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| **Schools’ Forum Meeting**  **22 October 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:**

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| **Members**  Carole Bradley (CB) (Large <50%)  Lynne Chambers (LC) (Primary-Academy >25% >50% FSM)  Tracey Gibson (TG) (Secondary Schools)  Martyn Gordon (MG) (PRU)  Lisa Greig (LG) Acting (Academy – Special)  Stephen Hammond (SH) (Academy – Secondary)  John Hardy (JH) (VA Small)  Joanne Heaton (JH) (Diocese C of E)  Mark Hughes (MH) (16-19 Sector)  Neil Nottingham (NN) (Primary Academy >50% FSM)  Linda Richardson (LR) (Early Years)  Sue Sharpe (SS) (Large Deprived)  Christopher Simmons (CS) (Governor)  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)  Danielle Swainston (DS) (Assistant Director)  Sandra Shears (SSh) (Children’s Finance)  Jane Watt (JWa) (Children’s Finance)  Jo Stubbs (JS) (Administrator) |

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| **Agenda Item** | | **Action** |
| **1** | **Apologies -**  Apologies were submitted by Amanda Baines (Academy – Primary – Primary Academy <25% FSM) |  |
| **2** | **Minutes of the Last Meeting (24th September 2020) and Matters Arising**  Approved  JW highlighted an outstanding actions log had been attached to the minutes.  The following was raised:  **High Needs Task and Finish Group** – DT referred to issues around the High Needs Block Spend and queried how this would be followed up. AW advised that work had begun on an overall approach at how the High Needs Block spend could be used which was being led by Jacqui Braithwaite. MT suggested that a meeting of the capital group be scheduled as soon as possible in order to look at allocations and best use of monies.  **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 - JH confirmed that work had begun on this through the Children’s Strategic Group but had stopped due to the pandemic. DS confirmed that this work had been ongoing and indicated that she would circulate to members what had been discussed prior to lockdown. The aim was to get feed in from the Education Board however she thought it unlikely that a meeting could take place before 2021. Work on the High Needs Task and Finish Group was at a similar impasse but both were linked through the inclusion group.  **High Needs Block Budget Proposals 2021/22** – JH had requested that a calculation be made of the level of funding schools would have received had inflation been applied. Analysis showed this would have been £38k across all schools for 2019/20 and £78k for 2020/21.  **Indicative Central School Services Block Budgets 2021/22** – CB requested an update on modelling of birth rates and future forecasts. AW indicated that the person with this information had only recently returned from leave and the information would be provided as soon as possible.  JW confirmed that spend for historic committiments withint the Central School Services Block would have sufficient funding until April 2026.  **Statutory Services Provided by the Local Authority –** DT requested an update on issues with water supplies and burst pipes. SSh advised that this was being chased up with the relevant department and she hoped to have a further update for the next meeting.  **Financial Transparency for Schools –** JW confirmed that as requested a standard form of words relating to disclosure of salary costs would be made available before January 2021.  **Proposed De-Delegated Services Budget 2021/22 –** JH queried whether Academies contributed to Trade Union facility time. SSh reported that all de-delegated services were offered to Academies. However if they chose not to contribute then they could access those monies.  **Early Years Sustainability Grant Update –** JH queried whether this fund was currently earning interest. SSh confirmed that there was no interest being received on Council balances currently.  **Investigate whether the regulations allow use of the Schools Block growth fund for special schools –** JW advised that this could only be done by agreeing a block transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. |  |
| **3** | **National Funding Formula (I) (standard item)**  No updates. It was requested that this be removed as a standard item. | **JS** |
| **4** | **SEND free school update (standard item)**  No updates. A meeting was due to take place with the DfE the following week. |  |
| **5** | **SEMH (Standard item)**  No updates. It was requested that this be removed as a standard item. | **JS** |
| **6** | **Indicative School Block Budget Update 2021/22**  JW advised members that the draft Authority Proforma Tool (APT) had been released last month. This was used to model and set individual school budgets. A local Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) could be set from 0.5% to 2% and based on the October 2019 census a local MFG of 2% was affordable without the implementation of a cap. DT highlighted a number of schools listed on the report appendix who received a minimum per pupil uplift and yet received significant overall increases in budget. JW agreed that this seemed counter intuitive, although it would be linked to which elements of the formula are included in the MPPF calculation. JW suggested a worked example for one of these schools could be provided to help understanding.  **Decision**  That the application of a maximum 2% MFG for 2021/22 ISBs be approved  In favour – 22  Against – nil  Abstain – nil | **JW** |

