

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held at 10:00 am on Tuesday, 12 January
2023 in the Savoy Suite, The Exchange, County Hall

Present:

Schools Members:

Primary School Governors

Stephen Booth
Gerard Collins
Michelle O'Neill
Robert Waring
Sam Ud-din
Tim Young

Primary School Headteachers

Danial Ballard
Sarah Barton
Jenny Birkin
Deanne Marsh
Helen Shaw
Anna Smith
Sarah Robson
Keith Wright

Secondary School Governors

Janice Astley
Brian Rollo

Secondary School Headteachers

Oliver Handley

Nursery School Headteacher

Jan Holmes

Nursery School Governor

Thelma Cullen

Early Years - PVI

Sharon Fenton
Sarah McGladrigan
Philippa Perks

Observers

David Fann
Sarah Troughton
Alison Daly
Paula Barrow

Academy Governor

Kathleen Cooper
Chris McConnachie
Louise Shaw

Academy Principal/Headteacher

Steve Campbell
James Keulemans
John Tarbox

Alternative Provision Academy

Special School Academy

Special School Governor

Mandy Howarth

Special School Headteacher

Claire Thompson

Short Stay Governor

Liz Laverty

Short Stay Headteacher

Abigale Bowe

Members:

Other Voting Members

Mark Bradshaw
Bill Mann (Church of England -
Diocesan/Church Authorities)

In attendance: Kirsty Lister
Sylwia Krajewska
Matt Dexter
Toni Rafferty
Aman Bhachu
Emma Nicholson
Sally Richardson
Aby Hardy
Glyn Peach
Steven Leaf
Paul Dunne
Paul Simpson

As the School Forum marks 20 years since its formation, Daniel Ballard has welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for their contributions.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Neil Gurman, Rachel Bond, Mike Wright, Holly Clarke, Louise Parrish, Lindy King, Margaret Scrivens, Rosie Fearn, Caroline Clayton, Helen Dicker and John Davey.

2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute members at the meeting.

3. FORUM MEMBERSHIP

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

Secondary School Governor Representative
Jackie Lord has recently resigned from the Forum.

The LA sought candidates to fill the vacancy and only one nomination was received. Jackie was representing Secondary School Governor and Rachel Bond, Governor from Up Holland High School has been appointed as new representative.

Members thanked Jackie for her contribution to the Forum and welcome Rachel to her first Forum meeting.

Observer
Welcome Alison Daly as an observer from Lytham St Annes High School to her first School Forum meeting.

Schools Forum
Millie Dixon recently progress into a new role within School Finance Team. Toni Rafferty has been appointed as her replacement and will take over the role of Business Support Officer of the School Forum.

The Forum thanked Millie for her contribution to the Forum and to welcome Toni to the Forum.

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 2022 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 2023 and will keep the membership balance under review ahead of the annual membership refresh for September 2023.

The Forum:

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Welcomed Rachel Bond, Alison Daly and Toni Rafferty to the Forum;**
- c) Thanked Jackie Lord and Millie Dixon to their contribution to forum.**

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 9 November 2022, were agreed as a correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING

School improvement Function – As per last years vote, Aby Hardy (Head of Education Improvement) informed members that primary schools opted in for the delegated service, whereas secondary schools did not. This will not affect the statutory services provided to secondary schools. All Special Schools, Nurseries and PRUs were offered buybacks, but only Special Schools declined. A revised option regarding the amount has been chosen by the nursery, which is a contribution of £0.02 per hour. A report and further information will be presented to the School Block Working Group on 9 March 2023.

Fusion - Glyn Peach (Director of Digital) and Steven Leaf (Senior Financial Services Manager) attended the meeting due to recent issues raised with new system Fusion to be able to respond and provide further information regarding on Fusion.

Prior to the meeting collective issues were raised by the High Needs Chair on behalf of teachers from special schools on the Chairs meeting, two days prior to the meeting. Officers decided to attend the school Forum to address them.

Glyn has thanked School Forum members for their patience and support while they work through technical issues related to making Fusion fully accessible to all users. It has taken longer than expected, and it is acknowledged that this has caused some difficulties. Teams are working around the clock to ensure that this work is completed as soon as possible, and we will keep users updated on all developments. The project already involves two years of effort and a cost of £22 million. It is the biggest program of biggest scale. The launch was not expected to be delayed, but the consequences have been felt throughout the Council. The system is still expected to have 'black windows' in the near future. There may be periods when the system is down, but it will be worked around in the evenings and weekends to minimise any disruption.

The schools were advised to use the Emergency Process, where suppliers will receive the money within three working days, as well as SIMS for normal transactions.

It has been raised by one of the members whether they will be able to provide one blank authorisation for Emergency Payments because if they are absent, they cannot authorise it. As a result, the team is aware of this issue and has advised members that a blank authorisation can be provided with the names of individuals who would be authorised to make the decisions on their behalf.

