

**Schools' Forum Meeting**  
**8 November 2019**

**Attendees:**

**Members**

Christopher Simmons (CS) (Governor)  
Jo Heaton (JHe) (Diocese of Durham)  
Louise Robson (LR) (Academy – Special)  
Mark Hughes (MHu) 16-19 Sector  
Martyn Gordon (MG) PRU  
Mandy Hall (MHa) (Primary Academy <25 FSM)  
Sue Sharpe (SS) (Large Deprived)  
Emma Espley (EE) (Secondary Schools)  
Zoe Westley (ZW) (Special Schools)  
David Turner (DT) (Small)  
Mark Tilling (MT) (Secondary Schools)  
Julie Thomas (JT) (Primary Academy >50% FSM)  
Helen O'Brien (HO) (Large <50%) (From item 6.7)  
Sarah Tait (ST) (arrived late)

**Local Authority Officers**

Amanda Whitehead  
(Assistant Director Education)  
Danielle Swainston (DS)  
(Assistant Director Children &  
Joint Commissioning Services)  
Sandra Shears (SSh)  
(Children's Finance)  
Jane Watt (JW) (Children's  
Finance)  
Judith Oliver (JO)  
(Administrator)

**Observer**

Lisa Greig (LG) Catcote

<b>Agenda Item</b>		<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	
1.1	Jo Wilson, Julie Deville, Tracey Gibson, Penny Thompson, Rachel Clark, Rachel Williams, Neil Nottingham, Mary Frain, Lynne Chambers, Amanda Baines	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising– 25 October 2019</b>	
2.1	ZW was present at the meeting.	
2.2	<u>Item 2.3</u> – ZW noted that the response in relation to ARP was still outstanding. JW circulated information, however, this was the commissioning agreement, and does not answer the query. The Capital Sub Group were looking into building insurance and risk assessments, and who the responsible person is. DS to provide response.	<b>DS</b>
2.3	<u>Item 6.13</u> – The extreme complex cases that are coming through are not just SEMH.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>National Funding Formula (I) (standard item)</b>	
3.1	To be covered in later agenda items.	

<p><b>4.</b></p> <p>4.1</p>	<p><b>SEND free school update (standard item)</b></p> <p>Interviews are scheduled, however, the Local Authority have been informed that these cannot take place until after the election. DS is currently working through the evaluation process, and will be pushing for interviews to take place before Christmas.</p>	
<p><b>5.</b></p> <p>5.1</p>	<p><b>SEMH (standard item)</b></p> <p>The Capital Sub Group are in the process of discussing Rossmere ARP, currently awaiting building regulation approval for change of use before a decision regarding funding can be made.</p>	
	<p><b>6. Central Services School Block Update 2020/21</b></p> <p>6.1 Following the report being discussed on 13 September 2019 indicative government funding has now been confirmed.</p> <p>6.2 There is an expectation from the government that the year on year costs for historic commitments should be reduced over time and that 20% funding cut is reasonable.</p> <p>6.3 There are two items in the historic costs: Brierton pension costs and licences.</p> <p>6.4 An appeal has been lodged, as the two historic items will not decrease, but increase year on year. Discussed that in the future further funding will be required from the Schools Block to support this, should the 20% cut continue in coming years.</p> <p>6.5 SSh noted that funding goes back to the S251 historic commitments, and the government are saying that these costs should be reducing over time. However, some of the items that were included as historic funding are not historic in nature so the generalisation that they will reduce over time is incorrect. This is why an appeal has been lodged.</p> <p>6.6 It is proposed that a block transfer of £0.267m be transferred from the Central School Services Block to the Schools Block in 2020/21.</p> <p>6.7 JHe asked about the feasibility of an analysis projection for Brierton pension costs to understand the expected profile of costs over time. SSh only has names without detailed information.</p> <p>6.8 A vote is required on the agreement of the proposed block transfer of £0.267m from Central School Services Block into the schools block in 2020/21.</p> <p><b>Vote</b></p> <p>In favour – all                  Against – none                  Abstentions – none</p>	

7.	<b>Indicative School Block Budgets 2020/21</b>	
7.1	The report circulated presents information requested at the last meeting. Noted that there is a 1.84% guaranteed increase per pupil in the National Funding Formula. There is also a compulsory minimum level on the basis of pupil-led funding plus school-led funding. Two primary schools in Hartlepool benefit from the new minimum per pupil.	
7.2	Core formula factors have been increased by 4% in 2020/21, with the exception of school meals that has increased by 1.84%.	
7.3	Hartlepool schools have never benefitted for the mobility factor, however, with the change in the formulaic approach in 2020/21 there will be an income of approximately £38k. Any new pupils between October census dates will attract funding, above a threshold of 6%. JW to confirm if these include pupils moving from in borough or are limited to out of borough. Further clarification is required, particularly as the mobility within Hartlepool is so high.	<b>JW</b>
7.4	The ESFA have removed the gains cap from the schools formula, however, this does not affect the Hartlepool allocation.	
7.5	MT asked if every school will be receiving a 4% increase a 1.84% or something different. JW explained that the 4% is the uplift applied to formula rates such as AWPU, deprivation and it includes lump sum. Therefore, this is largely driven by pupil numbers, therefore, not all schools will receive a 4% increase across the board. The 1.84% is the government funding guaranteed increase per pupil.	
7.6	The Indicative NFF 2020/21 is based on the October 2018 census information and October 2019 census information will be updated in December 2019.	
7.7	Section 5 of the report refers to proposed block transfers that Forum are already aware of. The local authority will be required to submit a disapplication request even if Forum propose the transfer of £0.550m to high needs block.	
7.8	Regulations still allow a local MFG to be applied, and it was agreed for 2019/20 to apply a local cap of 1.70%.	
7.9	The local authority have to guarantee that all schools receive the Minimum Per Pupil (MPP) amount under the NFF test, even after a local MFG and cap are applied. The MPP is a compulsory requirement from 2020/21.	
7.10	MHa queried the relationship between the MPP and the proposed 1.84% MFG. and JW replied the MPP would always apply before any local MFG as that is a compulsory factor.. If necessary, schools below the MPP will receive more than 1.84%.	

