



# **SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING MINUTES**

**HELD ON 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

**8.30am**

**Microsoft Teams meeting**

Position	Attendee	14 January 2021	10 February 2021	16 June 2021	13 October 2021	8 <sup>th</sup> December 2021
<b>Chairing the meeting</b>						
Chair	Michelle Smith	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vice Chair	Rob Andrew	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>18 School Members</b>						
<b>Appointed Members</b>						
<b>8 Maintained School reps:</b>						
Maintained Secondary Head	Peter Tite	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maintained Primary Head	Rob Andrew	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maintained Primary Head	Susan Aldred	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maintained Primary Head	Michelle Smith	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maintained Primary Head	Carolyn Morris	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Maintained Primary Head	Vicky Brown	✓	A	✓	✓	✓
Maintained Special Head	Rik Robinson		✓	✓	✓	✓
Maintained Infant School Head	Gillian Crompton	A	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maintained PRU Head	Vicki Michael	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>2 Free School reps:</b>						
Free School Head	Claire Gammon	A	A	A		✓
Alt' Provision Free School Head	Gary Holding	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>4 Academy reps:</b>						
Secondary Academy Head	Dean Logan	✓	✓	✓	✓	A
Secondary Academy Head	Diane Atkinson	A	✓	A		
Primary Academy Head	Donna Simpson	A	A		✓	✓
Special Academy Head	Jen Ashworth		✓	✓		
<b>4 Governors:</b>						
Secondary Governor	Gillian Yates	✓				✓
Primary Governor	Brian Peacock / Vacant					
Primary Governor	Pauline Lovick	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Primary Governor	Helen Holden	✓	✓	A	✓	
<b>4 Non-school members:</b>						
Teacher Unions	Simon Jones	✓	✓	✓		✓
Non-Teaching Unions	Paul Crewe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Post 16 FE College	Fazal Dad / Elissa Best	✓ / A	✓ / A	A / ✓	✓	/A
Early Years Provider	Tracy Ellett					
<b>Schools Forum Members present</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>17</b>
<i>Quorate 40% of filled posts</i>		<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>
<b>In Attendance</b>						
LA Officers	Jenny Hackett	✓	✓	✓		
LA Officers	Kirsty Thompson				✓	✓
LA Officers	Kirsten Reid	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LA Officers	Jayne Ivory / Carol Grimshaw / Alison Ashworth- Taylor	✓				
LA Officers	Jo Siddle	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LA Officers	Simon Ross	✓				
LA Officers	Safiyya Mulla	✓	✓	✓	A	✓
LA Officers	Dean Langton				✓	✓
Council Members	Cllr Julie Gunn				✓	A
LA Officers	Corrine McMillan					
<b>Total</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>

## 1. Welcome and introductions

Michelle Smith (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Stephen Jones attended the Schools Forum today as an observer.

Apologies were received from Dean Logan, Cllr Julie Gunn, Diane Atkinson and Elissa Best.

## 2. Minutes from the previous meeting

It was agreed that the minutes from 13<sup>th</sup> October 2021 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

## 3. Matters arising

KT has mentioned in the governor training for any governors who are willing to be on the Schools Forum. Stephen Jones is observing the meeting today and he will decide after the meeting today whether he wants to attend the meeting as a governor rep going forward.

## 4. Membership for 2021/22 academic year

- a) Vote of new Chair and Vice Chair – this will be Michelle's last meeting as she will be leaving for her new role. RA mentioned that he will be happy to take up the role of the Chair if no one steps up. JS advised RA that he will be supported by KT and KR as Chair. GC agreed to be Vice Chair. It was agreed that Rob Andrew will be Chair and Gillian Crompton will be Vice Chair of the School Forum.
- b) New members – Stephen Jones attended the meeting as a governor rep.
- c) Remaining vacancies – primary representative. KT explained that we will need secondary representative as well as primary representative as Diane Atkinson has left the School Forum. JS mentioned that this will be Rik's last meeting and the interim Headteacher will step in from January for maintained special school. SA suggested to ask SIG 4 members. JS and KR will contact SIG 4 members. GC will ask the SIG 3 members today.

