



North Tyneside Council

Quadrant, The Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park,
North Tyneside, NE27 0BY
Tel: 0345 2000 101

Item 5 Minutes

Meeting Schools Forum

Date Wednesday 12 July 2023

Location Via Microsoft Teams

Present

✓ Present
D Deputy
A Apologies
O Absent

Name	Organisation	Representing	22.03.23	12.07.23
Anthony Gollings	St Thomas More	RC Diocese	✓	✓
Angi Gibson	Hadrian Park Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Claire Garbutt	St Columba's Primary School	Academy	A	✓
Colleen Ward	Coquet Park First School	Primary	✓	✓
David Bavaird	Norham High School	Governer - Secondary	A	Vacancy
David Watson	St Thomas More	Academy	✓	✓
Diane Turner	Tyne Met	16-19 Provider	D (David Gardner)	A
Finn Wilcock	Southridge First School	Primary	✓	✓
Gavin Storey	Cullercoats Primary	Primary	✓	O
Jill Wraith	Benton Dene Primary	Primary	D (Carmel Parker)	Vacancy
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	O	✓
Laura Baggett	Monkhouse Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Lesley Griffin	Wellfield Middle School	Governor - Secondary	✓	A
Louise Bradford	Diocese	C of E Diocese	O	✓
Matt Snape	Marden High School	Secondary	O	✓
Michael Young	Spring Gardens Primary	Primary	✓	A
Paul Johnson	Churchill Community College	Secondary	A	A
Peter Gannon	Silverdale School	Special	✓	✓
Peter Thorp	Redesdale Primary	Governor - Primary	✓	A
Philip Sanderson	Kings Priory	Academy	O	✓
Phil Kemp	Trade Unions	Trade Unions	✓	✓
Rob Harker	Carville Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Stephen Baines	Holystone Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Steve Wilson	Whitley Bay High School	High	✓	✓

In Attendance:				
Mark Longstaff	Director of Commissioning & Asset Management	NTC	✓	A
Jon Ritchie	Director of Resources	NTC	A	A
Claire Emmerson	Head of Finance – Deputy S151 Officer	NTC	✓	✓
Andrew Brown	Principle Accountant, Finance	NTC	✓	✓
Jane Cross	Senior Business Partner, Finance	NTC	✓	✓
Diane Thompson	Senior Accountant – Schools Finance	NTC	✓	✓
Christina Ponting	Senior Manager – Schools HR	NTC	✓	✓
Mary Nergaard	PA to Director of Commissioning & Asset Management	NTC	✓	✓
Lisa Cook	Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion	NTC	✓	✓
Mark Mirfin	Assistant Director, SEND Transformation	NTC	✓	✓
Ian Wilkinson	Strategic Lead, Education and Inclusion Review	NTC	✓	A
Julie Firth	Director of Children’s Services	NTC	✓	A

Minutes of Meeting

Ref	Item	Action
1.	Apologies for Absence	
	See table above.	
2.	Attendance Register / Membership / Roles and Responsibilities	
	Roles & Responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reminder of roles and responsibilities for Forum Members was provided. Attendance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See table above. Membership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Any Other Business 	
3.	Virtual Public Meeting / Observers	
	The Chair issued a reminder that the meeting is live streamed to the public on the Authority’s YouTube Channel and welcomed the public/observers to the meeting.	
4.	Declaration of Interest	
	A declaration of interest was made in relation to Item 8 from Kelly Holbrook.	
5.	Minutes of the last meeting	
	Minutes agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.	

