



North Tyneside Council

Item 5

Minutes

Meeting Schools Forum **Date** Wednesday 13 July 2022

Location Via Microsoft Teams

Present

✓ Present
D Deputy
A Apologies
O Absent

Name	Organisation	Representing	23.03.22	13.07.22
Anthony Gollings	St Thomas More	RC Diocese	✓	✓
Andrew James	St Aidan's Primary	Academy	✓	✓
Angi Gibson	Hadrian Park Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Candida Mellor	Trade Unions	Trade Unions	N/A	N/A
Collen Ward	Coquet Park First School	Primary	✓	✓
David Bavaird	Norham High School	Governor - Secondary	A	✓
David Watson	St Thomas More	Academy	✓	✓
Finn Wilcock	Southridge First School	Primary	✓	A
Gavin Storey	Cullercoats Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Jill Wraith	Benton Dene Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Joanne Thompson	Holystone Out of School	Early Years PVI	✓	✓
John Croft	Sir James Knott	Nursery	✓	✓
John Newport	Marden Bridge Middle School	Middle	✓	✓
Karen Croskery	North Tyneside Student Support Service	PRU	✓	✓
Kelly Holbrook	Longbenton High School	Secondary	✓	✓
Kerry Lillico	Grasmere Academy	Academy	✓	✓
Laura Baggett	Monkhouse Primary	Primary	✓	Tim Jones
Louise Bradford	Diocese	C of E Diocese	✓	✓
Marie Flatman	Tyne Met	16-19 Provider	O	Eamonn Murphy
Mark Teale	Trade Unions	Trade Unions	✓	✓
Matt Snape	Marden High School	Secondary	✓	✓
Michael Young	Spring Gardens Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Paul Johnson	Churchill Community College	Secondary	✓	✓
Peter Gannon	Silverdale School	Special	✓	✓
Peter Thorp	Redesdale Primary	Governor - Primary	✓	✓
Philip Sanderson	Kings Priory	Academy	✓	✓
Rob Harker	Carville Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Stephen Baines	Holystone Primary	Primary	✓	A
Steve Wilson	Whitley Bay High School	High	A	✓
<u>In Attendance:</u>				
Mark Longstaff	Director of Commissioning & Asset Management	NTC	✓	✓
Claire Emmerson	Senior Manager - Finance Strategy & Planning	NTC	✓	✓
Noel Kay	Senior Business Partner, Finance	NTC	N/A	✓

Diane Thompson	Finance	ENGIE	✓	✓
Christina Ponting	Senior Manager - Schools HR	ENGIE/NTC	✓	✓
Mary Nergaard	PA to Director of Commissioning & Asset Management	NTC	✓	Fiona Lucas

Item		Action
1.	Apologies for Absence	
	See table above	
2.	Attendance Register / Membership / Roles and Responsibilities	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CP provided an overview of the apologies and deputies in attendance. Currently no changes to the membership A reminder of the Roles and Responsibilities was issued. Chair welcomed Lesley Griffin, secondary governor representative to the meeting. 	
3.	Virtual Public Meeting / Observers	
	The Chair welcomed the public to the meeting.	
4.	Declaration of Interest	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Bavaird – Item 6.1 in relation to Schools Deficits David Bavaird noted that he has now been appointed as Governor at Tyne Coast College and he is also now the High Sheriff of Tyne & Wear. DB noted that he is happy to attend any school assemblies to talk through his role as High Sheriff and what it involves. 	
5.	Minutes of the last meeting	
	Minutes agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.	
6.	Matters Arising	
	Page 6, Item 7 – AOB: Energy Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ML confirmed that a briefing note was circulated to schools and Jill Wraith. <p>All other actions are covered on the agenda</p>	
6.1	Finance Update Claire Emmerson	
	<p>CE welcomed Andrew Brown to the meeting as a member of the Schools Finance Team.</p> <p>CE talked through the presentation on screen. Main points to note as follows:</p> <p>Schools Outturn Balances in 2021/22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CE noted that this is still a provisional outturn until Audit is complete. Need to be published by end of November Closing surplus of £3.398m which is significantly better, by £9.391m, than the forecast overall deficit of £5.993m at the start of the year This is a positive movement, however, in terms of managing the budgets a reminder was issued of the importance of setting accurate budgets when making strategic decisions The Chair noted that the movement is on average over £0.125m per school which could have implications when schools move to MATs in 2030 	

