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# SCHOOLS' FORUM

**Wednesday 18 October 2023 – 10am**

**Dance Studio, CECA**

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## *A G E N D A*

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| 1. | Apologies  | Chair              |
| 2. | Minutes from Schools' Forum meeting on 21 <sup>st</sup> September 2023 and Matters Arising | Chair              |
| 3. | Schools Forum Membership Update (V)  | Chair              |
| 4. | Individual School Budget Shares 2024/25 (D)  | Amanda Whitehead   |
| 5. | Trade Union Facility Time – Termly Update (I)  | Rachel Clark       |
| 6. | High Needs Recovery Plan (I) – To follow   | Danielle Swainston |
| 7. | Horizon School and Alternative Provision (I) – To follow                                   | Amanda Whitehead   |

Date and Time of Next Forum Meeting – Thursday  
23 November 2023, CETL Conference Suite

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Schools’ Forum Meeting</h2> <h3 style="margin: 0;">21 September 2023</h3>
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**Attendees:**

**Members**

Carole Bradley (CB) (Academy Primary)  
 Chris Connor (CC) (Maintained Primary)  
 Sara Crawshaw (SC) (Diocese – RC)  
 Lisa Grieg (LG) (Academy – Special)  
 Linda Richardson (LR) (Early Years)  
 Emma Rutherford (ER) (Horizon School)  
 Sue Sharpe (SS) (Maintained Primary)  
 Christopher Simmons (CS) (Academy Governors)  
 Mark Tilling (Chair) (Maintained Secondary)  
 David Turner (DT) (Maintained Primary)  
 Zoe Westley (ZW) (Academy – Special)  
 Vicki Wilson (VW) (Diocese C of E)  
 Leanne Yates (LY) (Maintained Primary)

**Local Authority Officers**

Sandra Shears (SSh) -  
 Children’s Finance

Fiona Stobbs (FS) – Hartlepool  
 Borough Council

Jo Stubbs (JS) – Administrator

Danielle Swainston (DS) –  
 Assistant Director Joint  
 Commissioning

Jane Watt (JW) - Children’s  
 Finance

	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Apologies -</b></p> <p>Apologies were submitted by the following and accepted by Forum:</p> <p>Tracey Gibson – Academy Secondary                      John Hardy – Academy Primary                      Toni Ray – PVI Early Years                      Joanne Wilson – Academy Primary</p>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the Last Meeting – 13 June 2023 – and Matters Arising</b></p> <p>Minutes approved.</p> <p><i>DS to follow up an outstanding action for Amanda Whitehead who had agreed to speak to Sally Robinson in relation to a previous action as follows:</i></p> <p><i>“AD suggested that there be discussions with parents who had removed their children, even though conversations may prove difficult. AW to talk to Sally Robinson regards this”</i></p>	

	<p>Officers were unclear as to what the above referred to specifically however they confirmed that admissions officers did discuss the impact of transferring children between schools with parents who made such a request. Amanda Whitehead would continue to chase this up with Sally Robinson. – post meeting Amanda Whitehead confirmed that this discussion had taken place as part of a wider conversation.</p> <p>Vicki Wilson was in attendance as the new member for Diocese – Church of England.</p> <p>The member annual declaration of interest forms were prepped and ready to be sent out.</p> <p>The first meeting of the Growth Fund Working Group had taken place with further meetings due to happen. SS requested clarity on potential funding for schools affected by high mobility.</p> <p>Clarity was currently being sought over CS’s role on the Forum as he was now a school trustee rather than a governor.</p> <p>The Schools Capital Sub Group minutes were received and noted.</p>	<p><b>JW</b></p> <p><b>SSh</b></p>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>Dedicated Schools Grant – Extension of the Early Year’s Offer 2024/25</b></p> <p>The report provided an update on the extension of the Early Year’s offer. The Government had announced a significant expansion of Early Years provision – namely 30 hours childcare for all children over 9 months with working parents by September 2025 and £289m in funding to schools and local authorities to increase the provision of wraparound care. Existing early year’s provider hourly rates had also been increased from September 2023 via a supplementary grant. In Hartlepool this was an increase of £5.63 to £7.27 per hour for 2 year-old provision and £4.56 to £4.80 for 3-4 year old provision.</p> <p>The Early Years expansion would be introduced in phases utilising the same framework as the existing 3-4 year old provision. In terms of wraparound provision it was the Government’s expectation that this would be self-financing and sustainable by September 2026. A DfE stakeholder pack was appended to the report.</p> <p>A member commented that wraparound care should not be provided unless a need could be demonstrated.</p> <p><b>Decision</b></p> <p>That the report be noted</p>	