Further issues were raised regarding the HR process and guide not being useful. A member raised an issue when adding a new employee to the system. The functionality of the old system has not been transferred to the new system, and when you request assistance through the form, you are timed out; therefore, there should be an option to save your work. It was noted that the system does not incorporate school clubs and holiday entitlement calculations. Further, when contacting the technical support, support was not available due technical difficulties. Members suggested that there should be a better guide/instruction for the system. There are also issues within HR relating to pay progression and termination of contracts, which creates difficulties for the employees in claiming pension benefits. It was advised that such issues should be raised with HR.

Additional error has been raised in which an email has been sent out to all suppliers with the wrong wording, requiring them to invoice the LCC directly rather than the schools. The team is aware that this email was sent in error, and they have accepted the error and apologised for the misunderstanding.

Collective members raised the issue of duplicate payments to suppliers, and it was noted that this should not have occurred. Team members have apologised for this and offered to contact suppliers directly if necessary, in order to request a refund. In terms of receiving the money back, it was not a concern, but all the extra work that fell on the Business Managers. In response to members' requests, the team will email them directly to apologize for the increased workload they have experienced because of this change.

To ensure that any major issues that members are facing are addressed, members are encouraged to email School Forum and these messages will be forwarded accordingly.

The Forum:

a) Noted the matters arising.

6. Inclusion and Engagement Support Team

In the last working group of the High Needs Block, it was reported on 29 November 2022 that a temporary team had been created due to government COVID funds. Inclusion and Engagement Support Team funding will run out in June 2023. During the meeting it was proposed that the High Needs Block continue funding this team. This report has outlined the work achieved by this team and how the results will benefit the sector in the long-term.

The Inclusion Engagement Support Team was established in September 2021 and funded from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund, which was additional funding made available to local authorities during the Covid pandemic in 2021. This funding runs out in July 2023 and so this team will cease to exist unless it is possible to secure additional funding in the future.

The team comprises three full-time teachers, three and a half full time learning mentors and part-time business support. One of the learning mentor posts has been vacant since June 2022. It has not been possible to recruit to this temporary post for one year. The Council has experienced difficulties in relation to recruitment of staff to permanent posts generally and this becomes more challenging where posts are temporary, particularly where these are for a year or less. Other members of the team are seeking alternative employment due to the uncertainty about the future of this team.

The team was established to provide support for children and young people with education, health and care plans where their mainstream school placement was at risk of breakdown and/or where the child was at risk of permanent exclusion.

More information about the support provided by this team is available via the following link: [Inclusion and Engagement Support Team - Lancashire County Council](#), including the Good Methods of Engagement resources referenced below.

The SEND review: right support, right place, right time green paper published for consultation in March 2022 emphasised the need for better inclusion supported by high quality education and an outreach first approach. At the time of writing the outcomes of this consultation have not been reported, however the strategy being developed in relation to pupils at risk of permanent exclusion in Lancashire is on the development of support within pupils' existing settings. It is anticipated this out-reach support will be targeted at pupils with no or lower-level special educational needs. The Inclusion Engagement Support Team have in many ways led the way for this approach in Lancashire as all support provided by this team is within the mainstream setting. This contrasts with the approach that is sometimes adopted for pupils without education, health and care plans where support is often provided off site in settings that include for example pupil referral units.

In addition, the Inclusion Engagement Support Team have additional knowledge and expertise in special educational needs, which is not available to the same extent from outreach support practitioners working from the pupil referral units. This specialist knowledge is essential when working with children whose needs are so significant that they require provision to be secured through an education, health and care plan.

This support is particularly important at the current time where suspension and exclusion rates are increasing across Lancashire for children with and without special educational needs. Permanent exclusion rates for pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan in Lancashire was 0.04% in 2020/21, which was below the average for all English authorities where the rate was 0.07%. The permanent exclusion rate for pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans increased to 0.19% in 2021/22, which equated to 11 pupils. Since September 2022 there have been 12 permanent exclusions of pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans. There is no comparative national data after 2020/21. Of these exclusions, 1 was an IEST referral and none had had ongoing direct work. Others had not been referred into the team for support. From this data, we have identified a discrepancy between the number of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan who have been excluded and the number referred to the IEST for support prior to exclusion. On further investigation we identified that many pupils had received several suspensions prior to the exclusion. As a result, the IEST have linked with pupil access to request suspension data is shared so that we can ensure schools are aware of the IEST support offer. Currently, this is in its infancy and would be an area for future development if the IEST were to continue past July 2023 to ensure early identification and action can be taken to support such cases.

Referrals

Since the team was established to December 2022 the team have received 123 referrals from schools for support. Direct support has been provided for 109 children and young people. There were various reasons for support not being provided for the other 14 children which included for example the family moving out of area, a change of placement or where schools were seeking additional evidence to support a change of placement rather than support for the child.

It can be seen from the table below there have been twice as many referrals for primary aged pupils in comparison with those at secondary level and that most pupils referred to the team have social, emotional and mental health needs, closely followed by those with either social, language and communication needs or autism. 20% of referrals in 2021/22 were for pupils in years 6 or 7, although this information is not provided in the table.

| Educational phase | Number of pupils | Primary category of need | Number of pupils |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Primary | 82 | SEMH | 66 |
| Secondary | 41 | ASD/SLCN | 45 |
| | | Other | 12 |

Outcomes

It can be seen from the next table that 72% of pupils that received support from the Inclusion Engagement Support team have been able to maintain their existing placement within a mainstream school.

| Outcomes | Number of pupils |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Maintained placement | 78 |
| Transfer to a special school | 18 |
| Other ⁱ | 8 |
| Permanent exclusions ⁱⁱ | 5 |

The Inclusion Engagement Support Team have also received written testimonials from schools that have received support from this team, that can be made available on request.

