

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

KIRKLEES SCHOOLS FORUM

Friday 25th June 2021 at 10:30am via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Name:

Andi Gilroy-Sinclair
Jenny Shore, Diana Wilson, Catherine Jubbs,
Louise Brown, Martin Vayro

Paul Evans

Darren Christian (Chair), Michelle Lee, David
Wadsworth

Lisa Buckley (post 16), Hazel Danson (NEU),
Paula Wescott (NASUWT) Lisa Buckley (as
representative for Julie Arechiga – post 16)

Jo-Anne Sanders, David Baxter, Martin Wilby,
Natalie McSheffrey, Chris Jessup, Kelsey Clark-
Davies, Peter Bell (Clerk to the meeting)

Category of Membership:

Nursery School Heads (1)

Primary School Heads (5)

High School Heads (1)

Special School Heads (1)

Special Academy Heads (1)

Academy Heads (4)

Pupil Referral Units (1)

Non-school members (5)

School Governors (1)

Officers in Support

Observers:

Cllr Carole Pattison (Portfolio Holder Learning, Aspirations & Communities)

Apologies:

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Julia Arechiga (Non-School Member), Karen Colligan (High School Heads), Kath Duffy (Early Years Alliance), Laura Flynn (Special Academy Heads), Helen Pearson (Primary School Heads) and Rebecca Smith (Pupil Referral Units)

2 Minutes of the Schools Forum meeting held on 5th March 2021

It was agreed that the minutes were a true record of the meeting.

3 Matters arising from 5th March 2021 meeting

School Trade Union Facilities Time Arrangements (minute 3.1 of 5 March 2021)
Resolved Jun21

That this item be placed on the next agenda.

4 Education Learning Partnership Board (standing item)

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Natalie McSheffrey (NMCS) reported that the Education and Learning Partnership Board had met on 9 June 2021. Items discussed at the meeting included:

4.1 Admissions Code/Fair Access Protocol Changes 2021

Members were informed that the new School Admission Code would come into force 1 September 2021. They noted that admission authorities must comply with the Code and NMCS explained that the main purpose of the changes was to improve support for the in-year admission of vulnerable children. NMCS summarised the changes, which included:

- introducing more detail on the process for managing in-year admissions;
- changes to improve the effectiveness of Fair Access Protocols;
- giving children adopted from state care outside of England equal admissions priority as children who were previously looked after in England; and
- clarification of which address to use for the admission of service or crown servant children.

4.2 Workforce Planning Group

NMCS stated that the first meeting of the Workforce Planning Group took place mid-May. Whilst there had been good representation at the meeting, there were still several gaps to fill and this was being addressed. Members noted that several priorities had been agreed, which were:

- Well-Being of/for all education staff;
- CPD for Senior Leaders;
- Recruitment and Retention (including the Early Careers Framework)

4.3 It was reported to the group that sickness absence figures had reduced during the last quarter, which was a positive.

4.4 Members were informed that a strong partnership was forming between the Early Career Teachers and Teaching Hub. Meetings were taking place on a regular basis and HR were confident of a full launch in September 2021.

4.5 Transition Arrangements

NMCS informed the meeting that discussions had been held around Covid related transition arrangements as the end of the school year approached, along with options being considered for 2021-22. General discussions had taken place around more creative uses of existing space, along with other options that were currently available and easily accessible.

4.6 Education Recovery

NMCS reported that the focus of discussions around education recovery had focused on the quality of teaching and learning pupils were receiving and how this would be carried into the next academic year. There was still a need to focus on the well-being of staff, so that they could continue to support children and young people and deliver a broad and balanced, less prescriptive curriculum, in order to ensure that young people leave school with the knowledge, skills and ambition to succeed.

4.7 The Kirklees Futures Strategy Commission and Expert Strategy group continued to meet and work on the on the 3 key areas within the 3-year plan – which was likely

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to be in situ until to 2030. Members noted that the first year of Strategy would include recovery and reading.

4.8 Education Improvement Committee (EIC) – 19 May 2021

Discussions took place around the EEF Project and Helen Metcalfe (Senior KLP) gave an update on this. All EEF evidence showed that the strategies which had the greatest impact occurred in the classroom, via quality first teaching from the best teachers. More information on the roll out of the EEF Project would be given at the July 2021 meeting of the EIC.

4.9 Target setting had been moved to the July 2021 meeting of the EIC.

4.10 The EIC received an update on the standardisation offer. This had been very positive in terms of school engagement and uptake. More detail on this would be provided at the July 2021 meeting of the EIC.

4.11 The EIC was informed that carry forwards used to support Covid and schools were now in a deficit and continued to be so, A significant contribution towards the deficit was the need to purchase new books to support phonics development and reading skills.

