

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

The meeting is to be held at 10.00 am on Thursday 16 March 2023 via Teams;

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A G E N D A

1. Apologies for the Absence

To note any apologies for the absence.

2. Substitute Members

To welcome any substitute Members.

3. Forum Membership (Attached)

To note the Forum membership report.

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting (Attached)

To agree on the minutes of the last meeting held on 12 January 2023.

5. Matters Arising

To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the 12 January 2023 meeting that are not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

6. Oracle Fusion

John Morrissy (Director of Organisational Development and Change) will attend to answer queries from School Forum for Oracle Fusion.

7. Admissions/Attendance

Aby Hardy (Head of Education Improvement) to present new processes.

8. Inclusion Engagement Support Team (IEST)

Sally Richardson (Head of Service Inclusion) will attend to provide a verbal update.

9. 2023/24 Budget and NNDR Issue

Kirsty Lister (Principal Accountant) to deliver a presentation.

10. Clawback Suspension Requests (Attached)

To consider clawback suspension requests.

11. Recommendations from the Schools Block Working Group (Attached)

To consider the recommendations from the Schools Block Working Group meeting held on 9 March 2023.

12. Recommendations from the High Needs Block Working Group (Attached)

To consider the recommendations from the High Needs Block Working Group meeting held on 2 March 2023.

13. Recommendations from the Early Years Block Working Group (Attached)

To consider the recommendations from the Early Years Block Working Group meeting held on 7 March 2023.

14. Recommendations from the Chairs' Working Group (Attached)

To consider a verbal update of the recommendations from the Chairs' Working Group meeting held on 27 January 2023 and 10 February 2023.

15. Recommendations of the Apprenticeship Levy Steering Group (Attached)

To consider the recommendations from the Apprenticeship Levy Steering Group from 10 February 2023.

16. Forum Correspondence (Attached)

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

17. Any Other Business

- **Supply Scheme for Multi-Academy Trust.**

18. Date of Future Meetings (Attached)

To note that the next scheduled Forum meeting will be held at 10.00 am Tuesday 4 July 2023. Arrangements for the meeting will be confirmed in due course.

School Forum is asked to approve dates for 2023/24 meetings.

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

Date of meeting 16 March 2023

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 Angela Aspinwall-Livesey, Keith Wright, Kirsty Lister and Sylwia Krajewska for their contributions to the Forum;**
- c) Welcome Millie Dixon and Matthew Dexter to the School Forum.**

Background

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

Primary School Headteacher Representative

Since the last meeting, one primary school headteacher have resigned from the Forum.

Angela Aspinwall-Livesey and Keith Wright has resigned from their position as Primary school headteacher representatives on the Forum.

We are currently holding an election for one Primary School Headteacher vacancy. We will advertise the second vacancy shortly.

The Forum will wish to thank Angela and Keith for their contribution to the Forum.

Clerk to the Schools Forum

Sylwia Krajewska is leaving the post of School Forum Clerk. Millie Dixon has been appointed as her replacement and is taking the role of Forum Clerk.

Kirsty Lister (Principal Accountant) has been offered a position closer to home, which will lead her to leave her current position. Matthew Dexter has been appointed as her replacement.

The forum wishes to welcome Millie and Matt to their new posts.

The forum wishes to thank Kirsty and Sylwia for their contribution to forum.

Annual Membership Review

On 8 March 2023, 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 2023.

Responses have been requested by **Friday 1st April 2023**.

Arrangements will be made to fill any vacancies that arise from this process, in addition to the 1 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 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
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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.

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

Date of meeting 16 March 2023

Item No: 10

Title of Item: Clawback Suspension Requests

Executive Summary

This report provides information about requests for a clawback suspension due to issues relating from implementing Oracle Fusion.

Recommendations

The Forum is asked to:

- a) Note the report;**
- b) Express any views about the requests for a clawback suspension 2022/23;**
- c) Ratify clawback position for 2022/23.**

Background

At the Forum's meeting in July 2022, the School Balances and Clawback Policy for 2022/23 was discussed and it was agreed that clawback should be implemented again at the end of March 2023 on excessive revenue balances.

A meeting of Chairs was held on 10 February 2023 to discuss a temporary suspension of clawback, and the minutes of this meeting can be found under Item 14. The Chairs decided not to suspend clawback as it will apply for the entire year and schools build up balances over recent years due to clawback being suspended.

Recently school forum has received further request to consider for the clawback to be suspended and School Forum is asked for their views on this. Please see below;

Email (1) from a Nursery

A nursery has written that they would benefit amount of £10,000 to be exempt (Reserves 31 March £84,000), due to implantation to Oracle Fusion.

"Clarity and justification - 1) – Unable to spend with 4 major suppliers (Cosy, TTS, Hope and YPO) as our account has been suspended due to invoices not being paid by LCC since November 2022 due to the implementation of fusion.

2) Gas, Elec and Water charges have not been received since Aug22. While our Finance officer has provided estimates for these based on price rises given by the Energy Team I'm concerned the estimates may be too high following information I have looked at on the Sigma system. When these charges are finally made onto the oracle system there will be no time to spend further. LCC charges at least should be made in a timely manner if LCC are imposing clawback.

- *Estimated reserves at 31 March - £84,000*

This is not just request for exemption. I want to ensure the decision to reinstate clawback this year has been made knowing all the current facts that are affecting spending at this time. Nursery schools particular y have difficulty monitoring due to the termly nature of the funding we receive. The above only makes it harder. If any more information is needed, please contact myself or my finance officer".

Email (2) from a Primary

"I would like to raise my concern about the impact on the financial year-end due to the disruptions to our financial year caused by the transition to ORACLE fusion and associated technical issues at LCC with this transfer.

This transition has caused enormous uncertainty and disruption to our budget management and forecasting and has provided uncertainty in terms of working effectively to our end of year projections.

Because of this difficulty, It has been significantly challenging in terms of ensuring an accurate and efficient year-end.

This will result in a number of schools, including our own, potentially facing unnecessary financial clawback which would otherwise have been avoided.

I will be urging my Governors to raise this as a concern with LCC and if required will be seeking further independent advice if we are financially impacted by the situation. "

Email (3) from a Primary

"I am just wondering if clawback for this year is still going to be implemented. With all of the problems with Oracle Fusion and the gas and electricity invoices still not coming through this is leaving us in a really difficult position.

At this point in the year, I am usually in a position where I have a good idea of what my outturn will be. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing problems we are facing I have no idea where our finances are at. I haven't had an electricity bill since August. I have chased this numerous times with the energy team and there is a problem with my account billing. I can see on Sigma that there are invoices for gas but they have still not come out on Oracle. I also send in meter readings every month and I know that these haven't been used for my bills, again leaving me in a position where I am struggling to work out my end of year balances.

The wage rises only going through in November and December have also caused issues with knowing our financial position.

This is the first time I have ever felt really uneasy about our financial situation. I cannot advise my headteacher nor the finance committee at our governors meeting where we stand. I know throughout the year we knew we were going to be near clawback but through no fault of our own I don't know if we will hit this or not this year."

Please can you tell me if clawback is still going to be applicable?"

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM
Date of meeting 16 March 2023

Item No 11

Title: Recommendations of the Schools Block Working Group

Appendix A refers

Executive Summary

On 9 March 2023, the Schools Block Working Group considered a number of reports/topics, including:

- Schools Block Funding 2023/24
- School Improvement Function
- Inclusion Hub Funding 2023/24
- Clawback (Appendix A Attached)
- National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

The Forum is asked to:

- a) **Note the report from the Schools Block Working Group held on 9 March 2023;**
- b) **Ratify the Working Group's recommendations.**

Background

On 9 March 2023, 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 Funding 2023/24

This report provided updates around the finalisation and publication of the 2023/24 Schools Block Budget, and other brief information about future funding arrangements.

At the Schools Forum on 12 January 2023, decisions and recommendations about the 2023/24 Schools Budget were agreed.

In connection with the Schools Block, the Forum unanimously supported the 2023/24 Schools Block proposals, including:

- The DfE's National Funding Formula (NFF) methodology should continue to be used as the Lancashire formula for 2023/24;
- The Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) be set at +0.5% for 2023/24, mirroring the National Funding Formula;
- Growth Fund allocation not being utilised with National Funding Formula Budgets.
- 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 o Secondary £5,715 per pupil
- the 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;

On 19 January 2023, the County Council's Cabinet formally approved the Schools Budget for 2023/24.

The Authority Proforma Tool (APT), setting out the agreed Schools Block proposals for 2023/24, was then submitted to the ESFA for compliance checking ahead of the 20 January 2023 deadline.

Some elements of the Schools Budget require compliance checking by the ESFA and approval was received on 20 February 2023.

Budget statements for 2023/24 were prepared and issued on 22 February 2023.

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 2023/24, 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 2023/24 allocations should be notified to the LA in March 2023.

The LA did not therefore include an indicative PPG statement with the budget notifications. Once we receive the confirmed 2023/24 PPG allocations from DfE, we will inform schools.

Mainstream Schools Annual Grant 2023/24

The 2022 Autumn Statement announced that the core schools' budget will increase by over £2bn in 2023 to 2024 financial year, over and above totals announced at the Spending Review 2021.

In the 2023 to 2024 financial year, mainstream schools will be allocated additional funding through the mainstream school's additional grant (MSAG). This is in addition to schools' allocations through the schools national funding formula.

The MSAG will allocate funding to state-funded mainstream schools only. In addition to the MSAG, local authorities have been allocated £400 million in additional highneeds funding for 2023/24, which will be included in the high-needs national funding formula allocations.

The MSAG will fund the following providers, for the 5 to 16-year-old age range:

- primary and secondary maintained schools
- primary and secondary academies and free schools
- all-through maintained schools
- all-through academies
- city technology colleges

School-level allocations of the MSAG for the full 2023 to 2024 financial year will be published in May 2023.

The funding rates for the MSAG 2023/24 consist of the following 3 elements, which are based on factors already in the schools national funding formula:

- a basic per-pupil rate (with different rates for primary, key stage 3 and key stage 4);
- a lump sum paid to all schools, regardless of pupil numbers;
- a per-pupil rate for pupils who are recorded as having been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years (FSM6), with different rates for primary and secondary pupils.

The additional High Needs Allocation for 2023/24 has been applied as a 4.6% increase to the funding floor and proxy factor in the High Needs NFF Allocations

Lancashire Additional funding allocations for 2023/24 are: Mainstream Schools Additional Grant Allocation	£31m
High Needs Additional Funding allocation	£8m
Total Additional Funding 23/24	£39m

Additional High Needs Funding 2023/24

Lancashire has also been allocated supplementary grant funding for the High Needs Block. Following discussions with Forum, it was agreed that the High Needs Supplementary Grant would be calculated in two parts:

A payment to all Special Schools and PRU's as per the DfE guidance and conditions of grant. Details of the allocations for Special's and PRU's have been shared in your budget letter which was published via the portal week commencing 20 February.

A further allocation of a WPN element of additional high needs funding for Primary and Secondary schools, as well as the FE Colleges, will follow a similar process as last year but

with additional consideration for Early Years settings for pupils with EHCP plans. This is currently estimated at £493 and will be multiplied by the total WPN on the May 2022 SEN data. Based on 2022/23 figures this would be circa £2.2 million.

This still leaves potentially circa £2.5 million yet to be allocated and views are required on how most effectively this funding can be utilised through the financial year.

High needs supplementary allocations will be finalised in 2023/24 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.

Kirsty Lister (Principal Account) informed members that a certain aspect of the Schools Budget were subject to ESFA compliance checks. There is a small overspend in the school budget of £380k, which amounts to approximately 0.02% of the budget. Future meetings with the forum will examine and consult on how to avoid being in this position for the next year; at this time, it will be covered by the DSG reserves.

Additionally, the group noted a recommendation of the High Needs Block to form a Task and Finish Group to decide what happens to the remaining funding of £2.5 million. Members were advised to send an email to the school forum or contact their chairs if they have any proposals that they would like to present at the meeting to be held on 23 March 2023. As recommended by the HN group, the School Forum will be asked if they support the decision to be made by the chairs on the 16 March.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Expressed views relating to the information provided.**

2. School Improvement Function

Aby Hardy (Head of Education Improvement) attended the meeting to provide a verbal update.

In previous years, the service had a school improvement monitoring and brokering grant, but the government removed the funds and School Forum was provided with the option to delegate the service for 2023/24.

For School Improvement Function de-delegation 2023/24, the members were reminded that Primary, PRU's, and Nurseries had opted in, while Specials and Secondary did not. Currently, Aby is working on a handbook about the School Improvement Function which will be available to schools to ensure that schools are clear about what is available and the differences between sectors that choose to participate and those that do not.

Nurseries might be asked to contribute a little for certain services since they were offered different amounts for contributions and selected lowest range. The Monitoring Intervention Team (MIT) will be provided free of charge to other sectors that chose to delegate it. The sectors that did not opt in will still receive statutory visits and guidance but will be offered the MIT services at an additional cost. In addition, the handbook will define what is meant by a school being vulnerable as it may vary from school to school. However, things such as the need for improvement, the challenges, or assistance with the leadership will be considered.

The handbook will provide clarity for members who will vote again for the delegations in October.