It is also true that between September and the end of November 2022, County Moderating Panel was asked to consider 114 requests for a change of school placement. County Moderating Panel is a multi-agency decision making group that considers applications for independent, non-maintained placements. Just over 65 of the total number of requests made since September have been agreed. The cost of these placements so far is £2.3m per year plus £0.4m for transport. All maintained special schools for children with social, emotional and mental health needs and generic learning difficulties are over-subscribed and therefore often the only option available is a non-maintained special school place where this is not available within the state funded sector. County Moderating Panel has also made referrals to the Inclusion Engagement Support Team where it is considered that a school has not exhausted all the resources that would enable them to maintain the child's placement. This support will not be available if the Inclusion Engagement Support Team does not exist.

The Inclusion Engagement Support Team have also developed a range of resources, referred to as the Good Methods of Engagement (GEMS) that are freely available to all schools. It

can be seen from the number of downloads reported below that these have been well received by schools.

| Good methods of engagement (GEMS) downloads | Number of page views |
|--|-----------------------------|
| gems-autism.pdf | 503 |
| gems-adhd.pdf | 378 |
| gems-sensory.pdf | 340 |
| gems-anger.pdf | 323 |
| gems-workstation.pdf | 312 |
| gems-anxiety.pdf | 300 |
| gems-wellbeing-and-mindfulness.pdf | 299 |
| gems-visuals.pdf | 291 |
| gems-pre-teach.pdf | 260 |
| gems-friendship.pdf | 258 |
| gems-attachment.pdf | 252 |
| gems-bereavement-and-loss.pdf | 243 |

In addition, and further to requests from schools, a training programme for different practitioners has been developed by the Inclusion and Engagement Support Team. This training programme will run over the spring and summer terms in 2023. This is a targeted programme based on schools' requests and will include for example dedicated courses for teaching assistants and a separate one for teachers. The team are also developing a proposal to provide ongoing supervision via drop-in clinics for practitioners who work directly with this cohort of children. This approach has been found to be particularly successful in the delivery of the Emotional Literacy Support Assistants training for schools that has been delivered by educational psychologists in Lancashire for several years.

Finance

The current cost of this team is £253,905, however it is anticipated these costs would increase to £280,040 in 2022/23 with a 5% pay award and £294,042 in 2023/24 with the same pay award.

Sally Richardson (Head of Inclusion Service) was present to go through the report and requested the team to be funded by the High Needs Block, as the COVID fund will end in June 2023. A rapid response can be provided within a week to schools experiencing difficulties, or a consultation can be provided online by IEST Team.

There was discussion among members regarding the continuation of funding, since schools were also receiving COVID funds, but were asked to cope without it. The alternative member has informed us that their school has used the IEST Team services, which have been of great assistance and have made a significant impact. With the team's expertise, exemptions can be obtained which will result in a reduction of costs in the long run. It was asked for how long this team would be funded, for one year would not provide them with the necessary job security. Currently, all sectors are experiencing recruitment difficulties. The funding for this team has been agreed upon for two years, with further information to be brought to the forum, since members are eager to learn more about how it will benefit pupils and schools.

The Forum:

a) Noted the report.

b) Supported for IEST Team to be funded through High Needs block.

7. Commissioned places 2023/24

A further review of the commissioned places was requested by the high-needs block at the last working group and revised places were provided by Sally Richardson.

Alternative Provisions were reviewed with additional 39 places.

These additional places added were reviewed on averages from commissioned places in May 2022, January 2022 and October 2022 and the data pre-Covid was also taken into consideration. Whichever places numbers were higher was chosen to be in the proposed changes but was still capped at 15 places above the lower number. Moreover, PRUs headteachers were consulted where there were any changes in commissioning changes and supported the changes being proposed.

This methodology worked for a majority but not for all. Shaftesbury High School and Larches House School are not set on averages or COVID data but the PRUs headteachers were consulted and supported these lower commissioned places. Golden Hill was consulted on keeping it as 50. Additionally, Oswaldtwistle School, is at full capacity, therefore 95 commissioned places have remained.

Members will be aware that it costs £10,000 per commissioned place from the High Needs Block. The additional 39 places will equal to £390,000 + plus any top-up from HNB over a full academic year.

A formal request was received by the Inclusion Team from the Chair of Governors of Chadwick High School to review their commission numbers from 70 to 90. The new revised rate is 85, the formal request was written in a letter but is not appropriate to share this level of details. The school forum is asked to consider this formal request on behalf of the Inclusion Team.