- DB asked if it may be worth looking at which schools are forecasting the biggest differences
- In 2021/22 seven schools transferred to the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust (BBCET), becoming academy schools and as such are not reported in the 2021/22 outturn for maintained schools.
- These schools left the Authority with a combined outturn balance of £1.081m. The outturn for these schools in 2020/21 was £0.875m, as included in Table 1 of the report
- Excluding these schools from the balances shows that the remaining maintained schools have ended 2021/22 with an increase in balances of £0.552m bringing total maintained school balances to £3.398m (see table 2 of the report)
- Schools have been reminded of the need to forecast as accurately as possible so that decisions are taken in the light of accurate budget projections.
- Reasons for the improvements and impact of Covid grants was discussed.
- Chart 1 of the report sets out the long-term trend, however, the March 2022 position does not include the £1.081m balance of the seven academies created in 2021/22.

School Deficits

- There were 6 schools already in deficit in 2021/22, including 2 that were classed as structural deficits, totalling an approved deficit value of £13.799m
- All schools improved their closing position with a deficit outturn of £11.832m, a movement of £1.967m. The progress of individual schools is outlined in Table 3 of the report
- CE noted that Longbenton have produced a 3-year plan that will take the school out of in-year deficit in 2022/23. CE thanked the School and the Authority for the work carried out to support the school
- DB declared an interest and reported that Norham would be reporting a balanced position within 3 years.
- CE also noted that Greenfields are likely to come out of deficit.
- CE noted that there are new schools that will be entering into deficit in 2022/23 and the approach taken will be slightly different to what has been used in the past. An overview of the work to be carried out with these schools was provided
- School Resource Management Advisors will work with schools in deficit from September to October 2022, funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

2021/22 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Outturn

- **ACTION: CE to recirculate the report showing the correct dates as 2021/22 and not 2022/23.**
- The 2021/22 DSG account of £157.061m (after removing academy funding) is showing a net deficit balance of £12.851m. This compares to a deficit of £7.932m in 2020/21.
- Majority is linked to the High Needs Block
- In 2019/20 the DfE issued guidance that any shortfall in dedicated schools grant should not be supported using funds from the General Fund.
- There was a temporary statutory override to ring-fence DSG deficits from authorities' wider financial position in their statutory accounts. This

CE

	<p>ring-fence is due to end after the accounts for the financial year 2022/23, at which point authorities will need to demonstrate their ability to cover DSG deficits from their available reserves which poses a significant risk to the Authority which will have to be managed across all blocks of the DSG.</p> <p>High Needs Block</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The closing balance on the High Needs block is a pressure of £13.512m, which increased by £4.792m in 2021/22 from £8.720m in 2020/21. This is partially offset by an underspend of £0.533m on de-delegated items which mainly relates to the headroom, growth funding and falling roles funding. • Still seeing an average if a £3.500m to £4.000m increase year on year • As the DSG is currently a ringfenced account, any balance is carried forward into the next financial year. • Pressures are in line with the national and regional picture and results from additional places required in special schools, out of borough placements and in relation to top up payments as outlined in Table 4 of the report. • The DfE guidelines state that Schools Forum can approve a transfer of up to 0.5% of the School Block to support other blocks. Transfers have been made to the High Needs Block from the Schools Block in previous years, however such a move was not supported for 2021/22 pending the completion of the Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan. <p>Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DSG first fell into deficit during 2017/18 and there has been action to address the deficit working collaboratively with Schools Forum although increasing numbers of children with special needs entering the education system has offset some of the progress. • Overview of the work being carried out with the DfE and the Authority's Strategic Education and Inclusion Board was provided. • Overview of the approach needed was provided • The Authority submitted a draft DSG Management plan to the ESFA in August 2021 which outlined the main areas of priority that focus on reducing the deficit on the High Needs block of the DSG. • The Authority has been invited to be part of the ESFAs Safety Valve Intervention programme from September 2022. Early discussions with representatives from the ESFA have been carried out and as plans are firmed up over the coming months the ESFA will continue to challenge and support the Authority through to the Safety Valve process commencing in September 2022. A Strategic Education and Inclusion Board has been established to support the DSG management plan. • The Chair provided an update on the discussions carried out with the Strategic Heads Group. There was a request for a sub-group of Forum to be established to be involved in the decision making of the high needs spend and prepare the DSG management plan. • <u>ACTION:</u> Schools Forums members to contact Mary Nergaard if they would like to be part of the sub-group of Schools Forum. • Peter Gannon and Anthony Gollings offered to be part of the group. • For 2022/23 £150m of revenue funding is available to support the cumulative deficit position of those authorities who are part of the Safety Valve programme, however, the ESFA have been clear that access to 	
		All

