

THE KIRKLEES SCHOOLS FORUM

meeting held on Friday 27th November 2020

10:30am on Microsoft Teams

Present:

	Nursery School Heads (1)
Louise Brown, Helen Pearson, Jenny Shore, Martin Vayro, Diana Wilson	Primary School Heads (5)
	High School Heads (1)
	Special School Heads (1)
Laura Flynn	Special Academy Heads (1)
Darren Christian (Chair), Catherine Jubbs, Michelle Lee, David Wadsworth	Academy Heads (4)
Rebecca Smith	Pupil Referral Units (1)
Paul Davies	Kirklees Governors (1)
Hazel Danson (NEU), Paula Wescott (NASUWT)	Non-school members (5)
David Gearing (Financial Delegation Manager); [Minute Clerk] Natalie McSheffrey – Head of Education Relationships & Business	Officers in Support
Cllr Carole Pattison – Portfolio Holder Learning, Aspiration & Communities	Observers

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Karen Colligan (High School Heads), Paul Davies (Kirklees Governors), Paul Evans (Special School Heads), Andi Gilroy-Sinclair (Nursery School Heads), Judith Nash (interim Head of Service for Education Safeguarding & Inclusion), Jo-Anne Sanders (Service Director, Learning & Early Support) and Martin Wilby (Head of Education Places & Access).

2. Minutes of the Schools Forum Public meeting held on 16th October 2020

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

3. Matters arising from the Schools Forum Public meeting 16th October 2020

3.1 Appointment of substantive Head of Service for Education Safeguarding & Inclusion (minute 6 of the 16th October meeting)

It was confirmed that the local authority has not yet secured a substantive replacement for Ronnie Hartley. Judith Nash continues to cover the position in an interim capacity.

3.2 Second letter from the Forum to the Secretary of State concerning additional Covid-related costs falling on schools (minute 7 of 16th October)

The second Forum letter to the Secretary of State to raise concerns about the lack of proper financial support for schools for additional Covid-related costs has not yet been sent. It was agreed earlier that evidence of the scale of those costs would be gathered from schools to accompany that letter. Agenda item 6 below refers.

3.3 Overspend in Schools Block funding arrangements (minute 9 of 16th October)

The technical overspend of £2.18m within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Schools Block account at year end 2019-20 was raised amid concerns that Councils are no longer able to add their own funds to the DSG account to help. The overspend has since been revealed to be an element of double-funding that needs to be corrected going forward from funding year

2021-22. This correction will form part of the wider consultation with schools on the 2021-22 funding arrangements – see agenda item 8 below.

3.4 School trade union facilities time overspend (minute 9 of 16th October)

Conversations / meetings have begun about the proposed new pooling arrangements for school trade union facilities time in line with the draft timeline. The Forum will be updated as matters progress.

3.5 Future school premises funding arrangements (minute 10 of 16th October)

A question was raised about how premises factors will be funded if the Education & Skills Funding Agency moves to a “hard” (ie direct) national funding formula for schools. The earliest this could now happen is from funding year 2022-23. The ESFA are known to be considering how to replicate local circumstances for business rates, premises rentals and Private Finance Initiative (PFI) within a truly national funding formula. There is nothing concrete to report as yet.

3.6 Review of local specialist places (minute 10 of 16th October)

It was asked when Jane Friswell’s review of the sufficiency of local specialist places would be available to look at. It will be the new year before a report is available.

4. Kirklees Education & Learning Partnership Board

The next Education & Learning Partnership Board meeting is set for 2nd December 2020.

[A note of the main business considered at the last meeting on 4th November is included below for information].

The key item considered was the Learning Strategy. There had been real enthusiasm at the meeting for what was laid out. The strategy was summarised on two sides of A4 rather in a lengthy document. Aspects discussed included how to develop resilience in our children, how to build engagement and empowerment. The strategy is not just about academic attainment but about developing the whole child. Employability after education was also to be considered. The aim is that the Learning Strategy will be finalised early in the Spring term.

Other topics discussed at the Board meeting included ‘family hubs’ (which is very much a working title for a new approach being taken) and sufficiency of school places.

5. High Needs Budget

An update on the next steps following the recent consultation with schools on mainstream high needs top-up funding from April 2021 will be given at the next meeting.

6. Ongoing (financial) implications for schools arising from the Covid-19 health emergency

LA officers have been gathering information from Kirklees’ maintained schools and academies about their additional Covid-related costs. Schools were asked to break down the “other costs” figure submitted to the ESFA in their July claim and also to analyse what additional costs they have incurred since that claim was submitted up to date in the Autumn

term. Not all schools have been able to send a response – 82% of maintained schools and just over 50% of academy schools have replied. In the maintained sector £602k of the total other costs claim of £617k has been analysed (the remaining £15k is accounted for in just 4 schools). There is no doubt that the build-up of costs for some schools has been significant but the picture is by no means uniform across the board – some schools have reported unbudgeted expenditure totalling hundreds of pounds whilst others have been much harder hit and their spending runs into tens of thousands of pounds. It is highly likely that many schools will encounter financial problems should the ESFA decide not to reimburse the “other costs” claims and also leave schools to fend for themselves in the current school term.