The key issues highlighted from the letter to consider is that;

- The recent census data, the projected school roll for September 2022 (already full) and the rate at which Pupil Access colleagues continue to request places prove it.
- Chadwick is the lowest funded PRU in Lancashire.
- Chadwick has a very low PRU places to student population in the district.
- Chadwick is the only PRU to have more students on roll than are commissioned based on HNB data
- The number has been much higher than 70 in recent years. As a school we need to be able to accommodate the maximum number of students, not staff to the minimum. At times, the number of students is over 90. The ability to offer intervention to schools is now gone which is why so many PEX have been made in the last few months.

| Year | Commission | May census |
|---------|------------|------------|
| 2015/16 | 72 | |

| | | |
|---------|----|----|
| 2016/17 | 75 | |
| 2017/18 | 76 | 83 |
| 2018/19 | 90 | 90 |
| 2019/20 | 85 | 69 |
| 2020/21 | 75 | 91 |
| 2021/22 | 70 | 93 |
| 2022/23 | 70 | |

Increase alternative provision places from 4 to 25.

- The existing AP allocation of just 4 places for the district is ridiculously low, an historical level which has not been relevant or realistic for years
- The Chadwick has been highly successful in the range of AP options to prevent PEX
- With just 4 places available and pressure to admit PEX, AP can no longer be provided to any secondary schools in the district
- Chadwick is the only AP provider in the area.
- 25 places would allow the school to return to previous strengths

Furthermore, Sally Richardson looks at improving the methodology and approach to commissioning places. To review the methodology for commissioning PRU places in order to transition from the existing model to one that emphasizes outreach, a task and finish group is being proposed. It is likely that there will still be pupils, particularly older ones, where attempting to return them to mainstream schools may be more disruptive. However, ultimately, this will be the ultimate objective wherever possible. The next High Needs Block Working Group will be convened on 2 March 2023, at which time volunteers will be asked to participate in the groups' formation.

Representatives thanked Sally for reviewing Alternative Provisions and noted that in future years a more proactive approach will be taken when agreeing on commissioned places. It was discussed among members how assured places will ensure that schools will be able to recruit the right personnel. It has been explained by Sally that the revised places were based upon a methodology and that the maximum number of places was 15. It has been noted that Chadwick has been increased by 15 and that it is unfair to increase it by 20 without increasing it further for others. It has been pointed out by a member that Chadwick will experience increased pressure because of the closure of Wennington School. Additional member has added that they were not enrolling any pupils, therefore there should be no extra pressure on Chadwick. School forum has agreed on 851 commissioned places for 2023/24.

The Forum:

- Noted the report.**
- Supported proposed commissioned places for 2023/24.**

8. Emotional and Wellbeing Commission

A report was presented to the school form on the progress of the Emotional Health and Wellbeing commissioned service.

The demand for specialist Emotional, Health and Wellbeing Services has been on the rise nationally and locally for a number of years with the past year seeing a particular spike in demand following the impact of Covid-19 on children and young people's mental health.

Nationally, one in six young people are now estimated to have a mental health problem, an increase from one in nine young people prior to the pandemic.

Prevention and early identification is key in ensuring that children and young people have access to help and support as issues start to emerge and it is critical to capitalise on all opportunities to improve the continuity and outcomes for children and their families across health, education and social care.

The Schools Forum has supported the Early Support Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service for several years providing a funding contribution of £200k. Together with an annual contribution of £1.1m redirected from Tier 2/3 mental health services the service provides an appropriate pathway for children and young people at level 2, 3 and 4 on the Lancashire Continuum of Need who are experiencing escalating emotional health and wellbeing needs. The report included the actual analysis of the referrals and how in demand the service is.

The Forum:

- a) Noted the report.**
- b) Supported to continue to support this service in 2023/24.**

9. Pooled Resources Operational Plan – Update – "Reactive formulae contribution"

Paul Dunne, Building Surveying Manager and Paul Simpson, Principal Surveyor attended to present a presentation on Pooled Resources Operational Plan.

The PROp scheme is a non-profit making scheme offered to all Primary, Nursery, and Special Schools including PRU's and was introduced to support Head Teachers and Business managers in their responsibilities for building maintenance.

The scheme runs on a 3 yearly cycle and is delivered by a team of dedicated building professionals including surveyors and engineers who support governors on aspects of building maintenance in accordance with the "Good estate management for schools" document issued by the Department for Education.

The pooled resources element of the scheme relates to the unplanned REACTIVE maintenance pot which enables member schools to share the risk of repairs based on a fair and equitable contribution. The contribution is based on a formula linked to the numbers on roll and the type of school and ensures that member schools do not spend more on unpredictable reactive repairs during any financial year. The contributions for the pooled reactive pot were based on the formulae agreed at the Schools Forum 11th June 2013, this formulae has remained the same for the last 10 years without any increases.

The total contribution is typically £2.3 million per year, this figure being directly influenced by the number of schools and number of pupils on roll contributing to the scheme and the Design and Construction Service manages this total pot on behalf of all member schools.

This has largely been due to the success of good financial management, fluctuations in Building cost Indices over the years and regular competitive procurement exercises ensuring that we have a good supply of framework contractors. The latter has ensured that we have

been able to engage tried and tested contractors to support schools and where applicable undertake effective repairs at first visit.

