

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

KIRKLEES SCHOOLS FORUM

Friday 19th November 2021 at 8:30am, Via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Name:

Andi Gilroy-Sinclair
Helen Pearson, Jenny Shore, Diana Wilson, Louise
Brown, Martin Vayro

Category of Membership:

Nursery School Heads (1)
Primary School Heads (5)

Karen Colligan
Paul Evans

High School Heads (1)
Special School Heads (1)
Special Academy Heads (1)
Academy Heads (4)

Michelle Lee (Chair), Darren Christian, Catherine Jubbs,
David Wadsworth

Pupil Referral Units (1)
Non-school members (5)
School Governors (1)

David Baxter, Natalie McSheffrey, Eamon Croston, Elaine
Croxford (Supporting Clerk to the meeting) Peter Bell
(Clerk to the meeting)

Officers in Support

1 Apologies For Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2 High Needs Block Transfer Request To Schools Forum

2	High Needs Block Transfer Request to Schools Forum
2.1	The Chair reminded all those in attendance why a special meeting of the Schools Forum had been called, which was to give feedback and take onboard all key stakeholders (Head Teachers) viewpoints on the proposal to transfer 0.5% funding from the schools block to the high needs block (a total of £1.6 million) during the 2022/2023 financial year.
2.2	The Chair stated that it was important for Schools Forum to take everyone's opinions into consideration and listen to feedback received, before making a collective decision on whether to support the LA's proposal or not.
2.3	The Chair invited colleagues from the primary, secondary and special school phases to feed back on what their representative groups had said about and recommended with regard to the LA's proposal.
2.4	<u>Primary Phase Feedback</u> Diana Wilson (DW) reported that she, along with Catherine Jubbs (CJ), Helen Pearson (HP) and Jenny Shore (JS) attended a meeting of the Kirklees Primary Head Teachers (KPH) on 18 November 2021, at which the

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	LA's proposal was discussed.
2.5	DW informed Members that KPH colleagues recognised that the proposals had to be implemented and would be implemented, due to the demands placed on the LA by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Despite this, they welcomed the fact that they had given them the opportunity to comment on the proposals and offer feedback to the LA on them.
2.6	DW reported that KPH colleagues had expressed their concerns that funding was being taken from the schools block at a time when many primary schools were finding it very difficult to balance their budgets. She gave an example of one primary school which did not have sufficient finances to appoint a Deputy Head Teacher because their special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) costs, relating to the provision of teaching assistants within school to support children with complex/additional educational needs, were so high. This ad really brought home to KPH colleagues just how much some primary schools were struggling with their finances.
2.7	DW stated that KPH colleagues wanted the LA to be transparent with them over what the additional 0.5% would be used for, as well as its impact on high needs provision. They had also requested that the LA provide accurate, easy to follow and understand documentation to them which outlined the exact amount of funding each primary school would be missing out on – as the information submitted to them for the KPH meeting showed that some schools appeared to be losing out more than others, with some schools seemingly not losing out at all. Action 24: That the LA provide this information to KPH colleagues.
2.8	DW explained that Schools Forum Members in attendance at the KPH meeting did not sugar coat the information they shared with their primary school Head Teacher colleagues on the LA's proposals and were as honest, open and transparent about them as they could be. They reinforced the LA's viewpoint to their KPH colleagues that despite the pressures the LA was facing about the proposal, to the extent that it was effectively a done deal, they wanted KPH colleagues to feel a part of the consultation process on them and that they had been given an opportunity to give their views on them.
2.9	Concerns had been expressed as to who would be monitoring how the £1.6 million taken from the schools block would be utilised in supporting high needs provision, along with what impact this would have, not just on SEND provision within the high needs block, but how this filtered down to and supported primary schools.
2.10	DW informed the meeting that the Chair of the KPH had asked KPH colleagues to show, by vote of hands, how many of their schools were struggling to provide a high quality SEND provision. Members noted that 47 Head Teachers had raised their hands. This figure was well over 50% of the

