

THE KIRKLEES SCHOOLS FORUM

meeting held on Friday 6th March 2020

10:00am at the Textile Centre of Excellence

Present:

	Nursery School Heads (1)
Louise Brown, Claire Minogue, Martin Vayro	Primary School Heads (5)
	High School Heads (1)
Paul Evans	Special School Heads (1)
Laura Flynn	Special Academy Heads (1)
Catherine Jubbs, Michelle Lee [Chair], David Wadsworth	Academy Heads (4)
Martin Ridge	Pupil Referral Units (1)
Paul Davies	Kirklees Governors (1)
Paula Wescott (NASUWT)	Non-school members (5)
David Gearing (Financial Delegation Manager); [Minute Clerk] Natalie McSheffrey – Relationship Manager, Schools & Settings Jo-Anne Sanders – Service Director, Learning & Early Support	Officers in Support
	Observers

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Darren Christian (Academy Heads), Karen Colligan (High School Heads), Andi Gilroy-Sinclair (Nursery School Heads), Carmen Gonzalez-Eslava (Post-16), Jenny Shore (Primary School Heads), Harkireet Sohel (Head of Service – Educational Outcomes), Martin Wilby (Senior Strategic Manager – Education Places & Access) and Diana Wilson (Primary School Heads).

2. Minutes of the Schools Forum Public meeting held on 29th November 2019

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

3. Matters arising from the Schools Forum Public meeting 29th November 2019

3.1 Outcome of outstanding Disapplication requests 2020-21 (minute 3.1 of the 29th November meeting)

It was reported to Forum that the Education & Skills Funding Agency had given permission for a second adjustment in 2020-21 to the baseline funding of the primary school in question to continue the process of removal of the identified element of overfunding within their budget share allocation.

A very late disapplication request had also been submitted and approved giving permission to set a higher minimum funding guarantee percentage than the original maximum of plus 1.84% in order to balance off the 2020-21 schools funding block account. This was necessary to be able to allocate a remaining sum of around £650k in a way that would benefit most schools. Other options had been explored but all attempts to build the remaining amount into any of the available formula factors simply triggered a counter movement downwards in either or both of the minimum per pupil funding factor and the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) support allocation. The MFG for 2020-21 has been set at plus 2.18%, effectively raising the funding floor for 131 out of 170 mainstream schools. The other 39 were already in receipt of higher increases in their funding per pupil rates for 2020-21.

4. Kirklees Education & Learning Partnership Board

Michelle Wheatcroft, Head of Service - Early Support, had attended the Board to discuss the Community Hubs and Early Support Service reorganisation and the perceived benefits it will bring. There will be additional capacity from the appointment of two new service managers later this month – one for Youth Services and one for Community Hubs (to be renamed “Family Centre Hubs”). There will also be a new second lead officer within Family Support. A revised organisation structure chart will be issued. The aim is to build back up some universal support services that had disappeared as a result of the austerity programme. It was asked whether the structure chart could also include some brief summary notes about post responsibilities under each role. The Community Hub Co-ordinator roles have been extended through to September 2020 to provide some space to consider the approach going forward.

Kirklees Active Leisure (KAL) attended to provide an update on how their management of local swimming services for schools is going. Generally it is seen to be going well. There has been lots of positive engagement and some extension of the service to families. The unavailability of Spen pool has been successfully worked around. KAL is working with a dozen or so schools to pilot longer swimming sessions (although it was commented at Forum that the sessions are not significantly longer). The swimming sessions provided are being quality assured by Sport England.

The extension of the DfE’s Risk Protection Arrangement to the maintained schools sector from April 2020 had also been discussed.

The Education Improvement Committee had examined a number of reading projects.

The Education Services Committee had considered Catering and Cleaning and Caretaking Services and some positive developments within those services. The Committee also considered whether the letters of assurance approach covering Kirklees staff visiting / doing work in Kirklees schools was compliant with safeguarding requirements – the approach was regarded as satisfying compliance at a minimum level so ways to enhance the arrangement were discussed.

