

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

Meeting to be held at 10.00 am on Thursday 17 March 2022 via Microsoft Teams

If you wish to join this virtual meeting but are not a member of the Schools Forum, please email Schoolsforum@lancashire.gov.uk

A G E N D A

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
To note any apologies for absence
- 2. Substitute Members**
To welcome any substitute Members.
- 3. Forum Membership (Enclosure)**
To note the Forum membership report.
- 4. Minutes of the Last Meeting (Enclosure)**
To agree the minutes of the last meeting held on 13 January 2022.
- 5. Matters Arising**
To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the 13 January 2022 meeting that are not covered elsewhere on the agenda.
- 6. Recommendations from the Schools Block Working Group (Enclosure)**
To consider the recommendations from the Schools Block Working Group meeting held on 3 March 2022.
- 7. Recommendations from the High Needs Block Working Group (Enclosure)**
To consider the recommendations from the High Needs Block Working Group meeting held on 1 March 2022, plus a supplementary item relating to Teachers' Pay Grant (TPG) and Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) Allocations.
- 8. Recommendations from the Early Years Block Working Group (Enclosure)**
To consider the recommendations from the Early Years Block Working Group meeting held on 8 March 2022.
- 9. Recommendations from the Chairs' Working Group**
To consider a verbal update of the recommendations from the Chairs' Working Group meeting held on 17 March 2022.

10. Urgent Business

No matters of urgent business have been considered since the last meeting.

11. Forum Correspondence (Enclosure)

To consider the Forum related correspondence received since the last meeting.

12. Any Other Business

13. Date of Future Meetings

To note that the next scheduled Forum meeting will be held at 10.00am Tuesday 5 July 2022.
Arrangements for the meeting will be confirmed in due course.

Executive Summary

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

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

3. Forum Membership

To note the Forum membership changes since the last meeting.

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

To agree the minutes of the last meeting held on 13 January 2022 and any matters arising.

6. Recommendations from the Schools Block Working Group

To consider the recommendations from the Schools Block Working Group held on 3 March 2022.

i. Schools Block Budget 2022/23

This report confirmed that Schools Block budget recommendations for 2022/23 were ratified by the Schools Forum and LCC Cabinet and subsequently approved by the ESFA. School Budgets were prepared and issued on 21 February 2022, together with forecast High Needs Block allocations. Information was also provided about Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) allocations and Schools Supplementary Grant allocations for 2022/23

Formal support is also sought for a request to DfE for a permanent transfer from Schools Block to High Needs Block of £1.9m

The Working Group:

a) Noted the report.

ii. Request for Clawback Exemption for a Lancashire Primary School in 2022/23

A report was presented seeking approval for a Lancashire primary school to be exempt from clawback at March 2023.

The Working Group:

a) Noted the report;

b) Recommended that the Forum agree to exempt the Lancashire primary school from clawback at 31 March 2023 due to the circumstances set out in the report.

iii. Inclusion Hub Funding 2022/23

Information was provided on the proposed methodology for distributing inclusion hub money from April 2022:

The Working Group:

a) Noted the report;

b) Supported the continued use of the NOR plus deprivation methodology for distributing delegated funding to inclusion hubs in 2022/23.

iv. School Business Rates

An update was provided about the latest information from DfE about school business rates arrangements from April 2022.

A bid from for funding from the rate reimbursement fund for a Lancashire nursery school was also considered.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Supported an allocation of £19,548 being made from the Rate Reimbursement Policy to a Lancashire nursery school due to the circumstances described in the report.*

v. Reforming how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded

A verbal update was provided to confirm information shared with the Schools Forum at the January 2022 meeting.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the information.*

The Forum are asked to ratify the Working Group's recommendations.

7. Recommendations from the High Needs Block Working Group

To consider the recommendations from the High Needs Block Working Group held on 1 March 2022.

i. School Census data – special school termly redeterminations

Following recommendations at the last working group, Forum special school members kindly circulating a request via LASSTHA for pupil number information at special schools to be completed on a LCC eform, in addition to school census, in order to facilitate timely termly redeterminations. The report contained an update on responses.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report.*

ii. High Needs Block Funding 2022/23

This report confirmed that High Needs Block budget recommendations for 2022/23 were ratified by the Schools Forum and LCC Cabinet and School Budgets were prepared and issued on 21 February 2022, together with forecast High Needs Block allocations.

Formal support is also sought for a request to DfE for a permanent transfer from Schools Block to High Needs Block of £1.9m

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report.*

iii. High Needs Supplementary Grant 2022/23

Proposals were presented around the finalisation of the methodology for distributing the High Needs Supplementary Grant in Lancashire for 2022/23.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Supported the use of May 2021 census data in the WPN calculation of the High Needs Supplementary Grant methodology;*
- c) *Representatives agreed to consult further with colleagues and officers before final decisions were taken about the possible adjustment methodology.*

iv. Teachers' Pay Grant (TPG) and Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) Allocations

After the Working Group meeting, a High Needs Block issue has arisen, and information is included in this report for consideration by the Forum. This issue relates to Teachers' Pay Grant (TPG) and Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) Allocations.

The Forum are asked to ratify the Working Group's recommendations and consider the supplementary item on Teachers' Pay Grant (TPG) and Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) allocations.

8. Recommendations from the Early Years Block Working Group

To consider the recommendations from the Early Years Block Working Group held on 8 March 2022.

i. Early Years Block Funding 2022/23

This report confirmed that Early Years Block budget recommendations for 2022/23 were ratified by the Schools Forum and LCC Cabinet and budget statements were prepared and issued on 21 February 2022.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report.*

ii. Impact on Early Years settings on EEF as a percentage of total sales EEF Early Education Funding

A presentation was considered about the impact on Early Years settings on EEF as a percentage of total sales, which had been prepared by the working group chair. Members expressed concern about the underfunding of the sector by the Government.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report.*
- b) *Expressed significant concern about the underfunding of the early years sector in Lancashire and the inevitable impact this would have on the quality of provision;*
- c) *Supported the actions to raise awareness of this funding issues with MPs and DfE.*

iii. LCC Family Safeguarding model

The Federation of Lancashire Nursery Headteachers asked that an issue could be raised at the Schools' Forum on the role of Early Years settings in the LCC Family Safeguarding model.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report;*

b) Supported the proposed meeting with LCC officers to discuss the issues raised.

iv. **SEN in Early Years**

A report was presented setting out some of the challenges faced by the sector in relation to SEN children.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report;
- b) Supported the concerns raised about the pressures on SEN funding in the sector;
- c) Supported the wider invitation to the next SEN Inclusion meeting to facilitate wider discussions with the service.

v. **Childminders and Covid rules**

Information was provided about the current Covid rules for childminders and a response from the DfE about the inconsistencies in this guidance.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report.
- b) xxxxxx

The Forum are asked to ratify the Working Group's recommendations.

9. Recommendations from the Chairs' Working Group

To consider a verbal update of the recommendations from the Chairs' Working Group meeting held on 17 March 2022.

The Forum are asked to ratify the Working Group's recommendations.

10. Urgent Business

No matters of urgent business have been considered since the last meeting.

11. Forum Correspondence

To consider the Forum related correspondence received since the last meeting.

12. Any Other Business

No known items.

13. Date of Future Meetings

To note that the next scheduled Forum meeting will be held at 10.00am Tuesday 5 July 2022. Arrangements for the meeting will be confirmed in due course.

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

Date of meeting 17 March 2022

Item No 3

Title: Forum Membership

Executive Summary

This report summarises the changes to the Forum membership since the last meeting.

Forum Decision Required

The Forum is asked to:

- a) Note the report,**
- b) Thank Karen Stephens and Chris Bagguley for their contributions to the Forum.**

Background

This report provides information on Forum membership issues that have arisen since the last Forum meeting. Details are provided below.

Primary School Governors Representative

Since the last meeting, two primary school governors have resigned from the Forum.

Karen Stephens has resigned from her position as a primary school governor representative on the Forum.

Chris Bagguley has informed the LA that he is resigning as a school governor and can no longer be a Forum representative.

There are currently no primary school governor representatives on the Forum membership reserve list, so the vacancies will be filled as part of the Forum annual membership review process.

The Forum will wish to thank Karen and Chris for their contribution to the Forum.

Annual Membership Review

On 8 March 2022, the LA emailed school and early years members of the Forum, as part of the annual membership review, to ascertain if individuals wish to continue to serve on the Forum in the next academic year commencing in September 2022.

Responses have been requested by **Friday 1st April 2022**.

Arrangements will be made to fill any vacancies that arise from this process, in addition to the 2 primary school governor vacancies mentioned above.

Members are asked to complete the annual membership eform by the deadline, if they have not already done so. The eform is available [here](#)

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT 10:00 A.M. ON TUESDAY 13 JANUARY 2022
(Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams)

Present:

Schools Members:

Primary School Governors

Stephen Booth
Gerard Collins
Laurence Upton
Robert Waring
Karen Stephens
Tim Young

Primary School Headteachers

Sarah Barton
Jenny Birkin
Neil Gurman
Deanne Marsh
Steve McLoughlin
Sarah Robson
Keith Wright

Secondary School Governors

Janice Astley
John Davey
Gill Donohoe
Jackie Lord
Nicola Regan
Brian Rollo

Secondary School Headteachers

Ivan Catlow
Mike Wright

Nursery School Headteacher

Jan Holmes

Nursery School Governor

Early Years - PVI

Peter Hindle
Philippa Perks

Academy Governor

Kathleen Cooper
Helen Dicker
Louise Shaw

Academy Principal/Headteacher

Matt Eastham
Gaynor Gorman
James Keulemans
Alan Porteous
John Tarbox

Alternative Provision Academy

Holly Clarke

Special School Academy

Special School Governor

Mandy Howarth

Special School Headteacher

Shaun Jukes – Forum Chair

Short Stay Governor

Liz Laverty

Short Stay Headteacher

Abigale Bowe

Members:

Other Voting Members

CC Anne Cheetham
Rosie Fearn
Bill Mann

Observers

CC Michael Goulthorp
Lee Baines (NASUWT)
Andrew Murray
Joanna Potter
Sarah Troughton (NEU)
Sam Ud-din (LASGB)
Nicola Whyte

In attendance: James Beardwood
Paul Bonser
Vanessa Carthy
Matt Dexter
Millie Dixon
Victoria Lowton
Emma Nicholson
Kevin Smith

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cathryn Antwis, Julie Bell, Thelma Cullen, Sharon Fenton, Lydia Mannion, Pita Oates, Michelle O'Neill, Louise Parrish and Claire Thompson

2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Substitute members were welcomed to the meeting:

- Abigale Bowe, head at Shaftesbury House attended for Jane Eccleston on behalf of PRUs
- Steven McLoughlin DHT attended behalf of Cathryn Antwis, Headteacher from Frenchwood Community Primary School

3. FORUM MEMBERSHIP

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

Special School Governor Representative

Due to governance changes at her school, Laura Brennan was no longer eligible to be the special school governor representative on the Forum.

The LA sought candidates to fill the vacancy and 3 nominations were received. An election process was therefore undertaken at the end of the autumn term 2021.

13 votes were cast in the election, representing a 45% turnout. Mandy Howarth, a governor at Acorns Primary School, received 54% of the votes cast and has been appointed to the Forum.

Secondary School Headteacher Representative

Julie Langham, School Business Manager from Haslingden High School has recently resigned from the Forum.