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| **7** | **Statutory Duties Proposal 2021/22 - Verbal**  At the previous meeting members representing maintained schools had been asked to consult with the schools they represented regarding a proposed general rate of £60 per pupil to cover statutory services provided by the local authority  **Decision**  That a general rate of £60 per pupil for statutory services provided by the local authority would not be approved.  In favour - 1  Against - 7  Abstain - nil  The Chair confirmed that she would send a letter to the Secretary of State to record the dissatisfaction of Forum.. MT highlighted that the decision was in response to the government removing the former Education Services Grant which funded local authorities to discharge their statutory duties passing the burden of this to schools. and not a reflection on the local authority and the quality of statutory services. |  |
| **8** | **Designated Education Officer Proposals 2021/22**  Members were asked to consider future funding options for the Designated Education Officer role (DEO) for 2021/22. This post was funded jointly by Hartlepool and Stockton on Tees schools and Stockton had already agreed to provide 66% of the funding. Members had been asked to consult with the schools they represent on the following options:   1. Allow the post to come to an end with Hartlepool Schools no longer funding the role 2. Hartlepool schools to fund 34% with the cost shared out equally across all schools 3. Schools pay for the role based on the numbers of children on roll   Discussions took place around the role of the DEO in terms of vulnerable children and how this differed from that carried out by social workers.  PT clarified that the DEO would always contact the school with regards to any vulnerable children on roll in order to understand their perspective whereas a social worker might not always feel school needed to be consulted.  The DEO acts as a single point of contact for schools providing guidance and support.  It was felt that as part of the teaching profession the DEO had a better understanding of these issues than social care.  Concerns were raised that the DEO was not providing sufficient guidance on policy and procedure on safeguarding issues however PT advised that this is not within their job role.  Should this be required it could be looked into.  DS advised that while the Children’s Hub was available for safeguarding issues the DEO would bring added value in terms of educational procedures.  Members queried whether contribution to the post should be sought from the Further Education Sector and PT agreed this could be included. In terms of paying for this service it was suggested that this be funded through reserves saved from the unused Trade Union funding. SSh indicated that there is likely to be sufficient funding within the Trade Union reserve for 2021/22 only. Members were happy with this course of action but felt that there needed to be discussions going forward as to future funding of this role on a more permanent basis.  It was agreed that prices should be revised to reflect the further education sector and that the balance would be funded from the Trade Union reserve. |  |
| **9** | **Pupil Referral Unit – Operating Model and Financial Review**  Martyn Gordon gave an update on the current financial situation faced by the Pupil Referral Unit. There were currently 21 permanently excluded students on roll. Of these 7 were Y11 and therefore due to leave education and 7 were expected to re-integrate into mainstream education. Prior to 2019/20 Hartlepool had a high number of permanently excluded children (PEX). Since then through outreach work this had reduced meaning that there had been no additional PEX this academic year. In 2019/20 the total spend for the PRU and Home and Hospital had been £80k below what was predicted and allocated. The PRU therefore wished to continue with funding for 12 places for PEX and 12 for Home and Hospital. They also wanted to continue to engage with local schools, offering outreach for up to 2 places per secondary school (10 total) at £20k each. This would enable them to develop their systems and processes while supporting some of the most vulnerable students in Hartlepool.  Members were asked to vote on the preferred of 2 options:   1. To fund 12 permanently excluded places, 12 Home and Hospital places and 10 further funded place at £20 thousand each at a total of £680k for one year; or 2. To fund 12 permanently excluded places, 12 Home and Hospital places and 10 further funded place at £20 thousand each at a total of £680k for two years   Members had a detailed discussion on the proposals and the general issues raised by this report. The positive outcomes for pupils accessing the PRU were acknowledged and the need to find long term solutions to continue to make this sustainable. SSh confirmed that funding would come from the High Needs Block. If the proposal was approved, this would allow the PRU to plan ahead and provide more enhanced provision. Should the funding be insufficient applications would be made for additional funding however this was not something that could be planned for. ZW highlighted the need for consistent banding of pupils across all settings including the PRU. Discussion on whether this would be possible for particularly Home Hospital and secondary school outreach pupils took place.  A proposal was made to amend the recommendations to include a proposal to review bandings and how they could be applied to the PRU with a report going back to Schools Forum. Members were asked to vote on the amended recommendations for either option A (1 year funding) or option B (2 year funding). A recorded vote was taken and the results were as follows:  For Option A – 6  For Option B – 9  Abstained – 1  **Decision**  That the Horizon School be funded for 12 permanently excluded places, 12 Home and Hospital Places and 10 further funded places (2 per secondary school) at £20k each at a total of £680k for two years. |  |
| **10** | **Any Other Business**  JH queried when the High Needs Block budget proposals were due to be considered by the Forum. The Chair advised that members were asked to consult on these and send their considerations back to SSh over the October half term. |  |
| **11** | **Date and Time of next Forum Meeting**  Thursday 19th November at 10am |  |
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|  | Meeting finished 12 noon. |  |

Outstanding Schools’ Forum Actions Log

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| **Meeting** | **Description** | **Owner** |
| **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 |
| **24/09/20** | Provide information on statutory asset management services provided relating to water infrastructure at schools | Sandra Shears |
| **24/09/20** | Provide standard form of words for new salary disclosure (Financial Transparency for Schools) | Jane Watt |