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| **Schools’ Forum Meeting**  **5 February 2020** |

**Attendees:**

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| **Members**  Christopher Simmons (CS) (Governor)  David Turner (DT) (Small)  Emma Espley (TG) (Secondary Schools)  Helen O’Brien (HO) (Large <50%)  Jane Dolphin (JD) (VA small) sub  Lynne Chambers (LC) (Primary-Academy >25% >50% FSM)  Mark Tilling (MT) (Secondary Schools)  Mary Frain (MF) (VA Large)  Rachel Williams (RW) Diocese – Roman Catholic  Sue Sharpe (SS) (Large Deprived)  Martyn Gordon (MG) PRU | **Local Authority Officers**  Amanda Whitehead (Assistant Director Education)  Danielle Swainston (DS) Assistant Direc  Sandra Shears (SSh) (Children’s Finance)  Jane Watt (JW) (Children’s Finance)  Eileen Larkin (EL) (Administrator)  Jo Stubbs (JS) (Administrator) |

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| **Agenda Item** | | **Action** |
| **1** | **Apologies -**  Lisa Greig (LG) Acting (Academy - Special)  Mark Hughes (MH) 16-19 Sector  Stephen Hammond (SH) (Academy – Secondary)  Tracey Gibson (TG) (Secondary Schools)  John Hardy (JH) |  |
| **2**  2.1  2.2  2.3  2.4 | **Minutes of the Last Meeting (26 November 2020) and Matters Arising**  Chair welcomed Jo Stubbs as the new administrator for this meeting.  EL was thanked for her time.  Minutes were accepted as a true record.  There were no matters arising. |  |
| **3**  3.1  3.2 | **National Funding Formula (I) (standard item)**  Chair advised that this was covered elsewhere on the Agenda.  MT enquired if schools had been given any information yet and was advised that their 2020/21 budgets would be in their budget packs. |  |
| **4**  4.1  4.2  4.3  4.4 | **SEND free school update (standard item)**  DS advised that interviews would be taking place on 6 February of 2 x potential providers who could both deliver.  DS would advise Forum of the outcome.  A potential problem was road onto the site as monies to fund this would need to be found. A discussion was had about this.  50 places have been confirmed. | **DS** |
| **5**  5.1  5.2  5.3 | **SEMH (Standard item)**  Chair advised that there was nothing to report.  A bid had been received from Rossmere school to reimburse costs relating to the ARP. Retrospect funding was approved. £38500 to be used. SSh would contact the school and inform them of the decision.  DS – suggested reviving the SEMH group. After discussion it was agreed to have a meeting first and then discuss how to move forward. | **Actioned**  **DS** |
| **6**  6.1  6.2  6.3  6.4  6.5  6.6  6.7 | **School Balances (Mid-Year Review) (R) (A)**  In accordance with the ‘Scheme for Financing Schools’, and as agreed by Schools’ Forum, schools are required to complete two balances surveys each year: one following outturn as at the end of March, and an update in December.  Concerns have been expressed regarding the ongoing high level of school balances.  Schools’ Forum agreed that a robust challenge would be made to ensure that schools are spending their balances effectively.  A Forum members’ triad panel, was set up to monitor this. Last year one school was referred to the panel.  As part of this review, the December update monitors the actual spend against the planned use identified in the March survey.  SSh referred to the report.  Forum members were asked to note contents of report**.**  Chair asked members to convene the Excess Balances Panel for the three primary schools beyond the agreed threshold. After discussion it was agreed that a 3rd person would be required as a Chair and Vice Chair were already in place.  MF felt that 3rd person nominated would need to consider where their school was in terms of budget to allow no conflict of interest. |  |
| **7**  7.1  7.2  7.3  7.4  7.5  7.6  7.7  7.8 | **High Needs Block Budget Update for 2020/21 (R) (D)**  This report confirms the latest high needs block allocation for 2020/21, along with an update on the block transfer position in order to confirm the level of available high needs funding in 2020/21.  JW referred to the report and an overview was given.  **Recommendations**  Forum were asked to:   1. Note the contents of the report, including the projected funding pressure for 2020/21; 2. Ratify the proposed amendment from the Secretary of State to transfer 0.5% (or £0.329m) of the schools block to the high needs block in 2020/21.   Helen O’Brien arrived at 9.22am.  **All Forum Members are eligible to vote on this proposal**  Vote was taken for ratification  **For** : All  **Against**: None  **Abstention :** None  Discussions took place around the new HNB Task & Finish Group .DT – requested a breakdown of costs (How the High Needs Block was funded) before Friday. JW advised that the information would be distributed prior to the meeting.  MT – highlighted that a substantial amount of money was still left in the SEMH capital pot. He felt that Forum need to consider how to use the money.  Action to bring back to forum report for next agenda. | **JW** |