Over the last three years there have been significant changes in economic markets post covid and in the wider economy and whilst school closures during early Covid acted as a buffer to increasing building costs. We are now forecasting a deficit in the current financial year and need to increase in the contribution levels to ensure that there is sufficient funding in the "pooled resource" to cover the likely costs of building repairs in future years.

We currently monitor and forecast expenditure on a monthly basis to ensure that contribution levels are sufficient for all member schools.

Reactive Contribution Calculations

Member schools pay a contribution based on their number on roll using the following formulae:

Primary schools = lump sum of £2,500 + number on roll x AWPU £18.76 rate
Number of schools in scheme are 265 and Contributions range from £2,781 to £14,318.

The Primary schools contribute a total of £1,653,459 for a total of 52,823 pupils which gives an average contribution of £6239 or £31.30 per pupil

Special / Secondary PRU School = lump sum of £5,000 + number on roll x AWPU £73.78 rate. Number of schools in scheme are 16 and Contributions range from £4418 to £17321.

Special/Secondary PRU Schools contribute a total of £276,118 for a total of 2116 pupils which gives an average contribution of £11044 or £130.49 per pupil.

Nurseries formulae = Number on roll x AWPU £33.66 rate

Number of nurseries in scheme are 16 and Contributions range from £639 to £5,500.
The Nursery schools contribute a total of £39,940 for a total of 1197 pupils which gives an average contribution of £2497 or £33.36 per pupil.

Historically, PROp pooled reactive spend has seen fluctuations year on year with deficits and surplus balances, overall, this has balanced out within each 3 year scheme period however in the present climate we don't anticipate this trend to continue and in the interests of good financial management we need to have this plan in place.

At current contribution levels we will be managing £2.3million for all schools, however we are already seeing building cost increases so we are proposing an increase of 10% on Reactive contributions to ensure that there are sufficient monies available.

The pooled resources enable collective responsibility to ensure that monies are available for all member schools to access for urgent unplanned reactive repairs. This enables timely repairs to be undertaken by our Framework contractors.

On average this would equate to an increase of £621 per school, however it should also be borne in mind that the vast majority of schools buy in to Service Agreement 1, which has Schools contributing to Service Contracts and Planned budgets and therefore the percentage increase as a total to their overall building maintenance contribution is circa 2-3%.

The discussion was elevated between members about value for money using LCC service. A member said that she had used a recommended provider from their cluster, and it was cheaper than the local authorities. The team has explained that they are ensuring to provide best service and they have all the insurances and policies in place. Continually testing the market for competitive contracts.

A member has raised that when contacting the service the wait to get correct person to visit school takes too long, which made the school look elsewhere. Paul Simpson, has suggested that there is a pattern that some schools will be leaving the agreement but than come back to it because they may not have the right excess in place with the private company.

The School Forum was asked to note that there will be an increase to the Pooled Reactive pot contribution and we will continue to closely monitor the position monthly and report back to this Forum on an annual basis. It was noted that the schools will have an option to stay in or opt out from the scheme. The team has a responsibility to manage and make sure that there is a right of money in the pot, which lead to increase now after 10 years. If there would not be enough money in the pot, school can become liable. School Forum has appreciated the information about the increase prior to it.

The Forum:

- a) **Noted the information.**

10. CONSIDERATION OF THE SCHOOLS BUDGET 2023/24

- a) **Schools Budget 2023/24**

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

- c) **Formal Forum Decisions relating to the Schools Budget 2023/24**

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

Information were presented from the report about the Schools Budget for 2023/24. This included information from the original report to the Forum and subsequent information from the Chairs' Working Group meeting held on 10 January 2023. 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.

| <u>Forecast Dedicated Schools Grant Income</u> <u>23/24</u> | Allocation (£m) | Additional Funding (£m) | Total DSG Allocation 2023/24 (£m) |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Schools Block | 924.602 | 31.0 | 955.602 |
| High Needs Block | 193.394 | | 193.394 |
| Early Years Block | 87.644 | | 87.644 |
| Central Schools Services Block | 6.81 | | 6.81 |
| Gross Total forecast Dedicated Schools Grant Income | 1,212.45 | 31.0 | 1,243.5 |
| The total deduction for national schools' non-domestic rates | -0.888 | | -0.888 |
| Total deductions for direct high-needs payments made by the ESFA | -9.314 | | -9.314 |

| | | | |
|--|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Net Total forecast Dedicated Schools Grant Income | 1,202.25 | 31.0 | 1,233.25 |
|--|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|

It was noted that 2023/24 figure is over £70m higher than the previous year. This increase includes the Supplementary grant being mainstreamed into our Allocation for 2023/24 and the additional Mainstream Schools Annual Grant for 2023/24.

This increase in funding is due to:

- Lancashire's share of the increased £2.3bn funding nationally made available by the Government.
- Mainstreaming of the Supplementary Grant into our total DSG Allocation.
- Lancashire's share of the increased £180m nationally for the Early Years Block.
- An increase in the overall number of pupils in Lancashire compared to 2022/23.

