP Strategy for Lancashire*

**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.*

**viii. 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.*

*This decision had been agreed under the Schools Block Working Group report.*

**ix. 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.*

**x. 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.*

**xi. 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 ratified the Working Group's recommendations.**

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EARLY YEARS BLOCK WORKING GROUP**

A report was presented setting out the recommendations from 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.*

*Subsequent to the Working Group meeting a communication has been sent to Sally Richardson, Head of Inclusion Service requesting a meeting. At the Forum meeting it was agreed that a meeting would be arranged to discuss the early years SEND issues that had been raised.*

### ***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. Information on the revised policy had been circulated to providers.

*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 out 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, including some concerns about accessing SEND support.

A response from the service was shared with the group.

*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.*

*Subsequent to the Working Group meeting feedback about the distribution list was provided to the service.*

**The Forum ratified the Working Group's recommendations.**

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CHAIR'S WORKING GROUP**

A report was presented setting out 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 ratified the Working Group's recommendations.**

## **10.LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AREA POSITION ON PAYING STAFF IN SCHOOLS**

Members had seen that the Education Coronavirus Bulletin from 6 October 2020 included a message from Edwina Grant OBE, Executive Director Education and Children's Services about the Lancashire County Council Area position about paying staff who have to be at home to look after their own children when they are isolating.

Members were supportive of the position outlined and the Forum Chair referred to email dialogue he had had about the position and about consistent messages from HR.

The Forum requested that Chair to write to Government to make representations on the funding to support this principle, and were keen for this to happen now. Members also asked if similar representations could be encouraged from other NW authorities, particularly those in Tier 3. The Director of Education and Skills made reference to the possibility of issues being raised at the NW regional children's services group.

It was also noted that the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools was supportive of the approach outlined and would also make representations to Government.

### **The Forum:**

- a) Noted the information provided;**
- b) Requested that the Chair write to the Secretary of State;**
- c) Requested that similar representations could be encouraged from other NW authorities.**

## **11.SUPPLY COVER INSURANCE AND MATERNITY SCHEME FOR LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS – LATE JOINING**

The number of schools that change their supply arrangements in year is normally very few or none at all. However, we have recently received contact from a number of schools looking to join the scheme or change the level of cover, with effect from September 2020.

This includes:

- Schools wishing to join the scheme that did not 'buy-in' from April 2020;
- Schools that bought teaching staff cover in April 2020 and now wish to also join the support staff scheme;
- Schools that bought teaching staff cover in April 2020 and now wish to change their cover to reduce the number of waiting days.

In year monitoring data was provided in the report although it was noted scheme monitoring has often proved an unreliable indicator of the year end position due to a number of factors around when schools choose to submit claims, when they are processed by the county council and any late claims or appeals.

Whilst the scheme has a reserve to mitigate against years when claims are high and exceed premiums, the risk is underwritten by the DSG reserve. In such circumstances, the views of the Forum were sought on whether in year changes to scheme membership should be agreed.

Members considered the issues raised in the report.

**The Forum:**

- a) **Noted the report;**
- b) **Recommended that changes to the level of cover from September 2020 should not be agreed.**

## **12. URGENT BUSINESS**

The Forum's Urgent Business Procedure was used to obtain views about amendments to the Supply Cover Insurance and Maternity Scheme for Lancashire Schools for September 2020 onwards in the light of revised Government guidance.

The report set out the main changes proposed in light of amended government guidance.

Responses by 5.00pm on Monday 24 August 2020 were requested and by the closing date, responses were received from 20 members.

13 responses supported the proposals as originally presented and a further 6 replies supported the proposals but suggested certain amendments. One response opposed the introduction of revised arrangements.

Comments and amendments to the proposals were set out in the report and it was noted that information had been circulated to schools.

Some members had felt that the scheme should continue to support staff who were shielding and cover for pregnant staff beyond 28 weeks was particularly highlighted. It was not felt possible to incorporate this into the scheme, as it did not conform to current LCC HR advice, although national and local guidance will be kept under review.

**The Forum:**

- a) **Noted the report;**
- b) **Recommended that changes scheme be kept under review in light of any further changes to Government guidance.**

## **13. PUPIL PREMIUM GRANT + FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN 2020/21**

This report provided information on the PPG+ Policy for 2020/21. The policy is similar to that operated in previous years and includes the following provision:

The school/setting in which a looked after child is on roll will be allocated £600 per term on receipt of a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that is assessed as at least adequate through the Virtual School's quality assurance process. The PEP must demonstrate that the needs of the child/young person have been identified with a clear link to the intended use of the funding and the planned impact.

The remaining £ 545 per CLA will form the PPG+ high needs fund and is utilized for

- To provide additional funding support to be provided for pupils who have additional short term needs identified, or a period of crisis that is impacting directly on learning progress. Schools request this additional funding directly to the Virtual School with



evidence of need, details of proposed use and predicted outcomes/impact. Evidence of impact is also required following an appropriate period.

- To support the wider strategies and activities of the Virtual School to fulfil the statutory duties.

**The Forum:**

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Requested information on how the PPG+ high needs fund had been utilised.**

#### **14. SCHOOLS FORUM OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS DOCUMENT**

The Schools Forum has an operational arrangements document that sets out the working arrangements for the Forum

The document has recently been reviewed following the publication of the Schools Forums (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. A revised operational arrangements document was provided for members. The main changes relate to provisions of the new regulations, which allows the Forum to meet remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic and some minor changes to the membership.

**The Forum:**

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Approved the updated Schools Forum Operational Arrangements document.**

#### **15. FORUM CORRESPONDENCE**

At the last Forum meeting an item was raised that stemmed from a query discussed at the BTLS focus group. It was reported that many aided schools with under 250 staff were unable to access the government scheme providing up to two weeks Statutory Sick Pay for employees who are off sick with Covid-19 symptoms. This was because aided and foundation schools that buy BTLS payroll all appear under one HMRC code. This issue had also impacted on the operation of the apprenticeship levy.

Subsequent to the meeting, the Forum Chair wrote to HMRC about pooled payroll arrangements.

The response from HMRC noted that the pooling of schemes potentially alleviates the administrative burden of multiple returns and payments and indicates that HMRC originally took a relaxed view of these arrangements. However, the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy and the Department for Education (DfE) funding rules have resulted in additional complications with pooled PAYE schemes. As such HMRC published guidance in February 2017 which, HMRC indicated had, resulted in many public sector organisations separating their PAYE schemes.

Members discussed the correspondence and noted that whilst introducing separate payroll/PAYE systems for individual establishments may allow some schools to claim additional funding, the amounts involved were relatively small and would probably be less than the extra costs that would need to be charged to facilitate the individual payroll arrangements.

**The Forum:**

- a) Noted the report.**

**16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no items of AOB.

**17. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next scheduled Forum meeting will be held at 10.00am Tuesday 12 January 2021 at County Hall, Preston, subject to COVID-19 implications.