6.	Matters Arising	
	<p>Page 2, Item 2 – Membership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>ACTION (Carried forward):</u> The Chair is still to write to David Bavaird on behalf of Forum to thank him for his service. <p>Page 3 and 4, Item 6 – Matters Arising: Catering Services/Schools SLAs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of Schools Forum who would like to work with CP and the Head of Commercial & Procurement to look at Schools SLAs were asked to contact CP. • CP noted that a range of dates were offered to the Forum Members who showed an interest. Unfortunately, it has not yet been possible to coordinate diaries. It was agreed to reconvene with potential dates in September. • CP noted that if anyone wishes to discuss anything before that time, they can contact CP directly. 	PG
7.	Schools Finance Update	Claire Emmerson
	<p>CE talked through the presentation on screen. Main points to note as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authority Finance Update • Published the Local Authority accounts on 15 June 2023 • An update was provided on the General Fund position which shows a £2.005m improvement since the position reported in January. • Children’s Services and Commissioning & Asset Management carry the main areas of pressure (£13.797m). • Overview of the General Fund budget and outturn position was shown on screen. • Overview of the key variations that resulted in the movement was provided. • Update on the use of the Strategic Reserves and the replenishment plans was provided. • Overview of the key projects that form main areas of focus in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was provided. • Overview of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget and outturn position was provided. • Overview of the Investment Plan was provided including the key highlights and main variations. • Overview of the draft reserves position was provided. It was noted that the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is in a deficit 	

position.

- **Schools Finance Update**

- The 2022/23 accounts closure has been concluded.
- AB thanked all involved for the collaborative working between Schools and the Schools finance team.
- Outturn position decreased from a surplus of £3.398m at the start of the year to a closing deficit of £0.382m which shows an improvement of £5.151m from the original expected deficit as set out in the budget plan of £5.533m.
- The final position for schools is reported in the Authority's statutory accounts before any commitments, which are usually around £4.500m (still to be confirmed at the end of July 2023).
- The reported position across 2022/23 is outlined in Table 1 of the report (Shown on screen).
- It was noted that schools retain a high degree of autonomy when setting budgets unless they are in a deficit position. A reminder has been issued of the need to forecast as accurately as possible. It is imperative that the Authority and schools work together to meet the budget monitoring deadlines to ensure accurate forecasting.
- It was also noted that some schools continue to face significant financial challenges with fourteen schools submitting a deficit budget plan for 2023/24.
- Nine schools were in deficit at the end of the 2022/23 financial year and the remaining five are new to requiring a licenced deficit agreement in 2023/24.
- Of the nine schools already in deficit, one had a structural deficit in 2022/23 which continues into 2023/24.
- Overview of the work carried out with schools and Schools Resource Management Advisors (SRMAs) was provided.
- Initial deficit review sessions for the majority of the fourteen schools are planned in July 2023. Deficit sessions for the Special Schools will be held in September to allow time for work on pupil numbers and bandings to be completed.
- Before any adjustments the balances of these fourteen deficit schools are expected to total £14.826m with individual school deficit values outlined in Table 2 of the report (shown on screen).
- CE provided an update on the work that has been carried out to date with the NTC School with a structural deficit as