The Schools Budget proposals forecast a balanced Dedicated Schools Grant funding position in 2023/24, 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 2023/24, as set out below:

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Mainstream Schools Additional Grant Allocation | £31m |
| High Needs Additional Funding allocation | £8m |
| Total Additional Funding 23/24 | £39m |

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.

The Forum:

- Noted the report, including the 2023/24 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations and the budget proposals for each of the 4 funding blocks and the Schools Supplementary Grant allocation for 2023/24;**
- Noted the information from the Forum Chairs' Group meeting on 10 January 2023**
- Voted on the 2022/23 Schools Budget Proposals, as follows:**

Unanimously supported the Schools Block proposals, as follows:

- **Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) at 0.5%(As agreed on School Forum meeting held at 18 October 2022)**
- **No headroom within School Block to transfer funds to Early Years.**
- **Growth Fund allocation not being utilised with National Funding Formula Budgets.**
- **Confirm the use of the Minimum Pupil Funding (MPF) rates contained in the NFF for any new Growth Fund allocations from April 2023**
 - **Primary £4,405 per pupil**

- Secondary £5,715 per pupil
- Confirm that the DfE's NFF methodology should continue to be used as the Lancashire formula in 2023/24
- To transfer of circa £2.08m 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 (subject to receipt of final analysis of the consultation with schools)

Unanimously supported the High Needs Block proposals, as follows:

- Agreed on commissioned places.
- The historic commitments element transferred to the High Needs Block (from CSSB) to continue for;
 - 200K to Emotional Health and Wellbeing commissioned service
 - 150K to for the Multi-Agency safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- WPN by 3% increased to £5,330;
 - For Specific Factors Special School and PRU School Specific factors uplifted by 2% as in 2022/23
- The distribution of additional high needs funding at 3.4% to all Special Schools and PRUS.
 - Pass over the grant as per Department of Education guidance at 3.4%, but also include the WPN HNB element for Primary and Secondary schools, as well as the FE Colleges, following a similar process as last year but with additional consideration for Early Years settings for pupils with EHCP plans. Based on 2022/23 figures this would be circa £2.2 million (further modelling needed with 2023/24 figures) which still leaves potentially circa £2.5 million which will be discussed with relevant working groups to decide on how most effectively utilise this funding throughout the year.
- Inclusion Engagement Team cost of £294,042 in 2023/24
- To review intervention cap and bring report to next HNBWG

Unanimously supported the Early Years Block proposals, as follows:

- All other funding streams will be paid as the funding received.
- New hourly rate to be absorbed within Early Years Block
- No additional 4 pence funding from Schools Block but £0.04 pence from DSG reserves.
- Rates agreed for 2023/24 as follows;
- The passporting of other DfE EY funding increases to providers:
 - + £0.06 per hour 2-year-olds providing £5.63 per hour from April 2023.
 - + £0.27 per hour 3- and 4-year-olds providing £4.75 per hour from April 2023.
 - + £0.64 per hour for the maintained nursery schools supplementary funding providing £4.31 per hour from April 2023.
 - + £0.02 per hour for Early Years Pupil Premium providing £0.62 per hour from April 2023, equivalent to up to £353 per eligible child per year.

- + £28 per eligible child the disability access fund (DAF) per eligible child £828 per year from April 2023.
- The continuation of Deprivation Supplements on the existing methodology for 2023/24;
- 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 2023/24 to enable continued support for MASH and Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service;
- The proposals for the Central School Services Block in 2023/24, including uplifts for cost and demand led pressures.

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.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SCHOOLS BLOCK WORKING GROUP

A report was presented setting out the recommendations from the Schools Block Working Group held on 6 December 2022.

Steve Campbell the Chair of School Block Working Group was present to brief through the topics discussed in the working group.

On 6 December 2022, the Schools Block Working Group considered a number of reports, including:

i. Schools Forum School Block Membership

The Forum:

- a) Noted that it was covered in item 3.

ii. Schools Block Funding Arrangements 2023/24

Allocations were provided by Kirsty in the time of the working group, there was no additional information other than following Chancellor delivered his Autumn statement England's core schools budget will receive an additional £2.3 billion in 2023/24 and £2.3 billion in 2024/25.)

The Forum:

- a) Noted that final budget proposals were contained in the Schools Budget report at item 10.

iii. De-delegation Update

De- Delegation decisions were discussed and its outcomes, Aby Hardy has agreed to provide further information to the next School block Working Group.

The Forum:

- a) Noted the information.

iv.School Teaching and Support Staff Supply Reimbursement Scheme

Copy of the policy was provided as Appendix A as information were requested regarding policy, the Offer Letter will be available on the School Portal for schools to consider in the upcoming days.

Supply Scheme for 2023/24 will have;

1. COVID absences to be seen as normal sickness absence.
2. Schools may be allowed to enter the scheme part-way through the financial year at the discretion of the Authority, although any existing absences or maternity leave starting within nine months will not be covered. Any pre-existing absences will be subject to the excess period chosen by the school. Schools entering the scheme part-way through the year will be charged at the full-year premium. In addition, there will be an administration fee of £50.

School Block working group has recommended to increase 5 % on all elements to protect reserves funding. The Supply scheme position will be provided in June's meeting.

