

THE KIRKLEES SCHOOLS FORUM

meeting held on **Friday 29th June 2018**

10:00am at the Tolson Museum, Huddersfield

Present:

	Nursery School Heads (1)
Claire Minogue, Marcus Newby, Jenny Shore, Diana Wilson	Primary School Heads (5)
	High School Heads (2)
Anne Lawton	Special School Heads (1)
Sarah Wilson	Special Academy Heads (1)
Catherine Jubbs, Michelle Lee [Chair]	Academy Heads (3)
Martin Ridge	Pupil Referral Units (1)
Paul Davies	Kirklees Governors (1)
Hazel Danson (NEU – NUT section), Paula Wescott (NASUWT)	Non-school members (5)
David Gearing (Financial Delegation Manager); [Minute Clerk]	Officers in Support
Martin Wilby (Acting Deputy Asst Director – LA Statutory Duties)	
	Observers

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Gillian Collins (NEU – ATL section), Ian Ellam (Secondary Heads) and Loz Wilson (Secondary Heads). Today would have marked the last Forum meeting for both Ian Ellam and Loz Wilson. The thanks of the Forum go to both for their sterling service to the Forum and best wishes to both for their next steps.

2. Minutes of the Schools Forum Public meeting held on 23rd March 2018

The minutes were agreed to be a true record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising from the Schools Forum Public meeting 23rd March

3.1 Forum membership update [minute 3.1 of the 23rd March meeting]

The ballot process to elect a third mainstream academy representative to the Forum resulted in the selection of Kyrstie Joslin, head teacher of Boothroyd Primary Academy to the position. Mainstream academy representation does not have to be proportionate to the primary and secondary academy sectors. The three mainstream academy slots on Kirklees Schools Forum are now filled by the head teachers of three primary academies. The three representatives have a duty to represent the whole mainstream academy sector.

Overall Forum membership proportions will be reviewed again for the start of the new academic year using the latest available spread of pupil numbers amongst the constituent groups. There will be a need to secure new representation from the maintained secondary school sector because the two current reps are both moving on to other things at the end of this school term. One expression of interest has already been received.

3.2 Schools Budget Shares Summary 2018-19 [minute 5 of 23rd March]

An incomplete version of the 2018-19 Budget Shares summary was provided for the last meeting. This has now been finished off and a complete version had been made available amongst today's agenda papers. The information missing from the version considered on

23rd March related to early years funding figures for a handful of primary academies and details of the budget allocations to the three pupil referral units.

3.3 High Needs Review: Draft Action Plan [minute 7 of 23rd March]

The final version of the action plan arising from the recent High Needs Strategic Review process is still being worked upon. The latest available draft of the action plan (version 8) had been included amongst today's agenda papers for information. Forum has previously made a request that the plan should include, at appropriate points, a note of where the cost responsibilities lie for actions to be taken, eg with the Council, the High Needs funding block, Schools etc. This is not reflected in the action plan as yet.

4. Feedback from the Learning Summit / Strategy Day

It was reported that the Learning Strategy Day went very well with very positive feedback received. The session on High Needs issues had proven to be particularly useful and comments made will help officers refine a couple of aspects of the High Needs action plan. Firstly, transition protocols for when high needs children move schools. Work will begin on this over the Summer and further input from interested school staff will be sought next term. The other strand relates to the need for workforce development to be better able to deal with high needs issues. The need to include a focus upon how staff can better engage with parents came out of the session.

5. Kirklees Education & Learning Partnership Board (standing item)

The Education Services Committee continues to work through a range of services trading with schools. The process is helping to increase understanding of each service and helping individual services too to focus on how to improve their offer to schools in future. Specific actions are in the process of being pulled together once mutually agreed.

Summary notes from the Partnership Board and its two sub-committees are now placed on the Heads Up site. It was agreed that these notes should be included with Schools Forum agenda papers in future as a better way of providing update information.

6. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Outturn 2017-18

- **Closedown Summary**

The 2017-18 DSG outturn summary position was considered.

On the bottom-line of the 2017-18 DSG account is an overspend of £3,994,600. In terms of the component funding blocks of the DSG this break down as follows: -

High Needs funding block	£4,656,500	over
Early Years funding block	- (£ 741,500)	under
Schools funding block	<u>£ 79,600</u>	over
Total	£3,994,600	

The main pressure within the DSG is clearly falling on the High Needs block. There has been an increasing amount of focus from the centre of the Council on the growing imbalance within the account. The High Needs Strategic Review work has helped to set out the context for how the pressures have built up and will continue to do so as well as drawing up an action

plan with a view to return the system to a balanced position. That aim would not be helped by simply rolling forward £4.66m of deficit into the 2018-19 High Needs account. Although the Council's own financial position continues to be extremely challenging, its own 2017-18 outturn position was ahead of the (considerably reduced) target budget figure. The Council is therefore in a position to step in and deal with the £4.66m deficit at the close of 2017-18. Although High Needs pressures continue to build, the 2018-19 High Needs account will at least open having no inherited debt to address. This outcome has only been possible thanks to some unexpected one-off 'windfall' savings during last year. It is unlikely that the Council, with further savings to achieve during 2018-19, will be able to step in and help again in a year's time. It is imperative that the High Needs strategic action planning maps out the path to a more stable High Needs position over the coming years. The Forum wished to record its thanks to the Council for the action it has taken to deal with the 2017-18 High Needs deficit.

Given that the 2017-18 High Needs deficit has been dealt with, the focus of the meeting today needed to turn to the remaining (net) balance of £661,900 of unspent monies.