Julie was representing Secondary School Headteachers and Nicola Regan, Headteacher from Millfield Science and Performing Arts College has been appointed as new representative.

Forum Membership Numbers

The Schools Forum regulations require that the balance of Forum membership for maintained primary schools, maintained secondary schools and academies is reviewed to ensure that the number of Forum representatives in these groups is proportionate to the pupil populations across the schools. Now that the final October 2021 census numbers are available, the Forum membership had been reviewed against the latest pupil data and an analysis is provided in the report.

No immediate change to the membership balance was required based on the latest pupil data. However, the county council is aware that there are a number of academy conversions planned during 2022 and will keep the membership balance under review ahead of the annual membership refresh for September 2022.

The Forum:

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Welcomed Mandy Howarth and Nicola Regan to the Forum;**
- c) Thanked Laura Brennan and Julie Langham for their contributions to the Forum.**

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 19 October 2021, were agreed as a correct record

5. MATTERS ARISING

From item 8 Team Around the Schools and Setting (TASS)

At the last meeting, members noted the TASS update and asked that further presentations be made to future meetings. Following discussions with the Chair, TASS colleagues have been asked to attend the March Forum meeting, to ensure that budget considerations take priority at the January meeting.

The Forum:

- a) Noted the matters arising.**

6. CONSIDERATION OF THE SCHOOLS BUDGET 2022/23

- a) Schools Budget 2022/23**
- b) Schools Block Transfer Consultation – Analysis and Responses**
- c) Recommendations from the Forum Chair's Group Budget Meeting**
- d) Formal Forum Decisions relating to the Schools Budget 2022/23**

The Forum consider the 4 Schools Budget sub items as a single report.

A report was presented setting out information about the Schools Budget for 2022/23. This included information from the original report to the Forum and subsequent information from the Chairs' Working Group meeting held on 11 January 2022 and the responses to the

consultation on a possible Schools Block transfer. 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	£m's
Schools Block	878.278
High Needs Block	166.908
Early Years Block	80.655
Central Schools Services Block	6.838
Gross Total forecast DSG Income	1,132.679
Total deduction for national schools non-domestic rates	- 8.338
Total deductions for direct high needs payments made by the ESFA	- 8.604
Net Total forecast DSG Income	1,115.737

It was noted that in aggregate terms the 2022/23 Gross DSG allocation is some £42m higher than that received in 2021/22. This increase is due to:

- Lancashire's share of the increased £2.3b funding nationally made available by Government, including £780m for the High Needs Block
- Lancashire's share of the increased £170m nationally for the Early Years Block
- An increase in the overall numbers of pupils in Lancashire compared to 2021/22, although figures in the early years sector are now declining

An initial estimated of the Schools Budget 2022/23 was also provided, as set out in the table below:

Forecast DSG Expenditure	£m's
Schools Block	876.598
High Needs Block	168.588
Early Years Block	81.655
Central Schools Services Block	6.838
Total deduction for national schools non-domestic rates	- 8.338
Total deductions for direct high needs payments made by the ESFA	- 8.604
Total forecast DSG Expenditure	1,116.737

The Schools Budget proposals forecast a balanced Dedicated Schools Grant funding position in 2022/23, subject to the planned use of £1m in Schools Budget reserves to mitigate transitional pressures in the Early Years Block budget

The presentation also provided information on Lancashire's share of the Schools Supplementary Grant 2022/23, as set out below:

Mainstream Schools Supplementary Grant allocation	£25m
High Needs Supplementary Grant allocation	£6m
Total Supplementary Grant allocation	£31m

Initial suggestions were provided around how the high needs supplementary grant may be distributed.

Members considered the information provided and discussed the proposals for each funding block and the Schools Supplementary Grant and made a number of observations and comments, including around the use of the special school site transfer, commissioned place numbers, pressures on the early years sector, and policies being implemented to reduce the 'out-county' expenditure.

The Forum:

- a) Noted the report, including the 2022/23 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations and the budget proposals for each of the 4 funding blocks and the Schools Supplementary Grant allocation for 2022/23;**
- b) Noted the information from the Forum Chairs' Group meeting on 11 January 2022 and the responses from the consultation with schools on the Schools Block transfer proposals;**
- c) Voted on the 2022/23 Schools Budget Proposals, as follows:**

Unanimously supported the Schools Block proposals, as follows:

- Confirm that the DfE's NFF methodology should continue to be used as the Lancashire formula for 2022/23**
- Confirm the 2022/23 MFG set at +2.0%**
- The use of the circa £2.2m of the Growth Fund allocation to ensure that the NFF, MPF and MFG can be applied in full in 2022/23**
- The use of the Minimum Pupil Funding (MPF) rates contained in the NFF for any new Growth Fund allocations from April 2022**
 - Primary £4,265 per pupil**
 - Secondary £5,525 per pupil**
- Unanimously supported the transfer of circa £1.7m (0.19%) of Schools Block funding to the High Needs Block for the revised payment arrangements needed for the contractual school PFI contribution in relation to the former Hameldon site, as it is being taken over by a Lancashire special school;**
- Unanimously supported the disapplication submission to DfE relating to a Lancashire secondary school, as the MFG protection for the school, associated with the loss of the 2021/22 PFI allocation, is not required as the pupils have returned to the main site and the school no longer has a PFI funding commitment.**

Unanimously supported the High Needs Block proposals, as follows:

- The increased HNB allocation being utilised to cover the forecast growth in High Needs expenditure from April 2022**
- The increase in HNB allocations to broadly match uplifts in the mainstream sector, including:**
 - Increasing the Weighted Pupil Numbers (WPN) rate by 4% to £4,567**
 - Special School and PRU School Specific factors uplifted by 2% to match Schools Block MFG**
 - Rate for Excluded Pupils, Medical and Other pupils uplift to match increased WPN**
 - in the secondary PRU formula, 1 WPN**
 - in the primary PRU formula, 2/3 of 1 WPN**

Unanimously supported the Early Years Block proposals, as follows:

- The use of £1m Schools Budget reserves being used in 2022/23, to mitigate transitional pressures in the Early Years Block budget to support the 3 and 4 year old base rate, as the Schools Block headroom transfer is not available;
- The £1m contribution would allow 4p per hour to be added to the base rate and be available for 2022/23 only to support the 3 and 4 years olds, meaning the rate would increase by 13p per hour from 2021/22, providing a £4.48 per hour 3 and 4 years olds rate from April 2022 (compared to £4.35 in 2021/22);
- The passporting of other DfE EY funding increases to providers:
 - + £0.21 per hour 2 year olds providing £5.37 per hour from April 2022
 - + £0.17 per hour for the maintained nursery schools supplementary funding providing £3.67 per hour from April 2022
 - + £0.07 per hour for Early Years Pupil Premium providing £0.60 per hour from April 2022, equivalent to up to £342 per eligible child per year
 - + £185 per eligible child the disability access fund (DAF) providing £800 per eligible child per year from April 2022
- The continuation of Deprivation Supplements on the existing methodology for 2022/23;
- The continuation of the SEN Inclusion Fund at £500k for 2022/23.

Unanimously supported the Central School Services Block proposals, as follows:

- The transfer of £0.350m from CSSB to HNB from 2022/23 to enable continued support for MASH and Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service;
- The proposals for the Central School Services Block in 2022/23, including uplifts for cost and demand led pressures.

Unanimously supported the Schools Supplementary Grant 2022/23 proposals, as follows:

- The proposed mechanisms for allocating the high needs funding supplementary grant in 2022/23:
 - Health and Social Care Levy (Increased NI contribution in 2022/23 for social care) - For special schools and AP only, to be calculated on 80% of total budget per school x 1.25% based on 2022/23 School Budget data, with an adjustment for exceptional place changes in year at special schools and increased exclusions at AP later in the year
 - Wider costs pressures – Paid across all sectors and calculated on basis of WPNs in 2022/23 School Budget data, estimated at circa £600 per WPN

Unanimously supported the Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve underwriting the uncertainties around the 2022/23 DSG Schools Budget, across Schools Block, High Needs Block, Early Years Block and CSSB.

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

Function	LA proposals 2022/23	Proposed Expenditure: 2022/23 £m
Consultation on Formula Changes		
No local formula factor changes are proposed for 2022/23 in any funding block, beyond incorporating the DfE National Funding Formula (NFF) alterations into the local Schools Block formula	The Forum have previously agreed to use the DfE's NFF as the Lancashire funding formula for the Schools Block budget, and NFF updates for 2022/23 introduced by the DfE are incorporated in the Schools Budget proposals for 2022/23, including revised sparsity and school business rates factors	
De-delegation for mainstream schools	LA proposals for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools in financial difficulty; • Museum service (primary only); • Staff Costs Public duties/Suspensions; • Primary Inclusion Hubs Approved by the Schools Forum on 19 October 2021	3.468
Movement of up to 0.5% from the schools block to other blocks	Proposal to transfer £1.680m from the School Block to the High so that contractual school PFI contributions can be met from the relevant funding block in 2022/23, when the former Hameldon school premises will be used to permanently relocate a Lancashire special school	1.680
Contracts (where the LA is entering a contract to be funded from the schools budget)	No Proposals at this time	
Financial issues relating to:		
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 report to the Forum and the Forum budget papers	111.392
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 report to the Forum and the Forum budget papers	11.601
arrangements for early years provision	Proposals contained in the Early Years Block Working Group report to the Forum and the Forum budget papers	81.655

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 reported to Forum on 19 October 2021 and recommended that the level of MFG to be used in the Lancashire funding formula for 2021/22 be set at +2.0%. This is incorporated into the Forum budget papers	
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:		
funding for significant pre-16 pupil growth, including new schools set up to meet basic need, whether maintained or academy	Policy previously agreed by the Schools Forum. Proposal to increase the growth fund unit values in line with increased NFF Minimum Pupil Funding levels each year Final budget proposals are contained in the Schools Budget 2022/23 report	2.000
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:		
early years block provision	Final budget proposals are contained in the Schools Budget 2022/23 report	0.500
funding to enable all schools to meet the infant class size requirement	No Proposals at this time	
back-pay for equal pay claims	No Proposals at this time	
remission of boarding fees at maintained schools and academies	No Proposals at this time	
places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils	No Proposals at this time	
admissions	Final budget proposals are contained in the Schools Budget 2022/23 report	1.400
servicing of schools forum	Final budget proposals are contained in the Schools Budget 2022/23 report	0.188
Contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for all schools	No Proposals at this time	
contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for maintained schools	No Proposals at this time	

Central spend on:		
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	
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	For 2022/23, £0.350m from the historic commitments element has been transferred to the High Needs Block to ensure continuation of valued services to schools, as recommended by Forum on 6 July 2021	
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	
prudential borrowing costs – the commitment must have been approved prior to April 2013	No Proposals at this time	
SEN transport where the schools forum agreed prior to April 2013 a contribution from the schools budget (this is now treated as part of the high needs block but still requires schools forum approval as a historic commitment)	No Proposals at this time	
Central spend on:		
high needs block provision	2022/23 funding level presented as part of the Schools Budget setting proposals	36.423
central licences negotiated by the Secretary of State	2022/23 funding level presented as part of the Schools Budget setting proposals	1.016
Funding of brought forward deficits	No Proposals at this time	

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SCHOOLS BLOCK WORKING GROUP

A report was presented setting out the recommendations from the Schools Block Working Group held on 7 December 2021.