this funding will only be agreed once a robust DSG Management Plan is in place.

- A key risk for the Authority is that the statutory override to ring-fence DSG deficits is due to come end 2022/23. Due to the level of the deficit on the High Needs block of the DSG it is imperative that the Authority's DSG Management Plan meets the ESFA's requirements to ensure the historic deficit can be supported by funding that is available.
- NTC is an outlier in terms of the number of EHCPs currently in use at approximately 1% above the national average.

Early Years Block

- The Early Years block has ended the year with a cumulative deficit of £0.093m. This included a brought forward surplus of £0.198m from 2020/21.
- An adjustment to funding takes place in July when the DfE reviews initial funding estimates in relation to the numbers of pupils actually taking place compared to the initial funding estimates based on the January pupil census prior to the financial year

Falling Rolls, Growth and Schools in Financial Difficulty

- Finance sub-group are meeting on 19 July to discuss falling rolls and growth funding, which will include a discussion on approach for inviting applications from schools in financial difficulties. An update will be reported to Schools Forum in September

National Funding Formula (NFF) Consultation for 2023/24

- In 2021/22, the Authority made the decision to leave the Local Funding Formula (LFF) 100% in line with the NFF.
- No modelling has been under-taken at this stage, but the Authority are expecting an indicative funding allocation towards the end of July. Once this allocation has been received the Authority will consider modelling potential options for capping and maximising Minimum Funding Guarantees.
- Recommended modelling scenarios will be presented to Schools Forum in September, in advance of the formal consultation with schools during October/November 2022.
- DB noted that every school was dealing with the new budget tool and wished to record his thanks to Noel and the Schools Finance Team for the support provided with the new system which should improve the management of the budget in the future.

Recommendations

Schools Forum is asked to:

- acknowledge the provisional 2021/22 outturn position on all DSG balances;
Noted
- acknowledge the school budget plans overall summary position and the Deficit Schools positions for 2021/22;
Noted
- acknowledge the pressure on the High Needs block and the Authority's inclusion in the ESFA's Safety Valve Intervention Programme from September 2022;
Noted