	<p>defined by the Scheme for Financing Schools and the work that has been carried out with those schools and the SRMAs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CE noted that this is a larger number of schools in deficit than has been in previous years. The impact on the capacity of the team and the importance of the support from SRMAs was also noted. • Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2022/23 Outturn • After allowing for school allocations and removing academy funding, the 2022/23 DSG account is showing a net deficit balance of £8.340m. This compares to a deficit of £12.851m in 2021/22. • The Schools block (de-delegated) underspend of £0.914m mainly relates to the headroom, growth funding and falling roles funding. • Forum was reminded that the DSG is a ringfenced account, any balance is carried forward into the next financial year. • Early years Block • Ended the year with a cumulative surplus of (£0.338m). This included a brought forward deficit of £0.094m which was then adjusted in-year by £0.169m. • High Needs Block • Overall pressure is 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 (shown on screen). • The DSG Management Plan will aim to address the High Needs deficit as part of the Safety Valve Intervention Programme. • Safety Valve Intervention Programme • The Authority joined the Department for Education's (DfE) Safety Value Intervention Programme on 1 April 2023 which is subject to meeting specific performance measures. • The DfE have agreed to pay the Authority £19.500m over a 5-year period, with the first payment of £7.800m received at the end of the financial year 2022/23. Future payments are subject to compliance with the conditions set in the Safety Valve agreement. • On track to reach a positive in-year balance on the DSG High Needs block by the year-end 2027/28. • In 2022/23 the Authority's High Needs block forecast was a 	
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	<p>year-end pressure of £17.900m. The outturn position for 2022/23 was better than forecast, at £17.392m.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The in-year deficit was £13.511m. When including the DfE's first instalment of £7.800m, the outturn position for 2022/23 was £9.591m • In June 2023 the DfE also announced that the Authority will receive £4.681m in capital funding to support the implementation of the DSG Management Plan. • National Funding Formula (NFF) • The Local Funding Formula (LFF) is now 100% in line with the NFF. • The Authority is expecting the indicative funding allocation towards the end of July. • No modelling has been undertaken at this stage. • Once the allocation has been received the Authority will begin modelling potential options for capping and maximising Minimum Funding Guarantees which will then be presented to Schools Forum in September, in advance of the formal consultation with schools during October/November 2023. • A report will then be brought back to Schools Forum in November 2023 in advance of a report going to Cabinet in January 2024. <p>Recommendations</p> <p>Schools Forum is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. acknowledge the provisional 2022/23 outturn position on all DSG balances; Noted 2. acknowledge the school budget plans overall summary position; Noted 3. acknowledge the pressure on the High Needs block and the Authority's inclusion in the ESFA's Safety Valve Intervention Programme; Noted 4. agree the plan for funding consultation for 2024/25. Forum agreed 	
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8.	Falling Rolls and Growth Fund Proposed Allocations	Claire Emmerson
	<p>CE talked through the presentation on screen. Main points to note as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Authority have met with representatives from the Schools Forum finance subgroup on 13 June 2023 who have considered the applications for funding. • Schools in Financial Difficulty • Further to the earlier discussion around Schools in Financial Difficulty, a reminder was provided of the discussions previously carried out at Schools Forum regarding how the Schools in Financial Difficulty Funding would be considered/allocated. • It was noted that no recommendations are being made at this time. Applications are to be received and representations made from schools wishing to apply for Schools in Financial Difficulty Funding. Discussions are ongoing between the schools, the Authority and the SMRAs on how continued support will be offered to all of the Authority's maintained schools. The finance sub-group of Schools Forum will reconvene to receive the submissions and recommendations for funding allocations will be brought back to Forum at a later date for approval. • Falling Rolls • The total falling roll funding available for distribution is £0.300m (£0.050m carried forward and £0.250m in year allocation). • There were five schools identified as being eligible for falling roll funding with a total value of £0.168m. • The details of these schools and the funding identified for each school is included in Table 1 of the report (shown on screen). An overview was provided. • If approved, this will leave a balance of £0.132m of which £0.082m will be transferred to the headroom fund, leaving a closing balance of £0.050m • CE noted that as in previous years a proportion of the surplus funding will be transferred back to academies, the current estimate is that this will be around £0.030m. • Growth Fund • In 2023/24, Schools Forum agreed to set aside £0.250m of the identified growth funding, with a further £0.145m carried 	

forward from 2022/23.

- Total Growth Funding available in 2023/24 is £0.395m
- Eight schools were initially identified as being eligible for growth funding to the value of £0.764m.
- Four of those schools have been confirmed as eligible for growth funding and have provided sufficient evidence to the Authority.
- The total funding for those schools is £0.432m as outlined in Table 2 of the report (shown on screen).
- If all funding is approved the 2023/24 closing balance will be £0.037m deficit which will be carried forward into 2024/25.
- CE noted that Forum may need to consider increasing the Growth Fund pot in 2024/25.
- Details of the schools not eligible for Growth Funding are included in Table 3 of the report (shown on screen).
- Discussions continue with Monkseaton High and Norham High School. Two schools have yet to provide evidence of eligibility (George Stephenson and North Gosforth).

Discussion followed around:

- SW noted that if the 4 remaining schools are deemed eligible, this would wipe out the Growth Fund in 2024/25.
- CE noted that the overall total DSG allocation for Growth Funding is £0.750m which has historically been distributed as part of the schools budgets.
- Schools Forum agreed to allocate £0.250m of that to the Growth Fund pot on an annual basis.
- CE also noted that there was an underspend from the Growth Fund last year and that it will not always be the case that the entirety of the Growth Fund pot would be utilised. However, we wouldn't want the Growth Fund to run at a deficit position. Therefore, as discussed, the team may need to come back to Schools Forum to remodel the amount allocated to the Growth Fund pot.
- CE noted that any decisions relating to the 4 schools that are currently not eligible will be brought back to Schools Forum.

