

**Minutes of the Schools Forum – 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

**Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams and YouTube**

**Status: Draft**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Establishment</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Gill Eatough (GE) <b>Chair</b>	Learning Community Trust	Academies (Special)
Michael Scott (MS)	Newport Girls' High School	Academies
Christobel Cousins (CC)	Lilleshall Primary School	Maintained Primaries – Newport Cluster
Claire Whiting (CW)	Redhill Academy	Academies
Robert Fox (RF)	Donnington Wood Junior School	Maintained Primaries – North Cluster
Heather Davies (HD)	The Bridge Special School	Maintained Special Schools
Penny Hustwick (PH)	ABC Day Nurseries	PVI
Laura Arscott (LA)	Telford College	Post 16 Provision
Tom Cash (TC)	Kickstart Academy PRU	Academy PRUs
Darren Lennon (DL)	Linden Centre PRU	Maintained PRUs
Shirley Reynolds (SR)	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education and Lifelong Learning	T&W Cabinet
Simon Wellman (SW)	Director Education & Skills	Representative of the Executive Director of Children's services
Tim Davis (TD)	Group Accountant	Representative of the Director of Finance
Andy Wood (AW)	Senior Accountant - Schools	Representative of the Director of Finance

**1. Apologies - AW.**

1.1 Apologies were received from:

Rachel Cook – Newdale Primary School.  
Yvonne Crilly – Woodlands Primary School.  
Sarah Roberts – High Ercall Primary School.

1.2 GE welcomed Tom Cash to the Forum.

## **2. Minutes of the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021 meeting and matters arising - GE**

- 2.1 The minutes of the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021 were accepted as a true and accurate record.
- 2.2 There were no matters arising that would not be covered in the current meeting agenda.

[16<sup>th</sup> September 2021 approved minutes.](#)

## **3. School Funding Formula 2022-2023 - TD.**

- 3.1 TD provided a paper for the Forum on the schools block funding formula which can be found at the follow link:

[Schools Funding Formula paper.](#)

- 3.2 TD reiterated that the T&W funding formula would continue to replicate the national funding formula (NFF) as closely as possible.
- 3.3 TD advised that within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) schools block there is an allocation for growth funding. Historically we have used this to support those schools that have admitted pupils above their pupil admission number (PAN), or increased their PAN, at the LAs request. In recent years the additional funding allocated to those schools that have taken the additional pupils has been very similar to the growth funding allocated to the LA.
- 3.4 The current method of funding the additional pupil above PANs is to assume all current cohorts would remain intact and the new admission cohort would be PAN plus any agreed number over PAN. We also adjust for any underfunding against estimates from the previous funding year. This effectively funds growth in all cohorts.
- 3.5 When estimating the cost of growth funding for financial year 2022-2023 the estimates were over £300K more than the projected allocaton, if we use the current methodology.
- 3.6 A revised methodology was therefore modelled, using just the additional pupils in the Reception/Year seven cohorts. This reduced the overspend of the growth amount to around £182K which is manageable within the schools block as a whole. It was proposed that we move to the updated method of funding estimated pupils for FY2022-2023.
- 3.7 CW asked if we have modelled the formula to see the impact on schools of growth funding exceeding the allocation? TD stated that this had been modelled and that the overall impact on individual schools was modest given the amounts concerned and the general growth in funding per pupil.
- 3.8 SW stated that school organisation was working with schools to reorganise growth in other than the normal admission cohorts. It was therefore agreed that if a school admitted pupils above PAN following a request from the local authority, then this growth would be funded, even if the pupils were not in reception / year 7.

3.9 RF stated that there are 42 houses being built next to his school which could generate 20 additional pupils; will they receive any growth funding? SW stated that there would need to be a conversation directly with the schools, but assured the Forum that work was being done on sufficiency.

3.10 CW stated her concern around the number of houses being built in Priorslee and the potential additional pupils. SW reiterated that planning is ongoing to ensure that sufficiency pressures were managed. Plans would be communicated out to schools once firmed up.