The Forum were asked to make a decisions;

- **increase by 5% on all elements (Charges and Reimbursement), to protect reserves funding as per SBWG recommendation or to increase by 5% on all elements excluding the lump sum.**

The Forum:

- a) **Noted the report and the information.**
- b) **Supported the recommendations of School Block Working Group to increase the 5% on all elements.**

v.Ukraine Funding

The feedback was passed on to the team that the deadline for completing these forms were short. The team should publish further information on next Education bulletin regarding what will be allocated.

Those schools that have applied for funding will receive funding from the Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 funds, if pupils are eligible, once Fusion is up and running. Funding has not yet been received for Quarters 3 and 4.

Funding will vary depending on the arrival date in the United Kingdom and the age of pupil.

Lancashire County Council is using some of this funding to resource centrally delivered services for these children and young people. Additionally, a portion of the funding will be allocated to the Equality and Diversity Team to provide support directly to schools. This will include resources, staff training and advice and some EAL tutoring for pupils (at no cost to schools with eligible pupils). Additionally, there is some funding for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) within this group.

| | Funding per Quarter (for Quarters 1 and 2) |
|----------------------|--|
| Early years (2 to 4) | £ 450.00 |
| Primary (5 to 11) | £ 822.50 |
| Secondary (12 to 18) | £ 1,094.50 |

Funding for quarters 3 and 4 will be announced in due course and may vary dependant on Department for Education guidance.

The Forum:

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

vi. Schools in Financial Difficulty

Kirsty Lister held a workshop where additional advice could be given. A School Finance budget workshop was presented on 29 November and 6 December 2022. Frequent asked questions will be reviewed and provided on the School Portal in upcoming weeks.

The Forum:

- a) **Noted the information.**

vii. Clawback Exemption Request

Two requests were discussed at the meeting and the working has recommended both request to be approved by the School Forum;

Request (1)

The primary school in question has saved funds in the past years towards providing a new learning space and before/after school club space on the school site.

Currently, they have more classes within the school and the space used over recent years is no longer available.

The original price of this was estimated to be £200,000 and therefore money was put aside for this project and the planning was to be submitted this term for a January-March installation date – all before the end of the financial year.

The school has saved £200,000 in this year's budget so they could purchase a modular unit to be used for their after-school club and an additional learning support space for Learning Mentors and parents/family courses.

Considering the long time, it has taken to submit prices for this, obtaining three quotes has taken much longer than usual. Due to increased materials and labour costs and the availability of these units, the current costs being quoted have exceeded the original estimation, which impacted their plans for this year and may be subject to clawback at the end of this year. The school in question is being currently quoted at £255,630 and asking for £200,000 to be exempt from clawback so the project could go ahead next year.

Request (2)

In December 2021 the school in question was granted permission to extend its age range to make provision for pupils from age 4 – 16. The primary building assigned to School for this provision will be constructed at the Standen Estate and will become the first 'all-through' school in the local authority. The new primary site is due to be handed over to the school on 18th August 2023 in readiness for the admission of the first reception class in September 2023.

This school is successful for some considerable time and was assessed as being 'Good' with outstanding features at the most recent Ofsted inspection (February 2020). At the heart of both the school's success to date and its future plans is a clear and coherent focus on reading.

Proposed Build Activity

The school was originally built in 1932 and although there have been many modifications since then, the basic design still largely reflects the building's age. The 'all-through' school will create new challenges but they are convinced that, building on our existing successes, a central focus on reading throughout the curriculum will be essential in creating the best provision for every pupil right through the school from Reception to Year 11. The current Learning Resources facility is old-fashioned, dysfunctional and inefficient and they are now seeking to completely redesign and rebuild this area such that it is efficient, inclusive and inspirational. This is a major remodelling project that will completely open the area up and provide a more modern and productive working environment for pupils right across the whole school spectrum, including the school's most vulnerable pupils. The refurbished LRC will comprise a learning support suite as well as reading, ICT, careers and teaching areas and a Languages Café. It is our belief that this change will be central to the school's improvement journey, its provision of an outstanding curriculum offer and therefore the future success of the all-through school.

The project is set to commence as soon as possible, in the new year. The designs are in the process of being finalised and contractors are being tendered for by their architects. The timeline of the project will vary, as the project will need to be worked around pupil activity in the school, but it is estimated to be around six to seven months, hence the need to carry forward the project funding into the new financial year.

As a consequence of this, this school have sought to increase their planned Revenue Reserves holding and may breach the 'clawback' threshold at 31 March 2023. It is also possible that some element of the costs associated with this project will be invoiced or legitimately accrued (thereby avoiding clawback) but this is uncertain right now.

The current construction cost estimated for the school is £486K.

The following items are excluded from the construction cost estimate and are outside the scope of the project:

- Canopy
- Fixtures, fittings, furniture, furnishings, loose fittings
- IT equipment and systems
- Upgrading electrical incoming service supply if required
- Service connections
- Professional fees
- Planning and Building Regulation Fees
- Inflation beyond the second quarter of 2023
- VAT

They anticipate the overall final costs associated with this project to exceed £500K. Although the secondary school requests for £500K to be exempt from clawback so the project could go ahead next year.