Recommendations

Schools Forum is asked to:

1. Consider the funding allocations as set out in this report;
2. Agree the current position and plans for additional funding

	sources maintained by Schools Forum. Forum agreed	
9.	Reports from Services for 2024/25 Financial Year Proposal	
	<p>A reminder of the Central School Services Block items was provided as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Central School Services Block</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Budget to fund School Support Service. ○ Budget to Support vulnerable schools. ○ Budget to maintain High Borans Outdoor Education Facility. ○ Budget for the Education Improvement Partnership (Secondary Schools). ○ Collective contribution to ongoing pension costs incurred when allowing teachers to leave schools prematurely. ○ Budget for costs associated with de-commissioned school buildings. ○ Support for vulnerable Headteachers for those incidents where independent support and advice is necessary. ○ Schools admission service. ○ Former Education Services Grant (Retained). ○ National Copyright Licences. • Schools Forum was 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. • LB asked to see an impact assessment from the School Support Services. • An Overview of the De-delegated Items was provided as follows: • <u>De-delegated items</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Budget to support mainstream maintained schools in financial difficulty. ○ Support for vulnerable Headteachers. ○ Support for minority ethnic pupils and under-achieving groups (EMTAS). ○ Assessment of Free school meals eligibility. ○ The current central scheme to cover staff costs – supply cover, e.g. the maternity/paternity/adoption cover scheme, including Union facility time costs and Jury Service. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Additional agreed funding for above staff costs. • 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. • LB asked to see a report from EMTAS. • <u>ACTION:</u> CP/CE to liaise with colleagues in School Support Services and EMTAS to arrange the reports requested by Schools Forum and explore the best way for these reports to be shared with Schools Forum. 	CP/CE
10.	DfE Safety Valve Intervention Programme First Submission (Term 1)	Mark Mirfin / Claire Emmerson
	<p>MM talked through the presentation on screen. Main points to note as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As previously noted, the Authority was accepted onto the DfE Safety Valve Intervention Programme in April 2023. • The DfE requires that the Authority submits three reports each year of the 5 year DSG Management Plan, providing an overview of the work programme and ensuring targets are on track. • The reporting timetable is termly, therefore, none of the deadlines fit within key dates of the financial year. • MM noted the commitment to communicate the progress of the Safety Valve Intervention Programme and outlined the engagement that has been carried out to date. • MM recommended that Forum members read the full term 1 submission which was submitted to the DfE on 16 June, copy circulated to Forum with the papers for this meeting. • MM noted that the first report was due only 2 months into the programme. However, a lot of work had been carried out during the initial planning phase so there was still a lot of detail that was included in the report. • Overview of the key headlines was provided as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The DGS Management Plan will aim to strengthen and improve outcomes for C&YP with a balanced budget within a 5-year period. ○ The Authority, with its partners, is on track to reach a positive in year balance for the High Needs Block by the end of the plan (2027/28). ○ As previously noted, the year end pressure for 2022/23 was slightly better than was anticipated in the DSG 	