A statement has been issued via HeadsUp on the topic of Relationship and Sex Education. School representatives are working with officers to draft a model policy for schools to adopt. It was also reported that the West Yorkshire Teaching Alliance had been successful in bidding for PHSCE training monies.

5. High Needs Budget (Ronnie Hartley, Head of Service, Education Safeguarding & Inclusion attended the meeting for this item)

Following on from the briefing provided to the last Forum meeting about the discussions at the Forum’s High Needs Task & Finish Group, Ronnie Hartley reported a slight delay to the timescale for progressing the work on the future shape of mainstream top-up funding. The task and finish group had helped to establish the governing principles of the review and officers will now meet to conduct an options appraisal on 16th March and reconvene the Task & Finish Group thereafter. The aim would be to set an implementation date for the new top-up funding method of September 2020.

6. Details of the 2020-21 DSG settlement and the shape of school funding for 2020-21

Details of the 2020-21 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlement for Kirklees and how it compares to the previous year's settlement were included with today's agenda papers.

a) Schools Block

The pure Schools Block has increased from £293.5m in 2019-20 to £302.18m for 2020-21, a rise of £8.68m. The minor part of the increase is attributable to having 115 more pupils on the October 2019 pupil census return but the majority of the rise is driven by the average 4% increase to the National Funding Formula (NFF) factor values for 2020-21, including the higher minimum per pupil check values of £3,750 for primary schools and £5,000 for secondary schools. The overall rise in the Schools Block for 2020-21 is worth 2.96%. Whilst all schools will see the benefit of the formula factor unit value increases, many schools will experience a consequential reduction in the amount of cash protection layered on top of their NFF outcome. The worst case net effect of the two opposing movements would see a school gaining by a minimum increase of 1.84% per pupil on last year's baseline (but it has subsequently proved possible to deliver a minimum increase of 2.18% per pupils – see 3.1 above).

b) Growth provision within the Schools Block

The formula growth method brought in last year allocated £1.76m to Kirklees in 2019-20. The tail-off in growth pressure has seen this drop to £1.59m in 2020-21 although the fall would have been larger still if the DfE hadn't removed the gains cap which applied last year. [£165k was knocked off Kirklees' growth formula outcome in 2019-20 to produce the £1.76m result]. Any growth funds not needed to address within the funding allocations the addition of new year group intakes for those schools still adding a year group from the start of each academic year will be added to the Pupil Growth Fund for 2020-21 (see item 7 below).

c) Central Schools Services Block

Kirklees' CSSB allocation has again seen a reduction from the previous year's level - £2.22m compared to £2.30m in 2019-20. A 2.5% reduction in the value allocated per pupil had been expected as the true NFF outcome is phased in, but on top of this a 20% cut (a further £34k loss) has been applied to the historic commitments element of the CSSB. This sort of cut has been threatened by the ESFA for some while based upon an assumption that historic commitments should be reasonably short-term and will "unwind" over time. That simply isn't true when the costs relate to annual pension payments. The ESFA have begun to listen to arguments from local authorities where their commitments are in reality much longer term in nature. Officers wrote to the ESFA, as requested, to explain the situation with regard to the ongoing pension payments charged to the DSG and the £34k funding will now be restored.

d) High Needs Block

More funding nationally has been committed to High Needs from 2020-21. This has seen Kirklees' High Needs allocation for 2020-21 rise from £37.06m in 2019-20 to £43.17m – an increase of £6.11m. There are indications also that Kirklees' eventual outcome from the High Needs NFF will garner another £5.8m on top of the 2020-21 position (although the Treasury has still to confirm departmental allocations beyond 2020-21 and there is no indication of how quickly the funding would be passed through should it be approved). The increase in funds

for 2020-21 is very welcome but still nowhere near sufficient to bring the High Needs account to a balanced position in-year.

e) Early Years Block

The Early Years Block figure is only an indicative one at this stage of the year. It will be firmed up once January 2020 census data is available. The indicative allocation shows a mixture of gains and losses across the various funding elements in comparison to 2019-20. Numbers of children accessing the universal 15 hours free entitlement for three and four year olds have fallen compared to a year ago (resulting in a loss of £68k) and numbers of disadvantaged two year olds in the system have also fallen (a loss of £115k). The number of children from eligible working families accessing the extended 15 hours entitlement has increased by approaching 10% since last year, resulting in an increase in funding of £674k. There have also been increases to both the Early Years Pupil Premium (+£51k) and the Disability Access Fund (+£10k) allocations. Overall, there is an indicative increase from £28.09m to £28.64m.