The working group:

- a) **Noted the information.**
- b) **Supported the development of a Handbook to be available for clarity.**

3. Inclusion Hub Funding 2023/24

Following a consultation with schools in the autumn term 2022, the Forum again voted to de-delegate funding for primary inclusion hubs in 2023/24. The de-delegation cost was held at the 2022/23 rate of £11.00 per pupil for maintained primary schools and generates circa £1m for inclusion hub activities in Lancashire.

The distribution methodology has used pupil numbers and a deprivation factor to calculate the allocations for each district. For 2023/24, it is proposed to continue this methodology and the table below provides information on the allocations calculated for each district from April 2023:

District	NOR (90%) £	Deprivation (10%) £	Total £
01	96,400	11,451	107,851
02	69,807	7,505	77,312
04	43,845	3,796	47,641
06	126,624	15,320	141,944
07	77,774	7,104	84,878
08	78,257	8,289	86,546
09	90,421	7,802	98,223
11	104,571	11,347	115,918
12	75,295	10,857	86,152
13	80,086	10,785	90,871
14	56,919	5,743	62,662
	899,999	99,999	999,998

District allocations are very similar to those for 2022/23, with 3 districts receiving marginally higher allocations and 8 slightly lower allocations. The largest change for a single district is a circa £2.8k 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 2023 about de-delegation options for 2024/25.

Matthew Dexter (Senior Accountant) provided a brief overview of the report and reminded members that the Inclusion Hub applies only to primary only and is funded from the School Block Budget. As well, members were asked whether they supported the current methodology of carrying forward the surplus, as the Inclusion Hubs were underspent in recent years.

All members agreed to continue the methodology, and one member has asked if Finance Officers are aware of the balances that hubs currently hold. The data is not available at this time but could be shared at the next meeting when it is available.

The Working Group;

a) Noted the report;

b) Supported to continue the methodology used for Inclusion Hubs.

4. Clawback

In July 2022, the Forum considered the School Balances and Clawback Policy for 2022/23 and agreed that clawback should be reintroduced on excessive revenue balances at March 2023. A copy of the agreed policy is provided at Appendix A.

Clawback Exemption Requests 2022/23

Following notification of the Forum's decision, the request has been received from a Lancashire primary school requesting an exception to the policy at March 2023.

Request (1)

The primary in question is in an area of higher than average economic deprivation. The most recent OFSTED inspection report rated the school as 'Good' but this was in 2018 and they are expecting to be inspected again in the year ahead. It is important to note that the school is in a 'falling-roll' situation.

It is evident that the classroom infrastructure needed significant uplift as the existing infrastructure was dated and more importantly, negatively impacting on the quality of teaching and learning. School has planned to refurbish all 12 classrooms.

The school is very conscious of the falling role and building uplift issues, and they have been actively seeking to keep funding in Reserves to enable them to mitigate the risk (falling roll) and develop the project strategy (building uplift).

Proposed Build Activity

For some considerable time, school have been working with their representative in the LCC/Property team District Building Surveyor who has identified a serious surveying risk which has resulted in the work being suspended, but school did refurbish 4 classrooms, last year after summer term. The surveyor has identified that the reliability of the ground floor structure requires further investigation –'humps and hollows forming within the ground floor construction', which has suspended work being completed on further 8 classrooms.

At the time of writing, school is still waiting for clarification of what the problem is, how it will be resolved and whether we will be required to contribute to any remedial works.

As time continues to pass, it is clear that supplier prices continue to incrementally increase and they have taken the opportunity to source an updated quote for the work they plan from Glendale - this comes to £71.4k (excluding VAT for 8 classrooms). The school is concerned about the financial implications of the flooring structural problems and whether the resolution will result in the school being expected to contribute to the cost of works. Conscious that their project will be delayed for an unknown timeframe, prices continuing to increase, and potential costs required for flooring work, we are working on the assumption that £100k needs to be set-aside. The investigation of floor as seen on the picture of the classroom will costs £2856, but they are waiting for a contractor to assess it, to identify further costs and if other classrooms would need the investigation carried out.



Request to Schools Forum

The primary hereby requests that an exemption is allowed to carry-forward an additional £100k above the allowable Revenue Reserves threshold. The school will be grateful if members would confirm their decision on this matter as soon as is practically possible. The school has provided further information for their 3 years forecasting as if they would not receive the exemption, they could not be able to finish the project in upcoming years, as 2024/25 they expect to be in deficit.

NOR forecast;

Updated Forecast	Longer Term Impact	
2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
347	330	311

Budget Forecast;

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
In Year Surplus/Deficit	-£116,343	-£87,691	-£138,851	-£251,776
Surplus/ (Deficit) Brought Fwd	£383,621	£383,621	£295,930	£157,079
Estimated Balance Carried Forward at 31st March	£267,278	£295,930	£157,079	-£94,697

The school is in communication with HR about commencing a staffing restructure to reduce overall staffing costs in future years.

Request (2)

The primary school in question is requesting £40,748 to be exempt for 2022/23, which is the quote evidenced from Versa.

The planned project is to improve the current outdoor learning area for our EYFS children in line with the revised framework by installing a new bespoke canopy that will fall in line with the existing school building to enhance the children's outdoor learning experience.

After obtaining quotations from 3 different companies the school have decided to go with Versa who are able to meet the school needs. Unfortunately, on awarding the contract to Versa, they are unable to complete the project before the financial year end. Whilst the work that will be carried out is outdoors there is an old (20years+) steel canopy that needs to be disposed of and Versa will require 3 weeks for completion to include dismantle and disposal. However, to minimise disruption to the children school have asked if most of this work can be done during a school holidays period such as Easter or May half term. Versa already have jobs booked in for Easter and therefore it leaves the next nearest holiday of May to complete the works. The proposed start date of the works will be Monday 15th May with completion during the half term holiday ending on Friday 2nd June. Currently, final measurements have taken place and drawings are being produced and agreed with structural engineers.

The existing canopy no longer meets the requirements of the school and does not fit in with the school plan to develop the EYFS area (internal and external). The current canopy is too small for use (they are a double form entry primary with 60 children in the early years classes alone). The current steel framework blocks internal windows to the EYFS toilets that cannot be opened and as the canopy itself is dark colour in colour, the EYFS classrooms internally are dark, dismal and unattractive. Over the years the flashing that attached the canopy to the external wall has come away and 'weathered' creating a gap above the door, this means that when it is raining or particularly bad weather the outdoor learning area cannot be used.

In support of this request, the Headteacher and School Business Manager are both newly appointed (both starting their employment on 1st January 2023). At the time of their appointments, all staff had been awarded pay rises that due to unforeseen circumstances were not able to be budgeted for and then coupled with the rise in energy costs, the decision was made not to go ahead with a project the funds were saved for (Large Kitchen Project), as it was felt there was too much financial risk involved, of putting the school in a deficit position with current expenses increases. This planned project was due to cost in excess of £200k and was to move the commercial kitchen from the current KS2 building into the KS1 building. As a result of this when SBM started in January was asked to obtain quotes for a new canopy as it was known at this point that school needs use their save-up funds to improve schools environment.

Whilst school informs that they are doing their very best to ensure 'ongoing' orders are invoiced and any outstanding works are completed and invoiced before the deadline next week, their current estimated reserves are between £320k - £330k. The primary school have initiated an IT order to reduce this figure but as the reserves are only estimated (they are still waiting for their energy costs to be processed – which is linked to a fusion problem rather than anything else, as they are struggling to upload invoices) school is asking that School Forum would consider the cost of the new bespoke canopy to be exempt from clawback for this financial year.

Moving forward, primary school has stated that they are very much looking forward to working with a new budget that will be completely in our control and plans are already in place to ensure we will not be in this position next year.

Chairmans meeting

This report further provided the group with decision made by latest meeting held by Chairs on 10 February 2023. The group was presented with the minutes of the meeting. The meeting was held to consider a clawback suspension due to request received. However, clawback was not suspended because it will apply for the entire year and some schools have accumulated balances over the past few years as clawback was suspended due to COVID.

It is important to note that the final outturn position against schools delegated budgets at 31 March 2022 was an underspend of £5.173m. This meant that school balances had increased by £5.173m in 2021/22, to a total of £95.325m.

As a result of recent meetings surrounding clawback, it was noted that there was no deadline or a clear indication of the steps that need to be taken in order to review the request. During this meeting, it was discussed how schools and the authority would benefit from a deadline and guidance on what is expected to be submitted as part of the request. School Forum will be asked to review additional information below to be added to clawback policy 2023/24;

"Applying for Clawback Exemption

To apply for clawback, please email schoolsforum@lancashire.gov.uk

The deadline for requests to be reviewed is 31 October.

The schools should provide details following details;

- School Number and Name
- What is the planned project including dates for start and completion of the project
- Details of the quote (Evidence provided)
- Amount you are requesting to be exempt from clawback for one year
- Clarity and justification for the project
- Estimated reserves at 31 March

Depending on the school type the request will be reviewed by appropriate working groups.

The team will be working on a template that will be available electronically, to improve this process."

Request (1)

During the meeting, members discussed the school's forecasted financial decision and were pleased to learn that the school is implementing a plan for future deficits. As a result of the working group's recommendation, the primary has been exempt from clawback 2022/23.

Request (2)

The members fully supported the request 2, to be exempt from clawback in 2022/23

Applying for Clawback Exemption

The additional proposed guidance has opened a discussion among members about how schools should provide the amount of clawback they are subjected to, their NOR, whether they receive Capital Funding and whether they receive any assistance from Pooled Services. At the next School forum meeting on 16 March, members will be asked to consider this proposal.

The Working Group :

- a) **Noted the information;**
- b) **Approved clawback exemptions for 2022/23 for primary schools;**
- c) **Supported Chairs decision about clawback request suspension;**
- d) **Supported changes to a clawback policy in 2023/24, with additional amendments.**

5. National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

Kirsty Lister provided a verbal update on NNDR and informed the group that she had been contacting ESFA regarding the transition to the new NNDR process. Consequently, the rates would not be included in the NFF, and the La would provide the DfE with the latest bill and receive funding accordingly. The DfE currently provides funding for rates, but because they are not based on the most recent data and with current inflation there is a delay in receiving the correct funding. However, the county requires all council districts to agree to and follow this new process, as it costs LCC £1 million to not be part of this new process at this time.

The working group:

- a) **Noted the information.**
- b) **Supported for LCC to move to the new NNDR process.**

The Forum is asked to ratify working group recommendations.

School Balances and Clawback Guidance 2022/23

This guidance applies to school balances at 31 March 2023

Guideline Balances

The Authority's current maximum guideline balance is:

- 12% of Consistent Financial reporting (CFR) income for all phases of maintained school *(It is suggested that the 12% guideline figure is not seen as a target);*
- A £75,000 minimum balance threshold will be applied. *(This has been increased from £60,000 for 2022/23 taking into account inflation over the years since the last time that the minimum value was raised. This will provide smaller schools with a larger level of allowable balance as a protection against future costs pressures).*

Clawback of "excess balances"

The Authority's clawback arrangements are:

- A clawback rate of 50% is to be applied to any balance above the guideline in the first year a school exceeds the guideline (after adjusting for exemptions). ;
- A clawback rate of 100% is to be applied to any balance in excess of guideline where the guideline has been breached for two or more consecutive years (after adjusting for exemptions). *(No 100% clawback rate will be applied at March 2023, as clawback was suspended at March 2022).*

Exemptions from clawback

The Authority shall make the following deductions from the school's actual balance before applying clawback:

- Funds accumulated by schools where there is a contractual agreement, as part of a grant allocation or dual use agreement, for facilities to be replaced on a fixed basis (i.e. an all weather pitch) will continue to be exempt from clawback. Conditions of this exclusion are:
 - The amount excluded cannot exceed the total cost of replacing the facility committed in the contract/agreement;
 - The exclusion will only be allowed for a period equivalent to the stated replacement timetable for the facility and will be subject to retrospective clawback if no replacement is funded or if the replacement is at a lower value than estimated;

- Schools will be required to submit relevant supporting documentation relating to the terms of the contract or grant, including evidence of replacement conditions and also estimated costs.
- Any funding received in advance that is funded on an academic year basis to schools by the DfE or other Government department will have 5/12 this exempt from clawback. Schools will be required to submit relevant supporting documentation relating to the government allocation, including appropriate evidence of distribution timescales;
- Funding allocations that are notified to schools late in the financial year, where schools could not reasonably have considered the allocation in their financial planning for the year. Late allocations are defined as allocations notified to schools after 1 January each financial year. Allocations that are notified to schools before the 1st January of the financial year, but where the funding is received at a later date, would not qualify under this exemption;
- Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) allocations are specifically excluded from the clawback calculation. Schools are asked to ensure that the relevant capital accounting codes are used for DFC income and expenditure, to guarantee that this funding is identifiable and able to be excluded from year end revenue balances and the clawback calculation;
- No further clawback exemptions will be allowed.

What is Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) Income?

CFR Income is defined by the Department for Education in the consistent financial reporting (CFR) framework

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/consistent-financial-reporting-framework-cfr>

You will have seen your CFR income on several documents but you may not have known it by this description.

You will have seen it on:

- Your financial outturn statement - it is the total line labelled "Revenue Income". This will be the sum of lines I01 to I18D on the outturn statement:
 - This is the figure that will be used to calculate the guideline but as funding and income will change during the year this figure will not be known until the outturn statements have been produced following the end of the financial year.
 - It does not include "Capital Income" codes CI01-CI04
- On your submitted income and expenditure form – it is the total line labelled "Total Income Revenue". It does not include any balances brought forward.
 - This is not used to calculate the guideline but it is your estimate of your CFR income and may be used as your estimate of the guideline. Please note if you revise your estimates of income in the year then you would need to revise your estimate of the guideline figure.