Apprenticeship Levy Update

This item was deferred, as complications had very recently arisen about the ESFA teacher programme and the apprenticeship levy team need to look at the structure of the apprenticeship teacher programme before sharing anything with forum/publishing further information to schools.

ii. Schools Block Funding 2022/23

This report provided an updated on the latest Schools Block funding information and pupil numbers. Final 2022/23 proposals are included in the Schools Budget 202/23 report at item 6.

The Working Group.

- a) Noted the report and the updated NOR data;*
- b) Noted that final Schools Block budget calculations would need to await the 2022/23 DSG allocations from the DfE, expected around 16 December 2021;*
- c) Requested that the School Place Provision Strategy document be circulated to the working group.*

The Forum:

- a) Noted that final budget proposals were contained in the Schools Budget report at item 6.**
- b) Noted that the School Place Provision Strategy document has been circulated to members.**

iii. Reforming how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded ***Government consultation***

A Forum response to the DfE consultation on 'Reforming how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded' was agreed using the Urgent Business Procedure. This report provided information on the urgent business responses and included a copy of the final Forum submission.

The consultation sought views on DfE proposals to

- Remove the School Improvement Monitoring & Brokering Grant (the 'Grant'), which is currently allocated to local authorities to support school improvement activities; and
- Make provisions within the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations for the financial year (FY) 2022-23 to allow local authorities to fund all of their school improvement activity (including all core school improvement activities) via de-delegation from schools' budget shares.

As the closing date for this consultation was 26 November 2021, which was before the next meeting of the Forum/working groups, a draft Forum consultation response was circulated for approval using the Urgent Business Procedure.

By the closing date, responses had been received from 18 members, as follows:

- 17 responses supported the draft Forum reply without amendment
- 1 response supported the draft Forum reply but suggested amendments

A copy of the final forum response submitted to the DfE was provided for members. The Forum response raised a number of concerns about :

- The negative impact the proposals may have on school improvement activity for maintained schools;
- The risk that schools will not choose to de-delegate;
- The loss of the grant funding to the school improvement system.
- The unrealistic timescale for implementation.

The consultation documentation indicated that that the DfE decision will be available in 'December 2021/January 2022'. As highlighted in the Forum response, such a timescale would leave very little time for any consultation with maintained schools about a possible 'school improvement' de-delegation from 2022/23, but this possibility exists.

The Lancashire grant allocation for 2021/22 equates to just under £2m and DfE proposals indicate that this would be reduced by 50% in 2022/23, potentially leaving a £1m shortfall in school improvement funding from April 2022.

The Grant is proposed to cease totally from 2023/24.

The working group expressed support for the work undertaken by the School Improvement Service in Lancashire and were extremely concerned about the possible timescales set out in the consultation, which may mean decisions impacting on 2022/23 financial year Schools Budget are only announced by the DfE in 'December 2021/January 2022'; This is putting the school improvement functions offered by Lancashire in jeopardy and creating uncertainty for the service and even for colleagues employment going forward;

Members recognised that it was extremely difficult for the authority to make definitive plans for School Improvement functions from April 2022, without knowing the outcome of the government consultation, but asked if the Service could be considering relevant options. The Group also expressed a view hoping that whatever decision are taken by DfE that implementation is delayed giving all involved reasonable notice of the changes.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report;*
- b) Noted the Schools Forum consultation response agreed under the Urgent Business Procedure;*
- c) Expressed further concerns about the DfE proposals on Reforming how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded and expressed a view hoping that whatever decision are taken by DfE that implementation is delayed giving all involved reasonable notice of the changes.*

Subsequent to the meeting, on 11 January 2022, DfE issued response to consultation, which was shared with the Forum. DfE indicated that they are proceeding with their proposals despite a majority of responses opposing the proposals.

It was noted that DfE consultation conclusions contained information about in response to some of the concerns raised by the Forum, including:

- "There are concerns that these proposals will place a burden on maintained schools, and as a result schools forums may not de-delegate councils sufficient funds to deliver their core school improvement activities. We will reserve the right to permit de-delegation against the wishes of a schools forum in order to ensure councils are in sufficient funds to deliver their core school improvement activities, if satisfied that the local authority had demonstrated such de-delegation was necessary to ensure they were adequately funded to exercise their core school improvement activities as set out in the Schools Causing Concern guidance.*

- *There are concerns that there may be insufficient time for councils to arrange de-delegation in advance of financial year 2022-23. We have clarified that while councils need to submit their APT by 21 January, they only need to confirm schools' budget shares before de-delegation by 28 February and confirm budget shares after de-delegation by 31 March. ESFA are therefore happy to talk to councils on a case-by-case basis if flexibility is required on timings for confirming de-delegation amounts and rates following the APT submission"*

County Council officers were considering the implications of the DfE announcements and would provide further details to the Forum in due course, including the possibility of a developing a school improvement functions de-delegation proposal for 2022/23.

The Forum:

- a) Noted the report and the consultation response approved using the urgent business procedure;**
- b) Noted the update about the DfE decisions arising from the consultation;**
- c) Note that the LA was considering options, in light of the DfE announcements.**

iv. School Teaching and Support Staff Supply Reimbursement Scheme

Each year, reports are presented to the Forum about the arrangements for the School Teaching and Support Staff Supply Reimbursement Scheme. This report set out proposals for the 2022/23 Scheme changes for consideration.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report;*
- b) Noted the uncertainties around the current scheme monitoring position for 2021/22;*
- c) Supported the proposed 3% increase on premiums and reimbursements.*

The Forum considered further comments from the Forum Chairs' Group in light of the additional absences related to the Omicron variant. After discussions it was agreed to proceed with the original proposals for a 3% increase in premiums, as there was insufficient claims data on which to base any further increase. It was noted that the scheme held a reserve for this purpose and scheme premiums could be increased in future if an increased ;levels of claims depleted the scheme reserve.

The Forum:

- a) Noted the report, the further information on Lancashire staff absences and the comments made by the Chairs' Group;**
- b) Ratified the Working Group's recommendations and supported the proposed 3% increase on premiums and reimbursements.**

v. Healthy Relationships Training Programme Outcomes

In 2014/15, the Forum allocated a non- recurrent resource of £600K to commission a number of projects to enable staff in schools to develop the confidence, skills and resources needed to deliver effective Healthy Relationships Education and therefore support young people to form healthy relationships now and in the future. Forum agreed to funding being utilised across multiple years and a final outcomes report was now presented.

Overall, 72% of the schools engaged with this training programme 2014 – 2019 and the evaluations of all the courses show the success in meeting people's training needs and in their grading of the quality of training provided by partners and the Teacher Advisers.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Expressed thanks to Kate Piercy and her colleagues for the report and the training provided since 2014;*
- c) *Asked that enquiries be made about any school staff helpline considerations that had taken place in Lancashire.*

Following enquiries, it was noted that no Lancashire 24 hour helpline was available, but some services can be bought through LCC occupational health or from other providers.

The Forum ratified the working Group's recommendations.

vi. School Feedback on Covid Catch Up

The Government has made a number of additional funding streams available to schools to assist with the educational recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The County Council's Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee has asked for information about the impact of the DfE catch up funding. Forum members were specifically asked about funding related feedback on the catch up grants and views expressed included:

Some representatives expressed a view supporting the National Tutoring Programme, although it was noted that accessing the systems was not easy at first.

Many members also welcomed the Recovery Premium, as the similarities to the ongoing Pupil Premium Grant meant that schools were already organised for expenditure of this type and the reporting requirements.

The complexity of the school-led tutoring grant was emphasised with members indicating that the administration of the grant was onerous. Concern was also expressed that the grant conditions were burdensome and the DfE have indicated that they will claw back unspent grant or grant funding not used in accordance with the conditions. The group were also worried that many schools maybe unaware of the conditions and therefore at increased risk of the clawback, although it was noted that the LA had published information on the portal about the grant conditions and the full list of school allocations

Comment was also made that the DfE level of contribution dropped in future years making the costs associated with the administration even less appealing to schools.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Asked that the views expressed about Covid Catch-Up Funding be considered fed into the wider Scrutiny report.*

The Forum ratified the working Group's recommendations.

vii. Coronavirus (COVID-19) workforce fund to support schools with costs of staff absences

DfE have announced that the government have reopened the Coronavirus (COVID-19) workforce fund to support schools with costs of staff absences. The new window of support will only cover 22 November to 31 December 2021 and strict eligibility criteria are included in the fund conditions.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report.*

It was noted that subsequent to the meeting, DfE have extended the eligibility period for this grant to 18 February 2022.

The Forum noted the report.

i. School Financial Management Information Software

A small number of schools are considering changing their School Financial Management Information Software and the Scheme for Financing School specifies that whatever system a school chooses, they must be able to provide the County Council with their accounts in the required format or meet the costs of modification. Forum views were sought, and the members commented that the increased recent interest in alternative providers may have been caused by concerns over recent communications from SIMS, where the new owner is automatically extending the contract from one year to three years from February 2022.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Reiterated their original view around costs and notice periods where schools choose to change their School Financial Management Information Software;*
- c) *Asked that officers seek advice from Lancashire County Council Education Digital Services about the SIMS contract position.*

Subsequent to the meeting information was circulated to members indicating the Lancashire Education Digital Services (LEDS) were aware of the issue and had posted information to schools on the portal and on their website.

At the Forum meeting a further updated was reported to indicate that additional communications had been issued on the Schools Portal. In summary LEDS confirmed in the update that the Local Authority has decided it will sign the ESS Facilitation Agreement and the new ESS SIMS Support Unit agreement. These agreements will:

- *Assign the current Local Authority SIMS licence to each school individually, allowing schools to contract directly with ESS for their SIMS annual licence.*
- *Ensure that all Lancashire maintained schools will benefit from the discounted Local Authority rates on SIMS Annual Entitlement charges for the 3 years of each school's ESS agreement (if they choose to sign the direct contract with ESS which will be offered to schools).*
- *It will also ensure the Local Authority becomes an authorised SIMS Support Unit and the nominated support unit for each Lancashire school (this will be listed on the school's agreements).*

Both agreements are due to be signed shortly and LEDS then anticipate that ESS will be in direct contact by email to all schools, inviting them to review and sign-up to their new school licence agreement via the new ESS Gateway online portal (this is not live yet). LEDS will also issue a third update to schools once these steps are confirmed.

LEDS also have an Education Digital Services Schools Focus Group scheduled for Wednesday 9th February 2022, which will offer schools another opportunity for an update and to ask questions. Forum members are represented on this group.

The Forum:

- a) Noted the report and the supplementary information provided;**
- b) Ratified the working group's recommendations.**

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 2 December 2021.

ii. Appointment of HNB Chair and Possible Vice-Chair

Members consider the appointment of a new Chair and Vice-Chair for the Working Group.

The Working Group:

- a) Elected Claire Thompson as the new working group Chair;*
- b) Agreed to appoint a working group Vice-Chair*
- c) Elected Liz Laverty as the new working group Vice-Chair.*

The Forum noted the report.

iii. Alternative Provision Strategy Group Update

Sally Richardson, Head of Inclusion Service attended the working group and provided an update on the Alternative Provision Strategy Group and wider SEND matters.

In Lancashire, there is a broad range of alternative provision on offer, provided by the local authority, independent schools, further education colleges, charities, and businesses. AP may be therapeutic in nature for example for children and young people with social, emotional, and mental health needs or it may offer vocational learning.