| **8**  8.1  8.2  8.3  8.4  8.5  8.6  8.7 | **Growth Fund Update (R) (I)**  From 2019/20, ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) moved to a new formulaic approach that distributes growth funding on the basis of lagged pupil growth.    Hartlepool received a growth fund allocation of £0.157m as part of the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2019/20. Growth fund disbursement was completed in 2019/20 in line with the policy agreed by Schools’ Forum on 7 May 2019.  In December 2019, ESFA published growth funding of £0.343m for Hartlepool.  JW referred to the report.  **Recommendations**  Forum were recommended to note the contents of the report.  MT – felt that the funding was not reflected in special schools and asked if help could be given from the High Needs Block? Could this be looked into? Chair asked for this to be explored. | **JW** |
| **9**  9.1  9.1  9.2 | **School Budget Share Update 2020/21 – (R) (I)**  This report provides an updated school block allocation to reflect the updated allocations published by ESFA, along with the outcome of the two disapplication requests.  JW referred to the report and highlighted the changes that were made.  **Recommendations**  Forum were asked to note the changes to schools block funding outlined in the report. |  |
| **10**  10.1  10.2  10.3  10.4  10.5  10.6  10.7  10.8  10.9  10.10  10.11  10.12 | **Review of Schools’ Forum Constitution and Membership (R) (A)**  The report introduces a review of the Forum Constitution and presents the proposed revised membership of Forum based on the October 2019 census pupil numbers.  SSh referred to the report and an overview was given.  Members were asked if they wanted to change the current set up of the membership?  EE enquired if it was normal practice for the vice chair to become chair and was advised that this was the case.  MT – felt that members who did not turn up to 2 x consecutive meetings should be written to and reminded of the importance of attending.  A discussion was had about the Diocesan representatives.  MT requested that a table be drawn up to show attendance of forum members throughout the year.  CS – feels if a sub does not attend then a school is not represented.  SS – To feed back to HT meeting next week regarding looking a representation. 31 March should be deadline for names to be put forward for representation  MF – Catholic schools do not go MAT until 2022 and to be mindful of this.  AW to discuss at secondary heads meeting re HT at St Hild’s not wanting to be chair. To be discussed as a group and for decisions made.  The appointment of a Chair will be discussed also. | **AW** |
| **11**  11.1  11.2  11.3  11.4  11.5  11.6  11.7  11.8 | **Easter 2021 and Closure of Accounts (R) (A)**  This report provides an update on the statutory deadline for local authorities’ statutory accounts in 2020/21 with particular reference to the date Easter falls in 2021.  Good Friday falls on 2 April 2021 and Easter Monday on 5 April 2021.  SSh referred to the report  Sufficient time was needed to carry out necessary financial work. Visits to schools will be booked in. Visits will take place on Thursday 1st April or Tuesday and Wednesday 6th and 7th April.  **Recommendations**  Schools’ Forum is asked to:  a) note the contents of this report;  b) ensure that the head teachers (maintained schools only) they represent are aware that adequate staff cover is required in each school to support the closure of accounts over Easter 2021.  RW enquired about access to the schools for HBC staff due to unavailability of school staff to make a decision if on holiday. SSh advised that statutory deadline would still need to be adhered to and advised of the problems that would occur if deadline was not stuck to.  Chair – asked all Forum members to ask their schools to ensure that HBC staff have access to the accounts when requested. |  |
| **12**  12.1  12.2  12.3  12.4 | **Any Other Business**  MT – An update was given at Capital sub group meeting last week. Work on 3 projects was underway. Work on Fire doors work was to commence very shortly as the correct doors have now been identified. Work will start on schools asap.  SSh - Maintained schools – making tax digital. SSh advised that this new regulation should not impact school as they already kept invoices and petty cash vouchers for 6 years. Any update on this will be reported to a future Forum meeting.  MF – Forum members were asked to be aware that Anglian Water may need access to schools to check water metres. Any further improvements that they suggest may need to be acted upon. A discussion was had about this.  It was noted that Kieran Bostock (Transport and Infrastructure Manager) was looking further into this issue. |  |
| **13** | **Date and Time of Next Forum Meeting – 31 March 2020 @ 9am at CETL** |  |