In order to support clawback exemptions at 31 March 2023, it was asked if the working group affirmatively support both requests. There was unanimous agreement among the members to recommend both to the School Forum meeting held on 12 January 2023.

The Forum:

- a) Noted the information and approved both requests to be exempt from the clawback.**

12. 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 29 November 2022.

Claire Thompson the Chair of High Needs Block Working Group was present to brief through the topics discussed in the working group.

On 29 November 2022, the High Needs Block Working Group considered a number of reports, including:

- i. Lancashire Hospital Education Service: Annual Report: Academic Year 2021/22**

A information were presented from the report by Audrey Swann, this report was in the papers at the School forum meeting held on 18 October 2022. The working appreciated Audrey attending the meeting and presenting the information.

The Forum:

- a) Noted the information.**

- ii. High Needs Block Commissioned Places 2023/24**

Members were concerned that commissioned places do not cover the actual number of pupils. They are expecting to gain more pupils compared with commissioned places. If the commissioned places were reviewed and increased, it would aid special schools with planning ahead and recruiting specialist teachers to meet the needs of their pupils.

The exclusion rate has decreased significantly since 2020/21, but this is due to COVID since there were fewer students in the school. As a result, the current data make it difficult to assess the position of the commissioned places. An argument was made that the COVID impact would be felt now more than during the pandemic. Inclusion services has review the data before COVID, to change the commissioned places. This was covered in item 7.

The Forum:

- a) Noted the information.**

- iii. SEND Sufficiency Update**

Sally proposed that Inclusion and Engagement Support Team to continue and be funded from HNB. The information about this team were discussed under item 6.

The Forum:

- a) Noted the information.**

- iv. High Needs Block Funding 2023/24**

No new information was available at the time of the meeting as still we were waiting for DfE guidance. Allocation are covered in item 10.

The Forum:

a) Noted the information.

v. High Needs Deficit Management Plan

Presentation was delivered by Kirsty Lister regarding forecast of deficit in the High Needs. Following chairman's meeting on Tuesday a High Needs Forecast will be reviewed in future high needs working groups.

The Forum:

b) Noted the information.

vi. Supported Internships - Section 14 grant funding

Kirsty Lister informed there will be an additional grant for a Supported Internship over the next three years. However, LA is not sure how and when it will come through. The working group will be informed once more information is received from the DfE.

The Forum:

a) Noted the information.

13.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 1 December 2022.

Phillippa Perks the Chair of Early Years Block Working Group was present to brief through the topics discussed in the working group.

On 1 December 2022, the Early Years Working Group considered a number of reports, including:

i. Early Years Sector Challenges – Update Report

This report provides an overview of some of the issues currently affecting the Early Years Sector. Staff recruitment and retention, funding, costs, and training are among the topics discussed in the report.

The report has been written by Philippa Perks the Chair of the Early Years Block Working Group and Andrew Cadman Interim Head of Early Years.

Additionally, Phillipa has informed the School Forum that Andrew Cadman contract has end in December and that the members of the working group are concerned that there is no plan in place to replace him or extend his contract.

It was added that Sapphire Murray (Specialist Teaching Senior Manager, Inclusion Team) has agreed on becoming a standing member in future meeting, which the group is pleased with.

The Forum:

a) Noted the information.

ii. Early Years Block Funding 2023/24

No new information was available at the time of the meeting as still we were waiting for DfE guidance apart from NLW which was discussed, new rates can be found in Item 10.

The chair has thanked the school forum for approving the request of the £1 million from DSG reserves for 2023/24 to assist the EY sector with its current challenges.

The Forum:

a) Noted the information.

iii. MNS Deficit Summary and PVI Finance Update

Members have requested that Kirsty Lister meet with all MNS headteachers and a meeting was scheduled on 7 February 2023.

The Forum:

a) Noted the information.

14. Unscheduled Urgent Chairmans meeting

Information about a decision taken using the Forum's urgent business procedure was included in the Chairmans Working Group.

During meeting discussion was also held regarding the lack of time available for the portal to gather more views from people on this urgent matter. This matter needs to be decided immediately, which is why this meeting was held. Particularly, since schools were most busy before they close for the Christmas holidays, there would be very limited input, if any. In addition, the School Block Working Group on 6 December 2022 discussed how few people have used or engaged with the portal for recent consultations. The operational guidance support that an appropriate group can decide on behalf of the forum. Therefore, with all the Chairs' support, it was decided for LCC to follow the same pay increase method for schools via the LCC payroll. It was agreed that decisions from this meeting will be shared with members via email and it was shared on 12 December 2022

The Forum:

b) Noted the information.

15. FORUM CORRESPONDENCE

There was no Forum related correspondence received since the last meeting.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

School forum letter – On Chairmans working group held on 10 January Chairs were concerned about consistency in roles of Principal Accountant and Head of Service within School Finance Team. The letter has been drafted and once consulted with other chairs will be sent over to the Cabinet members.

17.DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted the next scheduled Forum meeting will be held at 10.00am Thursday 16 March 2023. Arrangements for the meeting will be confirmed in due course.
