



North Tyneside Council

North Tyneside Council

SCHOOLS FORUM

Wednesday 23 March 2022 - 12:30 – 14:30

The meeting will be held virtually and will be live streamed at the following link: <https://youtu.be/ctqPTgWUCo>

AGENDA

1.	Apologies for Absence	Chair
2.	Attendance Register / Membership / Roles & Responsibilities	Chair
3.	Virtual Public Meeting / Observers (*)	Chair
4.	Declaration of Interest	Chair
5.	Minutes of the last meeting Pages 5-12	Chair
6.	Matters Arising: Verbal Update	
6.1	Finance Update Circulated – Pages 13 -17	CE
6.2	Special Leave SLA Verbal Update	CP
7.	Any Other Business	
8.	Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday, 13 July 2022	

North Tyneside Council Schools Forum,
Financial Services, Quadrant, The Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park,
North Tyneside, NE27 0BY. Tel: (0191) 643 5991

North Tyneside Schools Forum Member Roles & Voting								
de-delegation Primary	de-delegation Secondary	scheme for financing schools	consultation on funding formula	General Duties	Retained Duties	all other matters	<i>last updated September 2019</i>	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Voting							Phase	Role
School Members								
x		x	x	x	x	x	First	Head
x		x	x	x	x	x	Primary	Head
	x	x	x	x	x	x	High	Head
	x	x	x	x	x	x	Middle	Head
	x	x	x	x	x	x	Secondary	Head
Other School Members Non Locality Based								
x		x	x	x	x	x	Primary/ First	Governor
	x	x	x	x	x	x	Secondary/Middle	Governor
		x	x	x	x	x	Nursery	Head
		x	x	x	x	x	PRU	Head
		x	x	x	x	x	Special	Head
			x		x	x	Academy	Other
Non Schools Members Non Locality Based								
		x	x			x	16-19 Providers	Other
			x			x	EY PVI	Other
						x	C of E Diocese	Other
						x	RC Diocese	Other
						x	Trades Union	Other

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Timetable & Forward Plan 2021/22

Date	Activity	Responsible
22 September 2021	<u>Schools Forum Meeting</u> 1. To include appointment of Chair and Vice Chair 2. Review of the Constitution and supporting documents 3. Responsibilities for Redundancy & Early Retirement Costs – Annual Update	Schools Forum
7 October 2021	School Census Day	DFE/ESFA
11 October 2021	Application for submitting disapplication requests	Local Authority
24 November 2021	<u>Schools Forum Meeting</u>	Schools Forum
19 November 2021	Deadline for submitting disapplication requests	Local Authority
19 November 2021	Deadline for submitting disapplication requests if wish to move more than 5% of the Schools block	Local Authority
3 November 2021	School census database closed. Checks and validation commences	DFE/ESFA
12 January 2022	<u>Schools Forum Meeting</u>	Schools Forum
	Submit final proposals re APT	Local Authority
21 January 2022	Deadline for submissions of final 2022 to 2023 APT to ESFA	Local Authority
7 February 2022	Cabinet Meeting for approval of 22/23 Schools Funding	Local Authority
21 February 2022	Cabinet Meeting	Local Authority
28 February 2022	Deadline for confirmation of Schools budget shares to mainstream maintained schools.	DFE/ESFA
23 March 2022	<u>Schools Forum Meeting</u> 1. Dedicated Schools Grant update 2. Scheme for Financing Schools – Annual Update (and review if required)	Schools Forum
TBC April 2022	Cabinet Meeting	Local Authority
13 July 2022	<u>Schools Forum Meeting</u> 1. Reports from Services for 23/24 Financial Year Proposal 2. Schools Finance Update 3. Responsibilities for Redundancy & Early Retirement Costs – Annual Update 4. Catering Services Update	Schools Forum

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North Tyneside Council

Minutes

Meeting Schools Forum **Date** Wednesday 12 January 2022

Location Via Microsoft Teams

Present

✓ Present
D Deputy
A Apologies
O Absent

Name	Organisation	Representing	24.11.21	12.01.22
Andrew James	St Aidan's Primary	Primary	D - Rob Harker	✓
Angi Gibson	Hadrian Park Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Candida Mellor	Trade Unions	Trade Unions	✓	✓
Collen Ward	Coquet Park First School	Primary	✓	✓
David Bavaird	Norham High School	Governor - Secondary	✓	✓
David Watson	St Thomas More	RC Schools	✓	✓
Finn Wilcock	Southridge First School	Primary	✓	✓
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	✓	A
Laura Baggett	Monkhouse Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Marie Flatman	Tyne Met	16-19 Provider	✓	✓
Louise Bradford	Diocese	C of E Diocese	✓	✓
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	✓	✓
Stephen Baines	Holystone Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Steve Wilson	Whitley Bay High School	High	✓	✓
<u>In Attendance:</u>				
Mark Longstaff	Director of Commissioning & Asset Management	NTC	✓	✓
Claire Emmerson	Senior Manager - Finance Strategy & Planning	NTC	D - Janice Gillespie	✓
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	A	✓

Fiona Lucas	Project Support Officer <i>minute taker</i>	NTC	✓	N/A
Kevin Burns	Senior School Improvement Officer (Vulnerable Learners)	NTC	✓	✓
Julie Firth	Assistant Director Safeguarding and Children's Services	NTC	N/A	✓

