Schools' Forum Meeting
24 September 2020

The meeting commenced at 10am and was an online remote meeting in compliance with the Council Procedure Rules Relating to the holding of Remote Meetings and the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Attendees:

Members

Carole Bradley (CB) (Large <50%)
Lynne Chambers (LC) (Primary-Academy >25% >50% FSM)
Tracey Gibson (TG) (Secondary Schools)
Lisa Greig (LG) Acting (Academy – Special)
John Hardy (JH) (VA Small)
Katie Hill (KH) (Diocese of Durham)
Mark Hughes (MH) 16-19 Sector
Neil Nottingham (NN) (Primary Academy >50% FSM)
Sue Sharpe (SS) (Large Deprived)
Christopher Simmons (CS) (Governor)
Sarah Tait (ST) (Academy – Secondary)
Penny Thompson (PT) (Early Years)
Mark Tilling (MT) (Secondary Schools)
David Turner (DT) (Small)
Lee Walker (LW) (Primary Academy >50% FSM)
Zoe Westley (ZW) (Special Schools)
Rachel Williams (RW) (Diocese – Roman Catholic)
Jo Wilson (JW) (VA Large)

Local Authority Officers

Amanda Whitehead (AW) (Assistant Director)
Jacqui Braithwaite (JB) (Integrated Services for Learning Manager)
Kelly Armstrong (KA) (Strategic Children Commissioner)
Sandra Shears (SSh) (Children's Finance)
Jane Watt (JWa) (Children's Finance)
Jo Stubbs (JS) (Administrator)

Agenda Item		Action
1	**Apologies -** Apologies were submitted by Jo Heaton (Diocese of Durham) with Katie Hill substituting for her and Stephen Hammond (Academy – Secondary) with Sarah Tait substituting for him	
2	**Minutes of the Last Meeting – 14 July 2020** Approved ZW updated members that work had commenced on the replacement hydro pool at Springwell School. Children's Services Committee had approved the additional costs at a meeting in August however the school would still	

	be required to contribute over 40% of the cost of the project rather than the standard 10% contribution.	
3	**Forum Membership Update** NN highlighted that LW had replaced Julie Thomas as representative for Primary Academy >50% FSM.	
4	**National Funding Formula (I) (standard item)** No updates	
5	**SEND free school update (standard item)** KA confirmed that 'Spark of Genius' had been appointed as the provider of the free school with initial planning ongoing between themselves and the DFE Capital Team. The school would be located behind Golden Flatts Primary with a proposed opening date of September 2022. MT requested a future report detailing how this school would link in with other available provision and fit together for young people. KA confirmed that the free school was aimed at students who were above the SEMH level but did not meet the criteria for Catcote or Springwell Schools. A report on the school's profile would be brought to a future meeting of the Schools Forum.	
6	**SEMH (Standard item)** This group had not met since the previous meeting due to the coronavirus pandemic.	
7	**High Needs Block 2020/21 – Estimated Outturn** JWa advised members that the final outturn for 2019/20 for the High Needs Block was an overspend of £0.521m. This meant that although overall Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) reserves were positive there was now a deficit on the High Needs Block reserves of £0.136m that would need to be repaid. The final allocation for 2020/21 for the High Needs Block was £11.209m. Officers had mapped out outturn estimates based on worst, mid and best case scenarios with the mid case showing a projected overspend of £0.155m. This would result in a year-end reserves deficit of £0.291m. Details were given of the various expenditure streams and their anticipated projections including independent school fees, top-up funding and support, exclusions and Pupil Referral Unit and post-16 top-up funding. DT referred to a working party which had been up by the Forum the previous year which had identified 6 areas of concern and representatives who could lead on looking at those areas. The Chair confirmed that a number of these areas had been dealt with and requested that officers revisit this and bring an update report to the next meeting.	