The Alternative Provision Strategy 2020 – 2024 was approved by the LCC cabinet in October 2020 and the Alternative Provision working group was then established. The group included PRU representatives, colleagues from other school sectors, and also partners from health and police and FE. An AP action plan was created to support implementation.

It was noted that consideration to alternative provision was also given in review of SEND sufficiency in June 2021.

Key principles of the Alternative Provision Strategy included:

- Increase the number of children and young people supported in mainstream provision
- Reduce the number of exclusions from schools
- Address the rising number of young people receiving home tuition
- Stop off-rolling, leaving young people without education

- Halt the increasing use of specialist provision
- Ensure specialist provision is in the right locations
- Increase the number of young people in education, employment and training

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report;*
- b) Thanked Sally for her presentation.*

The Forum noted the report.

iv. High Needs Block Funding 2022/23

This report provided an updated on the latest High Needs Block funding information and pupil numbers. Final 2022/23 proposals are included in the Schools Budget 2022/23 report at item 6.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report.*

The Forum:

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Noted that the final budget proposals were contained in the 2022/23 Schools Budget report.**

v. High Needs Block Commissioned Places 2022/23

This report provided an update about the proposed HNB places to be commissioned for 2022/23, including those place numbers submitted on the DfE on the annual place change notification submission. All the changes to commissioned places relate to the 2022/23 academic year. A copy of the latest commissioned places for 2022/23 are provided with the report.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report;*
- b) Supported the Commissioned Place numbers for 2022/23 but asked the LA to be mindful of the comments made.*

The Forum:

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Noted that the commissioned place numbers are incorporated into the budget proposals contained in the 2022/23 Schools Budget report.**

vi. School Teaching and Support Staff Supply Reimbursement Scheme

Each year, reports are presented to the Forum about the arrangements for the School Teaching and Support Staff Supply Reimbursement Scheme. This report set out proposals for the 2022/23 Scheme changes for consideration.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report;*
- b) Noted the uncertainties around the current scheme monitoring position for 2021/22;*
- c) Supported the proposed 3% increase on premiums and reimbursements.*

The Forum:

- a) **Noted the report;**
- b) **Noted that final decisions had been agreed under the Schools Block report.**

vii.School Feedback on Covid Catch Up

The Government has made a number of additional funding streams available to schools to assist with the educational recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The County Council's Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee has asked for information about the impact of the DfE catch up funding. Forum members were specifically asked about funding related feedback on the catch up grants. Members views included:

Welcoming the additional funding from government to assist in the educational recovery but expressed a view that there was too much 'jumping through hoops' to access the funding.

The school led tutoring grant was felt to be very bureaucratic and members indicated that many schools had no capacity to undertake the administration associated with grants, or release staff to support to undertake the pre-requisite training. It was also noted that the DfE contribution was to reduce over time. Some schools may therefore not apply for the funding in future years as the burden of apply outweighed the benefits as the funding reduced.

Concern was also expressed about the lack of clarity around some of the outcomes data that would be required. Members felt that the required data should be much clearer in advance.

There was also a view that some of the recovery funding was replacing other funding streams that had been discontinued, for example Y7 literacy and numeracy catch up funding.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Asked that the views expressed about Covid Catch-Up Funding be considered fed into the wider Scrutiny report.*

The Forum ratified the working Group's recommendations.

viii.School Census data – special school termly redeterminations

School census data seems to be taking longer to be available to the school funding team than was previously the case and this can impact on special school termly redeterminations and views were sought on whether the reintroduction of the eform may be necessary to ensure that special school spring term 2022 redeterminations can be processed in a timely manner, especially given the proximity of financial year end.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Supported the reintroduction of the special school termly redeterminations eform in spring 2022, if necessary, to facilitate timely redeterminations.*

Subsequent to the working group, officers confirmed that the data collection was necessary and have updated the Eform and communication will be issued. Special school Headteacher colleagues agreed to circulate a communication via LaSSHTA.

The Forum ratified the working Group's recommendations.

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 30 November 2021.

i. Early Years Block Funding 2022/23

This report provided an updated on the latest High Needs Block funding information and pupil numbers. Final 2022/23 proposals are included in the Schools Budget 2022/23 report at item 6.

The Working Group

- a) Noted the report;*
- b) Supported the proposed EYB funding allocations for 2022/23;*
- c) Recommended that the proposals be shared with the sector so that providers had early notification of the likely rates, for their planning purposes*

Subsequent to the meeting, officers have had further contact with the DfE, which has included clarification of the current national early years budget forecasts for future years. DfE indicated that the current forecast for 2023/24 and 2024/25 do not include any proposals to uplift the DSG funding rates for LAs from those agreed for 2022/23. The increased funding of £180m in 2023/24 and £160m in 2024/25 included in 2022/23 announcements were expressed as uplifts from 2021/22, so simply maintain the 2022/23 funding rates, with a smaller figure required in 2024/25 due to falling numbers. Officers fed back to DfE that these announcements could be misleading.

There is still considerable time before early years DSG funding rates for 2023/24 and 2024/25 are confirmed, so final allocations can still change and may be influenced by ongoing cost pressures in the sector and beyond, but expectations of increases in early years DSG elements in 2023/24 and 2024/25, as received in 2022/23 and based on the 2022/23 announcements, must be treated with considerable caution.

The Forum:

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Noted that the final budget proposals were contained in the 2022/23 Schools Budget report;**
- c) Noted the further information about Early Years funding in future years.**

ii. Chancellor's Children's and Family Services Announcements

On 27 October 2021, the Chancellor delivered his Autumn Budget and 2021 Spending Review. The main implications for the working group relating to the Government's increases to the early years block allocations are reported elsewhere on the agenda. However, there were a number of other announcements made by the Chancellor that were about Children's and Family Services that related to the sector,

Members highlighted that Lancashire was unlikely to receive any additional funding from the training of early years staff to support children's lost learning allocation, as we had already been involved in the programme.

The Working Group

- a) *Noted the report;*

The Forum noted the report.

iii. SEN Inclusion Fund

A number of working group members are involved in the Early Years SEN Task and Finish Group that has been meeting to review the SEN Inclusion Fund arrangements. Feedback from members indicated that the new process was viewed positively, as simpler and less bureaucratic.

The last meeting of the SEN Task and Finish took place on 11 October 2021 when it was confirmed that the revised SEN Inclusion Fund arrangements developed by the group had commenced in September 2021, which included:

- Increased the value of allocations;
- Extended the eligibility criteria;
- Reduced bureaucracy in the application process.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report;*
- b) *Provided feedback on the revised SEN Inclusion Fund arrangements for consideration at the SEN Task and Finish Group.*

After the working group, a further meeting took place on 10 January 2022 of SEN inclusion group. Key issues included:

- *Positive feedback provided about revised SEN inclusion fund;*
- *Work to be undertaken about the role of the specialist teacher.*

The Forum:

- a) **Noted the report;**
- b) **Noted that the further updated from the SEN inclusion group.**

iv. Household Support Grant – Christmas Food Vouchers for Early Years Children

Information was provided to the group on Christmas Food Vouchers for Early Years Children.

Settings were notified in the early years bulletin.

It has been agreed that food vouchers for vulnerable families with 2, 3 & 4 year olds will be provided to cover the two week Christmas holiday period, in the same way that they are being provided for eligible school age children. The food vouchers will be issued directly to the eligible children's home addresses by the postal service from 13 December onwards.

The Working Group:

- a) *Noted the report.*

The Forum noted the report.

v. Early Years Benchmarking

The DfE have just published the latest EY benchmarking data, relating to forecast expenditure for 2021/22. It was agreed that the benchmarking spreadsheet would be circulated to members to enable further consideration of the data to take place outside the meeting.

The Lancashire data compared to our statistical neighbours was shared with the Group and members considered the benchmarking information. The data could be used to help inform possible areas for inclusion in the consultation with the sector that was planned ahead of the 2023/24 financial year.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report;*
- b) Noted that the benchmarking spreadsheet would be circulated to members to enable further consideration.*

Subsequent to the working Group, the benchmarking spreadsheet was circulated to members.

The Forum noted the report.

vi. Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass is a system that provides schools with timely information about all police-attended incidents of domestic abuse.

The system is not fully operational in the EY sector and it was reported that work was being undertaken to resolve the specific issues that had been identified and enable the system to be rolled out across the sector.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report*

The Forum noted the report.

10. ORACLE FUSION UPDATE

On review of the current project updates and given the priority to consider Schools Budget information this item was deferred.

An Oracle Fusion update will be provided at the Forum meeting in March 2022.

11. APPRENTICESHIP LEVY UPDATE

James Beardwood, Vanessa Carthy and Victoria Lowton from the Skills Learning and Development team attended the meeting for this item.

A presentation was provided about the Teacher Apprenticeship Level 6. Key features of the programme included

- The training will be fully funded for all maintained levy paying schools.
- We will offer this to Early Years (3+), Primary, Secondary and welcome applications from SEND schools .
- Please note there is no specific SEND route offered by the DfE

- Apprentices must be released for a six-week contrasting school placement, typically in Spring
- Apprenticeship Teacher training can only be provided by an accredited ITT provider.

It was noted that the County Council was looking into sourcing a new delivery partner for 2022 and final details of the provision would be finalised once the partner was appointed.

Members sought clarification on a number of key points and members note that they could contact the team with individual queries or to pursue any apprenticeship options.

The Forum:

- a) **Noted the report;**
- b) **Thanked Apprenticeship Levy colleagues for the presentation.**

12. URGENT BUSINESS

Information about a decision taken using the Forum's urgent business procedure was included in the Schools Block report.

13. FORUM CORRESPONDENCE

A report was presented providing information on Forum related correspondence received since the last meeting.

i. Correspondence from a Lancashire Special School

Correspondence from the Chair of Governors at a Lancashire special school, addressed to Edwina Grant OBE, Executive Director of Education & Children's Services, was received on 3 December 2021, and asked that the letter be forwarded to the Chair of the Schools Forum for consideration. The letter related to the implementation of a 'damage policy' in connection to 'children looked after' that attend the school.

Following discussions with the Chair and officers, it has been judged that decision about the application of the policy is a matter for the county council, as corporate parent and the correspondence has been forwarded on to relevant officers to consider a response.

Members considered the correspondence and were sympathetic to the issues raised and acknowledged that this a matter for the county council, as corporate parent.

The Forum

- a) **Noted the correspondence received and the proposed action.**

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

i. Lancashire Education Strategy 2022-2025

Some members had asked about the Lancashire Education Strategy. It was noted that the strategy has been reported to the cabinet, but the county council are working on more accessible version which will include the objectives for the next three years under the 5 priorities so that schools can see very clearly what we will be working towards. Further information to be provided in due course

The Forum noted the information.

ii. Indexation of teachers pensions

A query had been raised in advance of the meeting about the impact of the pay freeze this year on the indexation of teachers pensions. As there is no pay rise, then the pensions will not be index linked to the rate of inflation, however, a pay rise of only £1 would trigger the indexation.

Advice from Lancashire School HR was shared with the Forum. This included information that DfE/LGA may come up with a different solution due to the concerns being raised by the unions, so individual schools may wish to await any further guidance.

It was noted Academies have more flexibility to change their pay policy, but would need to be careful if they have provided any commitment to staff/unions that the school will continue to apply STPCD in its entirety

The Forum noted the information.

iii. E-banking systems

The recent move to schools operating cashless payment systems has, unfortunately, resulted in a significant increase in the number of untraced credits remaining on the LCC schools income account. This account receives hundreds of income lines per day, relating to roughly 500 Lancashire schools.