**Action: GC to contact SIG 3 members and JS and KR to contact SIG 4 members for any Secondary or Primary reps.**

## 5. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Monitoring Report 2021/22

KT updated members the budget position of the 2021/22 DSG until November 2021.

There has been an increase in EHCPs and in demand for places in SEN settings which is reflected in the forecast overspend of £418k on the High Needs Block and it is expected for this to cover the overspend to year end, therefore it is showing a forecast break even position.

We have been allocated £101k by the panel for short-term interventions of £386k. Some of the schools haven't requested the money yet. This won't be an overspend. Its ring fenced so the money will be carried forward to the next financial year.

Maternity reimbursement is aligned with the original budget allocation.

In table 4.1, the Schools block and Central Services block budgets are both unlikely to change significantly.

In the High Needs block, there currently is an over spend within the top up funding for the special schools, this is due to new children attending those schools and also due to a change in bandings for children with EHCPs. There is also an over spend on the mainstream top up funding. This is due to the new children being granted an EHCP but instead of moving to a special school their needs have been met within mainstream school settings. This is a good use of the High Needs budget and shows how inclusive Blackburn with Darwen are with supporting their SEND children. The High Needs contingency pot was set aside at the beginning of the financial year, to cover the increase in demand over the year, currently we are forecasting that this additional fund will break even at year end.

JS asked about the emergency pot and what the schools are doing with that. If the emergency pot is just for children for school age and not nurseries. GC explained that some nursery schools are asking for the emergency pot. Nurseries are not funded the same as the school settings. GC will raise it at the SENCO meeting. KT mentioned that the transfer from the High Needs is all schools but not the nurseries as they are funded through early years. JS suggested that this is something RA, GC and Alison could work on for next year and maybe see evidence of how the money is spent. GC will bring a report to the next meeting and members can have a vote and discussion at the meeting in January.

## **6. Schools Block De-delegated Funding 2022/23 including the results from the Consultation**

The consultation went to schools on 28<sup>th</sup> October 21 and the closing date was 12<sup>th</sup> November 21.

The first question to the schools was if they agree to continue to de-delegate from the maintained schools in 2022/23, and whether they agreed to a 1.75% or a 3% increase of the rate from 2021/22 in 2022/23. 26 schools responded and 8 agreed for the 1.75% increase and 18 agreed to the 3%.

The next question to the schools was if they agree to consider a transfer of up to 0.5% from the Schools block to the High Needs block if required. 30 schools responded and all 30 said yes.

School Forum members were asked to vote on the de-delegation following the results from the consultation:

- For the de-delegation increase – all 8 people eligible to vote from the maintained schools agreed to continue with the de-delegation including a 3% increase on the rates for 2022/23
- For the transfer of up 0.5% from Schools block to High Needs if required – all members agreed

The consultation has taken place for the school brokering grant and no feedback has yet been received. The outcomes will probably be shared at the end of December or early January. KT stated, It doesn't leave much time if it is to be de-delegated as the school budgets have to be calculated by the middle of January 2022. JS explained that we have been using the school brokering grant for all our children in BWD. We have responded to the consultation and made it clear at BWD we are against the removal of the school brokering grant. It was discussed that the reason behind the consultation was to include academy's as this grant is given to LA's for maintained schools only. Therefore those schools that are not maintained across the country feel they are not receiving the support from their LAs, however at BwD we have used this funding to support the Mainstream and Academy schools in our area. JS wanted to reassure the maintained schools that we have got the funding currently and will continue to provide the support for 2022/23.

## 7. Historical Commitments 2022/23

The Central Services School Block is made of two elements: the residual funding for historical commitments and retained duties element. The DfE applied a 20% reduction to these budget lines on 2021/22 and they have announced that a further cut of 20% will be applied in 2022/23.

In 4.1, the table shows that the contribution to music service for 2022/23 has halved since the introduction of the 20% reduction in 2019/20. For the Contribution to Music Services, the reserves of £93k exist which have covered the shortfall in 2021/22 and will be able to do so again in 2022/23. The service will need to be reviewed in 2023/24 if the reductions continue at the same rate as the reserves will have been used up by the end of 2022/23. We will need to look at it again next year.