- **Contingency / Reorganisation pressures**

Aside from the High Needs account pressures referenced above, it is anticipated that the need to support a number of schools and academies which are undergoing some form of reorganisation will cause further pressure during 2018-19. For some time now a reducing reorganisation reserve (within the Schools Contingency account) has been rolling forward within the DSG to absorb annual overspends against the recurrent School Reorganisation budget of £292,000. The opening 2017-18 balance of this reserve stood at £1.27m but £912,900 of this was committed during that year, leaving a closing balance of just £355,900.

Looking ahead to the reorganisation-related commitments that need to be honoured during 2018-19, it is certain that the recurrent Reorganisation budget of £292,000 will be exceeded. These commitments include the provision of diseconomy support funding to new primary schools growing year group by year group, support for schools asked to increase their Planned Admission level to address excess demand for places in their locality and some further transitional support in respect of lump sum payments affected by reorganisation. Given the cost of these interventions, the Reorganisation account would be officers' preferred destination for any identified spare resources to be rolled forward.

- **The Early Years account**

A briefing note was circulated. This account has contained a reserve element of funding which harks back to an historic allocation of funding called the two year-old trajectory grant, which was all about establishing nursery and childcare places for disadvantaged younger children. In Kirklees the places were created at a cost well within the funding provided in support. The reserve has been reducing over time as funds have been transferred out over the last few years to relieve evident pressures in other parts of the DSG. The underspend in the Early Years account at closedown 2017-18 is -(£741,500) and probably represents the last opportunity to deploy spare monies to help with pressures elsewhere.

The paper proceeded to set out a number of issues for which it would seem prudent to retain a modest proportion of the total sum as contingent provision during 2018-19: -

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| i) Retain funds for potential clawback for lower numbers coming through | £50,000 |
| ii) Contingent provision re deprivation supplements to the 30hrs cohort | £60,000 |
| iii) To support a small number of 2 year olds subject to child protection | £13,000 |

iv) Early Years SEND provision for eligible two year olds £125,000

Total carry forward proposed to the 2018-19 Early Years account: **£248,000**

The remainder of the Early Years balance is therefore available to be used for other purposes. [There is a discrepancy to resolve between the Early Years Service's view of the 17-18 outturn figure of a £697k underspend and the Finance Service view of £741.5k. This should prove to be a simple enough matter to resolve].

- **Ongoing issues in the DSG – absence insurance, maternity, trade union facilities time**

There are a few budgets within the DSG which have overspent in 2017-18 (and also in previous years) which merit further consideration going forward, particularly given the likelihood that there will be little by way of compensating underspends within other DSG budgets from this point on...

Absence insurance

The insurance schemes overspent on the bottom line by £77,900 during 2017-18. It is proposed to roll this amount forward as a debit against the 2018-19 absence insurance account. Then, to avoid creating further pressure within the account, take steps to redeem the sum. This could be achieved by recharging the amount across all schools taking part in the absence insurance arrangements in 2017-18. In the past, when the schemes have been in profit, a dividend-style payment has been paid out to member schools. It would make sense to make a similar adjustment to member schools when the scheme has a deficit to address. Another approach that could be taken is to look to reduce the daily payment rates in 2018-19 by an amount sufficient to save £78k. This would be problematic if the pattern of schools buying the insurance had altered since 2017-18 when the deficit occurred. The meeting favoured the recovery of the debt from 2017-18 member schools.

Maternity, paternity and adoptive leave

The maternity pot was overspent by £545k at the close of 2017-18, a very similar total to that showing at the close of 2016-17. This level of overspend clearly cannot be sustained so something needs to be done to reduce the level of expenditure charged to the account and/or increase the budget to restore a balance on this line. Officers had brought a discussion paper on the subject today but, due to time considerations, the matter was deferred to a future meeting. Any changes could only be made from next April anyway so there is time to look at the issues next term.

Trade Union Facilities Time

The 2017-18 outturn report shows an overspend against the Public/Union Duties heading of £107,800. The Public Duties budget's share of this is around £6k. There is a clear gap between the cost of operating TU facilities and the amount of funds gathered via de-delegation processes and direct purchase from schools. It is likely that income levels for the account will actually increase for 2018-19 though as more schools and academies are deciding to buy in than in the previous year. An agenda item will be scheduled in the first half of the Autumn term to facilitate further discussion.

- **Rollover decisions**

The following rollover decisions were agreed...

Schools Block (£79,600 deficit)

- 1) The £77,900 overspend in the 2017-18 absence insurance arrangements is to be rolled forward into 2018-19 as an initial charge against that year's arrangements. The £77,900 is to be recovered by levying proportionate charges across schools which were members of the insurance scheme(s) in 2017-18.
- 2) The remaining small deficit balance of £1,700 will be addressed from monies rolled forward from the Early Years Block (see below).

Early Years Block (£741,500 surplus)

- 3) Accepting the need to retain some contingent provision within the Early Years account £248,000 is to be rolled forward into the 2018-19 Early Years account.
- 4) The remainder of the 2017-18 Early Years underspend (£493,500 if the £741,500 total is confirmed) is to be rolled forward and used as follows: -

Clear the residual overspend in the Schools Block (see 2) above)	£ 1,700
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Schools Contingency – provide a Reorganisation reserve for 2018-19 (Within this there may need to be a contribution to the Pupil Growth Fund to the pre-opening budget provided in 2018-19 to the new Brambles Primary).	£491,800
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7. Any other business

No other business was raised.

8. Date and time of next meeting

Friday 19th October 2018

Venue: Tolson Museum

Start: 10:00am