

SCHOOLS FORUM
VIRTUAL MEETING
HELD ON 11th OCTOBER 2022

PRESENT:

Primary Maintained School Headteacher: Mrs A Swift

Primary Academy Representative: Mrs S Richardson

Primary Governor: Mrs M Dowson

Secondary Academy Headteachers: Mr S White, Mrs M Wilkinson and Mrs L Spellman

Special School Representative: Mrs C Thomas

LA Representative: Councillor C Clark

Observers: Councillor L Evans
Mrs K Lovell-Spencer

OFFICIALS: Mr A Bryson – Chief Accountant
Mr M Gray – Director of Children's Services
Mr G Waller – Senior Accountant
Mr E Huntington – Head of Education
Mrs J Mills - SEND
Miss K Gallagher - Secretary to the Forum

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs C Taylor, Mrs E Carr, Mr E Squire, Ms B Atkinson, Mr R Henderson and Mrs L Graham

2. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Members were invited to declare any personal or business interests they may have in any item included on the agenda.

No interests were declared.

3. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 28th June 2022**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 28th June 2022 be approved.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

5. **PROVISIONAL FUNDING FORMULA 2023/24**

Mrs A Swift joined the meeting.

A Report had been shared outlined the provisional funding formula for 2023-24. It had been reported that this was for information purposes.

Mrs C Taylor questioned whether it would be the intention for the schools Forum to review the methodology relating to special Schools also in relation to the supplementary grant and how this is applied to the special school sector. Mr A Bryson reported that this

would form part of his report in January 2023 as there were too many uncertainties at present.

RESOLVED that the Report be received and noted.

6. BUDGET MONITORING – SCHOOLS BUDGETS 2022-23

A copy of the school's budget monitoring report for 2022-23 and supporting appendices had been circulated prior to the meeting to review.

The purpose of the paper provides members of the Forum with the outturn position of the school's budget and provides an overview of the Maintained School Balances for the 2022-23 financial year.

It had been reported that the paper provides members of the Forum with the current projected outturn position on the schools Budget based on information to the end of September 2022.

With the exception of exceptions highlighted within the report. It had been highlighted that the authority was expecting that there will be a balanced position by the end of the current financial year. The anticipated overspend on agency placements noted within the report would be offset by utilising the additional grant that was received for 2022/23.

Members of Schools Forum were drawn to previous discussion that the 2022/23 High Needs budget was set anticipating an in-year saving of £1.7m and based on a review of High Needs expenditure at quarter 2 it was still anticipated that this target would be met. It was reported that this saving should enable the LA to reduce the cumulative deficit brought forward from 2021/22 of £5.48m down to £3.78m which is in line with the current medium term financial plan.

The Chair questioned whether the agency placements were linked to the delayed opening of the free school. Mr A Bryson agreed that there had been an increase in placements. Mr M Gray added that the increase had now entirely been due to the free school and had also incorporated placements from the independent school Hartwell Special School in Stockton. It had been noted that the additional provision in Kiora Hall was anticipated to support with the additional expenditure allowing for costs to be monitored more closely.

RESOLVED that the financial position for Schools Forum be received and noted.

7. DELEGATION/DE-DELEGATION 2023/24

A report had been shared with Schools Forum members to review prior to the meeting. Mr A Bryson reported that the eligible Schools Forum members representing maintained schools need to seek the views of their respective maintained school representatives with a view to a vote at the schools Forum on the 15th November.

A summary of the report had been provided for information, as detailed below.

- Funding for de-delegated services must be allocated through the formula but can be passed back, or de-delegated for maintained primary and secondary schools with school forum approval.
- The authority is proposing the option of de-delegation (i.e., central management) for all of the areas covered in the report for 2023/24.
- As per previous years it was agreed that this paper would again be scheduled earlier in the year to allow, if required, eligible voting members time to seek the

views of their respective representative on the options open to them. Also, in the event of the proposal being rejected this would allow time to plan for the transfer of budgets and responsibilities.

The proposed areas for de-delegation had been circulated for consideration. In addition, an appendix had been shared outlining the proposals for Trade Union Facilities time. It had been noted that the trade unions were in agreement and if agreed at Schools Forum this would be managed by the Local Authority on their behalf.

Following a question relating to the School Improvement Function within the report, it was explained that only 50% of the costs of the previous grant were being requested within the dedelegation.

The Chair sought clarification as to whether maintained schools and academies were charged at the same rate for facilities time. Mr G Waller explained that this was the same unit rate for all schools.

RESOLVED that this item be discussed further at the next meeting.

8. DFE UPDATES RE FUNDING/CONSULTATION

A paper had been circulated providing a summary of the consultations for school forum members to review. The following key information had been shared regarding the consultations that the LA had responded to.

- Following on from the results of the 'Fair school funding for all: completing our reforms to the National Funding Formula' as detailed above, on the 7th June the Government published the next National Funding Consultation. This consultation focused further on the detail of the implementation of the direct NFF.
- SEND Review: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time. The SEND Review is a Department for Education Green Paper and consultation on the SEND and alternative provision (AP) system in England, presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Education Nadhim Zahawi on 29 March 2022.
- The DfE launched a consultation on 4 July 2022 on proposed changes to the early year's formula funding to local authorities. Many of the proposals in the consultation deal with updating the data sets behind the early years national funding formulas for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds to local authorities.

the Mr M Gray reported that with reference to the SEND review, the LA were working with DfE regarding the deficit. A further update would be provided at a future meeting regarding the progress of this piece of work. It was highlighted that it would be likely that a transfer request for funding would be considered or a further year to support the overspend in high needs funding. It had been confirmed that a high needs paper would be presented to Schools Forum members at the next meeting.

RESOLVED that the Consultation responses be received and noted.

9. MEETING DATES AND PROGRAMME OF WORK

It had been reported that this would be circulated once confirmed.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no further items of business.

11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that a calendar of meeting dates would be circulated once finalised.

DRAFT