3.11 RF reminded the Forum that previously when secondary pupil numbers were falling funding was held back to support the schools with falling numbers and now secondary numbers are rising we are again supporting them by allocating additional funding. TD accepted the point, although the number of spare places was reduced via BSF (i.e. a reduction in the number of secondary schools) and T&Ws move to mirroring the NFF as far as possible has addressed any legacy disparities within the funding formula (i.e. the secondary – primary funding ratio).

#### **4. Arrangements for funding statutory services provided by the Local Authority – Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) and De-delegation - TD.**

4.1 The Forum were presented with two papers on this agenda item; the first being the background and the request for funding and the second being the numbers behind the request:

[Funding for statutory central services word document.](#)

[Funding for statutory services numbers behind request.](#)

4.2 TD stated that the papers presented should look familiar as they are updated from previous years i.e. for slight inflation in some areas and for the pupil numbers driving the rates per pupil contributions.

4.3 The majority of Foun members remembered discussions concerning the funding of these services from previous years.

4.4 The vote for the funding from the CSSB was unanimously in favour of the local authority retaining the funding detailed in the second paper for central services.

4.5 The vote for de-delegation of funding for statutory services relating only to maintained schools was in favour of de-delegating the funding detailed in the second paper for central services.

#### **5. De-delegation for Free School Meal eligibility checks - TD.**

5.1 The Forum was presented with a paper on this agenda item which can be found at the link below:

[De-delegation for FSM eligibility checks paper.](#)

5.2 Separate votes are required for primary maintained and secondary maintained representatives. However, the Forum was reminded that we currently do not have a maintained secondary school representative. The local authority had therefore sought the views of both maintained secondary schools. One has replied to date, in favour of de-delegation.

5.3 Maintained primary schools voted on behalf of the primary phase and voted in favour of De-delegation.

## **6. Funding for School Improvement services for maintained schools - TD.**

6.1 TD introduced this item by stating that this refers to a recent DfE announcement and that there would be a further paper produced for the January 2022 meeting. The School Improvement and Brokerage Grant was introduced when the ESG was ended, to support local authorities retained duties to support school improvement.

6.2 The LA received £181,652 in the FY2021-22. Under current DfE/ESFA proposals allocations will reduce by 50% in FY2022-23, before ceasing completely in the following year. The DfE intends to require local authorities to ask maintained schools to de-delegate funding to the LA for this statutory duty. The £50m currently allocated nationally for the School Improvement and Brokerage grant will not be recycled to maintained schools to support this.

6.3 SW stated that there needed to be work done and consultations prior to asking the Forum for de-delegation in January 2022.

6.4 GE urged schools to complete the DfE/ESFA consultation to state their views on the withdrawal of this funding from maintained schools.

6.5 RF asked how the LA would persuade schools to support the funding of the LA for this service. SW responded that details would be provided shortly.

## **7. 2021 Budget & Spending Review: Implications for schools - TD.**

7.1 TD presented a paper to the Forum which can be found at the link:

[Budget and Spending Review 2021.](#)

7.2 The paper is written in two halves; the first outlining the main points effecting schools in the Government announcement and the second a commentary on the possible real terms impact upon schools.

7.3 HD pointed out that there are additional pressures on special schools as they have a high proportion of employees on the lower pay scales who will be attracting above inflation pay rises over the period of the announcement. TD responded saying that the High Needs block

had again received a reasonable increase and that some of this funding would be deployed to ensure special schools are able to operate sustainably.

7.4 HD also stated that staff retention was becoming a problem as other employers are prepared to pay more than the schools for those lower pay scale staff.

## **8. AOB - GE.**

8.1 There being no items raised from the membership the meeting ended at 10:40.

## **9. Next Meetings**

The dates of the forthcoming meetings for the academic year 2021/2022, are as follows:

- Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 9.30 am
- Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 9.30 am
- Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 9.30 am

[Planned Forum Meetings](#)