



North Tyneside Council

Minutes

Meeting Schools Forum **Date** Wednesday 22 September 2021

Location Via Microsoft Teams

Present

✓ Present
D Deputy
A Apologies
O Absent

Name	Organisation	Representing	07.07.21	22.09.21
Andrew James	St Aidan's Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Angi Gibson	Hadrian Park Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Candida Mellor / Claire MacLeod	Trade Unions	Trade Unions	Claire MacLeod	Suzette Thompson
Collen Ward	Coquet Park First School	Primary	N/A	✓
David Bavaird	Norham High School	Governor - Secondary	✓	✓
David Watson	St Thomas More	RC Schools	✓	✓
Gavin Storey	Cullercoats Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Jill Wraith	Benton Dene Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Joanne Thompson	Holystone Out of School	Early Years PVI	✓	O
John Croft	Sir James Knott	Nursery	✓	✓
John Newport	Marden Bridge Middle School	Middle	✓	✓
Karen Croskery	North Tyneside Student Support Service	PRU	A	✓
Kelly Holbrook	Longbenton High School	Secondary	✓	✓
Kerry Lillico	Grasmere Academy	Academy	✓	A
Laura Baggett	Monkhouse Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Marie Flatman	Tyne Met	16-19 Provider	O	A
Fr Martin Lee	Diocese	C of E Diocese	O	Vacancy
Matt Snape	Marden High School	Secondary	✓	✓
Michael Young	Spring Gardens Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Paul Mitchell	Whitley Bay High School	Governor – Secondary	✓	✓
Paul Johnson	Churchill Community College	Secondary	✓	✓
Peter Gannon	Silverdale School	Special	✓	✓
Peter Thorp	Redesdale Primary	Governor - Primary	✓	✓
Philip Sanderson	Kings Priory	Academy	✓	✓
Stephen Baines	Holystone Primary	Primary	A	✓
Stephen Easton	Marine Park First School	First	✓	✓
Steve Wilson	Whitley Bay High School	High	A	A
Tim Jones	Langley First School	Primary	✓	A
<u>In Attendance:</u>				
Mark Longstaff	Director of Commissioning & Asset Management	NTC	✓	✓ * Part meeting
Claire Emmerson	Senior Manager - Finance Strategy & Planning	NTC	✓	✓
Noel Kay	Senior Business Partner, Finance	NTC	✓	N/A
Diane Thompson	Finance	ENGIE	✓	✓

Susan Smiles	Finance	ENGIE	✓	N/A
Christina Ponting	Senior Manager - Schools HR	ENGIE/NTC	✓	✓
Mary Nergaard	PA to Director of Commissioning & Asset Management	NTC	✓	✓
Diane Buckle	Assistant Director for Education	NTC	✓	✓
Kevin Burns	Senior School Improvement Officer (Vulnerable Learners)	NTC	✓	✓
Mark Taylor	Strategic Commissioning Manager	NTC	✓	✓

Item		Action
1.	Apologies for Absence	
	See Table above.	
2.	Attendance Register / Membership	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleen Ward has replaced Tim Jones as Primary representative • Ft Martin Lee has stepped down leaving a vacancy for CofE Diocese representative • Suzette Thompson will be replacing Claire McLeod as Trade Union representative • Paul Mitchell is standing down as Governor (Secondary) representative after this meeting. The Chair thanked PM for his hard work and dedication to Forum • Work is ongoing to fill any vacancies as soon as possible 	
3.	Public Meeting / Observers	
	The Chair welcomed the public to the meeting	
4.	Declaration of Interest	
	Item 6.2a - Kelly Holbrook and David Bavaird	
5.	Minutes of the last meeting	
	Minutes agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.	
6.	Matters Arising	
	Page 5, Item 6.1.c – Central School Services Block. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Strategy for support and challenge to schools September 2021’ paper was circulated to Forum with the meeting papers • Findings of PLP are to be presented under Item 6.2b 	
6.1	Annual Review of Schools Forum Constitution	
	a) Election of Chair Mark Longstaff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nominations were requested. • Peter Gannon agreed to continue in the role of Chair which was supported by Forum • Peter Gannon was therefore duly re-elected as Chair 	
	b) Election of Vice Chair Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Young agreed to continue as Vice Chair which was supported by Forum • Michael Young was therefore duly re-elected as Vice Chair 	