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agree the current position and plans for additional funding sources maintained by Schools Forum; Forum Agreed • agree the plan for funding consultation for 2023/24. Forum Agreed 	
6.2	Reports from Services 2023/24 Financial Year Proposals The Chair	
	<p>The Chair provided a verbal update. Main points to note as follows:</p> <p>An overview of the Central School Services Block items was provided as follows:</p> <p><u>Central School Services Block</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget to support mainstream maintained schools in financial difficulty • Support for vulnerable Headteachers for those incidents where independent support and advice is necessary • Support for minority ethnic pupils and underachieving groups. (EMTAS) NB rate per pupil only applies to pupils that meet the EAL threshold • Assessment of Free school meals eligibility • The current central scheme to cover staff costs – supply cover. Eg the maternity/paternity/adoption cover scheme including Union facility time costs and Jury Service. <p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools Forum is asked if they wish any of those services included within the Central School Services Block to come and provide a report at Schools Forum in the future. <p>No requests were received from Schools Forum</p> <p>An Overview of the De-delegated Items was provided as follows:</p> <p><u>De-delegated items (Mainstream Schools Only)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget to fund the Schools Support Service • Budget to support vulnerable schools. Allocation to individual schools made annually by Schools Improvement staff • Budget for the education Improvement Partnership (secondary schools) • Budget to support the informational requests of the Schools Forum and improved budgetary awareness across all schools • Collective contribution to ongoing pension costs incurred when allowing teachers to leave schools prematurely • Schools Admission Service • Copyright Licences • Former Education Services Grant (Retained Strategic Responsibilities) <p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools Forum is asked if they wish any of those services included within the De-delegated items (mainstream schools only) to come and provide a report at Schools Forum in the future. <p>No requests were received from Schools Forum</p>	
6.3	Catering Services Update Mark Longstaff	
	ML talked through a presentation on screen. Main points to note as follows:	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There have been challenging times and the service has been through a tendering process with some schools choosing other providers. • Catering services are currently supporting 63 schools and has reflected on a renewed focus on: Customer experience; Sustainability / Climate Change / Cost certainty and improvement communications • Customer Experience – Quality of food - has achieved Food for Life Award; continued emphasis on fresh, locally sourced food; menus focus on plant-based provision; recipe bags; consultation with children and young people; food prepared by highly skilled kitchen teams; improved parental communication on food and menus. • Customer Experience – Improved dining environments and experiences – continue to review and refresh dining environments; importance of branding healthy eating messages; suitable for any size and layout of dining area; addressing issues with queuing; fully management cashless system and using the till app. • Re-branding Fresh Food Matters and World Kitchen. • Sustainability – action on climate change – service part of NTC Climate Emergency Board; continue to review all aspects of service to contribute to challenge; food waste converted to biogas and fertiliser; use local food suppliers; energy efficient kitchen equipment; support for Eco-Schools Green Flag Awards. • Financial context – significant inflationary pressure; supply chain pressures; continuing to review and manage costs; single annual recharge with no additional in year costs; poverty proofing staff terms and conditions. • Increased and improved marketing and communications by brand values; communications plan; social media; themed promotions; email communication direct to parents. <p>Discussion followed around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DB queried if there will be an increased pressure on those schools retaining the NTC catering service following several schools no longer using the catering service. • ML outlined that the service would need to cover their costs but not to get complacent by sharing the financial burden with remaining schools. Where the Authority loses some income from schools the team have to make the appropriate reduction in labour costs, food costs and management costs. • MY sought clarification of the tendering arrangements and variation of prices to a particular Primary School. • ML confirmed that he was not aware of the school in question and that the catering service needs to be competitive and be in a position to recover all appropriate costs. • ACTION: ML agreed to meet with MY to discuss the specifics of the school in question and report back to the next Forum on the conversation • AG suggested a survey could be sent out to schools about new providers, pricing arrangements and experiences to date. ML to progress with the wider team 	<p>ML</p> <p>ML</p>
7.	Future Meeting Dates / Arrangements	The Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed meeting dates were circulated to the group in advance 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A vote was taken on whether or not to continue with virtual meetings or return to face to face <p>Recommendations Schools Forum is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree the proposed dates/times <p>Forum Agreed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide if they wanted to continue with the virtual meetings or return to face to face <p>Forum Agreed (with 19 votes) to continue with virtual meetings</p>	
8.	Any Other Business	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No matters arising. 	
<p><i>This is to give notice of that item 9 was considered in private. Observers were excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that the report contains information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.</i></p>		
9.	Annual Update – Redundancy Costs (Schools) - CONFIDENTIAL	
	<p>The live streaming was ceased at 13.26pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CP outlined that the 'teams' invitation is for a Schools Forum Member or a named deputy. Members of the public can view the live stream of the meeting. CP did not recognise a name on the attendance list and when they did not respond to the request to confirm who they were they were removed from the meeting. Post meeting note: it was identified after the meeting that the colleague was a representative of Tyne Coast College but as the administrative team had not been informed of their name in advance of the meeting it was not recorded at the time. <p>CP talked through the confidential briefing paper. Main points to note as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principles are the same within the report to provide support schools with any redundancies. DB made colleagues aware of the potential changes coming forward as more Local Authorities work within a Combined Authority and have an investment in education. <p>Recommendations Schools Forum is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the recommendations within the report <p>Forum agreed</p> <p>Janice Gillespie – CE reported that Janice Gillespie is to leave the authority to work part time with the Combined Authority. Jon Ritchie has been appointed as Director of Resources from 8th August 2022.</p>	
10.	Date of next meeting	
	Wednesday, 21 September 2022 at 12:30pm, via Teams.	