	MT noted the overspend on post-16 top-up funding and queried whether there was a way to recoup this. JW advised that it was difficult to predict what funding would be needed in this area as there was no way to know which pupils would want to take up further education and the cost of the courses they might choose. MT suggested that more funding be sought as more people were staying in inclusive education yet there was a gap in funding. KA advised that there had been continual lobbying for post-16 funding as the current funding was insufficient. MT expressed concerns that there would be a drop in apprenticeships and training providers as a result of the pandemic. MH queried whether the increase in post 16 education take up was a direct result of progressive routes now being made available to students. Was this something that would be a concern going forward or a temporary blip? Members noted the report.	
8	**High Needs Block Budget Proposals 2021/22** KA advised that there were historically pressures on the High Needs Block and the associated need for transfers from the Schools Block to support spending on critical SEND services. In 2020/21 there had been a 15% increase in High Needs Block funding however this was in the context of a 5 year funding shortfall which had failed to keep pace with demand for SEND support. As well as this increase a transfer from the School Block budget of 0.5% had been approved by the Forum. High Needs Block funding for 2021/22 showed a net increase of £1.151m. Funding concerns included a need to increase capacity at Catcote Academy based on current numbers at Springwell School and future costs of the new SEMH free school. There were also plans for a joint pilot arrangement between English Martyrs and Catcote Academy from September 2020 to reduce the number of children needing to be placed out of area. This would be funded at cost for the first 2 years but future funding would need to be included as part of budget considerations. Outturns based on worst, mid and best cases had been projected with the mid-case showing a High Needs Block deficit of £0.291m, If a 3 year repayment period was agreed this would add £0.97m to the 2021/22 budget requirement. Based on this calculation it was suggested that an increase of 2 or 3% inflation be considered for Catcote Academy and Springwell School in 2021/22. 2% in line with the funding floor guarantee in the Schools Block and the 3% in line with the minimum per pupil funding increase. This would be change from previous practice whereby both schools had received negative inflation from 2018/19 onward. Similar inflation increases on Individual Pupil Support and ARPs and backdated inflation based on Teaching Assistant Pay Awards could also be applied. Members of the Forum were asked to consult with the schools and sectors they represented on these inflation proposals and bring their comments /	

	considerations back to SSh by the end of the October half term. Final decisions would then be made by the Forum in November. ZW confirmed that a working group had previously been set up around the inflation proposals for Catcote and Springwell but had been unable to meet so far. She noted the financial model and asked that herself and LG be given the opportunity to discuss with finance officers how this proposal had come about and what this would mean for their schools. The Chair suggested these concerns be included as part of the consultation. JH acknowledged the backdated inflation proposals but asked that an exercise be carried out to calculate the level of funding schools would have received had inflation been applied. Members noted the report **Decision** That members would consult with the schools and sectors they represent on the proposals for the 2021/22 budget as set out in paragraphs 4.5 and 4.6 of the report and report back to the Forum via officers by the end of the October half term.	**KA, SSh, ZW, LG** **SSh**
9	**Indicative School Block Budgets 2021/22** JWa updated members on the indicative schools block funding issued by the ESFA in July 2020 and key national funding formula changes for 2021/22. These changes included the migration of the currently separate Teachers Pay Grant (TPG) and Teachers Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) into the Schools Block NFF for mainstream schools. Unit values for basic pupil funding had been increased by 3% along with other pupil led formula factors. There had been changes to the allocation of pupils with a move away from IDACI ranges and a move to rank based allocations. Schools would be funded for a minimum of 100 pupils for the TPG and TPECG. LG noted that Catcote and Springwell did not receive inflation on either place funding or Minimum Funding Guarantee and raised concerns around money coming through to pay for teacher pay and pension payments. JWa confirmed that the requirement on local authorities to pass through the TPG and TPECG from High Needs Block funding was clear in the new operational guidance and would be factored into next year's budgets. Members noted the formula changes for 2021/22.	
10	**Indicative Central School Services Block Budgets 2021/22** SSh reported on the provisional Central School Services Block Budget for 2021/22 based on the total number of pupils on roll from the October 2019 census combined with the fixed rate funding for historic commitments.	

	Details of these historic commitments were given within the report including termination of employment costs for the former Brierton School and a variety of licences used to deliver education services. Ongoing responsibilities were also summarised including retained education services, admissions and the servicing of this Forum. SSh confirmed that funding was still available for the termination of employment costs for the former Brierton School but officers would formulate a future plan and lobby the Government as this funding would eventually run out. There was a procedure to apply for DFE funding which would be applied in this case. SS asked for confirmation on when the costs would exceed funding. CB noted that data indicated a drop in pupil numbers in their school group linked to birth rates and queried whether this was an issue across Hartlepool. AW confirmed that models on birth rates and pupil forecasts were carried out and were available. . Information on this could be brought to a future meeting. Members noted the report. **Decision** The following funding proposals (as set out in the report) were approved unanimously: I. £0.067m toward the cost of all licences used to deliver education services II. £0.031m to cover ongoing termination costs for ex-Brierton staff III. £16.18 per pupil for retained education services IV. No increase in the charges for the provision of the Admissions service V. No increase in the charges for the delivery of the Schools' Forum	**SSh** **AW**
11	**Statutory Services provided by the Local Authority** SSh set out the funding streams for statutory services provided for maintained schools and academies, details of which were appended to the report. Schools Forum was required to agree the funding for retained duties (for all schools) and general duties (for maintained schools only). For retained duties an indicative budget requirement of £0.229m had been included to cover these activities. Schools were being asked to fund central services at a consistent £60 per pupil. This rate had not changed since 2017/18 – if pay inflation had been imposed the rate would have been set at	