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

Date of meeting 16 March 2023

Item No 12

Title: Recommendations of the High Needs Block Working Group

Appendix A refers

Executive Summary

On 2 March 2023, the High Needs Block Working Group considered a number of reports/topics, including:

- High Needs Block Budget 2023/24
- High Needs Supplementary Grant 2023/24
- Inclusion Hub Funding 2023/24
- High Needs Block Monitoring Forecast 2022/23 (**Appendix A Attached**)
- SEND Strategy Update
- Inclusion Fund Update
- Clawback

Recommendations

The Forum is asked to;

- a) Note the report from the High Needs Block Working Group held on 2 March 2023;**
- b) Ratify the Working Group's recommendations.**

Background

On 2 March 2023, 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:

1. High Needs Block Budget 2023/24

There were decisions and recommendations about the 2023/24 Schools Budget made at the Schools Forum on 12 January 2023.

Forum members unanimously supported the High Needs Block proposals for 2023/24, including:

- Agreeing on an increase in 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).
- Increasing the Weighted Pupil Numbers (WPN) rate across all school and FE settings by 3% with additional £626 (of WPN element of High Needs Block Supplementary Grant from 2022/23) 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 (for following 2 years with yearly review)

On 19 January 2023, the County Council's Cabinet formally approved the Schools Budget for 2023/24.

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 2023/24, 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 2023/24 allocations should be notified to the LA in March 2023.

The LA did not therefore include an indicative PPG statement with the budget notifications. Once we receive the confirmed 2023/24 PPG allocations from DfE, LA will inform schools.

The topic of planning for this allocation has been brought up by a member. Previously, the LA provided indicative statements that were a year behind. However, the LA will provide actual statements as soon as allocations are confirmed by the Department for Education. In meantime, schools can plan with local knowledge for their 2023/24 budgets.

A member has requested a table with the Banding and related WPN figures, which will be circulated once it is available.

The Working Group;

a) Noted the report;

b) Expressed views on the information provided.

2. High Needs Supplementary Grant 2023/24

At the Schools Forum on 12 January 2023, information was provided about the Mainstream Schools Supplementary Grant.

The Government has announced £1.451bn nationally for 2023/24 in the form of 'Mainstream Schools Additional Grant'. The authority share is, indicatively, £31m and the grant will be allocated to mainstream schools and academies. School level allocations are expected from the DfE in spring 2023.

Within the additional £2bn for 2023/24, an extra £400m was announced nationally for High Needs. The authority will receive an additional £8m of High Needs additional DSG funding included within the published DSG allocations Part of this additional High Needs funding must be used to allocate an additional 3.4% to special and AP schools and academies, as per the 2023/24 DSG conditions of grant.

High needs supplementary allocations will be finalised in 2023/24 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.

Lancashire Schools Supplementary Grant allocations for 2023/24 are set out below:

Mainstream Schools Additional Grant allocation	£31m
High Needs Supplementary Grant allocation	£8m
Total Supplementary Grant allocation	£39m

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

A payment to all Special Schools and PRU's as per the DfE guidance and conditions of grant. Details of the allocations for Special's and PRU's have been shared in your budget letter which was published via the portal week commencing 20 February.

A further allocation of a WPN element of additional high needs funding for Primary and Secondary schools, as well as the FE Colleges, will follow a similar process as last year but

with additional consideration for Early Years settings for pupils with EHCP plans. This is currently estimated at £493 and will be multiplied by the total WPN on the May 2022 SEN data. Based on 2022/23 figures this would be circa £2.2 million.

This still leaves potentially circa £2.5 million yet to be allocated and views are required on how most effectively this funding can be utilised through the financial year.

It was discussed in great detail how potential funding could be allocated and used in sectors or if it should be kept in reserves to potentially assist High Needs Block in the future.

A number of members have suggested that they should utilize the funding this year to benefit children who are currently enrolled in school. The discussion focused on the lack of support for children without ECHP plans, the process, the transition period for these children and IEST involvement. It is especially important to identify SEN at an early stage in the educational process since the number of students with SEN is increasing.

As the discussion was lengthy but important, it was suggested that a Task and Finish Group be formed to make a decision regarding how the funding will be utilized. Members have agreed that the decision can be made by the Chairs of the working groups with the support of the finance officers and members of the Inclusion Team. As such, members are encouraged to contact their Chair if they have any ideas to share prior to the meeting or to directly contact School Forum. The meeting was scheduled for 23 March 2023. The item will be placed on the agenda for full forum asking for agreement that the decision is made by the chairs at the planned task and finish group after full forum. This is to ensure the funding can be allocated in the 2023/24 budget.

The Working Group;

- a) **Noted the report;**
- b) **Supported Task and Finish Group to decide regarding remaining funding for HN supplementary grant.**

3. Inclusion Hub Funding 2023/24

Following a consultation with schools in the autumn term 2022, the Forum again voted to de-delegate funding for primary inclusion hubs in 2023/24. The de-delegation cost was held at the 2022/23 rate of £11.00 per pupil for maintained primary schools and generates circa £1m for inclusion hub activities in Lancashire.

The distribution methodology has used pupil numbers and a deprivation factor to calculate the allocations for each district. For 2023/24, it is proposed to continue this methodology and the table below provides information on the allocations calculated for each district from April 2023:

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	899,999	99,999	999,998

District allocations are very similar to those for 2022/23, with 3 districts receiving marginally higher allocations and 8 slightly lower allocations. The largest change for a single district is a circa £2.8k 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 2023 about de-delegation options for 2024/25.

The officer in attendance explained that the methodology is derived from NOR and from district deprivation rates.

The Working Group

- a) **Noted the report.**
- b) **Expressed views on the information provided.**

4. High Needs Block Monitoring Forecast 2022/23

Due to the cost and demand led pressures on the High Needs Block budget, arrangements were introduced from 2018/19 to provide the Forum with termly budget HNB monitoring.

Autumn term 2022/23 data is now available, and the monitoring and analysis is was presented to the group, and it can view as Appendix A.

The HNB budget is currently forecasting a circa £6m underspend at 31 March 2023. The monitoring is an estimate of the full year forecast, based on expenditure that has occurred in the 2022 autumn term.

There remains significant ongoing financial pressure facing this block despite the current monitoring position, as the demand and costs continue to rise. It is anticipated that the final outturn position will come in significantly higher than the current forecast based on historic trends.

Despite the current underspend forecast, Matthew Dexter has explained that future years forecast a deficit in HNB. Previous years, other local authorities have kept their supplementary grants in reserve in order to be in a better financial position in the future.

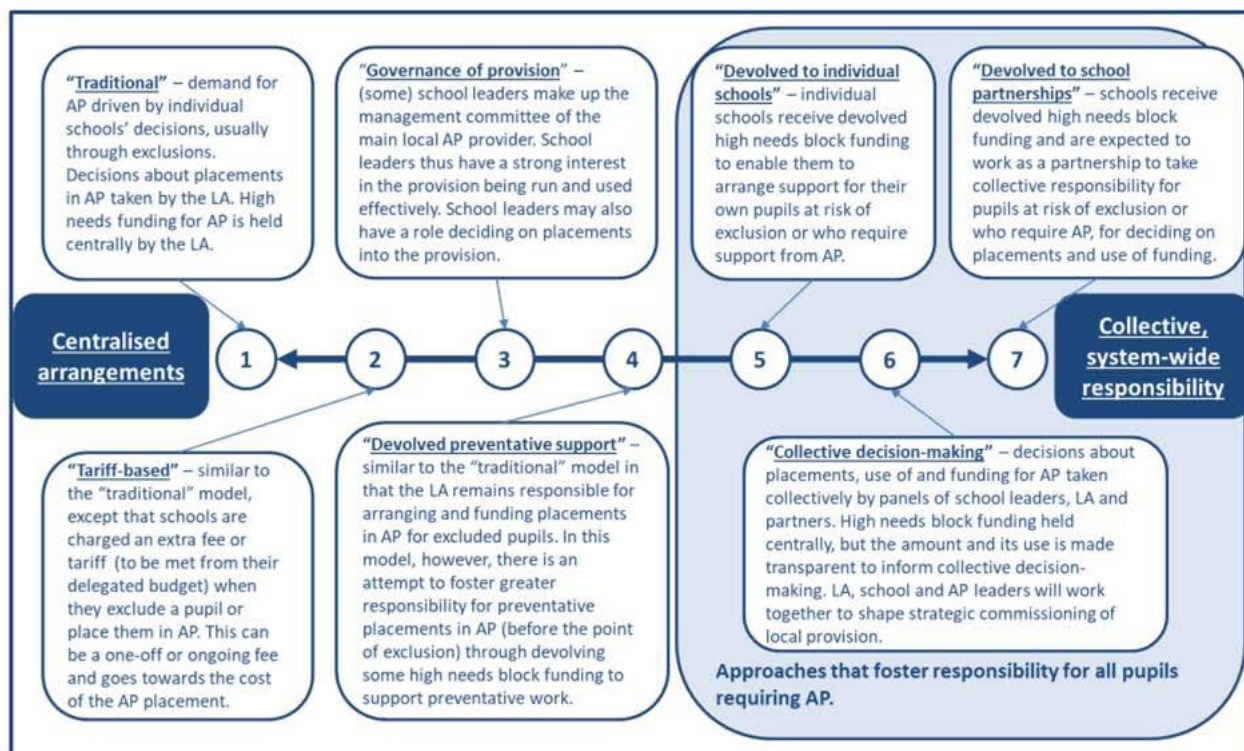
The Working Group;

- a) **Noted the report;**
- b) **Expressed views about the autumn term 2022/23 High Needs Block Monitoring.**

5. SEND Strategy Update

Sally Richardson stated that there is an increase in the demand for EHCP and that the data shows 900 more than last years and last year's being at 8,600K. This demand is felt across all counties and not just in Lancashire, with children being identified with more complex needs. The out of county cost have doubled but the number of pupils has not significantly increased. The demand for places has increased in ASD and SCLN. The SEND sufficiency strategy is being refreshed.

Further information was shared during the meeting as seen below;



Sally has agreed with members that the AP Strategy needs a refresher. She will be working further on this and will shared once available.

The Working Group;

- Noted the information;
- Supported to review AP Strategy.

6. Inclusion Fund Update

Unfortunately, Kirsty Lister was not available to attend the meeting due to underseen circumstances. However, we are currently awaiting accurate figures which should be available at the next meeting.

The Working Group;

- Noted the information.

7. Clawback

This report provided the group with decision made by latest meeting held by Chairs on 10 February 2023. The group was presented with the minutes of the meeting. The meeting was held to consider a clawback suspension due to request received. However, clawback was not suspended because it will apply for the entire year and some schools have accumulated balances over the past few years as clawback was suspended due to COVID.

It is important to note that the final outturn position against schools delegated budgets at 31 March 2022 was an underspend of £5.173m. This meant that school balances had increased by £5.173m in 2021/22, to a total of £95.325m.

As a result of recent meetings surrounding clawback, it was noted that there was no deadline or a clear indication of the steps that need to be taken in order to review the request. During this meeting, it was discussed how schools and the authority would benefit from a deadline and guidance on what is expected to be submitted as part of the request. School Forum will be asked to review additional information below to be added to clawback policy 2023/24;

"Applying for Clawback Exemption

To apply for clawback, please email schoolsforum@lancashire.gov.uk

The deadline for requests to be reviewed is 31 October.

The schools should provide details following details;

- School Number and Name
- What is the planned project including dates for start and completion of the project
- Details of the quote (Evidence provided)
- Amount you are requesting to be exempt from clawback for one year
- Clarity and justification for the project
- Estimated reserves at 31 March

Depending on the school type the request will be reviewed by appropriate working groups.

The team will be working on a template that will be available electronically, to improve this process."

The Working Group;

- a) **Noted the information;**
- b) **Supported Chairs decision to not suspend the clawback;**
- c) **Supported changes for a clawback policy in 2023/24.**

The Forum is asked to ratify working group recommendations.