It was asked whether the letter to be drafted to the Secretary of State could comment that there is a danger that teaching, learning and safeguarding could all be impacted if schools aren't supported with these unforeseen costs. A draft of the letter will be shared with the Forum Chair and vice Chair as soon as possible. In the meantime, it was requested that officers continue to gather information on Covid-related expenditure from the schools and academies who haven't yet responded in order that as full a picture as possible can accompany the letter.

7. Schools Funding 2021-22: latest news

The only update for Forum concerned the estimated impact of the October 2020 pupil census figures upon the growth funding element provided within the Schools Block settlement. The growth allocation compares the positive differences between the current census and the previous October census and multiplies those differences by a primary pupil value and a secondary pupil value. Within the 2020-21 Schools Block Kirklees was allocated £1.594m of growth funding, the estimate for 2021-22 is £1.438m – a reduction of around £156,000. Pupil growth in the local system is now impacting on the secondary sector having moved through the primary schools sector, but the overall rate of growth in the system is diminishing.

Part of the growth funding element filters through to the schools funding formula budget with the remainder being retained to operate the Pupil Growth Fund account. To maintain the input to the schools funding formula the anticipated £156k reduction will mean a lower level of funding to operate the Pupil Growth Fund next year.

8. Schools Funding 2021-22: annual consultation round

There are three recurrent DSG items that require annual consultation with schools: -

i) The Central Schools Services Block 2021-22

The table below shows an **estimated** position for the CSSB in 2021-22

Budget	2020-21	2021-22
Servicing of Schools Forum	£31,000	£31,000
Historic DSG pension commitments	£170,400	£170,400
Schools Admissions	£401,900	£401,900
School Organisation & Planning	£139,600	£139,600
School Reorganisation	£292,000	£292,000
National Copyright Licence charge	£331,100	£339,400
Statutory and regulatory duties for all children	£886,200	£874,100
Total	£2,252,200	£2,248,400

ii) De-delegation arrangements for maintained mainstream schools in 2021-22

The table below shows the agreed 2020-21 de-delegation rates. The local authority will be looking to continue to apply these into 2021-22.

Budget	Primary per pupil	Secondary per pupil
Schools Contingency	-£13.29	-£16.65
Free School Meals eligibility checks	-£1.03	-£1.29
Maternity/paternity/adoptive leave	-£29.32	-£29.32
Trade Union facilities time	-£5.72	Nil
Public Duties	-£0.16	-£0.20
International New Arrivals service	-£1.58	-£1.98
School Improvement Commissioning Fund	-£4.50	-£12.01

iii) Retained budget provision within the Early Years Block 2021-22

The table below reflects the retained budget for 2020-21. The local authority will be seeking to retain these budget amounts into 2021-22.

Budget provision	Proposed £	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	

In addition to the above recurrent items, the consultation will need to explain the adjustment in next year's mainstream school funding allocation to correct a double-counting of the PFI funding factor from 2021-22. This will mean that the schools system will still get an estimated £7m increase in funds in 2021-22 rather than the £9m indicated DSG increase. The Forum has received a private briefing on this issue recently and indicated their preferred way forward which was felt to offer the most protection for the smallest and most vulnerable schools in the system.

The consultation will be launched to schools sometime next week. Schools will be afforded a couple of weeks or so to comment on the contents and Schools Forum will be briefed about feedback received. Officers asked advice from the Forum about how the funding adjustment issue should be handled within the consultation – should the effect be illustrated school-by-school or should the focus simply be on the principles of the changed funding factors? There was support expressed for just explaining the principles rather than trying to show the effects on each school (which, at this stage, aren't accurate anyway as the new data set to govern 2021-22 allocations to schools hasn't yet been released by the ESFA).

9. Annual Cabinet report on School Funding - timescale

Officers will be drafting the annual Cabinet report on schools funding arrangements over the coming weeks. This will incorporate any changes to funding mechanisms, decisions taken at Schools Forum and a note of the annual consultation with schools. The report is due to be considered at the 19th January 2021 Cabinet meeting. The deadline for submission of the 2021-22 funding allocations to the Education & Skills Funding Agency is 21st January and the submission contains a check that there is local political sign-off for the declared figures. The report will be shared with the Forum at an appropriate point.

It is anticipated that the ESFA data set and settlement figures for 2021-22 will be released sometime next month, hopefully in time for the 11th December Forum briefing session. It is known that the ESFA is concerned about rising numbers of free school meal children on the October census which may take total numbers above the level that the national budget for that factor can accommodate. If this happens it may affect the ability of some local authorities to balance off their funding account within the operating conditions as they stand. This aspect will need particular focus once the data set becomes available.

10. Any other business

No other business was raised.

11. Date and time of next meeting

Friday 5th March 2021

10:00am start

Microsoft Teams