	£65.91 per pupil for 2021/22. In 2020/21 the £60 rate had not been agreed by the Forum resulting in a disapplication request to the Secretary of State. If members were unable to approve the proposed £60 per pupil cost similar steps would need to be taken again. Members were therefore asked to consult with those they represented in order that a decision be made on this issue at the meeting on 22nd October. Regarding asset management DT referred to issues around problems with water supplies and burst pipes at schools. SSh to investigate for a future forum meeting. Members noted the report **Decision** That Forum members consult with the schools they represent regards a proposed general rate of £60 per pupil to allow for a vote at the Forum meeting on 22nd October 2020.	**SSh**
12	**Proposed De-Delegated Services Budgets 2021/22** De-delegated services budgets applied to maintained schools only with funding incorporated within the NFF by ESFA and passed back to the Local Authority with Forum approval. Funding of services to special schools and PRUs is included in any top-up payments. Details were given of the formula used to calculate funding based on total pupil numbers across all maintained schools and academies. JWa highlighted a proposal to restart payments for Trade Union Facility Time at £1.25 per pupil following a 2 year payment break whereby this service was funded through reserves. JW queried whether maintained schools due to revert to Academy status in 2021 should be included in this vote. JWa confirmed the vote would be based on the current status not future anticipated changes. With reference to education psychology, JB explained that this was based 5 days per pupil per year. Should schools need more they could increase payments through the SLA. MT suggested that there be a business model for each de-delegated service , giving details of the level of agreement and what each school was expected to receive. AW confirmed that all services should be providing a business model. **Decision** The following proposed de-delegated costs (as set out in the report) wereapproved unanimously: I. Education psychology (primary schools only) II. School attendance (primary and secondary schools)	

	III. Trade Union Facility Time (primary and secondary schools) IV. Ethnic Minority Pupils (primary and secondary schools) V. Assessing School Meals Eligibility (primary and secondary schools)	
13	**Dedicated Schools Grant – Early Years Block Centrally Retained Budget 2021/22** Members were asked to approve the central spend element of the Early Years funding for 2021/22 as part of the DSG. Details were given of the anticipated initial funding allocation due to be announced in November 2020. . ESFA guidance states that a proportion of the grant may be centrally retained. It was proposed that this proportion be set at 5% of the EYNFF. This amount would be applied once the provisional allocations were published and would be centrally retained. It would be used to administer and deliver early years provision including staffing and administration. Members noted the report **Decision** The centrally retained funding at 5% used to administer and deliver early years provision in line with legislative requirements was approved.	
14	**Early Years Sustainability Grant Update**	
	At their previous meeting the Forum had approved the establishment of a £45,000 fund to provide sustainability grants to early years providers. 17 applications had subsequently been received with grants awarded to 8 nursery settings and 3 childminders following consideration by a panel comprising representatives from Finance and Childcare teams and the Head of Service. Total grant payments amounted to £20,000. The remaining £25,000 would be set aside should further mitigation be required. Members noted the report.	
15	**Financial Transparency for Schools**	
	JWa gave details of new measures implemented by the DFE to increase the financial transparency and accountability of maintained schools. This would result in schools and the local authority needing to take a number of actions in order to comply with these requirements. Details of the new requirements and who would have ownership of them were given in the report. With reference to the disclosure of salary costs over £100,000 JW asked that a standard form be provided to all schools to enable consistency on	**SSh**

	this matter. She also asked that the CFR link be sent out to all schools affected. Members noted the report. **Decision** That the appropriate changes as described be implemented from the effective date by all maintained schools.	
16	**Review of Final 2019/20 School Balances**	
	SSh advised that owing to the pandemic, the usual April survey had not been undertaken and instead school balances at 31st March 2020 had been compared to the forecast uncommitted school balances expected to be remaining as of February 2020. Details per school were appended to the report. This showed that 6 of the 17 maintained primary schools in Hartlepool had balances remaining in excess of 8% of the 2019/20 individual school budget. Members noted the report **Decision** That the Chair convene a meeting of the Excess Balances Panel for the 6 Primary schools beyond the agreed threshold.	**SS**
17	**Date and Time of Next Forum Meeting –** Thursday 22nd October at 10am	
	Meeting finished 12 noon.	