4.12 Places Access and Inclusion Committee (PAIC Committee) – 18 May 2021

NMcS reported that the PAIC Committee had met on 18 May 2021 and discussions had focussed on the following items:

- Primary National Offer headline data, which was shared.
- The SACRE Commission would be looked at in more detail.
- Overview of SEND Development work, which was shared.
- School Place Planning document, which was shared for discussion. Primary numbers were causing concern and feedback from schools and Governing Bodies was being sought on this.

4.13 Inclusion in Kirklees

Kelsey Clark-Davies (KCD) (Head of Educational Safeguarding & Inclusion) gave a PowerPoint presentation on 'Inclusion in Kirklees'.

4.14 KCD informed the meeting that a huge amount of development work was currently ongoing within the Council, which related to and involved:

- The Kirklees Inclusive Ambitions.
- Kirklees Inclusion Transformation Plan.
- SEND Transformation and Commissioning Group.
- Inclusion Support Offer.
- Valuing SEND Tool.
- LA Commissioned Reviews.
- EHCP Top-Up Funding Review.
- Inclusion Partner Work.

4.15 Kirklees Inclusive Ambitions

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Members noted that the Kirklees Inclusive Ambitions consisted of 7 areas, which underpinned the whole Kirklees approach to inclusion. These were:

- Responsive and holistic early intervention.
- Culture of trust with parents and families.
- Inclusive practice in the community and within education settings.
- CYP thriving in education settings and celebrating more holistic outcomes and achievements.
- An integrated system.
- Embedding a shared culture of proactivity, holistic skills and knowledge.
- Supporting children to have clear aspirations with a focus on preparing for adulthood.

4.16 Kirklees Inclusion Transformation Plan

The Kirklees Inclusion Transformation Plan focussed on high needs delivery via a number of delivery workstreams.

4.17 The Council was working on expanding the provision of outreach and inclusion workers in schools, with the ambition being to build capacity, have early interventions and maintain a quality provision up to and including out of area support. The Council was working closely with special schools on alternative provision (as special schools were currently full) which focussed on outreach provision from special schools into mainstream education.

4.18 SEND Transformation and Commissioning Group

Each workstream of the Kirklees Inclusion Transformation Plan was being overseen by the SEND Transformation and Commissioning Group. This group met on a monthly basis and was represented by key stakeholders across the primary and secondary sectors, as well as officers from within the Council. The purpose of the group was to provide quality assurance, challenge and support.

4.19 Inclusion Support Offer: Early Impact

Feedback from SENCOs about the Inclusion Support Officer had been very positive. Two officers from within the Council could be contacted Monday-Friday during office hours to offer support to schools on high need cases. SENDCOs valued the reassurance that this provision gave them, particularly as with Covid it was difficult to meet with professionals face-to-face.

4.20 Valuing SEND and Inclusion Support Offer

The Valuing SEND and Inclusion Support Offer were split into two initiatives, which were:

- **Valuing SEND:** increased understanding of the range of needs, settings, readiness, and home confidence to meet them across Kirklees through use of the Valuing SEND approach and tool.
- **Inclusion Support Offer:** supporting settings to assess and meet the needs of children and young people by providing information, advice and guidance and coordinating access to multi-agency services.

4.21 Implementing VSEND in Kirklees

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Members received a summary of work to date on VSEND in Kirklees. They noted that:

- There were 16 VSEND training sessions.
- 23 settings had submitted VSEND profiles.
- The average number of returns per setting was 5.6.
- There were c1200 CYP within those settings with SEND or an EHCP.
- 131 VSEND profiles had been completed.
- 10% completed returns of potential CYPs the VSEND tool could support.

4.22 Whilst the response rate was good, the Council acknowledged that the sample size was still relatively small. The responses had helped the Council identify where several tweaks to improve the provision could be made, which would be implemented in due course.

4.23 LA Reviews and Working Parties

Members were informed that there were currently 4 LA Reviews and Working Parties in situ. These were:

- **Alternative/Specialist Provision (Jane Friswell)**
- **Specialist School Placement Sufficiency.** A report to Cabinet was due imminently, which concentrated on the creation of additional places in special schools and the building of additional provision. As this would take time to implement, the Council was looking to find space in other schools and was working with key stakeholders on this.
- **Educational Safeguarding Service.** The Council was currently looking at its current provision and how this service could be located closer to local communities which utilised it.
- **Exclusion Working Party.** The Council was looking at pupil exclusion numbers across the district and had already received useful data to plan the 'what next' steps in relation to reducing the number of pupil exclusions.

4.24 EHCP Top-Up Funding

A paper had been agreed by Cabinet in May 2021, which proposed an increase in the top-up funding amount that mainstream schools received for pupils with EHCP's.

4.25 Other Inclusion Partner Work

There were two additional strands of other inclusion partner work which the Council was leading on. These were:

- **The Graduated Approach.** This considered the 'non-negotiable' best endeavours in provision and had been co-produced with a team of SENDCos.
- **Strategic Development of SENDACT (EHCP).** The purpose of this was to review systems and processes within SENDACT, as well as implement innovative, transparent and equitable ways of working, with the involvement of key stakeholders in the process.