Currently there are a large number of unallocated / unidentified credits remaining on the LCC income account which is causing us significant concern as we approach the end of the financial year.

It is imperative that all cashless systems are set up correctly, it is crucial to ensure colleagues in the income team can identify each and every transaction and ensure it is coded to the correct school CFR (Consistent Financial Reporting) code.

The County Council will issue guidance on the Schools Portal.

Schools are also asked to consider the choice of any e-banking partner carefully, as there is a risk connected to firms going bust and the loss of the income held by the company at that time.

The Forum noted the information.

iv. Amendment to the Specialist Equipment Policy

A paper was presented to the Chair's working group on 11 January 2022 about a possible amendment to the specialist equipment protocol.

There have been recent developments in assistive listening technology for our deaf pupils. Most audiology depts are now providing Oticon hearing aids (Edumic). The Edumic is much cheaper than the equipment most frequently purchased at the moment (Roger Touchscreen – this will still be provided for some pupils). The Edumic is currently around £250-£300 – approx. 1/4 of the cost of the Roger.

However, the Edumic will fall under the current equipment threshold (£380) for the LA to purchase, meaning it would be for to schools to buy from their own budget.

As the equipment is still specialist and is a significant saving in comparison to that currently purchased for the majority of deaf pupils requiring it, LCC asked the Forum to consider an amendment to the specialist equipment protocol.

The amendment to be considered would be for the Edumic to be exempt from the equipment threshold, so that it could still be purchased and provided by the LA as required. If agreed can be implemented ASAP.

Members considered the report.

The Chairs' Group:

- a) Noted the report;*
- b) Supported the proposal for Edumic to be exempt from the equipment threshold in the specialist equipment procedure, with immediate effect, so that it could still be purchased and provided by the LA as required;*
- c) Recommended that a list of identified equipment that is excluded from the threshold be considered when the equipment policy is reviewed.*

The Forum ratified the Working Group's recommendations.

15. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted the next scheduled Forum meeting will be held at 10.00am Thursday 17 March 2022. Arrangements for the meeting will be confirmed in due course.

A schedule of Forum meetings for the academic year 2022/23 was presented to the Forum.

The Forum approved the 2022/23 academic year schedule of meetings.

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM
Date of meeting 17 March 2022

Item No 6

Title: Recommendations of the Schools Block Working Group

Executive Summary

On 1 March 2022, the Schools Block Working Group considered a number of reports, including:

- Schools Block Budget 2022/23;
- Request for Clawback Exemption for a Lancashire Primary School in 2022/23;
- Inclusion Hub Funding 2022/23;
- School Business Rates;
- Reforming how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded.

A summary of the information presented, and the Working Group's recommendations are provided in this report.

Recommendations

The Forum is asked to:

- a) **Note the report from the Schools Block Working Group held on 1 March 2022;**
- b) **Ratify the Working Group's recommendations.**

Background

On 1 March 2022, the Schools Block Working Group considered a number of reports. A summary of the information presented, and the Working Group's recommendations are provided below:

1. Schools Block Budget 2022/23

At the Schools Forum on 13 January 2022, decisions and recommendations about the 2022/23 Schools Budget were agreed.

In connection with the Schools Block, the Forum unanimously supported the 2022/23 Schools Block proposals, including:

- The DfE's National Funding Formula (NFF) methodology should continue to be used as the Lancashire formula for 2022/23;
- The Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) be set at +2.0% for 2022/23, mirroring the National Funding Formula;
- The use of the circa £2.2m of the Growth Fund allocation to ensure that the National Funding Formula (NFF) methodology can be applied in full in 2022/23;
- The use of the Minimum Pupil Funding (MPF) rates contained in the NFF for any new Growth Fund allocations from April 2022:
 - Primary £4,265 per pupil
 - Secondary £5,525 per pupil
- the transfer of circa £1.7m (0.19%) of Schools Block funding to the High Needs Block for the revised payment arrangements needed for the contractual school PFI contribution in relation to the former Hameldon site, as it is being taken over by a Lancashire special school;
- the disapplication submission to DfE relating to a Lancashire secondary school, as the MFG protection for the school, associated with the loss of the 2021/22 PFI allocation, is not required as the pupils have returned to the main site and the school no longer has a PFI funding commitment.

On 20 January 2022, the County Council's Cabinet formally approved the Schools Budget for 2021/22.

The Authority Proforma Tool (APT), setting out the agreed Schools Block proposals for 2022/23, was then submitted to the ESFA for compliance checking ahead of the 21 January 2022 deadline.

The ESFA subsequently contacted the LA seeking a small number of clarifications and explanations and once satisfied with the responses provided approval, which was received on 15 February 2022.

In addition, the DfE approved the disapplication submission relating to the MFG protection for the secondary school associated with the loss of the 2021/22 PFI allocation.

School Budgets were prepared and issued on 21 February 2022, together with forecast High Needs Block allocations.

Indicative Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) statements have historically been issued alongside School Budgets each February. Final PPG allocations are then notified to schools later in the financial year, once data has been confirmed by the DfE.

For 2022/23, the DfE are calculating the PPG allocations on the basis of October school census data, rather than the January school census. This means that actual PPG information will be available much sooner. The LA did not therefore include an indicative PPG statement with the budget notifications.

It is anticipated that DfE will publish PPG allocations shortly

Schools Supplementary Grant 2022/23

As reported to the last meeting of the Schools Forum, the Chancellor announced an additional £1.6bn funding for schools and high needs, for the 2022/23 financial year, above the previous Dedicated Schools Grant settlement. The extra funding is in recognition of the additional costs that local authorities and schools will face in the coming year, which were not foreseen when the original Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations were calculated. This includes the Health and Social Care Levy, which will be applied initially through increased national insurance contributions from employers, and wider cost pressures.

For mainstream schools, this funding will be allocated through a schools supplementary grant 2022/23.

DfE announcements indicate that school-level allocations of the schools supplementary grant for 2022/23 will be published in spring 2022, but the stipulated funding rates are set out below:

Rate for early years

The base per-pupil funding rate for early years provision in schools, and for maintained nursery schools, will be £24 per pupil.

Rates for 5 to 16 schools:

The base funding rates for 5-16 schools will be:

- basic per-pupil rate of £97 for primary pupils
- basic per-pupil rate of £137 for key stage 3 pupils
- basic per-pupil rate of £155 for key stage 4 pupils
- lump sum of £3,680
- Free School Meals Ever 6 per-pupil rate of £85 per eligible primary pupil
- Free School Meals Ever 6 per-pupil rate of £124 per eligible secondary pupil

Rates for post-16

The base per-student funding rate for 16-19 provision in schools, including 16 to 19 schools and academies, will be £35 per student.

On 28 February 2022, DfE published a Schools Supplementary Grant calculator tool, which enable mainstream schools to estimate the grant allocation they are likely to receive in 2022/23. The calculator is available [here](#)

Lancashire has also been allocated supplementary grant funding for the High Needs Block. In accordance with Government guidance, we have discussed the Lancashire supplementary high needs grant allocation with the Schools Forum and are proposing a distribution methodology that includes a payment to be made to high needs pupils in mainstream schools. For 2022/23 this will be calculated on basis of WPNs in 2022/23 School Budget data, estimated at circa £600 per WPN.

High needs supplementary allocations will be finalised in 2022/23 and will match the payment terms for mainstream schools determined by the DfE, for example being paid as a one off payment or by instalments.

It is anticipated that the schools supplementary grant will be incorporated into the Dedicated Schools Grant from 2023/24, although schools need to be aware that there may be Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) or Minimum Pupil Funding (MPF) implications from this change.

Further announcements on this grant are expected later in March 2022.

DSG Funding Adjustment 2023/24

The County Council has also made further representations to the DfE requesting that the DSG allocations for Lancashire for 2023/24 are adjusted to reflect the permanent change of use of the former Hameldon PFI site, which is now being utilised by a special school. We have therefore requested a £1.9m transfer from Schools Block to High Needs Block, so that the contractual school PFI contribution can be met from the correct funding block. There has been an ongoing dialogue with DfE colleagues seeking various clarification around this issue, but no formal decision about the DSG adjustment request has yet been received.

Subsequent to the papers being distributed, the LA is now preparing a formal submission to the ESFA/DfE requesting the permanent transfer of the £1.9m transfer from Schools Block to High Needs Block in response to the change of the use of the former Hameldon site to a special school and the requirement for future PFI contributions to be made from the High Needs Block.

The Forum will be asked to formally support the submission for a permanent transfer from Schools Block to High Needs Block of £1.9m from 2023/24.

The Working Group:

- a) **Noted the report.**

2. Request for Clawback Exemption for a Lancashire Primary School in 2022/23

In July 2021, the Forum considered the School Balances and Clawback Policy for 2021/22.

It was agreed that the clawback of excess balances would be suspended in 2021/22 and no clawback would be applied to school balances at 31 March 2022. This clawback suspension was in recognition of the continued funding and expenditure uncertainties caused by COVID-19.

Furthermore, the Forum indicated that it was likely that clawback would be reintroduced on school balances above the guideline at 31 March 2023 but agreed that this policy would be

reviewed in July 2022, in light of the 2021/22 outturn data, any ongoing COVID-19 issues or any other implications, before it was confirmed.

At this point, the financial planning assumptions for Lancashire maintained schools will include the reintroduction of clawback in FY 2022/23. This has raised a particular issue for one Lancashire primary school and the views of the working group were sought on a request to exempt the school from clawback at 31 March 2023, if Forum ultimately agree to confirm clawback reintroduction.

The school in question is based on an army barracks in the county. This presents some peculiar challenges for the school, especially as and when the army changes the troops posted at the barracks, as this can mean that a significant proportion of the school's pupils leave en masse and then later a similar number of pupils are enrolled as a new regiment moves in.

Information about the planned troop movements at the barracks are causing some concern from the school.

The current regiment at the base is due to leave by 1 October 2022 but is not being replaced until August or possibly later in 2024, which will have a significant impact on the school finances and funding over these years. Historically, there has not been such a large gap between one regiment leaving the barracks and the next regiment being deployed.

Forecasts predict that the NOR at the school will drop from the current 181 to 85 children after 1 October 2022 but will return to circa 180 in September 2024 when the next posting begins at the barracks. It is anticipated that the circa 85 NOR level will be recorded on the October 2022 and October 2023 school censuses.

The drop in NOR will have significant impact on the funding of the school and the staffing requirements and the Headteacher is considering a number of options to manage the situation, including:

- Reduced staffing through natural loss,
- Attempting to secure secondment opportunities for staff in other local schools;
- Reducing the hours of teaching and support staff.

However, these proposed reductions are unlikely to be sufficient to fully account for the impact of a 50%+ reduction in NOR and associated loss of income and voluntary and then forced redundancies may be required.

The challenge from September 2024 then switches to a different situation, with the arrival of the new regiment at the barracks, it is anticipated that the school NOR will revert to circa 180 but it is possible that the number generated by the new regiment may be significantly higher, potentially encompassing growth funding. The staffing establishment at the school will need to be around the current levels but will have been reduced in the interim period. Additionally, funding to cover the costs of new appointments will not immediately be available, due to the lagged school funding system, with the 2024/25 budget being calculated on October 2023 census data, based around the 85 NOR level for the school.