	<p>Management Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work is actively being carried out with maintained special schools regarding pupil numbers and funding to ensure that our forecasting is as accurate as possible. ○ The Authority will also receive £4.681m in Capital funding. Overview of how this will be allocated was provided. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overview of the key performance data was provided which included a comparison against regional and national data. • It was noted that North Tyneside receives significantly more requests for Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNAs) • Whilst North Tyneside also has a higher rate for declining to complete an EHCNA, in terms of how many young people receive an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) out of those assessed, North Tyneside is higher than both the national and regional average. • Overview of the significant amount of engagement carried out was provided. Feedback received has been positive and indicated that the information being provided is very useful. • An overview the SEND Governance Structure was provided. • There is a complex list of workstreams that underpins the work being carried out. • It was also noted that the work being carried out linked to the DSG Management Plan now forms part of the wider SEND Improvement Plan. • MM noted that Schools Forum and the High Needs Sub-Group of Schools Forum both form part of the governance structure. • An overview of the progress made so far was provided. • It was noted that Head Teachers and SENCoS are overwhelmingly in agreement with the strategic priorities. Percentages donating those that agree shown on screen against each of the priorities were with all being at circa 80% or higher. • Across all the workstreams, over 70 Head Teachers and SENCoS are involved in the various steering groups. • MM noted that there are strategic priorities which do not form part of the DSG Management Plan reported to the DfE, however, are integral to the success of it, such as the development of the School Place Planning Strategy. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievements so far include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Authority has committed £0.208m recurring funding from the General Fund to create a SEND Preparation for Adulthood team which goes live in September 2023. ○ Half of North Tyneside Schools are supported by Mental Health Support Team in Schools. ○ Investment of £0.347m in Moorbridge to create a 6th day Primary provision and expand the PLS service for 38 pupils with an EHCP not on roll. ○ £1m capital programme awarded to support inclusion in schools. ○ Education North Tyneside will provide Whole School SEND Audits to all schools, commencing Autumn term. • An overview of the ARP review was provided. • Large representation of Headteachers and SENCos have been involved in the review. • An overview of the work carried out was provided which included carrying out surveys and looking at the provision in other Local Authorities. • Next steps include looking at funding, looking at case studies, and discussing common themes with workstream leads. • Steering group to meet again in October 2023. • Looking to build 120 ARP places over 5 years. • A copy of the High Needs Block Summary as submitted in the Term 1 Return was shown on screen. • 2022/23 showed an in-year deficit of £9.591m after receipt of the Safety Valve payment. This increases to £10.466m in 2023/24 but that has been accounted for within the plan. • CE noted that the last time Schools Forum discussed the 0.5% transfer to be included in the 2023/24 DSG Budget setting the DSG management plan was still in the early stages, and it was agreed not to approve a transfer at that stage. • CE noted that the SEND system is costing more than the funding available. • As outlined in the plan, the Authority needs to reach a balanced position by the end of 2027/28. • CE noted that the Authority, as part of the budget-setting process for the DSG, will be coming back to Schools Forum in September to discuss the budget consultation, which will include the annual consultation on the 0.5% transfer. • The last slide of the presentation includes a QR code which 	
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	<p>directs Forum Members to a short survey (pre-consultation) with the aim of gathering the views of Schools Forum regarding a 0.5% transfer, asking which 3 initiatives they believe will have the most impact on their school, and asking what further information they would like to receive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>ACTION:</u> Copy of the slides to be circulated after the meeting. 	MM
11.	Proposed Meeting Arrangements 2023/24	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed meeting dates were circulated to the group in advance. • Forum were asked whether or not to continue with virtual meetings or return to face to face. • Discussion followed around the advantages/disadvantages of face-to-face verses virtual and/or hybrid meetings. <p>Recommendations Schools Forum is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the proposed dates/times. Forum Agreed. • Decide if they wanted to continue with the virtual meetings or return to face to face. Forum Agreed to continue with virtual meetings. 	
12.	Any Other Business	
	<p>Membership Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CP noted that MY will stand down from Schools Forum at the end of the Academic Year/31st August 2023 and that she will contact Governors for the sector regarding a replacement. • Thanks were issued to MY for his contribution to Schools Forum. • The Chair noted that this also means that Forum will be looking for nominations for a new Deputy Chair in September. 	
<p>This is to give notice that item 13 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>		
13.	<p>Redundancy & Early Retirement Costs – Annual Update</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Christina Ponting *CONFIDENTIAL ITEM*</p>	
	<p>The live streaming was ceased at 13.45pm and CP talked through the main points from the confidential briefing paper.</p>	

	Recommendations Schools Forum is asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree the recommendations as outlined within the report. Forum agreed	
14.	Date and Time of Next Meeting	
	Thursday, 21 September 2023 at 12:30pm, via Microsoft Teams.	