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	<p>Head Teachers in attendance at the meeting, which again demonstrated the problems that primary schools were facing – and yet they were being asked to provide a high quality SEND provision, which met the needs of primary aged pupils, with less funding.</p>
2.11	<p>DW informed LA colleagues in attendance, that KPH colleagues who represented academies had asked which financial year this cut would be implemented from, as their academic year ran from September to August (whereas LA maintained schools financial years ran from April to March). The meeting was informed that the cut would be implemented from the 2022/2023 financial year for both LA maintained schools and academies.</p>
2.12	<p>DW reported that KPH colleagues had also expressed concerns around the timescales for the implementation of the LA's SEND Transformation Plan. Whilst it was acknowledged that this plan should bring about savings against high needs funding, it would not occur overnight. Further concerns were also expressed around the LA's SEND provision, which KPH colleagues did not believe was effective in addressing/meeting the SEND needs of children within primary schools.</p>
2.13	<p>The Chair thanked Members from the primary phase for their feedback and invited secondary phase Members to comment.</p>
2.14	<p><u>Secondary Phase Feedback</u> Darren Christian (DC) informed the meeting that he had emailed Dave Wadsworth, fellow Schools Forum Member, requesting that his email be circulated to secondary Head Teacher colleagues asking for their feedback about the LA's proposal.</p>
2.15	<p>DC informed the meeting that he had expressed directly in his email that the proposal was effectively a 'done deal', however, the LA wanted to involve key stakeholders as much as it could and was actively seeking feedback on its proposal. DC added that he had summarised details relating to the huge shortfall in high needs block funding and that the ESFA had brokered with the LA a way to move forward on addressing this issue.</p>
2.16	<p>DC reported that one school (Westborough High School) had made it very clear that the proposal would have a significant and detrimental impact on its budget and questions were raised around why the LA had targeted IDACI funding as a basis for its financial calculations (instead of, for example, AWPU). DC added that secondary Head Teacher colleagues who responded to him had scrutinised the appendices of the LA report, which detailed the financial losses that implementation of the proposals would have on of each high school/academy. As with primary Head Teachers, secondary Head Teachers had also identified anomalies within this information, which showed that some secondary schools had lost out, whilst others seemed to be unaffected.</p>

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2.17	<p>DC stated that from the feedback he had received from secondary Head Teacher colleagues, two main areas had been identified. These were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The direct impact the cut to the schools block would have on secondary schools budgets and educational provision.2. The number of concerns secondary Head Teacher colleagues had around the LA's SEND provision, especially around the work of SENACT.
2.18	<p>There had been a clear separation between the budget savings the LA was required to make in relation to high needs block funding, which all those who had fed back to DC acknowledged and accepted/understood (with the exception of Westborough High School), and concerns raised around the LA's SEND provision. Several areas of concern which secondary Head Teachers had experienced, which related to SENACT and Educational Psychologists were shared with the meeting.</p>
2.19	<p>DC stated that secondary Head Teachers would feel slightly appeased if their views on the LA's SEND provision were taken onboard and, perhaps, that a working group or something of that type was created by the LA, in order to give them a voice on SEND provision and how it could be best delivered within schools. DC felt that the message was loud and clear from secondary Head Teachers that the LA's SEND provision was currently not fit for purpose and that the LA needed to hear some honest perspectives around its failures within secondary schools.</p> <p>Action 25: <i>That these concerns be looked into and a way forward identified by the LA as a matter of urgency.</i></p>
2.20	<p>The Chair thanked DC for giving feedback from the secondary phase and invited special phase Members to comment.</p>
2.21	<p><u>Special Phase Feedback</u> Paul Evans (PE) informed the meeting that the views of special school Head Teachers differed from that of those within the primary and secondary phases.</p>
2.22	<p>PE stated that they were fully aware of and acknowledged the pressures that primary and secondary phases were experiencing in relation to the complexities around the SEND provision and individual SEND cases, but they had also recognised that putting additional funding into the high needs block would allow increased support to projects such as outreach, which would relieve some of the pressures being experienced by primary and secondary Head Teacher colleagues within the wider education system. He added that the two new special schools, when opened, would help to reduce the current pressures being experienced in relation to special school places.</p>
2.23	<p>The Chair thanked PE for giving feedback from the special phase.</p>

