

Lancashire County Council

Lancashire Schools Forum

Tuesday, 4 July 2023, 10.00 am in the Savoy Suite, The Exchange, County Hall, Preston

Schools Members

Primary School Governors

Gerard Collins
Robert Waring
Sam Ud-din
Stephen Booth (LSF Vice-chair)
Tim Young

Primary School Headteachers

Daniel Ballard
Sarah Barton
Deanne Marsh
Sarah Robson
Kirsty Sutton

Substitutes

Vicki Newsome - Substitute for Anna Smith

Nursery School Governor

Thelma Cullen

Nursery School Headteacher

Jan Holmes

PVI

Sharon Fenton
Philippa Perks

Secondary School Governors

John Davey
Brian Rollo

Secondary School Headteachers

Oliver Handley
Mike Wright

Academy Governor

Kathleen Cooper

Academy Principal

Steve Campbell
James Keulemans

Special School Governor

Mandy Howarth

Special School Headteacher

Claire Thompson

Short Stay Governor

Liz Lavery

Short Stay Headteacher

Abigale Bowe

Other Voting Members

Church Authorities

Bill Mann (Church of England)
Julie Jones (Catholic)

**Observers – Non-Voting
Representatives**

Sarah Troughton (NEU)
Alison Daly
Lorimer Russell-Hayes (LASGB)
Steve Jones (NASUWT)

Officers in Attendance

Matthew Dexter
Millie Dixon
Toni Rafferty
Emma Nicholson
Aby Hardy
Chris Warren
Roger Livesey
Steve Little
Diane Scarborough



1. Attendance and Apologies for Absence

To be recorded in accordance with the agreed membership of the Forum

Apologies were received from Janice Astley, Jenny Birkin, (Cllr) Anne Cheetham, Caroline Clayton, Stephanie Carter, Helen Dicker, Rosie Fearn, (Cllr) Stewart Jones, Michelle O'Neill and Anna Smith.

2. Substitute Members

Substitute members were welcomed to the meeting:

- Vicki Newsome attended as a substitute for Anna Smith

3. Forum Membership

This report provided information on membership changes since the last meeting:

Members leaving the Forum as part of the annual membership review included:

Helen Dicker Academy Governor
Liz Laverty PRU Governor
Emma Smurthwaite Primary School Governor

The LA is making arrangements to seek replacement representatives for September 2023. Members are asked to note that Liz Laverty will continue to attend Schools Forum meetings as an observer.

Members also welcomed the following new members to their first Forum Meeting

Stuart Booth - Primary School Headteacher
Kirsty Sutton - Primary School Headteacher
Julie Jones - Catholic Diocesan Representative
Lorimer Russell-Hayes - LASGB Observer

The Forum:

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Expressed thanks to those members leaving the Forum**
- c) Welcomed new members to the Forum**

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 16 March 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

5. Matters Arising

Steve Little, Principal Estates Surveyor, attended the meeting to present an update on School Rates, following a request at the March 2023 Schools Forum meeting.

Currently, 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 took effect from 1 April 2023.

For any further queries, please contact the estates mailbox
EstatesNNDR@lancashire.gov.uk.

The Forum:



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

6. Financial Support Services to Schools

Roger Livesey and Emma Nicholson, Schools Finance Senior Accountants attended the meeting to present an overview of the Schools Financial Services, following a request at the March 2023 Schools Forum meeting.

The Schools Finance Team offers a wide range of professional support services to assist schools in managing their budgets.

The team has a reputation throughout Lancashire for high quality support, advice, and training. The team build strong working relationships helping to ensure the work with schools delivers improved financial management.

This ensures resources are spent wisely and properly allowing schools to provide high-quality teaching and learning and so raise standards and attainment for all pupils. The Service Level Agreement was shared to members and can be found on the Schools Portal.

For any further queries, please contact the Schools Finance mailbox schoolsfinanceSLA@lancashire.gov.uk.

The Forum:

- a) **Noted the information.**
- b) **Thanked Officers for their presentation**

7. Lancashire School Library Service

Diane Scarborough, School Library Service Manager attended to deliver a presentation around the services the team provide to Schools.

The Lancashire School Library service offers a traded subscriptions at varying levels tailored to the school needs. These include core collection of books, curriculum boxes to support teaching and various interactive sessions.

For any further queries, please contact lancashireschoollibraryservice@lancashire.gov.uk.

The Forum:

- a) **Noted the information.**
- b) **Thanked Diane for her presentation**

8. School Budget Outturn 2022 - 2023

This report provided details of the 2022/23 Schools Budget final financial outturn position, in relation to each funding block. A copy of the full report was provided for members.