	<p>c) Declarations of Interest – All Members Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As noted in Item 4 <p>d) Members Attendance Christina Ponting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As noted in Item 2 <p>e) Notification to all Schools / Governors Membership Christina Ponting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annually and as changes occur a notification will be sent to all Schools including vacancies. <p>f) Action Plan / Self-Assessment Christina Ponting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last action plan was concluded in November • CP recommended that Forum wait for new Schools Forum guidance before reviewing the action plan • Guidance expected before November meeting. 	
6.2	Finance Update Claire Emmerson	
6.2a.	<p>Falling Rolls, Support for Schools in Financial Difficulty (previously referred to as Headroom) and Growth Fund Proposed Allocations</p> <p>CE talked through the presentation. Main points to note as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declarations of interest were made by Kelly Holbrook and David Bavaird and noted under Item 4 • The current expectations for these funding streams are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 5 schools eligible for falling rolls with an expected value of £0.082. ○ 5 schools eligible for growth funding with an expected value of £0.525m; and ○ 3 schools are expected to submit a Schools in Financial Difficulty (Headroom) application. • Falling Rolls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Breakdown of Falling Rolls eligibility is outlined in Table 1 of the report ○ Approximate total allocation £0.119m (including one school which is still pending) • Schools in Financial Difficulty: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Breakdown of Schools in Financial Difficulty eligibility is outlined in Table 2 of the report ○ It was noted that Norham have not previously been eligible for this fund, however, extensive work has been carried out in working towards bringing the school back into balance. This fund would significantly help the school and sub-group were supportive of the bid ○ Total allocation £0.335m • Growth Fund: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Breakdown of Growth Fund eligibility is outlined in Table 3 of the report ○ Five schools were eligible to apply for the funding, of which the subgroup approved four to apply. ○ The four eligible schools, with a total funding request of £0.385m, were each sent a request for evidence ○ Three schools have provided the relevant evidence to date. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Total allocation £0.218m ○ If all funding payments are approved, the 2021/22 closing balance will be £0.032m surplus which will be ringfenced to the Growth Fund <p>Recommendations: Schools Forum is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider the funding allocations as set out in this report; and ● Provide the necessary approval for the Authority to process the payments to eligible schools. <p>Approved</p>	
6.2b.	<p>Dedicated Schools Block – 2022/23 Consultation (0.5% block to block transfer)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CE provided an overview of the purpose of this presentation outlining the current pressures ● Forum will recall that the Authority has been required to submit a High Needs Recovery plan to the ESFA. ● This presentation is to inform Forum on how a proposed 0.5% transfer is intended to be utilised ● It was noted that a decision is not being requested today. The detail will form part of the annual consultation and a report outlining the consultation results will come back to Forum in November for a decision <p>i. SEND Support Service KB talked through the presentation. Main points to note as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overview of the main challenges was provided including increased need for out of borough placements, high number of EHCPs, significant growth in statutory requirements ● Financial Risks were outlined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of EHCP plans continue to increase year on year resulting in ongoing requests to increase capacity in the statutory team to meet the demand, therefore increasing spend by circa £1.2m year on year ○ 2/3 of our children and young people with plans attend specialist provision. This would require around 80 additional school places a year with additional post-16 and pre-school per year at a cost of £1.6m just on placement with no capital expenditure ○ Funding an additional 15-20 out of borough places year on year with an average cost of £45,356 per place (£680,350-£907,133 per annum) ○ This results in an overall projected increased pressure on the High Needs Block of £3.7m per year ● Significant investment has been made in the Statutory Team with no matched increase in funding ● There are circa 2000 EHCPs in North Tyneside ● Currently no children waiting over 20 weeks for an assessment ● Whilst we are now seeing the impact of this investment for statutory processes it is not solving the key pressures in the system ● Making the SEND Support Service fit for purpose: 	