2022/23 High Needs Funding Block Monitoring as at Autumn
22

	BUDGET	YEAR TO DATE	FORECAST	
	Current Budget	Actual	Full Year Forecast	Full Year Variance to Current Budget Under(-) Over (+)
Expenditure	£	£	£	£
<u>Mainstream Schools</u>				
Core Uplift Funding	1,234,145	1,098,344	1,449,035	214,890
Additional Support Uplift Funding	182,617	262,902	344,382	161,765
Top-up Funding	13,308,043	12,843,443	17,269,452	3,961,409
SERF Place Funding	775,148	452,857	679,970	-95,178
Additional HNB Funding	0	560,661	747,548	747,548
	15,499,953	15,218,207	20,490,387	4,990,434
<u>Special Schools</u>				
Place Funding	30,053,333	22,378,333	30,053,333	0
Additional Place Funding	1,500,000	1,780,000	2,277,500	777,500
Top-up Funding	22,154,078	18,002,069	24,161,509	2,007,430
School Specific Funding	15,604,159	11,698,926	15,633,546	29,387
Additional HNB Funding	0	861,523	1,148,697	1,148,697
	69,311,571	54,720,851	73,274,585	3,963,015
<u>Alternative Provision</u>				
Place Funding	6,720,000	5,040,000	6,720,000	0
Additional Place Funding	0	189,000	214,000	214,000
Top-up Funding	3,718,784	3,655,035	4,748,340	1,029,556
Additional HNB Funding	0	68,875	91,833	91,833
	10,438,784	8,952,910	11,774,173	1,335,389
<u>Further Education - Post 16</u>				
Additional Place Funding	0	0	0	0
Top-up Funding	3,361,950	2,847,146	3,844,448	482,498
Independent Specialist Providers	7,638,050	1,820,295	7,638,050	0
	11,000,000	4,667,441	11,482,498	482,498
<u>Commissioned Services</u>				
PFI - Special, Nursery	3,150,054	969,985	3,150,054	0
Early Intervention	350,000	125,903	307,000	-43,000
Commissioned Alternative Provision services	1,200,000	274,116	950,000	-250,000
Hospital Provision	1,300,000	359,183	871,382	-428,618
Independent Hospital Provision	0	0	0	0
Education in Residential Homes	0	0	0	0
Out County - Specialist provision places	20,500,000	8,242,845	23,048,612	2,548,612
Out County - Mainstream / academies places	2,500,000	464,446	2,011,040	-488,960
Inclusion Service Specialised Equipment	500,000	113,761	805,000	305,000
Inclusion Service Inclusion Projects	1,250,000	785	3,138	-1,246,862
Inclusion Service Teachers & Support	4,000,000	4,897	3,209,477	-790,523
Multi Agency Development	75,000	75,000	75,000	0
Support for Vulnerable Pupils - SI	1,000,000	396,085	881,983	-118,017
Overheads	598,200	598,200	598,200	0
	36,423,254	11,625,205	35,910,886	-512,368
<u>Other</u>				
High Needs Growth	17,142,970	0	0	-17,142,970
HNB Additional Supplementary Grant Payment	0	2,603,225	6,247,743	6,247,743
Exclusions	-400,000			
	16,742,970	2,603,225	6,247,743	-10,895,227
Total Expenditure	159,416,532	97,787,839	159,180,272	-636,260
Income				
<u>DSG</u>				
Provisional High Needs Block Funding as at 19.12.2020	166,907,915	69,544,965	166,748,915	-159,000
HNB Additional Supplementary Grant Payment	0	6,247,743	6,247,743	6,247,743
DfE High Needs Place Adjustments	-567,500	-236,458	-457,501	109,999
DfE High Needs deduction for direct funding of places	-8,604,000	-3,585,000	-8,604,000	0
Transfer from ISB to High Needs	1,680,117	1,680,117	1,680,117	0
	159,416,532	73,651,366	165,615,274	6,198,742
Total Income	159,416,532	73,651,366	165,615,274	6,198,742
Net Surplus	0	24,136,473	-6,435,002	-6,835,002

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

Date of meeting 16 March 2023

Item No 13

Title: Recommendations of the Early Years Block Working Group

Appendix

Executive Summary

On 7 March 2023, the Early Years Block Working Group considered a number of reports/topics, including:

- Early Years Rates
- Early Years Recruitment
- Early Years Block Budget 2023/24
- Early Years Block Additional High Needs Funding
- Clawback

Recommendations

The Forum is asked to;

- a) Note the report from the Early Years Block Working Group held on 7 March 2023;**
- b) Ratify the Working Group's recommendations.**

Background

On 7 March 2023, 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 Rates

Steve Little (Principal Estates Surveyor) attended to provide further information regarding business rates (NNDR – national non domestic rates) .

He has thanked the group for invitation and presented a presentation on the topic which was shared with members after the meeting.

The group noted that the rateable values are initially set by the by Valuation Office Agency (VOA) which are supported by legislation in place and the VOA Rating Manual that applies to valuation principles and practices in arriving at rateable values for commercial properties.

In relation to valuation, it was explained that the basis of valuation may differ – with an initial preference towards a rental method where evidence exists but in the absence of such the contractors (rebuild cost) being adopted.

VOA practice notes state that separately assessed Local Authority nursery schools and Children's Centres are to be valued as vacant and to let, restricted to a use with the same mode and category but not specifically as a local authority nursery school. Therefore, it is not assumed that the local authority is the only potential occupier.

As a result, it is appropriate to think about whether a private operator would be likely to bid for the property if it was vacant and to let. If so, it should be valued based on comparable private nurseries and day-care facilities. If the hereditament (property) by virtue of its nature and/or location would not be likely to attract a private operator as a hypothetical tenant, then a rental/comparative basis cannot be used, and the contractor's basis should be adopted.

8.7 section of the manual states "Nursery elements which form part of a primary or all age school should be assessed in accordance with the guidance in Rating Manual Sections 590 and 820 as appropriate". Therefore, a nursery within a school would be incorporated within the school assessment and valued in accordance with section 590 which advocates the contractor's basis of valuation. Such nursery areas will be valued but no design size adjustment will be applied even if applied to the main school .

In summary the valuation approach is:

Contractor's Basis is to establish what it would cost to construct a substitute hereditament of the same size on a cleared site. This followed by various adjustments for age and obsolescence, location – over capacity to assess the rate.

The rental basis focuses on the evidence already available in the market and other factors like space and location.

Billing

Steve further explained how the rates are calculated and how future rates include a transitional period with consideration for increase in inflation;

Billing Authority is the local authority and not the county.

Rateable Value x multiplier = bill with the national multipliers based on RV level

Small business rate 0.4999 / standard rate 0.512 (below £51,000 / £51,000 RV or above)

Transitional relief – ups and downs – downward relief abolished going forward

To illustrate transitional relief if your bill is increasing from 1 April 2023 then this increase will be phased in in accordance with the percentages below

Rateable value	2023 to 2024	2024 to 2025	2025 to 2026
Up to £20,000 (£28,000 in London)	5%	10% plus inflation	25% plus inflation
£20,001 (£28,001 in London) to £100,000	15%	25% plus inflation	40% plus inflation
Over £100,000	30%	40% plus inflation	55% plus inflation

It is important to note that precepting authorities (LCC is a classed as a precepting authority) are not able to benefit from discretionary relief and in order to qualify for a relief the name on the bill is important.

Furthermore, rates reliefs were discussed e.g., how a small business value is less than £12,000 they do not contribute. For a small business that is expanding, bill increases, if they lose the eligibility or see reductions in Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR) or Rural Rate Relief (RRR) will be capped at £600 per year from April 2023.

Charitable relief is when up to 80% relief is applied if the ratepayer qualifies and is something that PVI's could be set up as. To illustrate academies or foundations trust schools as well as public schools are usually set up under a Trust and structured to benefit from charitable relief. But this is decision to be made by private providers only, as there are some advantages and disadvantages.

Members stated that there are two local authorities that do not charge their nurseries for rates.

The local authority can case by case decide hardship relief.

A member inquired as to why nurseries are paying higher rates than primary schools. Steve has advised that without knowing the details he cannot provide advice unless he is given more information, which he could investigate.

In contrast to nurseries, schools have NOR in their calculations, which means that they could possibly pay less in rates if the school was built to accommodate 800 pupils but only had say 300 pupils as this influences the design size and hence the area valued with the calculation of the RV. This has further expanded the discussion, and the group has asked if they may question this with the VOA. Steve Little has provided his details and has indicated that he is willing to submit a case on behalf of the group to question to this since the EY think they would benefit from using the headcount, but he caveated that in terms changing the valuation

approach this would involve a national challenge and he would need to gain support from other representatives /ratepayers to lodge a Group Challenge .

Many factors are considered within rating hypothesis, including age and obsolescence , layouts, ages of buildings within the contractor basis. It is an agreed formula that is delivered nationally.

The 2017 rates are based on 2015 valuations. The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) has recently updated the rateable values of all business, and other non-domestic, property in England and Wales and these rateable values will take effect from 1 April 2023.

In case any questions regarding the rates arise in the future, Steve has indicated that he is happy to be contacted.

The Working Group:

- a) **Noted the information.**
- b) **Thanked Steve Little for delivering his presentation.**

2. Early Years Recruitment

Aby Hardy (Head of Education Improvement) provided an update about current recruitment process for Early Years.

The adverts are live on the radio last week and the contract will last for four weeks. Additionally, they had put together a website for Vacancies in early years settings - Lancashire County Council, which public could search for. This provides settings roles available and contact details only; for PVI's and MNS.

The Education Bulletin will be updated with this information. The Social Media strategy will include videos of EY practitioners describing what they do on platforms such as TikTok or Instagram.

It has been appreciated by members that this was managed promptly, and in particular to Lana, the Communications manager, who has assisted in this matter.

The Working Group:

- a) **Noted the information.**
- b) **Thanked Aby for the update and actions.**

3. Early Years Block Budget 2023/24

At the Schools Forum on 12 January 2023, decisions, and recommendations about the 2023/24 Schools Budget were agreed.

In connection with the Early Years Block, the Forum supported the 2023/24 Early Years Block proposals, including:

- The use of £1m Schools Budget reserves being used again in 2023/24, 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.

- As per DfE guidance the historic teachers pay grant (TPG) and teachers pension grant (TPECG) received by schools have now been rolled into the early years funding formula and is included within the increased base rate for 2023/24.
- Initial modelling on the early years block suggests the full £0.23 pence hourly increase can be funded from within Early Years Block Budget. School Forum understands that Early Years are facing considerable pressures within the sector. Therefore, for 2023/24 School Forum recommended that an additional 4p to be agreed above the national increase from DfE for the 3 and 4-year-old entitlements. This would provide a new rate of £4.75, an increase of £0.27 pence per hour. Final Early Years allocations will be received Summer 2023 and this additional 4p increase may be able to be funded from within the Early Years Block also, if there is no headroom, then DSG Reserve will be utilised.
- The passporting of other DfE Early Years funding increases to providers:
 - + £0.06 per hour 2-year-olds providing £5.43 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) providing £828 per eligible child 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 2023/24.

On 19 January 2022, the County Council's Cabinet formally approved the Schools Budget for 2023/24. Some elements of the Schools Budget require compliance checking by the ESFA and approval was received on 20 February 2023.

Early Years budget statements for 2023/24 were prepared and issued on 22 February 2023.

Deprivation Rates 2023/24

There was a communication sent from School Forum on 21 February 2022, entitled 2022/23 3&4 Years Old Early Years Budget Statement. Unfortunately, it was later identified that there has been an error in the deprivation rate calculations that were detailed in the budget statement.

The error identified in calculation was where the data used included settings postcode rather than a pupil. At the School Forum meeting held on 17 March 2022, members were provided with this issue and consulted on the options to move forward.

The analysis showed that if the data was recalculated using correct data, 503 of 934 providers would have changed their deprivation rate.

The LA has contacted providers affected by the change and included details of their specific rate change.

"Feedback from the Forum was sought on the principle to be applied to the correction.

- Option 1: Simply apply the correct data meaning that the deprivation forecast for 503 settings will change, either up or down.

- **Option 2: Use the corrected calculation for settings where the value of the deprivation factor will increase but honour the original deprivation level where the corrected data results in a reduction. This would protect 159 settings for 2022/23 only. The cost of the protection is estimated at between circa £70k and £80k, which would be underwritten by the DSG reserve.**

Members considered the information and supported the use of option 2, to honour the original deprivation level where the corrected data results in a reduction."

Lancashire School Forum 17 March 2022

The methodology for calculating the deprivation rates has not changed and is still based on the postcode of children that were in attendance in the autumn term headcount; the rates also remain the same at £0.00 to £0.40 per hour. The deprivation rates for individual settings can therefore change year on year, as it is dependent on where the children live. It is important to note that some settings may see a change for deprivation rate for 2023/24, as Option 2 referred to 2022/23 only.

It was discussed how the deprivation rates for 2023/24 has given a bad press for the county as it was shared over Facebook how the rates were reduced.

Members noted that the nurseries that would have their rates changed were notified last year and provided with further information explaining the change. This nursery was contacted again to demonstrate that the communication had previously been shared and to explain that the local authority is the only county that provides 100 percent funding to the early years.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the information.**
- b) Expressed views relating to the information provided.**

4. Early Years Block Additional High Needs Funding

During the Schools Forum on 12 January 2023, decisions and recommendations regarding the School Budget for 2023/24 were made.

Along with the additional funding provided through the NFF uplifts, Lancashire has also received additional funding through the High Needs Block.

As per government guidelines, at the last School Forum, it was discussed about the allocation of the supplementary high needs grant and a distribution methodology that includes payment to all Special Schools and PRUs in accordance with DfE guidelines.

In accordance with the school forum agreement, a further additional high needs funding supplementary grant allocation will be made for any settings that have early years pupils with an EHCP as per the May 2022 SEN data (Lancashire Pupils Only). Based on the May 2022 SEN data, this amount is estimated to be £493 and will be multiplied by the total number of early years pupils WPN on the May 2022 SEN data.

In 2023/24, supplementary allocations for high needs schools will be distributed according to the DfE's payment terms, such as one-off payments or two instalments.

There has been some concern raised by a member that May 2022 data will not include pupils with ECHP who come through summer holidays and may miss out on some funding. In the long discussion, it was between October or May data, and members agreed that May data works better.

Additionally, Sapphire Murray has added that her team is looking on improving processes for Inclusion Fund by changing the approach and to meet the level needed. Members have thanked Sapphire for her hard work and are looking forward on seeing future improvements.