4.26 The Chair invited questions, following which Kelsey was thanked for her interesting and informative presentation.

5 Dedicated Schools Grant Outturn

Dedicated Schools Grant Outrun

5.1 The DSG Account (Projected DSG reserve account deficit at 31.03.21)

David Baxter (DB) reported on the projected DSG reserve account deficit at 31.03.21

5.2

	Opening Balance	Correction	Agreed carry-forwards	2020-21 over/under spending	Closing balance 31.03.21
	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k
High Needs	12,876.8			10,548.0	23,424.8
Early Years	-982.2		982.2	-1,225.7	-1,225.7
Schools Block / CSS Block	316.6		-316.6	-329.2	-329.2
Central Services Adjustment	0.0			-2,864.8	-2,864.8
PPP1 Affordability Gap	2,184.4	-84.9		2,047.1	4146.6
Almondbury CS Deficit	0.0			1,954.1	1,954.1
Net DSG Reserve account deficit	14395.6			10,129.5	25,105.8

5.3 Members noted that the Net DSG reserve account deficit stood at £25.1 million and that the High Needs block contributed £23.4 million towards this total. This figure was the highest in the Yorkshire and Humberside region and was therefore a high priority to address. The Council was working with the ESFA on this.

5.4 The Chair stated that this was a national issue, not just a Kirklees one. The government was aware of the situation, which had been caused by underfunding over several years.

5.5 Jo-Anne Sanders (JAS) reiterated the Chair's comments. She stated that this was a cumulative position created over several years. Historically the Council had not gained financially when changes in incremental funding had occurred, meaning that more and more pressures had been put on its finances. The Council was working hard to address this by utilising funding from other budget headings to support high needs funding. However, this did not detract from what was a very serious budgetary situation and the outcomes of the work with the ESFA would be reported to the Schools Forum at a later date.

5.6 Maintained School Balances

DB reported on current maintained school balances and Members noted the following carry forward figures:

Primary Maintained Schools	+£8,376,525
Secondary Maintained Schools	+£3,047,995
Special Maintained Schools	+£394,738

5.7 Schools with Excess Balances

DB reported on current maintained school balances and Members noted the following numbers of schools with excess balances (i.e. more than 8% c/f):

Primary Maintained Schools	14
Secondary Maintained Schools	5
Special Maintained Schools	0

The Council was working with schools which had excess balances in order to establish why this was (e.g., a future capital project). This would then be reported to the Schools Forum.

5.8 Schools with Deficit Balances

DB reported on current maintained school balances and Members noted the following numbers of schools with deficit balances:

Primary Maintained Schools	9
Secondary Maintained Schools	0
Special Maintained Schools	0

5.9 JAS informed the meeting that the LA worked in partnership with schools in deficit. Decisions made to get the school back on track were not rushed or made because of a 'panic' situation. Consideration was given to identifying where the budget issues were within the school and what could be done to address them. As DB had explained, a forward plan would then be put together and agreed, along with timescales for getting the school out of its deficit position.

5.10 School Contingency

DB presented the financial outturn for 2020/201. Overall the budget was just over £2.0 million with actual expenditure totalling £1.4million leaving a net underspend on the account of £0.6million.

5.11

Q: What will happen to the net underspend of £0.6 million?

A: It will be carried forward into the 2021/22 contingency fund.

5.12 Expenditure included support in the following areas:

Pupil Growth	£0.7million
Severance Costs (Schools in Financial Difficulty)	£0.4million
Business Rates Adjustments	£0.2million

5.13 School Reorganisation

DB presented the financial outturn for 2020/2021. Overall the budget was £0.29 million with actual totalling more than £0.64 million, resulting in a net overspend of £0.35 million.

Expenditure was split across the following areas:

Primary Sector	£0.15m
Secondary	£0.49m

6 Any other business

6.1 Plans for Next Academic Year

6.2 NMcS reported that discussions had been held about holding face-to-face meetings during the next academic year. It was felt that a hybrid approach, with some face-to-face and some virtual meetings, was a sensible way forward for the immediate future. Members were receptive to this suggestion and proposed the following way forward for future meetings of the Schools Forum and other Working Groups:

- Procedural meetings – to be held remotely.
- Business Meetings – to take place face-to-face where possible.

ACTION: That Future procedural meetings be held remotely and that future business-related meetings take place face-to-face where possible.

ACTION: That the next meeting of the Schools Forum take place as a face-to-face meeting, should this be possible.

- **Schools Forum Membership**

Members noted that the LA would be looking at the Schools Forum membership and constitution over the summer.

ACTION: That Members receive an update on this at the next meeting.

- **Future Agenda Items**

The Chair proposed that the item “Covid-19” be removed from future meeting agendas.

ACTION: That the item “Covid-19” be removed from future meeting agendas.

7 Dates and times of next meetings

Friday, 10 September 2021 at 9:00 am – Briefing (*Teams Meeting*).