- Need to build on the work already carried out to ensure that the SEND Support Service is fit for purpose. Example of the work required was shown on screen including resolving systemic issues, developing how we fund provision fairly while offering value for money, dedicated legal support and ongoing support, advice and training for the team
- Proposals include:
 - Creation of a short-term 18-month post for a SEND Expert to lead, review and develop our policy, process and practice. This will include an expert review of how we fund and assign resource
 - Embedding the use of existing systems (EMS) to manage and create workload and to track, celebrate and challenge performance
 - Creation of a Legal specialist post
 - Development of a training package to provide ongoing support, advice and training to the team
 - Creation of a SEND Quality Assurance Officer post
 - Creation of a SEND Support & Challenge Officer post
- Projected costs:
 - Year 1 cost = circa £0.245m
 - Year 2 and ongoing costs = circa £0.152m

Discussion followed around:

- JW asked if these are all temporary or fixed term posts and additional to what is provided at present
- KB noted that these will be new permanent posts with the exception of the 18-month fixed term post for the SEND Expert
- DB asked if there is any NoTCA Authority view on this matter
- KN noted that the Statutory responsibility sits with the individual Local Authorities. MT confirmed that across the 12 NE Authorities there is a collective approach to quality assurance including an individual Lead Commissioner for each Authority and a quality assurance framework etc. There is also a programme of activities and regular contact in place with the providers

ii. Proposed Expansion of the Behaviour (Schools Support) Team:

DB talked through the presentation. Main points to note as follows:

- Overview of the challenges and the background was provided. Impact of the pandemic was also discussed
- Current Team structure and funding:
 - Primary schools access the SST through an SLA which currently equates to an income of £16,500 this year
 - Maintained secondary schools access the SST through EIP funding of approximately £80,000 pa
 - The cost to the Local Authority of the current structure is £127,417 per annum. However, the real time running cost of the current service to approximately £185,000
- Overview of the scope of the current support was provided. which includes:
 - Advice and guidance to schools, staff, children, young people and their families at the point of need.
 - Individual case work support for managed moves, behaviour advice and support & in-year applications.

- Significant preparation and triage of PPEX
- Support at point of permanent exclusions
- Triage and access to alternative provision
- Strong working relationships with PRU leaders to seek solutions to wider issues and look at creative and innovative approaches to re-engage hard to reach pupils
- Training and support including drop-ins and network meetings
- Work Based Learning referrals, visits to providers and setting up of new processes and procedures
- Contribution to requests for assessment for EHCPs
- Collaboration with Early Help and Children's Services
- Overview of the impact of the current support was provided as follows:
 - Team is highly regarded for the work they do
 - Utilising strong links with schools and other services, the team has succeeded in maintaining children in their home schools and where this isn't appropriate, ensure a smooth and successful transition to ALP
 - Oversees and facilitates the Fair Access Protocol which is highly regarded
 - Provides support to children with complex histories arriving into the borough
 - Instrumental in designing and facilitating access to the Covid-19 Recovery Programme (Route 16) and continues to work closely with Moorbridge PRU
 - Along with Moorbridge PRU, the SST oversees the Year 6 Enhanced Transition project to support pupils who have been particularly impacted in relation to their SEMH by the pandemic/lockdown and who may struggle with the transition to high school
- Challenges:
 - Primary colleagues are increasingly keen to access an equitable level of support to that received by their secondary colleagues.
 - The current primary offer to schools relies heavily on the personal relationships that exist between the team and the Silverdale Outreach Team, which operate independently. There is no formal mechanism for co-operation between the two, which is not sustainable long-term.
 - The team is currently working at full capacity. Should the School Improvement Advisor (SIA) be unable to contribute beyond the allocated time, or should Primary schools request full access to support, the team would not be able to meet the demand.
 - Sustainability of the team in its current form is threatened by changes to funding, specifically the planned reduction to the CSSB grant.
- Demand:
 - The effects of the pandemic have increased both the quantity and complexity of casework being undertaken by the team. It is anticipated that this will remain a significant challenge for some years to come.
 - Same number of pupils needed support in 2020/21 as did in 2019/20 and this was with 2 periods of national lockdown and school closures