Further details were provided in connection with each funding block and members concentrated on the High Needs Block position. It was noted that the outturn position for the 2022/23 High Needs Block revealed a circa £0.75m overspent. Some key issues were highlighted.



The Forum:

- a) Noted the information.**
- b) Welcomed further information around the**

9. School Balances 2022 - 2023 and Clawback

This report set out the year end position of schools' delegated budgets at 31 March 2023. A copy of the full report presented to the group was provided for members.

The report highlights that the overall school balances have decreased from c£95m to c£73m, an overall in the 2022/23 financial year.

Further details were provided, and members concentrated on the Schools Block schools. It was noted that, in total 42 schools were in deficit at March 2023, which is twice the amount at March 2022. This shows the number of schools in deficit at 31st March is similar to pre pandemic levels.

It was also noted that the year end position did include grant funding from DfE that was allocated on an academic year basis and analysis provided by schools about their year end position at 31 March 2023 indicated that circa £15m of total balances are classed as 'committed'.

Clawback Policy

Whilst clawback had been suspended on year end balances at March 2020, 2021 and 2022. In July 2022, the Forum voted to reintroduce clawback at March 2023 and increase the minimum balance thresholds, policy is as follows:

- 12% of Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) income for all phases of maintained school
- A £75,000 minimum balance threshold will be applied.

The Forum are now asked to consider the school balances and clawback policy to be applied at 31 March 2024.

The Forum:

- a) Noted the report;**
- b) Noted the overall position on school balances at 31 March 2023, including the individual school level information provided in the report;**
- c) On balance, recommended that clawback of revenue balances above the guideline figure should be reinstated at 31 March 2024, at previous levels:**
 - **A clawback rate of 50% is to be applied to any balance above 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);**

10. Schools Forum Annual Report 2022 – 2023

Each year the Schools Forum publishes an annual report setting out items of business in which the Forum has been involved

A draft report for 2022/2023 was presented to the Working Groups and the Forum for consideration.



The Forum:

- a) **Noted the report;**
- b) **Approved the 2022/23 Annual Report be for publication.**

11. Early Years entitlement expansion and wraparound childcare pathfinder scheme

Since the Early Years Block Working Group, the LA has received notification around the funding of additional early years provision.

The additional funding will be issued via the Early Years Supplementary Grant rather than increasing the rate. More information should be provided before the Summer Break and will be reported at the next Schools Forum.

The Forum:

- a) **Noted the information**

12. Recommendations from the Schools Block Working Group

On 20 June 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. Health and Safety Update

Jill Cornwell, Service Delivery Manager Health, Safety and Quality attended the meeting to provide information around hiring swimming pool on school grounds. The authority are aware of this and had been working with the provider to create a suitable risk assessment for schools risk assessment

Following the meeting it was noted that current providers are unable to accommodate children with mobility needs or disabilities and difficulties who are unable to access the pool via the stepladders provided. There are no accessible facilities, therefore any school considering this model of delivery will need to consider the impact on children who need support to access a pool and make alternative arrangements for them to be able to take part in swimming lessons. Schools are advised to comply the guidance and risk assessments available on the Schools Portal.

The Forum:

- a) **Noted the report and thanked Jill for the update**

2. De-Delegation Proposals 2024/25

In accordance with normal practice, it is envisaged that a de-delegation consultation will be issued to maintained primary and secondary schools in early September 2023, with responses being reported to the meeting on 17 October 2023, at which time the Forum will be asked to make formal decisions, by phase, on each de-delegation proposal.

In 2023/24, the Forum formally approved 4 service de-delegations, relating to:

- Staff costs – Public Duties/Suspensions
- Heritage Learning Service - Primary Schools Only
- Inclusion Hubs - Primary Schools Only



- Schools who Require Additional Support

Relevant de-delegations were also offered to nursery schools, special schools and PRUs as pooled services buy-backs.

For 2023/24, the LA is again proposing to consult on the continuation with some aspects of the services as de-delegations, and merging the Schools in Financial Difficulty and School Improvement de-delegation. Further information was provided on each service.

3. High Needs Block Supplementary Grant Task and Finish Group

Using the agreed methodology, £2.5m remained unallocated. During the Spring Term Forum meetings, it was agreed to set up a task and finish group to allocate the remaining funding.