The school's outturn position at 31 March 2021 was a balance of over £220k, against a guideline balance of circa £125k. As with many schools, this year end position may be artificially high as it incorporates covid catch up funding allocations that could not be fully utilised by March 2021 but that need to be spent during the academic year.

School forecasts, submitted as part of the 2021/22 budget setting process, predict that the year end balance will reduce slightly over the next two years, being just under £200k at 31 March 2023. If clawback were reintroduced at the end of FY 2022/23, the school's year end balance could be around £75k over guideline, meaning a potential clawback liability of circa £37.5k for the school.

Clearly, there is considerable time before any clawback would be applied on March 2023 balances, and the school could reduce their balance by increasing spending.

However, the school's key financial challenge over the coming years is to manage the reduced income for the interim time when the NOR is lower due to the period without a regiment being stationed at the barracks.

If Forum were willing to confirm a 2022/23 exemption to clawback for the school at this early stage, it would assist the school's planning with the aim of utilising reserves to operate a more stable staffing structure for the interim period when the NOR is reduced, ahead of the September 2024 pupil number increase. This would increase stability for the school and decrease the risk of compulsory redundancies providing a more established staffing base to assist the arrival of circa 100 new pupils. Early notification of the clawback exemption would also allow the school to commit any savings to their reserves that accrue in the 2022/23 budget year, which is calculated on the 181 NOR, that will be generated by reduced costs when the pupil numbers fall from October 2022.

Other options to support the school with the challenges caused by the significant increase in the pupil population from September 2024 may be considered nearer the time, if necessary, for example a growth fund allocation. However, any future options of this kind relate to the 2024/25 financial year and would need to take account of appropriate DSG allocations and DfE funding regulations applicable at that time. Further information may be presented in due course, as we approach FY 2024/25 depending on the circumstances.

Members considered the information provided and expressed support for the clawback exception, to assist the school in managing the pupil number volatility in a more stable and practical way.

The Working Group:

- a) **Noted the report;**
- b) **Recommended that the Forum agree to exempt the Lancashire primary school from clawback at 31 March 2023 due to the circumstances set out in the report.**

3. Inclusion Hub Funding 2022/23

Following a consultation with schools in the autumn term 2021, the Forum again voted to de-delegate funding for primary inclusion hubs in 2022/23. The de-delegation cost was held at the 2021/22 rate of £11.00 per pupil for maintained primary schools and generates circa £1m for inclusion hub activities in Lancashire.

Following an initial year of Inclusion Hub funding allocated on a 'pump priming' basis of £80k per district in 2019/20, the distribution methodology has used pupil numbers and a deprivation factor to calculate the allocations for each district. For 2022/23, it is proposed to continue this methodology and the table below provides information on the allocations calculated for each district from April 2022:

District	NOR (90%) £	Deprivation (10%) £	Total £
01	96,948	11,564	108,512
02	68,872	7,280	76,152
04	44,518	3,900	48,418
06	123,836	15,261	139,097
07	78,037	6,969	85,006
08	79,078	8,277	87,355
09	91,329	7,866	99,195
11	104,520	11,507	116,027
12	75,053	10,731	85,784
13	80,773	10,876	91,649
14	57,036	5,769	62,805
	900,000	100,000	1,000,000

District allocations are very similar to those for 2021/22, with 5 districts receiving marginally higher allocations and 6 slightly lower allocations. The largest change for a single district is a circa £1.6k increase in funding.

Further updates will be presented to the Forum in due course about the operation of the hubs, and the Forum will need to make formal decisions in October 2022 about de-delegation options for 2023/24.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report;
- b) Supported the continued use of the NOR plus deprivation methodology for distributing de-delegated funding to inclusion hubs in 2022/23.

4. School Business Rates

Schools Block School Business Rates Arrangements 2022/23

Information has been provided previously for members about revised arrangements for school business rates from April 2022.

These changes are being introduced by the Government following national consultations held in 2021. The DfE had indicated that from 2022/23, schools business rates will be paid nationally by the ESFA to billing authorities directly on behalf of 'all state funded schools'.

For the purposes of 2022/23 maintained school budget statements, rates still appeared as a line on funding statements, but was then deducted from net budgets, similar to how delegations appear. This approach was adopted to comply with DfE guidance and mirrors how the DfE indicated that they are treating the rates allocations nationally, with funding allocated to LAs but then returned to central government to allow the actual rates bills to be paid nationally.

There are still a number of details about how the new rates system will work yet to be finalised by the government. However, a key issue has recently arisen where it appears that the government will not enforce the new system on billing authorities in 2022/23, leaving the decision with each relevant authority about whether to opt into the system or opt out.

In Lancashire, the district councils are the billing authorities and we do not yet have any confirmation about the intentions of these councils.

Recent feedback from the Estates Team indicates that initial responses from some Lancashire billing authorities is that they will not be opting in to the DfE's revised billing arrangements from April 2022, meaning that the rates system is likely to remain as it operated in 2021/22 for many schools. This would involve schools and academies paying the relevant business rates bills from their local billing authority.

This is because the latest information suggests that all the billing authorities in our county would need to opt into the revised billing system for the new arrangements to go live, but we are awaiting final confirmation of this.

DfE say they will write out to schools and academies once they have confirmation of the arrangements, which should be by the end of March 2022.

The LA will need to await final decisions and information before assessing the impact, but apart from actually having to pay the rates bill from the district council, this late change to the arrangements should have a limited impact on school budgets, especially if the Rate Reimbursement Policy continues, which would provide protection for schools receiving larger rates bills than they received funding. Forum could consider the threshold levels in the policy, if applicable, when final details are received, and an assessment has been undertaken.

Bid to the Rate Reimbursement Policy

The Schools Forum has agreed a rate reimbursement policy. The future of the policy will need to be clarified in light of the final school business rate arrangements applicable in Lancashire from April 2022, but the existing policy will remain active until 31 March 2022, at least.

The current Lancashire school block funding framework provides rates funding in school budgets based on the authority's estimate. These estimates of actual costs are provided by Estates Team and in known instances include a provision for increased costs because of expansions and revaluations.

The rates reimbursement policy requires schools to submit a business case in year to the authority, where the actual in year costs incurred by a school is greater than budgeted and

the difference is greater 1% of the Total Schools Block Budget Share for the same funding period or £5,000.

To date, this policy has only reimbursed school block funded schools, as this is the only local funding formulae with a rates factor included.

However, the LA has recently received a request to consider a reimbursement to a maintained nursery school.

The school has recently received an additional rates bill for £19,548. The bill followed a revaluation carried out by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) in October 2021 and relates to an extra modular building on the school site, with the charge backdated to June 2018 when the additional building was completed.

This building was signed over to the nursery while the school still housed children's centre activities, and the school is currently in the process of disposing of the modular building, so increased rates charges should not be an issue going forward. However, the school is liable for the bill arrears.

Whilst the Rate Reimbursement Policy was predominately written for school block establishments, the principle of the policy was to protect schools from the financial burden of meeting larger, unexpected costs relating to school business rate bills which are usually as a result of arrears due to backdated revaluations. The size of the bill in this case exceeds the financial thresholds contained in the Forum policy. Members will also be aware that the early years sector is perhaps the phase facing the most significant financial challenges at the current time, and that the LA is carrying out a comprehensive review of maintained nursery schools.

It should be noted that cost of any rates redeterminations are met initially from the surplus in the rates rebates budget that is held centrally, which also includes provision for an annual charge to facilitate rateable value challenges on school premises by the LCC Estates Team. The arrangement is underwritten by the DSG reserve.

The outturn position on the rates rebates budget for 2021/22 is not yet known, but the budget overspent by circa £86k in 2020/21 and generated a circa £500k surplus in 2019/20.

As the Rate Reimbursement Policy was agreed via the Schools Block Working Group, the views of the group were sought on the business case for an allocation from the rate reimbursement budget submitted by the maintained nursery school.

The Working Group:

- a) **Noted the report;**
- b) **Supported an allocation of £19,548 being made from the Rate Reimbursement Policy to a Lancashire nursery school due to the circumstances described in the report.**

5. Reforming how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded

A verbal update was provided to confirm information shared with the Schools Forum at the January 2022 meeting.

Previous reports to the Forum set out information on DfE proposals around 'Reforming how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded', which included a Forum response to the Government's consultation exercise.

The Lancashire grant allocation for 2021/22 equated to just under £2m and DfE proposals indicated that this would be reduced by 50% in 2022/23, potentially leaving a £1m shortfall in school improvement funding from April 2022.

The Grant is proposed to cease totally from 2023/24.

The Forum consultation response raised a number of concerns about :

- The negative impact the proposals may have on school improvement activity for maintained schools;
- The risk that schools will not choose to de-delegate;
- The loss of the grant funding to the school improvement system;
- The unrealistic timescale for implementation.

On 11 January 2022, DfE issued their response to the consultation and indicated that they are proceeding with their proposals, despite a majority of responses opposing the proposals.

The announcements were shared with the Forum on 19 January 2022, and it was noted that DfE consultation conclusions contained information in response to some of the concerns raised by the Forum, including:

- *"There are concerns that these proposals will place a burden on maintained schools, and as a result schools forums may not de-delegate councils sufficient funds to deliver their core school improvement activities. We will reserve the right to permit de-delegation against the wishes of a schools forum in order to ensure councils are in sufficient funds to deliver their core school improvement activities, if satisfied that the local authority had demonstrated such de-delegation was necessary to ensure they were adequately funded to exercise their core school improvement activities as set out in the Schools Causing Concern guidance.*
- *There are concerns that there may be insufficient time for councils to arrange de-delegation in advance of financial year 2022-23. We have clarified that while councils need to submit their APT by 21 January, they only need to confirm schools' budget shares before de-delegation by 28 February and confirm budget shares after de-delegation by 31 March. ESFA are therefore happy to talk to councils on a case-by-case basis if flexibility is required on timings for confirming de-delegation amounts and rates following the APT submission"*

The LA is still considering the implications of this grant cut and further information will be provided in due course.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the information.**

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM
Date of meeting 17 March 2022

Item No 7

Title: Recommendations of the High Needs Block Working Group

Executive Summary

On 1 March 2022, the High Needs Block Working Group considered a number of reports, including:

- School Census data – special school termly redeterminations;
- High Needs Block Funding 2022/23;
- High Needs Supplementary Grant 2022/23.

A summary of the information presented, and the Working Group's recommendations are provided in this report.

In addition, a supplementary High Needs Block item that emerged after the working group, relating to Teachers' Pay Grant (TPG) and Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) allocations is included in this report, for consideration by the Forum.

Recommendations

The Forum is asked to:

- a) Note the report from the High Needs Block Working Group held on 1 March 2022;**
- b) Ratify the Working Group's recommendations;**
- c) Consider the supplementary item on Teachers' Pay Grant (TPG) and Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) allocations.**

Background

On 1 March 2022, the High Needs Block Working Group considered a number of reports. A summary of the information presented, and the Working Group's recommendations are provided below:

A supplementary item is also included at item 4, which emerged after the working group meeting, and relates to Teachers' Pay Grant (TPG) and Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) allocations.

1. School Census data – special school termly redeterminations

Following recommendations at the last working group, Forum special school members kindly circulating a request via LASSTHA for pupil number information at special schools to be completed on a LCC eform, in addition to school census, in order to facilitate timely termly redeterminations.

The LA has chased outstanding returns after the deadline and all but 2 schools have now responded. The LA aims to issue redeterminations in w/c 7 March 2022 and will use last terms data for these schools if they do not reply. Even though deadline has passed, the LA confirmed that it would be able to include their numbers if they were submitted by 4 March 2022.

