

**The KIRKLEES SCHOOLS FORUM PUBLIC**  
**(Schools Funding Consultative Group)**  
**meeting held online on Friday 10 January 2025**  
**at 10.00am via Teams** (due to adverse weather conditions)

Present:

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Category of Membership:</b>
Andi Gilroy-Sinclair	Nursery School Head
Diana Wilson, Helen Pearson	Primary School Head
	High School Head
Rik Robinson	Special School Head
	Special Academy Head
Darren Christian (Chair), Laura Willimott, Dave Wadsworth, Paul Brook, Debbie Kelly, Ian Rimmer	Academy Head
Rebecca Smith	Alternative Provision
Vicky Morris	Non-school Member
Mathew Pinder	School Governor
Nicky West (Minute Clerk), Martin Wilby, David Baxter, Jo- Anne Sanders, John Bartlett, Emma Brayford, Tom Brailsford	Officers in Support
	Observers
	Others

**1 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for absence**

Darren Christian (Chair) welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

Apologies were received as follows.

- Jenny Shore – Maintained Primary Schools
- Vicky Morris – Non-school Member
- Emma Brayford – Officer in Support
- Andrew Fell – Maintained Secondary
- Hazel Danson - NEU

**2 Minutes of the Schools Forum Briefing held on 11th October 2024**

The minutes were confirmed as an accurate record of the last meeting.

**3 Matters arising from the meeting held on 11th October 2024**

(a) High Needs Block (Minute 5a refers)

Jo Anne Sanders updated that there had been a communication from the DfE soon after the last meeting that the Safety Valve arrangements would continue.

## Kirklees Schools Forum - 10 January 2025

### 4 Kirklees Education & Learning Partnership Board (standing item)

Jo-Anne Sanders reported on the last meeting which took place on 18 December 2024:

- It was reported that medical needs training had been reviewed with the clinical officer.
- There was discussion about the Fair Access Protocol review.
- There was a SEND update presentation.
- A proposal was discussed about Multi-Agency Safeguarding to strengthen arrangements which will be implemented from February 2025.
- There had also been updates from the Schools Forum meetings.

### 5 High Needs Block (standing item)

Jo-Anne Sander provided an update:

- Quarterly Safety Valve monitoring submission continue to be made.
- Meetings have taken place in relation to the last submission and discussions took place covering the current position and mitigations in place. The current position reflects the adverse impacts of increased costs from external providers and the increase in the number of young people being placed in settings outside of the LA
- There remains uncertainty about the approved AP Free School which is impacting on Safety Valve predictions.
- There was positive feedback in the meeting in relation to Cluster Working in the LA.
- The LA has been invited to be part of commissioned research on the Safety Valve process.
- EHCP backlogs in the LA have been reduced significantly. The team have worked very hard to achieve this.

Tom Brailsford provided a quick overview of the national position including:

- The government have announced that no new Safety Valve agreements will be entered into in future.
- Kirklees Council is the 2<sup>nd</sup> worst funded authority in the UK for high needs.

### 6 2025/26 Funding Formula

A Schools Funding Formula 2025/26 report had been circulated ahead of the meeting.

David Baxter outlined the key aspects of the proposal. The final allocations are as follows:-

Schools Block	£397,195,102
Central Schools and Services Block	£2,844,604
High Needs Block	£72,020,148
Early Years Block	£68,318,306
<b>Total</b>	<b>£540,378,160</b>

## Kirklees Schools Forum - 10 January 2025

The Safety Valve – High Needs Block Transfer is £3.6 million or 0.91% of schools block budget which requires Secretary of State approval.

The National Funding Formula Funding Rates were shared.

**Q. Why is there a big difference under Middle school sparsity?**

A. David Baxter will look into this further but there will not be a big impact for Kirklees schools.

**Q. There is a discrepancy between the total value of £540,378,160 and the total allocation which is approximately £10,000,000 less. What is the reason for this?**

Q. This deduction is made nationally, the lower value is the actual allocation.

The Minimum Fund Guarantee (MFG) is set at -0.35% within a permissible range of -0.5% and 0.0%.

The Growth Fund has been provisionally set at £1.2 million to allow for a balanced Authority Proforma Tool (APT) / Local School Funding Formula.

It was noted that the Teachers' Pay Additional Grant, Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant and Core Schools Budget Grant are now built into the National Funding Formula.