A Task and Finish Group was discussed during HNB in order to determine how the remaining funds (£2.5m) from the high needs supplementary grant should be used. As the HN working group supported the Chairs in making the decision regarding the methodology, members are encouraged to submit their ideas to the school forum email or to their Chair by 23 March 2023. The School Forum will be asked if they are in agreement on 16 March and will be reported back if a decision is made.

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the information.**
- b) Expressed views relating to the information provided.**

5. Clawback

In July 2022, the Forum considered the School Balances and Clawback Policy for 2022/23 and agreed that clawback should be reintroduced on excessive revenue balances at March 2023.

Clawback Exemption Requests 2022/23

Following notification of the Forum's decision, the request has been received from a Lancashire nursery school requesting an exception to the policy at March 2023.

Request (1)

The nursery in question would like £61,471 to be exempt from the clawback. Their current reserves are forecast at £118,575 at 31 March 2023. They are estimating for the project to start in mid-April 2023 and finish in May 2023. They evidenced a budget estimate from the contractor (£61,471), and they are currently undergoing the planning process. The project is for additional space for intervention and work with SEND children.

School has reported that it is a slow process, to plan the build, get plans drawn up and then finally submit them to planning. Further information from nursery was provided where;

"Data demonstrates that over the last 2 years, SEND support has increased by 8% and a significant increase in the number of complex cases who cannot manage to follow the universal school's curriculum has also risen by 7%. This data demonstrates that approximately a quarter of our children (24%), receive above our universal offer and require additional intervention support, with nearly half the number of children (46%) requiring intensive language support. This figure of 46% is a significant increase this year by 22% from any other years previously. The extra space is required to facilitate this. The reason that there had been a delay is because this wasn't in the budget plans for 22-23. As a nursery school,

you do not know what needs are always coming your way. The LSIP show a rising trend in the numbers in SEND, and the impact of Covid particularly this year has demonstrate that children are entering with abilities well below their age. We are having to support this. Plans for this build started at the beginning of the autumn term, because the need was very obvious straight away and I had to cap numbers on admission in Sept 22, due to the needs of the children. This is the first time I have ever had to do this. Without this build, we will struggle to meet the children's needs in September, as I am already aware of a 5% increase in children who have complex needs, who will be starting in sept 23. If we are claw backed, this is the difference in whether we can go ahead with this modular build or not. If we lose money I am very likely to have to put a stop to all plans, which in turn will consequently impact on the quality of education for our children. I have tried my hardest to get everything moved through as quickly as possible, but genuine timescales of planning permission etc must be followed."

This report further provided the group with decision made by latest meeting held by Chairs on 10 February 2023. The group was presented with the minutes of the meeting. The meeting was held to consider a clawback suspension due to request received. However, clawback was not suspended because it will apply for the entire year and some schools have accumulated balances over the past few years as clawback was suspended due to COVID.

It is important to note that the final outturn position against schools delegated budgets at 31 March 2022 was an underspend of £5.173m. This meant that school balances had increased by £5.173m in 2021/22, to a total of £95.325m.

As a result of recent meetings surrounding clawback, it was noted that there was no deadline or a clear indication of the steps that need to be taken in order to review the request. During this meeting, it was discussed how schools and the authority would benefit from a deadline and guidance on what is expected to be submitted as part of the request. School Forum will be asked to review additional information below to be added to clawback policy 2023/24;

"Applying for Clawback Exemption

To apply for clawback, please email schoolsforum@lancashire.gov.uk

The deadline for requests to be reviewed is 31 October.

The schools should provide details following details;

- School Number and Name
- What is the planned project including dates for start and completion of the project
- Details of the quote (Evidence provided)
- Amount you are requesting to be exempt from clawback for one year
- Clarity and justification for the project
- Estimated reserves at 31 March

Depending on the school type the request will be reviewed by appropriate working groups.

The team will be working on a template that will be available electronically, to improve this process."

There has been a question raised by a member regarding why the exemption is £61k when there is a lower risk of clawback based on the forecasted reserves. Having noted that the

reserves are forecasted, the nursery wishes to ensure that there are funds available to complete this project in early 2023/24. The working group have fully supported to exempt the nursery from clawback for 2022/23.

Members have welcomed the addition of this to the clawback policy for 2023/24 and noted that it will be discussed again at the next meeting scheduled for School forum on 16 March 2023.

The Working Group;

- a) Noted the information;**
- b) Approved the request for a clawback exemption in 2022/23 for a nursery school.;**
- c) Supported Chairs decision to not suspend the clawback;**
- d) Supported changes for a clawback policy in 2023/24.**

The Forum is asked to ratify working group recommendations.

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM
Date of meeting 16 March 2023

Item No 14

Title: Recommendations of the Chairs' Working Group

Executive Summary

On 27 January 2023 and on 10 February 2023, the Chairs' Working Group considered matters, including:

- Requests for Clawback Exemption
- Request for Clawback Suspension

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 Chairs' Working Group held on 27 January and on 10 February 2023;**
- b) Ratify the Chairs' Group's recommendations.**

Background

On 27 January 2023 and 10 February 2023, the Chairs' Working Group considered matters regarding clawbacks requests and request for clawback temporary suspension.

Both meetings were scheduled following Urgent Business Procedure ;

Urgency Procedures

"In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary for a decision or formal view to be expressed by the Forum, before the next scheduled meeting. In such circumstances, the LA will attempt to convene an unscheduled meeting of the Forum or an appropriate Working Group.

If this is not possible, or if time does not allow, the LA shall seek a response from the Forum by emailing all Forum members, allowing all Members the opportunity to express a view on a matter of urgency.

Any matters conducted under the urgency procedure will be reported to the next scheduled meeting of the Forum."

On both occasions, the Chair of the Forum was consulted, and meetings were scheduled. This matter was voted by the Chairs working group, which is composed of all sector representatives that are capable of voting quickly on both matter.

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2023 can be found at Appendix A, and those of the meeting held on 10 February 2023 can be found at Appendix B. The minutes are provided here for members to be aware of what was discussed in detail during the meeting.

**LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM
CHAIRS' WORKING GROUP**

Minutes of a meeting held on 27 January 2023 via Teams.

Present Claire Thompson
Daniel Ballard (Chair)
Philippa Perks
Stephen Booth
Steve Campbell

In attendance Sylwia Krajewska

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Kirsty Lister and Liz Lavery.

2. Minutes of the Last Meetings

The minutes of the meetings held on 12 December 2022 were agreed as a correct record, just with a minor correction to a sentence.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meetings.

Oracle Fusion - During the meeting, the Chair raised the issue of how he receives further complaints and issues from other Headteachers to represent them in these matters since they do not feel they have a direct contact. Suppliers continue to experience these issues at a high rate, as they are unable to receive their monies and become indebted. During the School Forum, the group discussed how LCC has gone through the worst stage and it is only going to get better, which does not seem to be the case. On 23 February 2023, the EY SEN Inclusion meeting will discuss whether delayed payments under the SEND Inclusion Fund are related to Fusion.

An outline of the issues to be addressed to Glynn Peach and Steven Leaf, who attended the School Forum for Oracle Fusion update, will be drafted by the Chairs.

4. Request for Clawback Exemption

The Forum reviewed the School Balances and Clawback Policy for 2022/23 in July 2022 and decided to reintroduce clawbacks on excessive revenue balances in March 2023. The group was provided with a copy of the policy that has been agreed upon.

Schools requested that clawback requests be considered prior to the School Forum meeting in March, based on the timing of the end of the financial year.

This meeting has been scheduled after consultation with the Chair of the Forum. By following Forums Operational this meeting was conveyed.

Clawback Exemption Requests 2022/23

Following notification of the Forum's decision, the request has been received from a Lancashire primary school requesting an exception to the policy at March 2023.

Request (1)

The secondary school in question has saved funds in the past years towards the replacement of the roof structure and pitched roof covering and for the additional teaching spaces and sports hall that was originally planned to accommodate the increase in pupil number of 600. These additional teaching spaces would significantly reduce the crossing of public road for pupils between lessons, significantly reduce time loss from teaching and learning and make staff more productive. The school currently does not have a sports hall, it uses an open space for dining, assemblies, examinations, and indoor sports, which is inadequate in all sense. Thus, a sports hall would not only fulfil a basic need, additionally it will allow the school to develop its PE curriculum and personal development of its pupils.

Due to unforeseen circumstances the planned Capital Expenditure that was due to take place in the year has had to be revised due to it exceeding the original costs that had been budgeted for. The projects are expected to be delayed beyond March 2023. The roof structure and pitched roof covering that was due to take place over the summer of this year was delayed due to unprecedented increase in costs for the project and therefore had to be revised. The idea before it became too costly was to replace the roof and build on top of it to accommodate extra classrooms and a sports hall. However, the amount required way exceeded the budget.

As a result, this is going to leave the school with a balance over the Clawback amount. The balance remaining after the Clawback will be insufficient to undertake the planned capital expenditure. Therefore, the school would like to make a plea that a special exemption is made so we are able to carry forward the money required into following year to carry out the capital projects in the next financial year. To tackle their current predicament, they have revisited and amended our plans so they can obtain their original goal.

To adjust to the rising prices the project has now been revised to replace just the roof with no added structure above. A summary of the projected costs has been set below which was drafted by our consultancy team, AA Projects. School have employed their services to carry out the necessary work, including, obtaining all 3 quotes. School plan to carry the work in Summer 2023, and to be completed by the end of the 1st term.

Breakdown of Details	Amount
Summary of Costs from Below:	£858,193
Salix Loan Amount	£8,553
Client Contribution (to reserve)	£96,758
DFE Funding excl. extras	£552,882
Relocation Expenditure & Rent (to reserve)	£100,000
Extras (M&E, false ceiling, contingency, etc.) – Estimated (to reserve)	£100,000

Currently, the school is not able to accommodate for the additional classrooms and sports hall in the project above due to rise in costs, they had to investigate alternative arrangements

to meet their requirements. School decided to opt for the modular build, details of which has been attached and presented below. Given the rise in prices, the modular build will not include a Sports Hall, which is a compromise school had to make. School will look to accommodate for this when it becomes feasible. It is expected to complete this work by Summer 2023, due to the lead times it cannot be carried out prior to April 2023.

Breakdown of Modular Build Costs	Amount
Current Project Costs (as per the document 1)	£392,580
Demolition Cost (as per document 2)	£16,200
Ground Work (Padding)	£35,000
Contingency Cost (e.g. price increases)	£50,000
All other expenditure not incl. above	£50,000
Total Cost	£543,780

As mentioned above, the revised capital projects exclude the necessity of a Sports Hall. The lack of dedicated sports facilities is detrimental to the health and well-being of schools students. The school in the past couple of years have been work and are currently in the process in obtaining additional funding from DfE to accommodate their needs.

School has sent out communication to DfE to re-assess their previous bids in which they are waiting for a positive response. As a result, if DfE are to reconsider their bid, the school will have to provide a contribution to the project which is estimated around £250K.

Schools consider their options on how to move forward with projects quoted and it is a vital reason why they require current reserves to be exempted from clawback as it will result in the school missing out on project critical to the progression of the school.

The previous failed bids was also one of the reasons why there was an initial delay in the commencement to the capital projects as the school had to re-plan to ensure the school maintained a healthy cash balance before re-committing to the projects.

Note: The £250k has been excluded from the amount requested to be exempt from the clawback (below) due to the ambiguity revolving around the success of the bid.

To summarise the total amount we would like to be exempt from the clawback in able for us to carry out the two projects next year is:

Breakdown of Costs to be Carried Forward	Amount
Client Contribution	£96,758
Extras (M&E, false ceiling, contingency, etc.) – Estimated	£100,000
Relocation Expenditure & Rent	£100,000
Modular Project (as per the above)	£543,780
Total	£840,538

The current amount that has been set-aside in our budget for the capital projects is as follows:

Cost Centre	Description	Amount
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02RENTS	Rent towards relocating expenses	£30,000
02DECANT	Expenses relating to relocating	£70,000
09ROOF	Roof Project Capital Costs	£600,000
09CONTING	Contingency towards the Roof Project	£120,000
Total		£820,000

It would be really unfortunate if the funds required is taken away as it would be a massive setback towards the goals of the school and the school would have nothing to show from the savings that have been made over recent years.

The actual balance brought forward from 2021/22 was £1,012,976.

The latest forecast balance provided by the schools finance team assumes that if the projects are completed within the 2022/23 period it would leave a remaining balance of £243,673.

The current estimate of project costs which will be delayed until next year is £840,538 (this excludes the £250k contribution fs the bid for the sports hall is successful) for which we request a clawback exemption.

This would result in an outturn balance of £1,083m at 31st March 2023.

The current forecast guideline (12% of CFR Income) is c£466k, if schools forum approve the exemption of c£840k, this would result in a clawback threshold of c£1,306m.

Request (2)

The secondary school in question has saved funds in the recent years for projects and they currently in Project Memorandum Of Agreement with LCC to action them.

Please see below information and justifications provided by;

What is the planned project including dates for start and completion of the project?

The project is split into two sections, the improvements to the outside areas to create an outside eating and seating area for the students, we are calling this the outside oasis. This is going to be an area the students can sit/read and relax. The increase in student mental health and wellbeing which is widely publicised has impacted on our students massively. Having a calming environment to relax in is vital for our student's wellbeing.