<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Dedicated Schools Grant – Early Years Block Centrally Retained Budget 2024/25</b></p> <p>Members were asked to approve the central spend element of the Early Years funding for 2024/25 as part of the Dedicated Schools Grant. The initial funding allocation was expected to be announced no earlier than December 2023. ESFA guidance states that a proportion of the grant may be centrally retained. It was proposed that this proportion be set at the maximum 3% of the EYNFF. This amount would be confirmed once the provisional allocations were published and would be centrally retained. It would be used to administer and deliver early year’s provision including staffing and administration.</p> <p><b>Decision</b></p> <p>That the report be noted</p> <p>That the centrally retained funding be unanimously approved at 3%, to be used to administer and deliver early years provision in line with legislative requirements.</p>	
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Indicative Schools Block Budgets 2024/25</b></p> <p>ESFA had published indicative National Funding Formula allocations for 2024/25. Based on pupil numbers and characteristics from the October 2022 census they showed an allocation of £81.118m for 2024/25. This would be amended based on information provided by the October 2023 census and would be reissued during December 2023 when it was forecast to increase to £81.437m, due to an increase in secondary pupil numbers. In previous years a transfer-in to the Schools Block from the Central School Services Block (CSSB) had become usual practice. This would be considered in a separate report at this meeting. No proposal for a transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block was expected. Regulations also allowed for a minimum funding guarantee and cap to be set so that excessive year-on-year charges could be protected against. In 2023/24 the MFG had been set at a maximum of 0.5% with a cap of 3.29% per pupil. The working assumption is that Forum would suggest the maximum MFG, along with an appropriate cap for 2024/25.. However members were asked to consider this prior to the next Forum meeting.</p> <p><b>Decision</b></p> <p>That the report be noted</p>	
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Statutory Services Provided by the Local Authority</b></p> <p>SSh set out the funding streams for statutory services provided for maintained schools and academies, details of which were appended to the</p>	

	<p>report. Schools were being asked to fund central services at a consistent £60 per pupil, a rate which had not changed since 2017/18. If pay inflation had been imposed the rate would have been set at £77 per pupil for 2023/24. In 2023/24 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 maintained schools they represent in order to allow for a vote on 18<sup>th</sup> October.</p> <p><b>Decision</b></p> <p>That the report be noted</p> <p>That members consult the maintained schools they represent to enable a vote on a general rate of £60 per pupil at the October Forum meeting</p>	
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>Indicative Central School Services Block Budgets 2024/25</b></p> <p>Members were asked to approve the budget requirements for the 2024/25 Central School Services Block. This Budget is funded within the Dedicated Schools Grant allocation comprising a fixed amount for historic costs with a rate per pupil for ongoing costs. The rate per pupil for 2024/25 is £40.65 with the fixed rate set at £152k– total funding of £689k For the fifth year a funding cut of 20% would be applied to historic commitments with the Central School Services Block. These historic commitments were licences and termination of employment costs relating to the former Brierton School. With this cut the funding requirements for 2024/25 would be met however this position was likely to change by April 2026. Details were given of the Budget’s ongoing responsibilities of Retained Education Services, Admissions, Copyright Licences and Servicing Schools’ Forum. Members were asked to vote on the budget requirements for historic commitments and ongoing responsibilities. Not voting to approve any of the elements would require a request for disapplication to the Secretary of State.</p> <p>SC queried whether a review of the copyright licences could be undertaken. JW advised that these were provided on an all or nothing basis and could not be cherry picked individually.</p> <p><b>Decision</b></p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p>That funding of £67k for licences for 2024/25 be approved</p> <p>That funding of £31k for termination of employment costs for 2024/25 be approved</p> <p>That indicative funding of £214k (subject to pupil number changes to be updated in December 2023) for Retained Education Services be approved</p>	

	<p>That funding of £156k for Admissions be approved</p> <p>That indicative funding of £83k (subject to pupil number changes to be updated in December 2023) be approved for Copyright Licences</p> <p>That funding of £45k be approved for Servicing Schools' Forum.</p> <p>All votes unanimous</p>	
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>High Needs Block (HNB) Projected Outturn 2023/24</b></p> <p>Members were given details of the High Needs Block projected outturn for 2023/24. In 2022/23 the final position had been a year end overspend of £752k. The allocation for 2023/24 was confirmed at £18.661m. £3.330m of this is recouped by the ESFA to pay place funding direct to academies. Based on quarter 1 spending the outturn was projected at being on Best Case Scenario an overspend of £167k and Worse Case Scenario an overspend of £274k. This potential overspend was primarily owing to out of authority top-ups and top-up funding &amp; support. Children's Services Committee had previously approved a budget exceeding available HNB funding and Forum were reminded of the commitment to establish a recovery plan to bring spending back in line within 3 years.</p> <p>DT requested information on the cost caused by the delay of the new free school querying whether this delay in funding could be challenged. ZW confirmed the cost for Independent Schools was up by a massive amount and queried how much of this was due to the delay in available places at the free school. She also referred to previous plans to form a group to prevent children being moved out of authority. DS confirmed this was still the intent but there were concerns that there might be limited involvement by secondary schools thereby preventing buy in to any proposed solution. She also noted that the Provider was already in place and children were already earmarked and part of a transition arrangement with Spark of Genius.</p> <p>A discussion took place about some secondary schools not being inclusive and had very low EHCP numbers. The Chair noted there were 91 children with EHCPs in his school but not all schools were taking their share. It was discussed that this needs ongoing challenge. It was agreed that in terms of the solution focused meetings that all schools would be invited and we would then review who had participated.</p> <p>CB queried whether there was any clarity around exclusions particularly the bridge between primary and secondary. The Chair advised that referrals were being considered the following week at the inclusion panel while ZW confirmed concerns had been raised by her head of Y6 around transitions. The Chair advised that meetings had and would take place around this issue with 9 pupils already back in education through fair access. Dates for</p>	