The allocation of funding for SIGs 2021/22 will be approved by the SIB. The budget for 2021/22 is £224,000. Primary, Secondary, Special and PRU will all be funded at £4,000.

Schools can still decide to de-delegate Schools Block funding for School Improvement, the options for 2022/23 are:

- To de-delegate per-pupil amount from the Schools Block - the amount based on current pupil numbers would be approx. £8.84 per pupil.
- To reduce the funding for each school from £4,000 to £3,200 for all schools in 2022/23 in line with the rolling 20% reduction of the grant.

For Broadband Connectivity; this needs looking at. The underspends have been used to cover the funding shortfall in 2020/21 and will be able to do so again in 2022/23. JS explained that some schools might buy into the broadband connectivity. JS and KT to put something in the HT bulletin about the historical commitments.

For Capital Expenditure, the contribution to the capital programme was reduced in previous years and will be reduced further in 2022/23.

**Action: JS and KT to put something in the HT bulletin about the historical commitments**

PT mentioned that 9 secondary schools have agreed for the additional funding

## 8. Growth Funding

Within the Schools Block of the DSG, LA will receive a growth fund allocation. The funding probably will be allocated next week which can be used for the following:

- To support growth in pre-16 pupil numbers to meet basic need
- To support additional classes needed to meet the infant class size regulation
- To meet the costs of new schools

If a school is asked to increase their numbers in September:

- For maintained schools - it will be 7 months before they receive any funding in their budget for the additional pupils.
- For academies - it will be 12 months before they receive any funding in their budget for the additional pupils

The current growth funding policy is to pay schools the Basic Entitlement element. Any growth in pupil numbers will be funded through growth funding and must be maintained for the whole period of that academic year. If pupils are admitted to a school after the October census, the school will have to educate the pupil for at least one financial year without

receiving any funding for them. For many schools the number of in-year admissions is not significant and may be offset by the impact of pupils leaving after the October census. Some schools accept in-year admissions through the Fair Access system.

A Mobility Factor is included in the national funding formula for children who first register in school in either spring or summer term. If pupils account for more than 6% of the school cohort, the school will receive an element of funding for pupils above the 6% threshold in addition to the Basic Entitlement. The Mobility Factor in financial year 2022/23 is expected to be £900 per pupil. The funding will only appear in school budgets in the financial year after the pupil first appears in October census

We are considering allocating an amount of funding for each additional pupil admitted into schools after the census date, over and above the 6% threshold adopted by the DfE. Funding would be paid in the autumn term of the academic year following the year of growth.

The final 2022/23 Schools Block allocation for Blackburn with Darwen will be announced in December 2021.

The forecast demand on the 2022/23 growth fund will be calculated based on the following:

- All schools who are asked to take additional pupils in September 2022 will receive additional funding for these pupils based on the Basic Entitlement.
- Any school whose pupil numbers grow by more than 6% between the October census and the end of the academic year will receive some additional funding for these pupils

The proposals will be brought to the Schools Forum meeting in February 2022.

JS mentioned that this mainly affects the secondary schools as we have asked the secondary schools to increase their year 7 intakes. PT explained that we need to keep an eye on the in-year access.

## **9. Any Other Business**

PC asked if this was Dean Logan's last meeting. KR mentioned that we will have no academic rep. KR to double check with Dean Logan.

SJ mentioned that the Local Education Committee are sending a book to schools. If any school haven't received the books to let SJ know. SJ wished everyone a Merry Christmas

JS wanted to thank Rik on behalf of the Schools Forum and wished him luck in his job in Dewsbury. JS will send Diane Atkinson a thank you from the Schools Forum. JS thanked Michelle for being Chair of the Schools Forum and thanked Michelle for everything she has done for the Schools Forum and wished her luck in her new job.

Chair thanked everyone and wished everyone a Happy Christmas

## **10. Dates for future meetings**

- 12th January 2022
- 9th February 2022