Secondly the building of an additional multiuse building to create additional indoor dining space that in the evening can be used for the letting of the facilities. This area will have a large open space with moveable walls so it can be used in the daytime by the school and separately by the community in the evenings. This area will also consist of 4 shower cubicles, 4 toilets and hand basins as well as some much-needed storage space.

The planning application is due to be submitted at the end of January 2023 with work being completed in November 2023.

All work is being completed by Lancashire County Councils building and construction.

Details of the quote

- Oasis Area at £175,000
- Office, Staffroom and Kitchen at £50,000
- Science Room at £20,000
- Lettings Extension at £190,000

Amount you are requesting to be exempt from clawback for one year.

£350,000 is the approximate total value of the works listed above as per the attached documentation received from LCC design and construction. My approximate carry forward figure which is allowed within the 12% allowance is £576000, therefore I am requesting £350,000 above this figure to be exempt from clawback to allow the works to be completed.

Clarity and justification for the project

We are an 11-16 school with a school roll of 785 and 4 buildings (3 single storey and 1 double-storey). We have a certain amount of hard-standing between and around the buildings and a large field which is inaccessible in poor weather. Over the past few years the behaviour and attitude of our students around school has been graded as Good by Ofsted. We are a school with a much higher percentage of students with SEND than nationally and locally we have significantly higher level of social deprivation in our school cohort than our neighbouring schools. Behaviour at lunch and break time is often a concern, particularly in poor weather and we work hard to manage our limited indoor social spaces in order to create a calm, civilised atmosphere that is recognised and commented on by visitors to our school.

The next stage in our development is the creation of a covered outside seating space to rejuvenate a derelict area of the school behind the Sports Hall. This will create significant additional capacity for shelter during poor weather as well as enabling our students to sit in a calm, civilised location, reducing the likelihood of silly, immature physical interactions. These often spill over into the following lessons after break and lunch and so the creation of this space will further reduce the impact of low-level disruption on teaching and learning. It will also significantly enhance the physical appearance of the school.

We had set aside the funding for this project but had to allocate that to the unexpected pay awards and energy costs in September 2022. Through careful financial management we are now able to schedule the work based on the financial projections for the coming year, but clawback would unfairly and significantly penalise us for careful financial management – the budgetary issues caused by pay awards and energy crises were not of our making.

Request (3)

The secondary school in question is a generic learning disability school for pupils aged 11-19. Both of the units rented at a location and will be used to support our pupils to undertake internship. Allowing them to gain real life skills and qualification, preparing them for adult life and employment in Burnley.

The project for a coffee shop and classroom on the same site;

Classroom unit with facilitate the academic elements of the courses undertake while the other will facilitate a fully function not for profit coffee shop in the heart of the community.

Students will gain valuable knowledge and skills through practical work experience in The Coffee Mill. The desired impact of the work-based learning curriculum is that all students can

move on to their intended destinations with transferable skills for the future allowing them to be as independent as possible in their adult lives.

Students will continue to build on their communication skills, develop emotional resilience and improve their mental health and wellbeing. Participating in work-based learning will provide students with a natural sense of accomplishment whilst boosting self-worth, confidence and self-esteem.

Through participating in community and voluntary projects students will become more socially astute, enabling them to build on their cultural capital. They will demonstrate active citizenship in their local community instilling a sense of pride and identity through helping those in need. Values which will hopefully continue into their adult lives.

The school will appreciate for this request to be considered to make necessary plans. They currently plan to start the project on 20 February 2023 with completion 8 weeks late, which passes end of financial year. They are asking for £214,183 to exempt from clawback.

The costs/quotation of Projects for coffee shop and classroom;

- Preliminaries at £1,000 and £1,000
- Building/Joinery at £50,600 and £40,400
- Electrical costs at £19,670 and £24,530
- IT/data at £320 and £320
- Plumbing at £17,820
- Ventilation at £18,690 and £18,690
- Flooring at £8,376 and £8,367
- Decoration at £2,200 and £2,200

Total costs including labour and materials for coffee shop at £118,676 + VAT.

Total cost including labour and materials for classroom at £95,507 + VAT.

There are always going to be unexpected costs associated with building work. We have recently had work done where the asbestos report failed to reveal asbestos present, resulting in a substantial additional cost, in excess of the contingency sum. As a result, we are also spending a portion of the carry forward on new windows and doors in areas of the school that are considered a priority. As part of our carry forward allowance of 12%, we are investing in other improvements and additional staffing for our pastoral team, which was identified by Ofsted as a key concern.

Request (4)

A fourth request was received from a primary school requesting an exemption from clawbacks. The school's current budget reserves total £86,775 and the project is quoted at £78,340 plus VAT.

The project involves the construction of an additional classroom, a room for intervention, and a room for crisis management.

It has been noted that there has been an increase in the number of pupils in the school who have an EHCP and additional needs. In order to facilitate this, they have had to use staff room at the moment to facilitate the creation of a personalised learning environment.

This project is expected to start in April 2023 and should be completed (ready for use) by September 2023, which is the date when the project is expected to be completed.

The school has provided a quote for **£78,340 + vat**, to carry out this project and they are asking for £78,340 to be exempted from the clawback.

Originally, the project was scheduled to be completed by September 2022, but due to builders' illness/absence, the Christmas break, and lack of supplies, it was delayed three times, which could subject the school to clawback. As a result, the school is requesting that the project amount be exempted so that it can be implemented in the financial year 2023/24.

Request (5)

The primary school in question had their projects delayed and they are planned to be completed in the new financial year. The current estimated balance at 31 March 2023 is at £440,055, the total of the projects is at £172,699 and they are asking for this amount to be exempted from clawback.

School is planning to fence up school boundary due to sale of land next door to school. This raises serious safeguarding concerns for access and visibility of their school premises. The actual start date dependent upon start of demolition and start of build of supermarket. The school has been quoted for £34,450.35 to complete this.

The plan for outdoor classroom was delayed due to weather condition and death of Company Director of a family business. The school used this company as they provided the best quote for the work the school is planning. It is currently quoted for £38,648.40. The school has their own wood/forests at the back of their fields and they want to promote outside learning outdoors. Therefore, the plan is for pupils to have a classroom nearby to promote this learning.

KS2 Toilet Refurbishment was delayed due to failed Diocesan bid and scheduling by Arcadis Surveyor. Work is planned to commence in April 2023, quoted for £49,901.26. The KS2 toilet is outdated, the school has reported that the tiles are falling off, doors trapping, and windows do not open for ventilation.

Staff Toilet Facilities are also outdated and were also awaiting tender process from Arcadis, but due to commence in April 2023, quoted at £37,801.62.

Lastly, Staffroom Refurbishment awaiting tender process from Arcadis. But the plan is to commence in April 2023, quoted at £11,897.81. School has reported that the current staffroom is small, and the work planned is to promote staff wellbeing and provide workstation.

These costs total up £172,699 and school would have had this work carried out in the financial year, but due to unforeseen delays it is falling to 2023/24, where they are being subjected to clawback.

Request (6)

A 4-16 range specialist school in question has provided the following letter for Chairs consideration;

"I am writing in relation to our reserve figure for the financial year 2022-2023 which is in excess of the 12% allowance balance and would like to explain our current situation in the hope that we will be granted exemption from clawback on this occasion.

There are a number of factors which have contributed to this situation the main two are outlined below;

- a) We are currently on Phase 3 of our extension building plans for two additional classrooms and facilities. Phase 3 of the entire building project only commenced on the 1st November 2022 due to delays that have arisen from the pandemic and the inability for the building company to purchase materials for the project. We now expect the build to be completed on 30th June 2023.

The total build cost including the Phase 1 & 2 is £1,195,747.80. Phase 1 & 2 are now complete. The projected cost for Phase 3 of the project is £558,420.00 as the build project encroaches on the new financial year we would like consideration to be in excess of clawback and we do appreciate this is over the 12% allowance.

- b) Our school roll has grown significantly since my appointment in 2015 (from @ 85 to now 156) and the primary department has expanded by 100% in the last two years. We plan to move from 5 to 6 primary classes in September 2023 in order to try and meet the demand from the LA for places. The building of the additional class rooms has allowed us to meet the demand and will continue to do so with the ability to meet Phase 3 of the build project.

I hope that the above information is sufficient and should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me."

The schools' current reserves up to period 7 is at £517,851. The work falls into 2023/24. Projection of phase 3 build remaining is £489,640.

The schools request to carry over the full amount if possible due to commitments to the build as their budget next year will be also needed for internal furniture to provide provision for additional pupils.

The group has discussed the fact that schools should not be in the position to request exemption from clawback now, as it should be done in advance with appropriate financing. The SFVS indicates the 3-year forecasting, and schools should understand what needs to be accomplished.

The Clawback Policy does not specify a deadline by which schools must submit their requests, although it is understood that some of these exemptions are reasonable. The proposal was made to make changes to the policy, to set a deadline of 1st December for schools to submit their requests for consideration. This should be reviewed on next School Forum meeting. Furthermore, it was stated that COVID has helped schools save for projects, and a member said there was £95m in reserves last year and 200 schools were over School Balance. While some exemptions are reasonable, schools should spend their money on their current students.

There has been a request from a member to know which schools the requests come from so it can be easier to judge the location and circumstances. Furthermore, the need for anonymisation was discussed in order to be able to make an objective decision without being aware of the involvement of schools.

Furthermore, requests were considered individually and voted anonymously;

Request (1) was discussed how they are asking on considerable big amount of money and they should be aware of their position in advance. The 5 chairs voted where 4 agreed and one opposing to it. The chairs have stated that this is only exemption for one year only and they must make sure it will be carried out in 2023/24 with no more delays.

Request (2) had full support of all 5 chairs. There was a question as to whether there was any proof that they were working with LCC construction. The clerk of the forum reassured the chairs that the communication was seen, and all quotes were seen as stated, but not shown to keep them anonymous.

Request (3) had all support from 5 chairs. The members commented how this will help pupils gain qualifications and prepares them for life as it improves their social skills as well as making them more prepared to take on future employment.

Request (4) was fully supported by 5 chairs.

Request (5) Chairs objected to it since there are a number of projects that could have already begun. This school is being perceived as not being financially prudent and not completing their projects. The fence could have been funded by the Diocese when safeguarding is an issue or by a supermarket without spending funds that should be allocated to children's needs. Chairs rejected this request, unless further clarification could be provided for the delay, for this to be reconsidered.

Request (6) had full support from the chairs, it was noted how the request is a very good example on how school understand their position. The phase 3 of the projects falls into 2023/24, therefore they simply need the exemption to finish the project.

The Chairs' Group:

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Approved Requests (1),(2), (3), (4) and (6) schools requests to be exempted from clawback.**
- c) Rejected Request (5) unless further clarification from school will be provided for consideration for the delays of projects.**

5. Any Other Business

School Forum meeting - A member raised the issue of the next School Forum meeting being scheduled on 16 March 2023, which coincides with the strike day. The strike days are scheduled for 15 and 16 March, so the attendance of members may be affected depending on their circumstances at school. Therefore, it was proposed that the meeting be postponed by a few days. The clerk of the School Forum has expressed the need for their members to be present in order for the meeting to be successful and all appropriate matters to be discussed. However, it was raised that the room may not be available at a later date at such short notice, but this could be reviewed. The chair has purposed that the meeting could be done over teams which may aid with attendance.

The alternative date will be taken into consideration and, if not feasible, will be arranged via teams as a last resort, as it was mentioned in many meetings, face-to-face meetings are much better to be in discussion with members.

The Chairs' Group:

- a) **Noted the information.**
- b) **Supported the alternative date for School Forum or to be arranged via Teams if no room availability.**

6. Date of Next Meeting

To be arranged as required.

**LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM
CHAIRS' WORKING GROUP**

Minutes of a meeting held on 10 February 2023 via Teams.

Present Claire Thompson
Daniel Ballard (Chair)
Philippa Perks
Stephen Booth

In attendance Matthew Dexter
Sylwia Krajewska

7. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Kirsty Lister and Liz Lavery.

8. Minutes of the Last Meetings

The minutes of the meetings held on 27 January 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

9. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meetings.

10. Request for Clawback Suspension

In July 2022, the Forum considered the School Balances and Clawback Policy for 2022/23 and agreed that clawback should be reintroduced on excessive revenue balances at March 2023.

A number of requests were already received and considered by the forum/chairs following notification of the Forum's decision.

There are still issues with the implementation of Oracle Fusion at the authority. Glyn Peach, Director of Digital, has informed members that black windows are still expected to further improve the system, and emergency payments are still made. Although the testing was completed prior to implementation, the live scenario differs from the test scenario, resulting in inevitable problems.

It is well known to members that schools faced numerous issues and delays in implementing a fully functioning system. There were issues related to accessing the system, making payments, or duplicating payments. Additionally, schools' suppliers were negatively impacted by this, with missed payments and possibly resulting in personal debt.

At the last school forum meeting, members mentioned that their school managers were working extra hours to handle this situation. Despite reassurances from Fusion leads, the chair was still receiving further complaints from headteachers. It was decided at the last Chair meeting that a letter will be sent to the leaders to address these concerns. The group was presented with a copy of a letter to Steven Leaf/Glyn Peach and a response.

Furthermore, a request was received for the suspension of a clawback for 2022/23. The request continues to express concern about Oracle Fusion and its enormous impact on schools. A copy was provided in the papers.