	<p>future meetings would be distributed to Forum members and primary heads were encouraged to attend. Members suggested other interested parties might be invited including schools with a child of concern and parents. The Chair confirmed that families were made aware if their child was being discussed.</p> <p><b>Decision</b></p> <p>That the report be noted</p>	
	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>High Needs Block Review – DS gave a brief verbal update. An inclusion strategy meeting had taken place the day before, details of which would be brought to the Heads meeting. A progress checkpoint was tabled for members’ information – a colour version would be sent out in due course. The majority of objectives were complete or on course with the following exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Schools – Review of Funding Model – overdue actions to develop commissioning agreement and evaluation process</li> <li>• Develop HNB recovery plan – plan not yet drafted</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked DS and her team for all their work</p>	
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>Date and Time of Next Forum Meeting – Wednesday 18 October, CECA Dance Studio</b></p> <p>The meeting closed at 11.15 am.</p>	

## OUTSTANDING ACTIONS LOG

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Owner</b>
18/11/22	Annual declaration of interest forms to be sent to members	Sandra Shears
01/03/23	Develop 3 year recovery plan for High Needs Block spending	Schools Forum



Financial Year 2022/23: Children’s Services Committee – Log of Schools’ Forum Recommendations and Committee Decisions

Last Updated: 6 June 2023

Committee Date	Report	Recommendation and Decision Details
15/11/22	Dedicated Schools Grant (Former Education Services Grant rate per pupil) – Disapplication Request	<p>The Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Agreed the 2023/24 funding rate at £60 per pupil/place.</li> <li>b) Agreed to submit the disapplication request to the Secretary of State to set the Education Services General Duties rate at £60 per pupil/place for 2023/24.</li> <li>c) Noted this will be the seventh consecutive year the local authority has applied for disapplication and that the previous six applications have been successful.</li> <li>d) Agreed that a request for additional funding be sought from the Secretary of State, on behalf of the Children’s Services Committee, to assist in discharging statutory responsibilities to schools.</li> </ul>
17/01/23	Dedicated Schools Grant - SCHOOL BUDGET SHARES 2023/24 AND CENTRAL SCHOOL SERVICES BLOCK 2023/24	<p>The Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Noted the contents of the report;</li> <li>b) Noted the agreement by Schools’ Forum to centrally retain funding of £0.572m, with the residual £0.139m being transferred to the schools block;</li> <li>c) Agreed the MFG to be used for 2023/24 and noted the recommendation from Schools’ Forum of applying an MFG of 0.5%, alongside a 3% cap;</li> <li>d) Approved the individual school budget share for 2023/24</li> </ul>
14/03/23	DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT – EARLY YEARS BLOCK 2023/24	<p>The Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) noted the contents of this report and the outcomes from the consultation with providers and Schools’ Forum;</li> <li>b) noted the recommendation by Schools’ Forum to centrally retain funding of 5%;</li> </ul>