Outstanding Schools' Forum Actions Log

Meeting	Description	Owner
21/06/19	High Needs Task and Finish Group – agree and implement a mechanism for sharing best practice across all schools to ensure an effective understanding of the knowledge, skills and expectation of mainstream staff, including access to effective training, in order to enhance the offer of support and meet the needs of students with SEMH based difficulties within the mainstream curriculum. To be led via SEMH Group. **Update October 2020** • In July 2019 an audit of SEMH practice in schools was carried out looking at o How school identifies SEMH needs o What the graduated response for SEMH looks like o What works well and impact measures to show this o How schools engage parents and carers where there are SEMH needs o What practice would schools be willing to share with others • Thematic analysis of the findings showed the important elements to be: o **Leadership and management** - vision, culture, structures, roles & responsibilities, policies, systems, financial management, whole school approach, strong multiagency working etc o **Curriculum and pedagogy** - QFT, settling to learn, strong SEMH curriculum, personalised curriculum o **Workforce development** - blended learning (whole school approach, targeted training, supervision, visit other schools, networks, problem solving meetings, working alongside other professionals) o **Parent Partnership** – building strong relationships from the early years, PSA role, single point of contact, regular proactive communication, being accessible and responsive, use of 3rd sector partners, honesty and transparency, signposting, parenting support o **Interventions** – a range of intervention from whole school, through small group to individual packages were on offer. The majority were underpinned by staff being 'ACE Aware', 'Trauma Informed' and 'Attachment Friendly'. Common approaches	Jacqui Braithwaite / Sue Sharpe

	included THRIVE, PIVOTAL, Nurture Provision, Restorative Approaches ○ **Environment & Resources –** break out areas, safe spaces, personalised space or box of resources, use of outdoor space, space and time for staff to plan and think ○ **Transition** – planning over time, building new relationships, close links between staff to build on what has worked ○ **Identification and Impact Measures** – these were 2 areas were practice differed greatly from 'we just know' to evidence based measures of wellbeing, Boxall Profile, Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire, THRIVE assessment tools • SEMH subgroup reported the findings to the SEND Operational Group in the autumn term of 2019. Subsequently a small group met to feed this information into the SEND workforce development work stream. The importance of having a joined up approach to workforce development was noted so there was no duplication or conflicting advice from providers. • Running alongside this work the mental health trailblazers were coming on stream and the CAMHS Anna Freud Link programme was running so again it was important to try to join workstreams together. • Covid-19 intervened but support and development did not stop. Support in the form of on-line learning, consultation, provision of resources and networks were delivered by the EP Team and the Trailblazer mental health teams during lockdown. This work continues under the banner of the DfE Wellbeing for Education Return Programme (led by Kathryn Crowder) and covers the main aspects of SEMH exacerbated by covid (anxiety, bereavement and loss, emotional based school avoidance, recovery curriculum etc) • This work will continue as part of agreed priorities within the Education Strategy	
21/06/19	High Needs Task and Finish Group – Explore and implement extended and enhanced transition arrangements – lead on links with ONE North East through their transition project	Jacqui Braithwaite / Mark Tilling

	Update October 2020 • May 2019 – December 2019 enhanced approaches piloted in High Tunstall and 3 feeder primary schools • January 2020 successful bid to DfE to roll out these approaches (programme interrupted by Covid so will now run from September 2020 to March 2022) • March 2020 – June 2020 development, pilot and full roll out of the Transition Planning Profile Tool. 94.5% completed the TPPT in full. • July 2020 – first meeting of the strategic transition group brining governance to this work and tying it into the Education Strategy • August 2020 – successful bid to What Works in Social Care bringing additional recourse to vulnerable children with a social worker making the transition to secondary school in September 2021 (programme to start in January 2021 and until December 2021) • Processes for enhanced transition for children with Autism were piloted in summer 2020. Plans for further roll out of this approach with current year 6 in planning Date of next meeting of the transition group is planned for 9th November 2020	
21/06/19	High Needs Task and Finish Group – document and implement a whole system approach to an inclusive ethos across the full school estate – to lead initially via the Head Teacher Group and then through the Children's Strategy Partnership	John Hardy
05/02/20	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. Report to be brought to future Forum meeting.	Danielle Swainston
05/02/20	Investigate whether the regulations allow use of the Schools Block growth fund for special schools	Jane Watt