The current situation with Oracle Fusion prevents internal departments from purchasing materials, resulting in schools not receiving some services, such as signage.

Chairs meeting is scheduled to decide whether to suspend of clawback for 2022/23 due to unforeseen distributions caused by Oracle Fusion.

In the discussion, members discussed how Oracle Fusion had a negative impact on schools and that some schools are not able to spend their money as a result of supplier issues caused by Oracle Fusion. All agree that Fusion should be fixed as soon as possible. According to the Chair, the Apprenticeship Levy faces issues taking on new apprentices due to Fusion. There can be no financial reassurance for schools if they cannot pay their suppliers and suppliers incur personal debt. A member has mentioned that they had difficulties paying phone bills and their line was disconnected. This was not due to a lack of funds, but to Fusion's failure to transfer these funds. Fortunately, the school manager was able to arrange for the phone to be reconnected. As a result of the new system, everyone is experiencing difficulties, and these issues are also internal.

Regarding Fusion, it was questioned whether the clawback could be suspended temporarily until the system ceases to have an impact on its users. The officer present advised that clawbacks must be based on the financial year and the decision must apply for the entire year and not just for a particular period. As the chairs discussed, if there were an option for a temporary suspension, they would fully support it, but since it applies over the full year, some schools have accumulated money over the past years, and the money should be spent on the children currently enrolled in school. Therefore, all members supported the decision not to suspend clawback.

As the constant frustration is felt across all schools, members did ask if there is anything that can be done further with Fusion. It was stated that the system had not been fully tested prior to its launch, but this must come to an end. The chair has explained that he has written to Glyn regarding the issues and that the response does not include any new information pertaining to the previous forum meeting. It has been proposed by a member that schools should bring all cases/issues to the forum and have their representatives answer for them. It was noted that a clerk of the forum is currently seeking a representative for the 16 March meeting of the School Forum.

Additionally, due to late submissions of clawback requests it was proposed that a deadline would be set on end of October. Schools with prudent financial management may qualify for clawback exemptions if any projects are planned. An end of October deadline will be proposed at the school forum meeting. In order to improve this further, it was proposed that submissions be received electronically.

The Chairs' Group:

d) Noted the report;

e) Opposed to suspend clawback exemption for 2022/23.

11. Any Other Business

School Forum meeting - A member raised the issue of the next School Forum meeting being scheduled on 16 March 2023, which coincides with the strike day on the previous meeting. A different date was considered, but there was no room available, so it will be arranged via a team meeting.

School Finance/Forum Officer - Due to recent changes in the team, Matthew Dexter (Accountant) will be supporting the Principal Accountant, Funding Streams (High Needs / Early Years) and the Clerk of Forum, to ensure no statutory information is overlooked. In the past, he has attended some meetings, but now he will be a standing member or able to fill in for the Principal Accountant when necessary.

Executive Director of Resources meeting – The chair has reminded the group that a letter was sent to cabinet members and the Executive Director of Resources (Mark Wynn) regarding the leadership void in the School Finance Team. The response provided reassurance that the posts will be recruited soon. A meeting has been arranged by the Chair with Mark Wynn today to further discuss this matter since it has been three years since the team did not have a permanent Head of Service and schools pay for SLA, but do not receive the same level of service from the Finance Team as the post has not been filled. Due to the need for financial representatives, the chair wants to know why it is taking so long for these positions to be filled.

Early Years Head of Service – The Chair of Early Years has commented that, since Andrew Cadman's departure, her role has extended to include meetings as a committee and dealing with issues in the Early Years sector. Prior to this, Andrew Cadman handled all of this as HoS of EY, and the chair does not have the capacity to address everything that he has handled in the past. As an example, it was noted that childminders had an Ofsted visit which resulted in an ineffective judgment, resulting in all Lancashire childminders having their funding limited or terminated within eight weeks. During the last School Forum meeting, this issue was raised regarding the possibility of going out and recruiting for HoS of EY, however no further communication has been received. It has been informed by the clerk of the forum to the Chair that Aby Hardy intends to bring recruitment to the agenda for the next meeting of the EY working group. As a result, providers suffer because of no HoS in EY. The Chair will also raise this issue.

The Chairs' Group:

- c) Noted the information.**
- d) Welcomed Matt in to his new role;**
- e) Supported Chair meeting with Mark Wynn.**

12. Date of Next Meeting

To be arranged as required.

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM
Date of meeting 16 March 2023

Item No 15

Title: Recommendations of the Apprenticeship Levy Steering Group

Executive Summary

On 10 February 2023, the Apprenticeship Levy Steering Group considered a topic:

- School Apprenticeship Levy Update

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 Apprenticeship Levy Steering Group held on 10 February 2023;**
- b) Ratify the Steering Group's recommendations.**

Background

On 10 February 2023, the Apprenticeship Levy Steering Group considered a number of reports. A summary of the information presented, and the Working Group's recommendations are provided below:

1. Apprenticeship Levy School Finance Update

James Beardwood (Apprenticeship Team Schools Lead) delivered a presentation to members providing an update on the latest information about Apprenticeship Levy.

In order to maximize investment and to communicate the message within cluster groups and forums, the group was reformed as he had a need to communicate regularly with schools. It was necessary to refocus the previous group since it contained members who did not participate in Levy or did not attend it, for a long period of time.

Currently, schools are not spending their share of Apprenticeship Levy. In his statement to the group, James advised them that his aim was to engage the school with the intention of increasing their use of Levy in Lancashire.

James has stated that schools should not contact providers directly, since training is arranged by the LCC and delivered on their behalf. There is a contract signed between the team and the trainer.

Levy Finance

From 1st August 2022 to 1st January 2023, 81 new Apprenticeship Training requests were received from schools and approved by the team for referral to the providers.

There are currently 244 apprentices ongoing, 33 awaiting enrolment, and 351 who have completed their apprenticeships.

Approximately £559,033 has been requested in apprenticeship requests during this window of opportunity.

The private companies such as care homes, etc., may also request transfers to meet their specific needs. To date, LEVY has supported 32 Transfer requests totalling £365,000 - and 2 more are pending. LEVY is also supporting five additional apprentices in their pursuit of post-school academisation apprenticeships.

The team is continuously forecasting their position on where they are today and will be in future, to make sure that they are financially responsible, to cover what is promised. It was noted that the forecasting will differ in Jan – July to Aug – Jan as with start of a school year. But currently forecast to fund £1.3 million.

Update on activity

114 schools have taken advantage of the apprenticeship incentive which provides an additional £1000 to support 16–18-year-old apprentices. Another 43 claims were submitted for the 'Employer New Hire Incentive' program. A further £1000 may be provided to apprentices aged 19-25 in the care system. During COVID, additional funds of £3000 were available to encourage people to return to work after a period of furlough.

There were 146 apprentices enrolled in 2021-2022, with a total apprenticeship funding cost of £1,437,686. In 2022-2023, the team has received requests for 69 apprentices, with a total cost of apprenticeship funding of £493,033. To maintain our spending levels and to avoid clawbacks, we must focus on apprenticeship funding in the schools.

A break in learning is offered by the team and there are currently 16 Apprentices on a break in learning

As part of the "Out of Funding " (OOFs) process, the team needs to contact providers to ensure deadlines are met for fixed-term contracts - at present, 53 school-based apprentices are "Out of Funding ". Generally, this occurs when a training programme takes too long to provide, which has an adverse effect on participants.

Current Apprenticeship offered;

- Assistant Accountant (L3)
- Associate Project Manager (L4)
- Business & Administration (L3)
- Business Administrator (L3)
- Career Development Professional (L6)
- Chartered Manager (L6)
- Children, Young People & Families Practitioner - Residential Childcare (L4)
- Coaching Professional (L5)
- Customer Service Practitioner (L2)
- Cyber Security Technologist (L4)
- Data Analyst (L4)
- Digital & Technology Solutions Professional (L6)
- Digital Support Technician (L3)
- Early Year Practitioner (L2)
- Early Years Educator (L3)
- Facilities Services Operative (L2)
- HR Consultant Partner (L5)
- HR Support (L3)
- Infrastructure Technician (L3)
- Operations/Departmental Manager (L5)
- Outdoor Activity Instructor (L3)
- Play Therapist (L7)
- Schools Business Professional (L4)
- Senior Leader (L7)
- Sports Coach (L4)
- Teacher (L6)
- Teaching Assistant (L3)
- Teaching Assistant with PE & Sport (L3)
- Team Leader/Supervisor (L3)
- Children, Young People & Families Manager - Community (L5)

Members discussed how the investment in Levy can really make a difference in the school and that they actually save money by training and employing younger staff. It was noted that Levy will be offering Playworker L2, which was welcomed by members as some may struggle to get on L3.

The advertising apprenticeship vacancies can be done by the team on Oracle Fusion, Indeed and by National Apprenticeship website by the team, but they also encourage schools to advertise on their social media and website.

Unfortunately, the VA school cannot access the Levy due to payroll number issues and government does not provide an option to resolve this. The authority would have to spent £2.3 million and employ 30 staff to manage 270 VA schools. This frustration is felt across whole country and not only in Lancashire. Additionally, there is a British Airways provider that is facing the same difficulties with having different sites.

New Application

A new application form has been developed by the team and has replaced the Request for Funding form. It is now accessible through the schools portal. The Apprenticeship Guide will be updated along with a new vacancy request form. A recent issue relating to GDPR arose when individuals were added to the training without their consent, intent, or interest.

Members asked why businesses and schools are required to contribute to the Levy. James explained that traditionally, local governments did not charge employers, which resulted in debt. Therefore, large employers should contribute to the development of their employees. This makes it more likely that employers will use it, as it motivates them to do so.

Further discussion was also conducted regarding the fact that as an employer, if your annual pay bill is greater than £3 million, you are required to pay the Apprenticeship Levy each month.

The Group:

- a) Noted the information;**
- b) Expressed frustration at the continued difficulties caused by school pooled payroll issues;**
- c) Thanked the Apprenticeship Levy Team for their continued hard work.**

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM
Date of meeting 16 March 2023
Item No: 16

Title of Item: Forum Correspondence

Executive Summary

This report provides appendices of recent communication on behalf of School Forum.

Recommendation

The Forum is asked to:

- a) Note the correspondence;

Background

School Forum is updated on the forum correspondence on every meeting if any was received. There were four different correspondences after last meeting of School Forum.

Correspondence (1)

On the last meeting held on 12 January, Chairs agreed to draft a letter to Cabinet members and Director of Resources about how they are concerned about the consistency in roles of Principal Accountant and Head of Service. The letter is available below and a response to the letter follows.



CC Philippa Williamson, Leader, Lancashire County Council and CC Jayne Rear, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, Jacqui Old 'Executive Director of Education and Children's Services'

[Redacted]
Date: 12 January 2023

C. Mark Wynn, Neil Kissock and Kirsty Lister

Dear Cabinet,

Schools' Finance Team appointments

I am writing as the Chair of Lancashire School Forum. I am requesting some information about the position of Head of Service for the Schools' Finance Team. Kirsty Lister has been in post as the interim Principal Accountant for the team since September 2022. We have always known that she was only interested in an interim position, so at least one permanent candidate would need to be recruited to lead the team. Where are we in this recruitment process? Members of the Forum have, today, asked me to investigate why there has been such a delay in the recruitment for these posts. Please can you provide some answers?

The link between Lancashire County Council, as the Education Authority, and schools has historically been strong. The fact that so many maintained schools remain with LCC is a testament to this fact – even now we retain a budget of £1.2bn from the Dedicated Schools' Grant. The Lancashire School Forum are concerned that we are lacking the firm commitment to a strong and capable lead at this time – we really need someone to liaise with Kirsty and overlap with her to give schools the confidence they need for the future of our mutually beneficial relationship.

I await your response and a committed timescale for recruitment for the missing post(s) within the Schools' Finance Team.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Daniel Ballard".

Daniel Ballard
Chair, Lancashire Schools Forum

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Chair of Forum - Daniel Ballard
C/O The Clerk to the Schools Forum, • Financial Management (Development and Schools)
PO Box 100, County Hall, Preston, PR1 0LD

Daniel

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the appointments within our schools finance team. Apologies if our communications have not been as clear as they should have been in this area as, as you say, we regard our relationship with schools as healthy , important and a priority to us.

I can update you on the fact that Kirsty has agreed to stay around until the end of June, and we are actively in the process of recruiting to these posts.

I hope this gives you reassurance all of this will be in place (subject to the current jobs market of course) in time to allow an effective transition of roles.

I am of course happy to discuss any of this with you further if you so wish

Mark

Regards

Mark

Mark Wynn
Executive Director of Resources
Lancashire County Council

Following up on the correspondence Daniel Ballard the Chair of Forum has contacted Mark Wynn the Executive Director of Resources and scheduled the meeting regarding the leadership void in the School Finance Team.

The Chair has provided update following this meeting;

(It should also be noted that Mark does not formally start work in LCC until 1st March.)

"There is a movement, as in all public sectors, to look at ways of streamlining and being more efficient. This is a continuing process within and across LCC as one would expect. There is, however, no strategy that Mark is aware of that would mean 'cutting to the bone' and seeing staff in existing teams being overworked in order to make financial savings. Many senior staff, including at Executive Director level, have stressed the positive working relationship that schools have historically had with LCC and they want this to continue. Mark will, therefore, be investigating my concerns fully and I have a follow up meeting scheduled for three weeks time – Friday 3rd March."