A breakdown of the proposed budget for each school was shared including numbers on roll in October 2024 and in October 2023 as well as increase/decrease in numbers on roll.

**Q. What is the current Minimum Fund Guarantee set at?**

A. For 2024/25 it is set at +0.5%.

It was explained that Schools Forum must be consulted on the proposed Local School Funding Formula and its views would be included in a report to Cabinet due to be published next week to support final decision making.

**RESOLVED:** That the Schools Forum support the Proposed Schools Block APT Allocations / Local School Funding Formula 2025/2026.

Jo-Anne Sanders referred to the reduction in pupil numbers and the significant impact on budget and the challenges that this represents.

## 7 Growth Funding

A Growth Fund report had been circulated ahead of the meeting. Martin Wilby explained that a similar report had been shared previously and had been updated to include data from the October 2024 census.

There was a discussion about the proposal to reduce the Growth Fund to £1,050,000 or whether to keep at the current amount of £1,200,000.

**Q. What happens if there is an underspend?**

## Kirklees Schools Forum - 10 January 2025

A. It could be used to offset other budgets or carried forward.

**Q. If the lower value of £1,050,000 is agreed, how would the additional funding be reallocated?**

A. It would be used to adjust the Minimum Fund Guarantee.

**Q. Are all the schools who have been allocated Pupil Growth funding maintained schools?**

A. No, some are academy schools as all school, including academies in effect contribute to the Growth Fund and can, therefore, benefit from it.

**RESOLVED:** That the Schools Forum agreed to keep the Growth Fund at £1,200,000 for 2025/26.

It was noted that the Growth Fund will continue to be reviewed at Schools Forum Meetings twice per year (after National Offer Day and After October census).

### 8 **Central Schools and Services Block (CSSB) proposed Allocations 2025/2026**

A Central Schools and Services Block (CSSB) Allocations 2025/2026 report had been circulated ahead of the meeting.

It was explained that further detail had been added to the report following the decision to approve the proposal in principle at the last Schools Forum meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That approval is given to the proposed Central Schools and Services Block (CSSB) 2025/26 Block Allocations.

### 9 **Proposed Schools Block De-delegations for 2025/2026**

It was confirmed that the report had been amended since the last meeting with further details added including rationale at point 2.3.

**Q. What happens if a school academises during the year? Is there a rebate?**

A. Yes there are rules in the DfE guidance about this.

**RESOLVED:** That the primary phase of maintained schools agree to the proposed schools block de-delegations for 2025/26.

The Chair read out an extract of an e-mail from Andrew Fell, the maintained secondary school representative on Schools Forum (who was unable to attend the meeting due to extenuating circumstances):

*'I've ready through the papers with relevant points included below:*

- I support the de-delegation as proposed. Please could it be confirmed that four out of the six maintained secondaries buy into Trade Union facilities times. I would also like a clear breakdown of the school improvement spend, specifically in relation to secondary provision.*
- CSSB - happy to support the decision of forum'*

## Kirklees Schools Forum - 10 January 2025

**RESOLVED:** That the secondary phase of maintained schools agree to the proposed schools block de-delegations for 2025/26.

[Officer note: a breakdown of school improvement spend was last reported to Schools Forum in July 2024. As per the action recorded above an updated report is due in the near future which will provide the information requested by AF]

### 10 **Early Years Funding Consultation and next steps**

An Early Years Funding consultation and timeline 2025/26 report had been circulated ahead of the meeting.

Martin Wilby explained the 5 areas for consultation and confirmed that the consultation period will end on 19 January 2025. Virtual briefings will take place this week and next and an outcomes report will be produced following the consultation period.

The outcomes will be presented to the Early Years Reference Group and then to a Schools Forum Briefing on 7 February 2025. By this time, it is expected that Cabinet will have delegated decision making on the Local Early Years Funding Formula to Tom Brailsford. Tom will take account of the views of Schools Forum members before final decision making. The plan is to bring certainty to Early Years providers as soon as possible after this date.

### 11 **Any Other Business**

There were no items of Any Other Business.

### 12 **Confirm Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed above.

### 13 **Next meeting details**

#### **Dates and time of next meeting**

~~The next Public Meeting will be on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2025, 10.00am – 11.00am – The meeting will be held at Cathedral House, St Thomas Road, Huddersfield. HD1 3LG~~

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The above meeting has now been cancelled and the next Public Meeting will be held on 2nd May 2025