The Working Group:

a) Noted the report.

2. High Needs Block Funding 2022/23

At the Schools Forum on 13 January 2022, decisions and recommendations about the 2022/23 Schools Budget were agreed.

In connection with the High Needs Block, the Forum unanimously supported the 2022/23 High Needs Block proposals, including:

- The increased HNB allocation being utilised to cover the forecast growth in High Needs expenditure from April 2022;
- The increase in HNB allocations to broadly match uplifts in the mainstream sector, including:
 - Increasing the Weighted Pupil Numbers (WPN) rate by 4% to £4,567
 - Special School and PRU School Specific factors uplifted by 2% to match Schools Block MFG
 - Rate for Excluded Pupils, Medical and Other pupils uplift to match increased WPN
 - in the secondary PRU formula, 1 WPN
 - in the primary PRU formula, 2/3 of 1 WPN
- the transfer of circa £1.7m (0.19%) of Schools Block funding to the High Needs Block for the revised payment arrangements needed for the contractual school PFI contribution in relation to the former Hameldon site, as it is being taken over by a Lancashire special school;

On 20 January 2022, the County Council's Cabinet formally approved the Schools Budget for 2021/22.

Some elements of the Schools Budget required compliance checking by the ESFA and approval was received on 15 February 2022.

School Budgets were prepared and issued on 21 February 2022, together with forecast High Needs Block allocations.

Indicative Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) statements have historically been issued alongside School Budgets each February. Final PPG allocations are then notified to schools later in the financial year, once data has been confirmed by the DfE.

For 2022/23, the DfE are calculating the PPG allocations on the basis of October school census data, rather than the January school census. This means that actual PPG information will be available much sooner, and the DfE have indicated that 2022/23 allocations should be announced in March 2022. The LA did not therefore include an indicative PPG statement with the budget notifications.

It was anticipated that the DfE will publish PPG allocations shortly.

DSG Funding Adjustment 2023/24

The County Council has also made further representations to the DfE requesting that the DSG allocations for Lancashire from 2023/24 are adjusted to reflect the permanent change of use of the former Hameldon PFI site, which is now being utilised by a special school. We have therefore requested a £1.9m transfer from Schools Block to High Needs Block, so that the contractual school PFI contribution can be met from the correct funding block. There has been an ongoing dialogue with DfE colleagues seeking various clarifications around this issue, but no formal decision about the DSG adjustment request has yet been received.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report.**

Subsequent to the meeting, the LA is now preparing a formal submission to the ESFA/DfE requesting the permanent transfer of the £1.9m transfer from Schools Block to High Needs Block in response to the change of the use of the former Hameldon site to a special school and the requirement for future PFI contributions to be made from the High Needs Block.

The Forum is asked to formally support the submission for a permanent transfer Schools Block to High Needs Block of £1.9m from 2023/24.

3. High Needs Supplementary Grant 2022/23

At the Schools Forum on 19 January 2022, information was provided about the Schools Supplementary Grant.

This grant was introduced by DfE for 2022/23, to distribute £1.6b of additional funding for schools and high needs, above the previous DSG settlement. The additional funding is being

provided to support Health and Social Care Levy costs (increased NI contribution in 2022/23 for social care) and wider cost pressures.

The Grant allocation will include a government calculated element for mainstream schools, with £325m of the national total targeted for high needs funding, to be allocated locally, following discussion with the Schools Forum.

Lancashire Schools Supplementary Grant allocations for 2022/23 are set out below:

Mainstream Schools Supplementary Grant allocation	£25m
High Needs Supplementary Grant allocation	£6m
Total Supplementary Grant allocation	£31m

Following discussions with the Forum, it was agreed that the High Needs Supplementary Grant would be calculated in two parts:

- **Health and Social Care Levy (Increased NI contribution in 2022/23 for social care)**
 - Provided specifically to support special schools and PRUs;
 - To be calculated on 80% of total budget per school x 1.25% based on 2022/23 School Budget data;
 - This should broadly reflect the additional costs for the HNB schools, as circa 80% of total budgets are staffing and the employer NI contribution is increasing by 1.25%;
 - Prevents the need for extensive extra work and complex calculations;
 - Contribution for other schools included within mainstream grant;
 - Consideration of exceptional expansion at special schools and data point used regarding WPN values due to differentials between terms.

- **Wider Cost Pressures**
 - Uses remaining Grant, of circa £5.2m;
 - Paid across all sectors as one off payment or instalments;
 - Calculated on basis of WPNs in 2022/23 School Budget data;
 - For AP incorporates Excluded, Medical & Other Places + WPN above E2 (1.00 WPN);
 - Equates to circa £600 per WPN, subject to confirmation of final allocations and distribution methodology.

Whilst the overall principles of the methodology were agreed by Forum in January 2022, the details of how the 'Consideration of authority commissioned expansions at special schools and the data point used regarding WPN values due to differentials between terms' in the calculations need to be finalised.

Having considered the issues, the following information was put forward for consideration:

- For special schools with authority commissioned expansions planned from the academic year 2022/23 due to LA projects, the 2022/23 School Budget data to be used in the NI increase calculation already has the revised September 2022 place numbers built into the budget for the place funding. The existing methodology is therefore already recognising an element of the additional costs that the schools will

face in September 2022. However, the budget figures will not take account of the impact the additional pupils will have on the WPN figures or school specific calculations. It is therefore proposed to calculate the average costs per place at relevant schools based on the 2022/23 budget figures and multiply this by the increased number of places at September 2022. The 80% x 1.25% calculation will then be applied, to provide an estimate of the additional NI burden on these schools arising from the extra commissioned places that was not recognised in the standard Health and Social Care Levy calculation.

The calculation applied to 4 schools where LA commissioned expansions are taking places from September 2022 and is estimated to cost just over £4k in total. This will not substantially impact on the estimated overall costs of this element of the methodology, with the total calculation rising to marginally over £0.8m.

- In response to the WPN data point to be used in the methodology, the original proposal planned to use the Schools Budget 2022/23 data, which is taken from the October 2021 census.

An alternative solution would be to use May census data in the WPN calculations. The Summer term census is traditionally the high point in the academic year for pupil number/WPN values, especially for PRUs. The latest summer term data available before the start of the 2022/23 financial year is from May 2021.

The high level WPN data is provided below calculated on both the October 2021 and May 2021 data:

Calculations based on October 2021 data

Sector	Total WPN	%
Special WPN	4851	53%
PRU WPN	499	5%
Mainstream WPN	2914	32%
FE Colleges WPN	822	9%
Total HNB WPN	9086	100%

Calculations based on May 2021 data

Sector	Total WPN	%
Special WPN	4625	54%
PRU WPN	526	6%
Mainstream WPN	2783	32%
FE Colleges WPN	701	8%
Total HNB WPN	8635	100%

The revised estimate of the High Needs Supplementary Grant for Lancashire is £6.2m, leaving circa £5.4m available for the wider costs pressures element of the methodology. The October 2021 data would therefore equate to circa £599 per WPN, with the May 2021 data providing circa £630 per WPN.

It was noted that the October 2021 data contains a larger number of WPNs overall, so reduces the value to be paid for each WPN. The May 2021 data contains a lower number of WPNs overall, so the factor can be increased proportionately. May 2021 data does however provide a higher WPN figure for PRUs.

The final WPN figures will also provide an adjustment for the special schools subject to the LA commissioned expansions, similar to that described above, but without the NI percentage element, which will also impact on the final WPN factor to be allocated.

Members considered the proposals for distributing the High Needs Supplementary Funding and discussed the various options available. There was general agreement for a preference for the May 2021 census data to be used for the WPN calculations. However, members wanted to consult further with colleagues and officers before final decisions were taken, with some concern expressed about the possible adjustment methodology to post 16 commissioned place numbers in the authority commissioned expansions element of the arrangements. The need to use a single data point for calculations and have a methodology that could be applied across all sectors and settings was emphasised.

Officers asked that members hold discussions/collate any views by 17 March 2022 if possible, so that final decisions can be agreed at Forum, in time to implement payments from April 2022.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Supported the use of May 2021 census data in the WPN calculation of the High Needs Supplementary Grant methodology;**
- c) Representatives agreed to consult further with colleagues and officers before final decisions were taken about the possible adjustment methodology.**

4. Teachers' Pay Grant (TPG) and Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) Allocations

After the Working Group meeting, a High Needs Block issue has arisen, and information is included in this report for consideration by the Forum.

This issue relates to Teachers' Pay Grant (TPG) and Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) Allocations.

The LA has been in discussion with an AP provider about the payment of TPG and TPECG in 2021/22. This has caused the LA to re-examine the DfE's High Needs Guidance for 2021/22.

Members will recall that for 2021/22 the DfE included funding in High Needs Block allocations to LAs that had previously been distributed via 2 specific grants to cover the costs of teachers pay and pension increases. Following discussions with the Forum, this additional funding was allocated to special schools/academies and PRUs/AP providers in Lancashire via an addition to the school specific factor in both formulae, at a rate of £660 per pupil. As the extra £660 was included in the school specific element of the formulae, it related to the pupil count and was redetermined each term.

Having reviewed the situation, the LA is now of the view that this methodology does not fully comply with the DfE guidance/conditions of grant, which specify that the allocations should be based on 'places' and also incorporates a minimum payment threshold of 40 places.

As the original allocations did not fully comply with the conditions of grant, the LA will need to analyse the allocations to determine adjustments.

The 2021/22 High Needs Block TPG and TPECG funding has been recalculated using the 'place' methodology, with some 18 schools/PRUs generating higher allocations and 21 resulting in lower allocations.

As this issue has emerged so late in the 2021/22 financial year it would be inappropriate to reduce allocations for schools where the place methodology generates a lower amount, so the LA intends to honour the original allocations.

For those schools with higher place methodology allocations, a supplementary allocation will be issued shortly, to ensure that the allocations from the corrected amounts can be included in the 2021/22 year end accounts. The largest increase for a special school is circa £23k, and for a PRU, circa £14k.

Members will recall that Forum has already agreed that no clawback mechanism should be applied on school balances at 31 March 2022, so this late allocation does not create any clawback issue for schools.

The costs of the payments to the 18 schools entitled to the higher allocation under the place methodology, plus the original AP provider that raised the query, is just over £200,000.

2022/23 TPG and TPECG Allocations

The 2022/23 HNB guidance and conditions of grant contain similar TPG and TPECG requirements. However, as the correction of 2021/22 allocations has only recently been finalised, the original 2022/23 special school and PRU budget statements, issued on 21 February 2022, included TPG and TPECG allocations calculated on the 'school specific' methodology.

The LA will need to recalculate these 2022/23 allocations to ensure compliance with DSG conditions of grant, however, as the 2022/23 financial year has not yet commenced, the Forum's views are now sought on the options available.

Options could be:

- Revise funding models, recalculating the TPG and TPECG allocations for 2022/23 and issue revised budget statements to all special schools and PRUs and, as the new financial year has not yet commenced, expect the schools to factor the revised allocations into their 2022/23 individual school budget proposals.
- Inform all special schools and PRUs of the revised calculations, however, as 2022/23 budget statements have already been issued, then honour allocations that would be lower, and increase allocations that are higher using the 'place' methodology. Uplifted 2022/23 allocations would need to be calculated and paid in March 2023, but initial

estimates suggest that around half the schools would again be eligible for higher allocations, with a total amount of circa £200k to be underwritten by the DSG reserve.