		<p>c) approved the hourly rate funding formula for three to four year old provision for 2023/24, passing an increase of 6p on to all providers through the base rate;</p> <p>d) approved option 3 for payment of the new TPG / TPECG supplement as recommended by Schools' Forum;</p> <p>e) approved the hourly rate funding formula for two year old provision for 2023/24, passing the increase of 22p on to providers through the hourly rate.</p>
14/03/23	Dedicated Schools Grant – High Needs Block 2023/24	<p>The Committee:</p> <p>a) noted the contents of the report;</p> <p>b) approved the proposed new 25 place primary ARP from 1 April 2023 and the extension of 22 secondary ARP places with effect from 1 January 2024 at a cost of £0.205m;</p> <p>c) noted the agreement from School's Forum to establish a solution focused forum, bringing challenge to the current process in order to reduce the significant cost of independent school fees;</p> <p>d) approved an increase of 6 places at Horizon School and the introduction of a new top-up rate of £14k for Horizon School and £1.6k for Haven at a total cost of £0.120m;</p> <p>e) agreed the proposed uplift of 4% to top-up ranges for IPS and ARPs and cessation of the clawback process at a total cost of £0.270m;</p> <p>f) noted that once further work is complete and a cost model established for both special academies, a proposal will be presented to Members at a future Committee;</p> <p>g) approved the creation of 2 SEND Officer posts to increase capacity at a cost of £0.089m;</p> <p>h) approved the creation of an early year's offer with a focus on early intervention at a cost of £0.116m (make up of posts in the team yet to be agreed);</p> <p>i) approved the overall budget requirement of £20.807m, noting that the budget allocation is £18.661m;</p> <p>j) noted that Schools Forum have committed to draw up a plan which will look to address the deficit over a three-year period.</p>



## Agenda Item 4: Individual School Budget Shares 2024/25 – Update

Forum Members may be aware from recent media that DfE have issued revised National Funding Formulas for 2024/25. Unfortunately, modelling of school budgets for 2024/25 had already been completed by the local authority on the basis of information issued in July 2023. New figures were received on Friday 6 October 2023. However, ESFA have not yet been able to reissue the APT information. This is to be issued during week starting Monday 9 October.

As modelling of school budget shares for Schools' Forum is based on completion of the APT, it has not been possible to prepare the necessary financial information in time to support this agenda item.

Depending on the timing of issue of the APT, it may be possible to table information at the meeting. Alternatively, this agenda item will be deferred to the November Forum meeting.

**Report to Hartlepool Schools' Forum 18 October 2023**  
**From Rachel Clark, Head of Human Resources**

**Agenda Item 5 - Trade Union Facility Time (Update)**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Schools' Forum on the activity and spending for trade union facility time under the Service Level Agreement (SLA) arrangement.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Trade union representatives, and members of an independent trade union which is recognised by the employer, have a statutory right to time off when taking part in trade union activities.
- 2.2 The benefits of funding trade union facility time and utilising representatives across all schools in Hartlepool has been established and accepted by the Schools' Forum. In June 2019, Schools' Forum agreed to fund the sharing of non-teaching trade union facility time and contribute to the local authority costs on an annual basis.
- 2.3 With effect from budget year 2022/23, Schools' Forum agreed to cease the funding of de-delegated services and move instead to buyback / SLA arrangements. This agreement included the Trade Union Facility Time service.
- 2.4 In 2019/20 the funding was reduced from £2.45 per pupil to £1.25 per pupil for all primary and secondary schools including academies, bringing it well below the mean average spend per pupil across the North East Local Authorities.
- 2.5 It has been agreed that the current price per pupil will remain at £1.25 for the 2023/24 financial year (1<sup>st</sup> April) under the SLA arrangement.
- 2.6 Trade Unions have agreed a recording mechanism for time spent in schools which has been formalised following a review with Joint Trade Unions of the Trade Union Recognition and Facility Time Agreement.

**3. LA managed Trade Union Facility Time Update**

- 3.1 During 2023/24 to date, there has been no facility time request made on the budget and no timesheets submitted by the host school for the NASUWT representative.
- 3.2 At the time of writing this report, there are a number of schools that have not updated their SLA position for 2023/24. The authority is aware that this could be linked to system issues and this is being investigated. The proposals contained in this report and outlined at paragraphs 3.3. and 3.5 are predicated on the agreement of all Hartlepool schools to the trade union facility time SLA.

- 3.3 The reserve balance relating to Trade Union Facility Time had an opening balance of **£31,604** at 1 April 2023. Schools' Forum agreed to fund the Hartlepool school's contribution to the Dedicated Education Officer (DEO) post in 2023/24 from the reserve balance. After funding the DEO for 2023/24, a reserve balance of **£14,094** is anticipated.
- 3.4 At the end of financial year 2023/24, any unspent SLA funding will be taken to reserves.
- 3.5 At their meeting on 18 November 2022, Schools' Forum agreed that future funding of the DEO role be approved automatically. In line with this agreement, the Hartlepool schools contribution to the DEO post in 2024/25 will be charged to the same Trade Union Facility Time reserve balance in 2024/25. Contributions from both the early years and further education sector will continue to be charged in 2024/25.
- 3.6 Funding of the DEO post in 2024/25 using the Trade Union Facility Time reserve is only affordable should all Hartlepool schools continue to sign up to the SLA.

#### **4. Recommendation**

Schools' Forum are asked to note the contents of the report, including the assumption at paragraph 3.2 that 100% of schools will sign up to the Trade Union facility time SLA.