In Summary the funding was allocated;

- £600k to create two central Inclusion Engagement Support Teams to support children without an Educational Health Care Plans, funded for one year.
- £400k allocated to Y11/12 transition teams for Alternative Provision schools, administered through SEND central team.
- £150k Support for transition between EYFS/Reception to be funded through the inclusion hub banker schools.
- £300k Support for transition between Y6/7 to be to be funded through the inclusion hub banker schools.
- £1,050,000 to be transferred back to Reserves for High Needs Block.

A letter was sent to all schools on 30th March and the minutes were provided to members in the working group papers.

This report was also presented and noted at the High Needs Block and Early Years Block.

The Forum:

- a) **Noted the information**

4. PFI updates

PFI historic Commitments

Following the submission of the Authority Proforma Tool (APT) in December 2022, the ESFA raised concerns in February 2023 around PFI funding. The Local authority were instructed to remove any historic PFI commitments by the ESFA. Unfortunately, this led to a reduction in PFI funding for six settings in Lancashire.

PFI Hameldon Site

Officers were finally successful in getting DfE to support the authority in transferring, and therefore retaining, the PFI Funding for the Hameldon Site. To note, the PFI Gap



funding will no longer grow each year as previously within the Schools Block, however, this is similar to the PFI Gap funding for all the other Special Schools.

The forum would like to pass on thanks to Paul Bonser and Kevin Smith for all their work in securing this funding.

The Forum:

- a) **Noted the information**
- b) **Thank Officers for their work on securing the funding**
- c)

13. Recommendations from the High Needs Block Working Group

To consider the recommendations from the High Needs Block Working Group from 13 June 2023.

1. High Needs Block Commissioned Places

No changes are proposed to the PRU process, with correspondence on indicative place numbers for 2024/25 being circulated in autumn term 2023, to include input from the service to refine the commissioned places, and the continuation of the additional place top up funding arrangements as a continued safety mechanism

Sapphire Murray shared a report around the current Alternative Provision service, this can be found in Appendix A.

The outcome of this report is to create a panel to make collective decision regarding allocation of intervention places at PRUs. Currently seeking representatives to set up a task and finish group to organise a more efficient process.

Thanks to those members who have volunteered to be part of the group. If any other members wish to be on the group, please let the Schools Forum Clerk know.

The Forum:

- a) **Noted the Information**
- b) **Thanked members who had volunteered to the group**

2. SEN Green Paper

The report was included in the working group papers for information. The LA are awaiting any further updates.

The Forum:

- a) **Noted the report**

3. EHCP funding challenges

Andrea Riley, Senior SEND Manager, presented a presentation to the Working Group around the challenges faced by schools around SEND funding.

It was noted that Lancashire follow the Nation Funding Formula and increase the WPN year on year were there is capacity to do so. Schools also receive Notional SEN funding which should be the starting point of any queries.



To resolve these issues going forward, Schools Finance Officers will attend an Inclusion team meeting to provide an overview of school funding.

The Forum:

- a) **Noted the information**

14. Recommendations from the Early Years Block Working Group

To consider the recommendations from the Early Years Block Working Group from 8 June 2023.

1. Matters Arising from the Last meeting

Early Years Recruitment

Recent Early Years recruitment advertising campaign has received over 3000 hits. However, it hasn't not led to any recruitment. A social media campaign is being arranged to widen the audience and posters advertising vacancies are also being sent to settings.

2. Early Years Funding Claims Internal Audit

The Working group were presented a report following an audit review of the school's early years funding claims for 2, 3 & 4 year old children

As a result, £16,636.52 will be recovered over two financial years from the school. Following the Audit review, the Early Years Parental Funding Agreement, Terms and Conditions and guidance notes have been reviewed

The Forum:

- a) **Noted the Information**

3. Any other Business

National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) Conference

Potentially a further 60,000 children eligible for the additional early provision funding from September 2023 with approximately 10% of the children with need additional support. This was noted as a severe risk to the Local Authority across the Early Years Sectors.

The Forum:

- a) **Noted the Information and concerns**
- b) **Welcomed any future updates**

15. Urgent Business

No decisions have been taken using the Urgent Business Procedure since the last meeting.

16. Forum Correspondence

There is no Forum related correspondence to consider at this meeting.

17. Any Other Business



It's suggested that all presentations or reports to be presented at Forum meetings be sent to the Schools Forum Clerk two weeks prior to meeting to allow papers to be sent out on time.

The Forum:

a) Supported the introduction of deadlines

18. Date of Future Meetings

To note that the next scheduled Forum meeting will be held at 10.00 am on Tuesday 17 October 2023. Arrangements for the meeting will be confirmed in due course.

A copy of the forum schedule of meetings for the 2023/24 academic year included in the papers