The Forum are asked to advise which option should be pursued.

2023/24 TPG and TPECG Allocations

The LA will update the 2023/24 HNB funding models to incorporate the TPG and TPECG place based allocation methodology after reviewing updated DfE high needs guidance for 2023/24.

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM
Date of meeting 17 March 2022

Item No 8

Title: Recommendations of the Early Years Block Working Group

Executive Summary

On 8 March 2022, the Early Years Block Working Group considered a number of reports, including:

- Early Years Block Funding 2022/23;
- Impact on Early Years settings on EEF as a percentage of total sales EEF Early Education Funding;
- LCC Family Safeguarding model;
- SEN in Early Years;
- Childminders and Covid rules.

A summary of the information presented, and the Working Group's recommendations are provided in this report.

Recommendations

The Forum is asked to:

- a) Note the report from the Early Years Block Working Group held on 8 March 2022;**
- b) Ratify the Working Group's recommendations.**

Background

On 8 March 2022, the Early Years Block Working Group considered a number of reports. A summary of the information presented, and the Working Group's recommendations are provided below:

1. Early Years Block Funding 2022/23

At the Schools Forum on 13 January 2022, decisions and recommendations about the 2022/23 Schools Budget were agreed.

In connection with the Early Years Block, the Forum unanimously supported the 2022/23 Early Years Block proposals, including:

- The use of £1m Schools Budget reserves being used in 2022/23, to mitigate transitional pressures in the Early Years Block budget to support the 3 and 4 year old base rate, as the Schools Block headroom transfer is not available;
- The £1m contribution would allow 4p per hour to be added to the base rate and be available for 2022/23 only to support the 3 and 4 years olds, meaning the rate would increase by 13p per hour from 2021/22, providing a £4.48 per hour 3 and 4 years olds rate from April 2022 (compared to £4.35 in 2021/22):
- The passporting of other DfE Early Years funding increases to providers:
 - + £0.21 per hour 2 year olds providing £5.37 per hour from April 2022
 - + £0.17 per hour for the maintained nursery schools supplementary funding providing £3.67 per hour from April 2022;
 - + £0.07 per hour for Early Years Pupil Premium providing £0.60 per hour from April 2022, equivalent to up to £342 per eligible child per year;
 - + £185 per eligible child the disability access fund (DAF) providing £800 per eligible child per year from April 2022;
- The continuation of Deprivation Supplements on the existing methodology for 2022/23;
- The continuation of the SEN Inclusion Fund at £500k for 2022/23.

On 20 January 2022, the County Council's Cabinet formally approved the Schools Budget for 2021/22.

Some elements of the Schools Budget require compliance checking by the ESFA and approval was received on 15 February 2022.

Early Years budget statements for 2022/23 were prepared and issued on 21 February 2022.

The Working Group:

- a) **Noted the report.**

2. Impact on Early Years settings on EEF as a percentage of total sales EEF Early Education Funding

A presentation was considered about the impact on Early Years settings of EEF Early Education Funding as a percentage of total sales, which had been prepared by the working group chair.

The presentation provided information on the Costs and Income changes in Early Years settings. The analysis indicated that for 2022/23 there would be a 7.1% increase in costs but only a 3.5% increase in government funding.

Further analysis was shared assessing the impact for settings depending on their percentage of EEF compared to their total income and on the historic comparison of funding rises compared to cost pressures.

A summary of the impact included:

- Settings with a high percentage of EEF can't increase parent fees to cover government shortfall.
- Under 2's and all other parents paying fees are subsidising the shortfall in EEF.
- The low level of government EEF increase means that most settings are going to be short of income.
- Whole sector is experiencing huge increase in children with SEND etc where settings need unfunded extra staff but cannot obtain or afford them.
- Many settings are not making a surplus.
- Make cost reductions or charge more for extras to stay in business.

Members discussed the ongoing problem of underfunding in the sector and compared this to Wales where rates were increasing to £5 per hour from April 2022, plus £9 per day towards meals. There was also full remission of business rates for early years providers.

Concern was expressed that the level of funding provided by the Government would soon begin to reduce the quality of provision in the county. Currently 98% of Lancashire providers were rated good or outstanding by Ofsted, but this would be unsustainable if funding were not significantly increased.

Officers, in consultation with the Working Group Chair, planned to send a letter from the county council to Lancashire MPs to highlight the underfunding for the sector, and it was also agreed that this matter would again be raised at the regular sessions the county council held with the DfE.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Expressed significant concern about the underfunding of the early years sector in Lancashire and the inevitable impact this would have on the quality of provision;**
- c) Supported the actions to raise awareness of this funding issues further with MPs and DfE.**

3. LCC Family Safeguarding model

The Federation of Lancashire Nursery Headteachers has asked that an issue could be raised at the Schools' Forum on the role of Early Years settings in the LCC Family Safeguarding model.

In the Family Safeguarding model Early Help and Support is provided by settings. This has brought additional workload, particularly for those settings located in areas of deprivation providing education for Lancashire's most vulnerable children. Early Years settings are already stretched, often working precisely on ratio. There is no funding for Early Years settings to cover the additional workload. Although other sectors may also feel the pressure of providing Early Help and Support they receive considerably more in Pupil Premium to be able to provide the necessary family support.

Headteachers have said that school staff are increasingly being allocated as the Lead Professional. The feeling is that this is a family support worker role but most schools don't have that post, and can't afford to create that post, so it falls on the headteacher/DSL. Settings in areas of high deprivation will see more families requiring support due to the effects of deprivation. Covid has worsened the stresses on families which further increase the workload.

The issue is very similar to that previously raised by the PVI sector.

It was noted that settings are fully supportive of the Family Safeguarding model because they have the children's best interests at heart but would welcome consideration of the issues by Schools Forum.

All members recognised the concerns that were highlighted, and officers agreed to arrange a meeting with the Head of Service for Child Protection/Children in Need (Family Safeguarding) to directly discuss the issues raised.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Supported the proposed meeting with LCC officers to directly discuss the issues raised.**

4. SEN in Early Years

A further issue was raised about the level of funding available in the sector to support children with SEN.

Members reported that the situation they faced was getting increasingly worse as more children presented with SEN after the pandemic and funding generally was already stretched.

It was noted that Lancashire passported all the early years funding received from the government to Lancashire providers and that increases in the SEN Inclusion Fund for example would reduce funding available for base rates.

Officers confirmed that it was intended to consult the sector ahead of the 2023/24 financial year to obtain feedback about the balance of factors in the Lancashire early years formula and these views could influence decisions about future funding arrangements.

A more general survey of the sector was also to be issued shortly to obtain feedback from the sector and this would include feedback about the SEN pressures on settings.

Members were aware that a sub group held regular meetings with Inclusion Service colleagues and it was proposed that the invitation to the next meeting of this group could be extended to the wider Working Group membership to enable colleagues to hear directly from the service and discuss options available. Feedback was provided that a service restructure was underway and early years officers had been involved in the recruitment process to ensure appointees had relevant early years experience and focus. The possibility of future use of High Needs Block funding to support the pressures on SEN children in the sector was raised and it was noted that discussion with the Inclusion Service would be needed first to formulate any policy considerations.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Supported the concerns raised about the pressures on SEN funding in the sector;**
- c) Supported the wider invitation to the next SEN Inclusion meeting to facilitate wider discussions with the service.**

5. Childminders and Covid rules

Information was provided about the current Covid rules for childminders which include

- A childminder can accept a child with Covid into their home
- A parent with Covid can come to the home to drop off their child
- If the childminder or a household member has Covid they have to close
- But the household member can still go to work or school
- The childminder does not need to self isolate
- This only applies to childminders and not other EY settings.

The LA has raised the inconsistencies in this guidance with the DfE.

The DfE response was shared with the working group and is provided below:

On Thursday 24 February 2022, the Government removed the legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive test. Public health guidance continues to advise adults and children who test positive to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for at least 5 full days, and then continue to follow the guidance until they have received 2 negative test results on consecutive days. The guidance also advises that people with symptoms of COVID-19 or a positive test result should not have social visitors to the home.

This means that the guidance on managing positive cases for childminders has not changed and childminders should not childmind in their home when someone living there has tested positive or has symptoms of COVID-19. This is because there is a higher risk of transmission to those attending the provision for childcare as they are in close proximity of the case and for extended periods of time.

In light of the changes to the legal requirement to self-isolate, we have reviewed and updated the guidance with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and it can be found here: [Additional actions for childminders during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#). The guidance also outlines the situations where childminders may be able to continue working if there is someone who has tested positive or has symptoms of COVID-19 in their home.

There is additional guidance for childminders which can be found [here](#).

The response did add that the DfE is aware of the issue and discussions are ongoing with UKHSA with an update expected for 1 April.

Officers confirmed that there were some temporary workarounds available for childminders but that these were not that easy to action and had not been taken up in Lancashire.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report.**

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

Date of meeting: 17 March 2022

Item No 11

Title: Forum Correspondence

Appendix A refers

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on Forum related correspondence since the last meeting.

Recommendations

The Forum is asked to:

- a) Note the report;
- b) Express any views on the correspondence received.

Background

This report provides an update on Forum related correspondence received since the last meeting.

a) Correspondence from a Lancashire Special School

At the last Forum meeting in January 2022, correspondence from the Chair of Governors at a Lancashire special school was reported. The letter related to the implementation of a 'damage policy' in connection to 'children looked after' that attend the school.

Following discussions with the Forum Chair and officers, it was judged that decisions about the application of the policy were a matter for the county council, as corporate parent for the 'children looked after' and a response was sent to the Chair of Governors (CoG) to confirm that the correspondence had been forwarded on to county council relevant officers to consider a response.

Officers subsequently looked into the matter and held a meeting with the Headteacher and CoG of the school. Correspondence from Edwina Grant OBE was then sent to the school.

A letter from Edwina was also sent to the Forum Chair setting out the outcome of the discussions.

b) Correspondence from the Cabinet Member for Education & Skills

After the Forum meeting on 19 January 2022, the Forum Chair wrote to the Cabinet Member for Education & Skills and the Leader of the County Council, setting out the Forum's decisions and recommendations regarding the Schools Budget 2022/23. This correspondence formed part of the County Council Cabinet's consideration of the Schools Budget on 20 January 2022.

A letter, dated 21 January 2022, was received by the Forum Chair from County Councillor Jayne Rear, Cabinet Member for Education & Skills. A copy of the letter is provided at **Appendix A**, which thanked Shaun for his correspondence and asked that the thanks of the Cabinet Member and the Leader be passed on to all members of the Forum for their hard work to help set the budget this year.

The letter confirmed that the Cabinet had accepted the Forum's recommendations when setting the Schools Budget for 2022/23.

The Forum is asked to note this correspondence and express any views.



Mr S Jukes
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Phone: (01772) 539650
Email: jayne.rear@lancashire.gov.uk

Your ref:
Our ref: CCJR/LD
Date: 21 January 2022

Dear Shaun

Schools Budget Proposals 2022/2023

Thank you very much for your letter providing information about Schools Budget proposals for 2022/23.

Phillippa and I would be very grateful if you could thank all members of the forum for their hard work to help set the budget this year.

We can see that careful thought has gone into the decisions that have been made and we are happy to accept your recommendations for the budget.

Yours sincerely

County Councillor Jayne Rear
Cabinet Member for Education & Skills