The shape of (mainstream) school funding for 2020-21

An analysis comparing the 2020-21 schools funding allocation factor by factor with the equivalent figures for the previous year was circulated to the meeting. The 4% average boost to the National Funding Formula factor values has reduced the amount of cash protection for schools within the system. In 2019-20 cash protection totalled around £14.5m above the pure operation of the national funding formula. Within the 2020-21 funding allocation this has reduced to approximately £10.6m.

7. Budget retention and de-delegation decisions for 2020-21. Cabinet approval of funding arrangements

Following a round of consultation with schools, discussions at Forum briefings and feedback gathered from constituent group meetings the tables below reflect the agreed retention budget decisions for financial year 2020-21.

Central School Services Block 2020-21

Budget provision	Proposed level	Notes
Servicing of the Schools Forum	£31,000	Unchanged from 2019-20
Historic DSG pension commitments	£170,400	Unchanged
Pupil Admissions Service	£401,900	Unchanged
School Organisation & Planning	£139,600	Unchanged
School Reorganisation Support	£292,000	Unchanged
National Copyright Licence charge	£331,100	Forum approval is not required. Budget level affected by volume change in pupil numbers and inflation.
Former Education Services Grant retained duties for all children	£886,200	Statutory and regulatory duties upon the Council for all school-age children. Amount reduced from £943,300 due to lower CSSB allocation in 2020-21 and the increased Copyright Licence charge
TOTAL	£2,252,200	[To match the total CSSB allocation 2020-21 with £34.1k cut restored]

'Growth' funding within the Schools Block 2020-21

Budget provision	Proposed level	Notes
Pupil Growth Fund	£600,000	Unchanged from 2019-20
Future pupil growth	£737,500	Retention of the unused element of formula-based growth monies within the PGF to continue to provide support for ongoing school reorganisations and restructures and to support necessary future changes.
TOTAL	£1,337,500	

Funding retained within the Early Years Block 2020-21

Budget provision	Proposed level	Notes
Early Learning and Childcare	£585,000	Free Early Education, Childcare Sufficiency and Early Years Outcomes Teams – funding to providers, free entitlement place sufficiency, supporting standards of delivery
Back office / management costs	£71,200	Finance, Payroll, HR, Legal, IT etc
Inclusion Support	£40,400	Contribution to the Inclusion Officer team
Miscellaneous	£12,000	Contribution to admissions, maternity, union duties etc
TOTAL	£708,600	

De-delegation 2020-21 (maintained mainstream schools only)

Budget	Primary per pupil	Secondary per pupil	Notes
Schools Contingency	-(£13.29)	-(£16.65)	Rates unchanged
Free School Meals eligibility checks	-(£1.03)	-(£1.29)	Rates unchanged
Maternity, paternity and adoptive leave	-(£29.32)	-(£29.32)	Rates unchanged
Trade Union facilities time	-(£5.72)	£0	Rates unchanged, Secondary sector to continue to not de-delegate.
Public Duties	-(£0.16)	-(£0.20)	Rates unchanged
International New Arrivals	-(£1.58)	-(£1.98)	Rates unchanged
School Improvement Commissioning	-(£4.50)	-(£12.01)	Rates unchanged
TOTALS	-(£55.60)	-(£61.45)	

School Funding 2020-21 Cabinet Report

It was reported that the recommendations in the 2020-21 report to Cabinet on school funding had been approved at their meeting of 14th January 2020.

8. Any other business

It was asked whether the Forum needs to discuss the implications that Coronavirus may have for schools and their finances. Further information and guidance will be made available to schools as the situation develops.

9. Date and time of next meeting

Friday 26th June 2020

10:00am start

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