7.11	Three different budget scenarios were circulated to the meeting (with variants for a local MFG and cap), and it is for Forum to decide which they vote on at a later date.	
7.12	DT commented that it is difficult to understand why some schools gain more under the budget models than others that appear to have similar pupil numbers and characteristics.	
7.13	To better understand this, DT proposed sharing Rift House information with Forum to look at how this affects the school. MHa also offered to share information for a comparison. DT noted that some schools are to receive a 6% increase and others are to receive a 2% increase, so it is important to see what is making the increase different.	
7.14	JHe felt it is the principal of the funding formula that needs to be looked at and the effect it has on schools, rather than comparing different schools. The formula isn't driven by Forum, and the increases are formula driven. Therefore, although factors may be understood more clearly, they are not capable of being changed.	
7.15	JW proposed looking at a list of similar schools, but comparing data not the funding. SH noted that the funding floor in the formula, along with any local MFG applied, goes back to 2013/14 funding, so there is still reliance in the budget models on historic amounts. Forum members moved on as they agreed that they should be concentrating on the principles of the MFG and not individual schools details.	
7.16	JW went through the four different appendices referred to in item 8.1 of the report. Although there are lots of different numbers and variances, it is possible to summarise the decision for Forum as whether to agree the principal of applying the maximum MFG of 1.84%	
7.17	ZW asked that it is noted that every school does not receive an increase, special schools and the PRU have received cuts of 1.5% for the last two years, and will be the same next year. SSh clarified this relates to Special Schools only and doesn't affect the PRU. A report was taken to Children's Services Committee for this three year cut based on a 98.5% MFG, on the recommendation of Forum. However, SSh explained this can be revisited if Forum chose to do so.	
7.18	Forum agreed that this should be brought back to a future meeting to discuss the funding of special schools and the PRU. . The paper would address how these establishments are currently funded, along with options for change and the impact on the high needs block. MT explained that the PRU Finance Committee are currently working through the PRU budgets to gain clarity on how the funding works at the moment, and will present this information to Forum as soon as there is sufficient understanding of the current model and options for change.	

7.19	Forum were reminded that a vote must take place at the next meeting on 15 November on whether Forum support the proposed £0.550m block transfer to the high needs block. The deadline for disapplication requests is 29 November. A vote on the options for setting a local policy on MFG protection and capping in 2020/21 can follow at a later meeting.	
7.20	An email was circulated, as a number of Forum members and their subs could not attend on 15 November. Any other requested representation was required prior to Forum, in order to approve the representatives.	
7.21	Only one request was made by Julie Thomas, and the request is for Gemma Kelly to attend to make vote on the items on Friday 15 November 2019. Forum agreed the request.	
7.22	Forum agreed that the voting process needs to be very clear. The options are not to block transfer, transfer £0.326m or transfer £0.550m. The Local Authority can also propose one of the above for Forum to vote upon.	
7.23	Following discussion it was agreed that £0.326 was not viable and this would be removed from the voting process.	
7.24	No other proposals will be brought to the meeting to consider voting upon.	
7.25	An email is to be sent to Forum to provide details of what members are voting upon at the meeting on 15 November 2019. Feedback is to be received by close of play Monday 12 November 2019. Forum will also be reminded of the importance to consult with their groups and also the importance of attendance in order to vote.	
7.26	MHa noted the size of groups does need to re-considered in order to have more of a discussion, as some groups have only 2 members, and this is also difficult having an small even number of members. The Chair noted that Forum can change the groupings if required. SSh confirmed that Neil Nottingham agreed the academy groupings previously.	
7.27	A report has been submitted to Children's Services Committee on 19 November 2019, and they will be receiving a verbal update from Schools' Forum following the meeting on 15 November 2019. SSh asked for any comments or feedback from Forum on the proposed block transfer to include in the Children's Services Committee report. Forum Members did not provide comments for inclusion in the report but felt that there was sufficient representation at Committee for a balanced view to be given.	<b>JW</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
8.1	Following meeting on 15 November 2019 the next meeting will be scheduled for early December 2019, when a vote will take place on the preferred model for schools budget (as in item 7).	

	Post meeting note: Following review of deadlines for Childrens Services Committee, the next Forum meeting needs to be scheduled for the last week of November instead.	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>	
9.1	Friday 15 November 2019 – CETL – 9am	