- Total referrals this year are already almost double the same period last year
- Need for support for children returning from EHE was discussed along with the need to manage absence when schools started to return in September
- Proposals:
 - Increase the capacity of the team
 - Creation of a part time Primary SENCo post
 - An Educational Psychologist to support the team's work
 - Full-time allocation of SIA support
 - Current Team Leaders role has been revaluated and regraded to reflect increased workload and added responsibility.
 - Longer term proposals for further expansion of the team with the addition of a Family Partner, linking with the Primary Outreach team to provide oversight and co-ordination to support CYP and their families.
 - It is anticipated that expanding this support will result in a reduction in pressure on the High Needs Block
- Proposed structure was shown on screen
- Funding has been secured for this financial year that will pay for the full-time advisor and the SENCo officer
- The anticipated cost of the revised structure would be circa £0.385m

Discussion followed around:

- PG asked for clarification on whether the funding for these posts is to come from the 0.5% transfer
- CE confirmed that this would be the proposed use of the transfer
- JW asked if this would put increased pressure on the High Needs Block
- CE confirmed that the intention is to reduce the pressure
- CE noted that as per previous years, individual sessions will be arranged for colleagues to attend before schools complete the consultation questionnaire
- It was noted that the presentation slides will be shared with colleagues after the meeting along with the contact names in case of any queries
- DB noted that she is happy to be available to respond to any queries
- DW thanked the team for all the work involved in preparing the proposals outlined, however, he reminded colleagues that this will take over £0.700m away from mainstream schools and asked colleagues to bear the impact on schools' budgets in mind when making a decision. DW also noted that this is a national issue and not unique to North Tyneside
- PM noted the good work carried out, however, noted the risks that it appears that the pressures will still continue to grow
- DBa thanked the team for the work carried out and noted that the proposals will form part of the consultation exercise and asked if it could be made clear in the consultation documentation that the outcome will come back to Schools Forum who will then make the recommendations to Cabinet
- The Chair encouraged Forum and colleagues to ensure that they look in-depth at the make-up of the proposals and planned teams
- GS proposed that the meeting in November is used to address any comments that come out of the consultation with the vote being postponed to January

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CE noted that the DSG proposals will have to go to Cabinet for approval as part of the Authority's budget setting process and asked what clarification he felt would be required to allow a decision to be made in November • GS provided a summary of queries • CE noted that if there are any specific questions that Forum wanted to ask as part of the consultation, they can be included to facilitate a decision in November • DW noted that this is the first time Forum have been sighted on the proposals and raised concerns that this doesn't leave them much time to make a suitably informed decision in November • DB noted that there has been a lot of discussion within PLP about the disparity and the proposals have been widely discussed • DB also noted that herself, KB and Anne Oldham will be available to respond to enquiries in October in order to facilitate a decision in November • DBa noted that he was hopeful that any enquiries can be dealt with during the consultation process in order to facilitate a decision in November rather than postponing to January • JW noted that colleagues would appreciate a breakdown in terms of contributions from schools (SLAs) EIP/PLP and high block needs and impact on schools <p>Recommendations: Schools Forum is asked to note the proposals and ensure that they are shared with colleagues in preparation for the consultation process.</p>	
6.3	Forward Plan – review for 21/22 Academic Year	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forward plan attached on page 3 of the agenda with updated dates. Any comments to be forwarded to CP • CP noted that a number of schools have converted to a MAT. It is therefore recommended that the Schools Forum membership is reviewed with the view to bring recommendations back to Forum at the next meeting. Forum agreed. 	
7.	Any Other Business	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PG noted that a question had been received linked to Catering SLAs • <u>ACTION:</u> PG to forward to ML who will provide a response • CP noted that there were 3 members of Forum not in attendance and a reminder was issued for a deputy to be available if Forum members are not able to attend. 	PG/ML
<p>Item 8 below was considered in private. Observers were excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information).</p>		
8.	Annual Update – Redundancy Costs (Schools) - CONFIDENTIAL	
	<p>CP talked through the confidential briefing paper. Main points to note as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All recommendations shown in the report were agreed by Schools Forum 	
9.	Date of next meeting	
	Wednesday, 24 November 2021 at 12:30pm	