Correspondence (2)

On the 27 January 2023, Chairs met to consider clawbacks request that requested a urgent consideration. During the meeting, the Chair raised the issue of how he receives further complaints and issues from other Headteachers to represent them in these matters since they do not feel they have a direct contact. Suppliers continue to experience these issues at a high rate, as they are unable to receive their monies and become indebted. During the School Forum, the group discussed how LCC has gone through the worst stage, and it is only going to get better, which does not seem to be the case.

The Chair has agreed to write a letter to outline the issues to be addressed to Glynn Peach and Steven Leaf, who attended the School Forum for Oracle Fusion update. The letter written is available below followed by a response;

Steven Leaf

Glyn Peach

Tel: 01772 336650

Email: head@smsb.lancs.sch.uk

Date: 30th January 2023

Dear Steven & Glyn,

Oracle Fusion Issues - ongoing

I am writing as the Chair of Lancashire Schools' Forum. You both came to our last full meeting, earlier this month, and gave various assurances that you understood the issues that schools faced, you had faced unprecedented issues and that this was a huge undertaking. You did add that things could only get better and that you were about to turn a corner... I am being inundated, as Chair of the Lancashire Schools' Forum, with continued frustrations, unresolved issues and a lack of opportunity to hold colleagues to account.

One headteacher has been waiting since December to access her new Fusion account but emails to the help address have been unanswered. The pressure that this is adding to colleagues – both at the chalk face in Finance and within school offices is undeniable. Again, we were asked to be patient but these delays with reconciliation are causing significant delays in operational procedures for everyone. Was there insufficient testing done prior to going live?

Another headteacher has related to me about staff overpayments that were impacted by delays in processing documentation for staff finishing with their school. Indeed, many similar issues about payroll delays that have led to payment inaccuracies. Especially, during a 'Cost of Living Crisis' this is wholly unacceptable!

Colleagues who work for schools but get paid as contractors – such as sports coaches – is another massive concern. These individuals often work on a self-employed basis and trust us – as LCC – to treat them with fairness, respect and integrity. Anecdotally, another headteacher has frustrations about this point: *"A late payment form was sent to LCC with 3 people on it -only 2 got paid, one has not been paid, but again LCC's response to our emails has been poor. I then have people coming to me.... and I am helpless in giving them an answer as to when they will get paid for hours worked in November/December 2022."* These people are, potentially, in increasing personal debt!

Daniel Ballard
Chair, Lancashire Schools Forum
Sent via email:
head@smsb.lancs.sch.uk

Phone: 01772 535531
Email: Glyn.Peach@lancashire.gov.uk
Your ref:
Our ref: GP/MO
Date: 03 February 2023

Dear Daniel

Oracle Fusion Issues – ongoing

Thank you for your letter date 30 January 2023 about the recent issues experienced in relation to Oracle Fusion.

Lancashire County Council (LCC) are still experiencing issues which is expected when implementing a system of this size and complexity. LCC staff are still working very hard to reconcile the emergency payments that have been completed during the blackout window and are still making emergency payments to assure our schools remain as unaffected as possible.

Rigorous testing has been undertaken throughout the programme implementation including System, unit and payroll testing, however, it does not take account of issues that occur in a live environment and whilst we did everything to resolve the issue prior to go live it is inevitable further issues occur.

LCC understand how serious incorrect pay is at any time of the year especially with the run up to the Christmas period, we have had staff working throughout the Christmas holiday to ensure the payroll process was as accurate as possible. Without the specific details of the schools facing the issues and the affected employees, it is not possible to provide a specific response. Please advise the relevant schools to submit their examples regarding non-payment of salaries to the following email address: payroll-feedback@lancashire.co.uk, in order for the Payroll Service to fully investigate and respond to the relevant school. In relation to the December payroll there were 323 emergency payments made out of 33,578 employees, in comparison to 2021 December payroll when 163 emergency payments were made. In respect of January payroll errors, again the Payroll Service are fully focussed on progressing emergency payments and working extra hours to complete as soon as possible, prioritising those payments where the employee has not received any pay.

In respect of user log-in issues, Digital Services have an on-going designated resource to resolve any issues as soon as possible.

Continued...

Lancashire County Council
PO Box 100, County Hall, Preston, PR1 0LD



lancashire.gov.uk

The decision to go live at the beginning of December was largely due to the previous Oracle system being end of life, being unstable and resulting in outages which were not going to be able to support the system. As a result, and with the testing that had taken place, the decision was made to go live.

I would like to assure you that we are doing everything we can to support schools and several measures are in place to assist schools with the transition to the new system:

- Emergency payment process for schools to use to enable the schools' suppliers to be paid is still in place.
- On-going support is being provided to resolve user log-in issues.
- Additional instructor led training sessions in self-service tasks for school employees and administration managers.
- Additional user guidance to provide step by step instructions of the core self-service transactions, to supplement Oracle Guided Learning.
- Schools AskHR will have additional staff to cover the phone lines to provide navigation support.
- Payroll 1:1 transaction support virtual drop-in sessions to be arranged for schools to book onto to obtain specific guidance for transactions that users may be having difficulty with, following attendance on the training courses.

As I am sure you can appreciate; transitioning to new systems to accommodate the complexities of an organisation the size of LCC is a substantial undertaking and it may take a couple of months to iron out all of the initial 'snags'. Every possible effort is being made to stabilise the system as quickly as possible and whilst there are difficulties and challenges, which unfortunately are also impacting school end users, the new system is operational and in the majority of cases; employees and suppliers are being paid.

Please continue to bear with us during this period and be assured that everything possible is being done to address schools' concerns.

Yours sincerely



Glyn Peach
Director of Digital,
Lancashire County Council



Correspondence (3)

In the light with current Oracle Issues a request was submitted to temporary suspend a clawback 2022/23. Another Chairs meeting was held on 10 February to discuss this. Unfortunately, as you cannot suspend clawback temporary and would have to refer to the entire year, all chairs voted for it to remain.

The request for clawback suspension was emailed as seen below;

"I am emailing to continue to express concern over the issues still being had with Oracle Fusion and the impact not only directly on schools but also indirectly when schools are buying services or procuring resources from County Council services. I appreciate that some elements of concern are continuing to be addressed and noted the information provided to forum from those responsible for Fusion rollout. However, after yet another issue has been raised for us:

procuring signage from LCC signage for new road and car park signage to be told they are not in a position to be able to purchase the materials and resources to make the signs because of a directive relating to oracle Fusion.

This was to be a significant amount in terms of purchasing but is compounding in many cases the issues with paying suppliers and will have a direct impact upon end of term balances, which we may or may not be able to access the full reports for in order to effectively manage end of year monitoring and actions relating to any potential clawback position, noting that monies that would have been paid out by year end may still be held in end of year budgets and may lead to incurring clawback positions through no fault of the school.

Has this been considered or is it due to be considered by Forum prior to year end?

If not I would ask that some thought is presented to forum members about the impact the delay to Oracle Fusion and its implementation has had to schools, their budgets the timely payment of suppliers and indirect impact through the use of LCC services and the potential issue that schools may fall foul of the reinstated clawback arrangements because of it and would ask that forum reconsider its reinstatement of clawback temporarily until some stability can be established and Fusion is finally implemented successfully and that schools budgets are no longer affected in the way they have been directly and indirectly."

Correspondence (4)

Following meeting of the Chairs a Vice Chair has written a letter as seen below and a Oracle representative was asked to attend School Forum meeting on 16 March 2023;

Wednesday 15th February 2023

Angie Ridgwell,
Chief Executive and Director of Resources,
Lancashire County Council,
P O Box 78,
County Hall,
Preston
PR1 8XJ

Dear Angie Ridgwell,
Oracle Fusion

As a Primary School governor representative and Vice Chair of the Lancashire Schools Forum I have been asked to express concern about the many complaints which have been made against the introduction of the new 'Oracle Fusion' school accounting system.

So far as I can tell the Forum first heard that the new system would be introduced at the Full Forum meeting held on Tuesday 19th October 2021, a point which means that the Local Authority has had a period of at least fourteen months in preparation before the live introduction of the system in December 2022.

The problems reported fall into four broad categories:

- Inability to log on to the system
- Wages not being paid
- Suppliers not being paid
- A lack of response from the helpline or to emails

A discussion of Oracle Fusion took place on the 10th January 2023 at the Forum Chair's Group meeting where it was said that schools had suffered 'no end of problems' and a whole month of the system not working.

Two representatives from the service came to the Full Forum meeting on the 12th January 2023. There, a number of points were made by Forum members. There was a 'blackout window' for changing over between the old system and the new, this was initially planned for two weeks but over-ran into six. A point was made that the 'emergency payment' system allowed for individual payments, but it did not appear to be possible for the Headteacher to authorise batches of payments, a point which impacted badly on Headteacher stress and workload. Also at this meeting some criticism of the 'user guides' took place. Bursars would get stuck in the middle of processing a payment and by the time they managed to find the directions the transaction would have timed out. It was also pointed out that there were problems with club payments, and an inability to save the page in order to keep a copy of the details in the transaction. The Oracle help-line and the Ask HR help-lines had been swamped. In some cases they could do nothing to help.

Also at the 12th January Full Forum reports were given about mistaken payments, a point which meant an increase in administrative workload. Accounts had not been paid – one example here was a petrol account which meant that a Special School minibus used to collect pupils could not be refuelled. Pay progressions for teachers had not been processed, there were reported difficulties over new starters and retiring teachers.

At the meeting of the Chair's Group held on the 27th January it was reported that the situation was getting worse, with more and more complaints being forwarded to the Forum Chair. Suppliers were forced into debt due to payments not coming through and were having to pay interest, through no fault of their own, or fault of the school. It was claimed that some suppliers had been bankrupted. At this meeting some members of the group spoke of the 'brick wall of unaccountability'.

The situation was felt to be so poor that on the 30th January the Forum Chair wrote a letter of concern. A response to this was received dated the 3rd of February. The second paragraph of this reply states:

Rigorous testing has been undertaken throughout the programme implementation including System, unit and payroll testing However it does not take account of issues that occur in a live environment and whilst we did everything to resolve the issue prior to go live it is inevitable further issues occur.

The situation continued. On Friday the 10th February a Chair's group had to be convened to consider whether to postpone or to cancel the collection of Clawback monies from schools because of the financial chaos caused by Oracle Fusion. This implied that the people applying for the postponement / cancellation did not believe that these many problems could be sorted out by the end of the Financial Year on the 31st March 2023.

At this meeting we were given the example of a school where the Bursar processed a payment for the school telephone bill, but the Oracle did not make the payment and so the school telephones were cut off by the supplier, through no fault of the school.

In my opinion this problem is a serious matter with widespread implications. On Friday I suggested that the Forum should collect together a detailed factual dossier of these problems in order that those responsible for this fiasco could be held responsible, and perhaps that this terrible situation could be sorted out before the end of March.

Obviously the longer this situation is allowed to go on, the greater will be the damage to the relationship between the Authority and schools, and so I hope that firm and prompt action can be taken to put this right.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Booth
Vice Chair, Lancashire Schools Forum

CC: Daniel Ballard, Chair Lancashire Schools Forum,
Sylwia Krajewska, Clerk to the Lancashire Schools Forum

Lancashire Schools Forum Meeting Schedule 2023/24

Autumn Term

Meeting	Day	Date	Time	Venue
Schools Forum Induction	Thursday	14-Sep-23	10:00 – 13.00	Savoy Suite
Schools Block Working Group	Thursday	28-Sep-23	10:00 – 13.00	Savoy Suite
High Needs Block Working Group	Tuesday	03-Oct-23	10:00 – 13.00	Ribble Suite
Early Years Block Working Group	Tuesday	10-Oct-23	13.00 – 16.00	Ribble Suite
Lancashire Schools Forum	Tuesday	17-Oct-23	10:00 – 13.00	Savoy Suite
Early Years Block Working Group	Tuesday	28-Nov-23	13.00 – 16.00	Ribble Suite
High Needs Block Working Group	Thursday	30-Nov-23	10:00 – 13.00	Ribble Suite
Schools Block Working Group	Thursday	07-Dec-23	10:00 – 13.00	Savoy Suite

Spring Term

Meeting	Day	Date	Time	Venue
Chairman's Working Group	Tuesday	09-Jan-24	10:00 – 13.00	Meeting Room 8
Lancashire Schools Forum	Thursday	11-Jan-24	10:00 – 13.00	Savoy Suite
High Needs Block Working Group	Tuesday	05-Mar-24	10:00 – 13.00	Ribble Suite
Schools Block Working Group	Thursday	07-Mar-24	10:00 – 13.00	Savoy Suite
Early Years Block Working Group	Tuesday	12-Mar-24	13.00 – 16.00	Ribble Suite
Lancashire Schools Forum	Thursday	21-Mar-24	10:00 – 13.00	Savoy Suite

Summer Term

Meeting	Day	Date	Time	Venue
Early Years Block Working Group	Thursday	06-Jun-24	13.00 – 16.00	Ribble Suite
High Needs Block Working Group	Tuesday	11-Jun-24	10:00 – 13.00	Ribble Suite
Schools Block Working Group	Tuesday	18-Jun-24	10:00 – 13.00	Savoy Suite
Lancashire Schools Forum	Tuesday	02-Jul-24	10:00 – 13.00	Savoy Suite

All meetings are scheduled to take place at The Exchange, County Hall but may be conducted virtually