2.24	<p><u>Next Steps and Future Actions</u> The Chair informed the meeting that there were two items which required action from Schools Forum Members, which were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To support the LA proposal to transfer 0.5% from the schools block to the high needs block. 2. Make recommendations to agree a way forward in relation to the issues schools are experiencing around the LA's SEND provision.
2.25	<p><u>LA Proposal to transfer 0.5% from the schools block to the high needs block</u> Chair invited those who were eligible to vote on the LA's proposal. All those within the meeting who were eligible to vote voted to support the proposal. There were no votes against the proposal. Action 26: That the Schools Forum supports the LA's proposal to transfer 0.5% from the schools block to the high needs block.</p>
2.26	<p><u>Make recommendations to agree a way forward in relation to the issues schools are experiencing around the LA's SEND provision.</u> Members discussed ways in which the voice of Head Teachers could be communicated to the LA in relation to its SEND provision, as there was a clear message from Head Teachers that the current provision was not working and was not effective.</p> <p>Questions continued to be asked around IDACI funding being used for the LA's calculations. DB stated that IDACI had been used in the past for financial calculations and Schools Forum were familiar with having financial proposals being put to them in this manner. This was acknowledged by the Chair, who also commented that this was one area of funding which Schools Forum had some control over. It was noted that some schools did not receive IDACI funding, which possibly explained why the appendices within the LA report on the High Needs funding block proposals showed that some schools would not be losing any funding. Members asked DB to draft a briefing note on this for circulation to Head Teachers. Action 27: That DB draft a briefing note for Head Teachers, summarising what IDACI is and explaining why IDACI funding has been used to calculate the LA's proposal to transfer 0.5% from the schools block to the high needs block.</p>
2.27	<p>DC informed the meeting that whilst there were high hopes around the two new special schools, in relation to addressing concerns around special school places and the wider SEND context, what the two new schools would not do is address issues schools were currently facing with regard to extreme behaviours (as a result of SEMH) and deep personal issues children and young people were experiencing. In response to this, which Head Teachers within the meeting acknowledged was an issue, the Chair suggested that a questionnaire be sent to Head Teachers asking them to outline what their main priorities are around SEND, along with their main issues.</p>

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2.28	DW added to the comments made by DC. He stated that the after effects of Covid had, certainly from his experience, been underestimated. Whilst schools had got things right in relation to educational provision and getting children and young people back on track with their learning, what schools were struggling to deal with was the longer term impact Covid was having on pupil and student behaviour, wellbeing and anxieties. He felt that this was an area which needed to be looked into further by the LA as it was causing concerns through the secondary phase sector. It was also acknowledged that within the primary phase children I reception and year 1 had spent approximately two-thirds of their young lives in a lockdown situation, which had impacted on their social, communication and language skills/development.
2.29	All Members agreed that it would be useful for a piece of work to be undertaken by the LA, with support from Schools Forum Head Teachers, to look at the SEND provision within the LA. Members welcomed and agreed with the Chairs suggestion that a questionnaire should be drafted and circulated to Head Teachers would be a useful first step. Action 28: That the Chair, Natalie McSheffrey, Darren Christian and Dave Wadsworth arrange a meeting to undertake this piece of work.
2.30	NMcS agreed to feedback the comments and concerns raised within the meeting around the SEND provision to senior colleagues within the LA, for which she was thanked.
2.31	The Chair invited further comments.
2.32	Eamon Croston (EC) informed the meeting that the DfE would be publishing 2022/2023 school budget allocations in the near future. In view of this, he suggested that it might be worthwhile contacting schools to inform them of their 2022/2023 individual school funds allocation outcomes. This information would include details of the cash injection in basic school funding, as announced by the government in October 2021. Members thanked EC for his suggestion and agreed that it would be worthwhile contacting schools on this. Action 29: That EC arrange for schools to be contacted with this information.
2.33	<u>Thank You</u> On behalf of the LA, NMcS thanked Members of the Schools Forum and wider Head Teacher colleagues for their feedback and support for the LA's proposal to transfer 0.5% funding from the schools block to the high needs block (a total of £1.6 million) during the 2022/2023 financial year. She also acknowledged and thanked everyone for their feedback on the LA's SEND provision, which she would take forward on their behalf.

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Any Other Business

There were no further items of business to discuss.

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- 4** **Dates And Times Of Next Meetings: - 8:30 - 11:30**
Friday, 26th November 2021 – Briefing / Public Meeting (Textile Centre)
Friday, 10th December 2021 – Reserve Meeting (TBC)