Item		Action
1.	Apologies for Absence	
	See table above	
2.	Attendance Register / Membership / Roles and Responsibilities	
	<p>CP provided an overview of the changes to the current membership as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of office due to end before the next meeting were for Michael Young, John Croft, Karen Croskery, Peter Gannon, Kerry Lillico and David Watson. • There are also vacancies for a Governor Representative for Secondary/High/Middle and 2 new academy roles agreed at Schools Forum in November 21 which are yet to be appointed. • Michael Young, who is also Vice Chair, has indicated that he is willing to stand again as a SF Governor for Primary/ First (this has taken place in the past) and if Forum agreed we would make Governors aware of this and see if there were any further nominations so that the recruitment would stay open/representative. Forum agreed. • CP is liaising with members/Schools to renew any posts due to end and/or fill any vacancies. <p>The Chair noted that Schools Forum members are elected to Schools Forum to represent colleagues within their sector or local partnership area. A reminder was issued for Members to ensure that information from Schools Forum is shared accordingly and that members engage with the schools they represent to obtain feedback and support.</p>	
3.	Public Meeting / Observers	
	The Chair welcomed the public to the meeting.	
4.	Declaration of Interest	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Thorp declared an interest under Item 6.2b – De-Delegation in relation to High Borans. • David Bavaird informed Schools Forum that he was appointed to the board of Governors of TyneCoast College in December. It was noted that he will not be representing TyneCoast on Schools Forum and will continue to represent Secondary Governors. 	
5.	Minutes of the last meeting	
	Minutes agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.	
6.	Matters Arising	
	<p>Page 11, Item 7 – AOB – Communication with Governors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CP is liaising with Kathleen Wallace, Governor Services Coordinator on ways to communicate information to Governors 	

	All other actions are covered on the agenda	
6.1	Council Financial Position – Update Claire Emmerson	
	<p>CE talked through the presentation on screen. Main points to note as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on the medium-term financial plan was provided • Report due to go to Cabinet on 31 January • Reminder of the 2020/21 Outturn was provided • Current forecast (November 2021) is showing a pressure of £5.962m which includes Covid pressures of £4.161m and a BAU pressure of £1.801m linked to cost pressures and lost income. • Working to ensure contain grant is maximised to reduce/negate the Covid impact • Reminder of the medium-term financial plan (MTFP) 2022-2026 as at February 2021 was provided • Overview of Resource assumptions and growth predictions/pressures was provided along with the key considerations following the Autumn 2021 spending review • It was noted that there is no certainty beyond 2022/23. Impact on future budget setting was discussed • Potential service risks and new burdens were outlined including the High Needs pressures and the impact on the General Fund linked to increased statutory assessments and Home to School Transport pressures. Recovery Plan is in place • Actions/considerations to manage the risks/burdens were outlined along with the actions to manage the impact of Covid in 2022/23 and future years • Overview of the Corporate Risks was provided • Overview of the approach to savings was provided. Full details were published in the November budget report • Overview of the impact on the MTFP for the next 4 years was provided along with the current picture based on the proposals as outlined • Overview of the Change Reserve proposals was provided. It was noted that this is one off funding that won't necessarily be available in future years • Overview of the Covid reserves proposal was provided along with the proposals • Update on the Strategic Reserve was provided • Overall picture of Reserves was shown on screen • Update on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was provided including the refreshed 4 year plan • Overview of the Investment Plan for the next 5 years was provided. Looking towards maximising grants from Government • Investment Plan considerations include Climate Change Emergency, Electric Vehicles replacement plan, Industrial Estates • Next steps in the budget setting process were outlines <p>Discussion followed around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A question was raised on the £1.000m school deficit reserve and if this links to Headroom. CE noted that this is linked to the overall risk across 	

	<p>all schools should schools that are in deficit become an academy through an academy order then the deficit would become the responsibility of the Authority and this poses a significant risk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LB raised a query around outstanding debt linked into school meals and how this was being managed. ML noted that this has been raised during the ongoing tendering process <p><u>ACTION:</u> ML to provide a written response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Query was raised on the bad debt provision highlighted in the presentation slides. CE clarified that this is linked to the HRA (i.e. rent collection) which is specifically ringfenced to Housing and not linked to the General Fund. • David Bavaird asked if Catering Services could be an agenda item for a future meeting. CP noted that this can be added to the forward plan if Forum members request it • ML noted that we need to be mindful of the timing so as not to impact the current tendering exercise and proposed that this is added to the forward plan after April • <u>ACTION:</u> MN to update the forward plan to add 'Catering Services Update' to the July meeting. • David Bavaird also noted that he would like to congratulate the Authority for the way they have supported the local business community throughout the pandemic 	<p>ML</p> <p>MN</p>
6.2	Schools Finance Policy & Practice Update	Claire Emmerson
6.2a	<p>National Funding Formula</p> <p>CE talked through the presentation on screen. Main points to note as follows:</p> <p>i. Local Funding Formula (Schools Block)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table 1 of the report was shown on screen which outlines the current allocation including prior year figures for comparison. • Increase of just under £4.000m • Schools Block 2022/23: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Funding allocation of £139.273m which is a 2.3% increase from 2021/22 and includes the teachers PA and TPG • Proposal to deduct £0.250m from the Schools Block to fund Falling Rolls and £0.250m to support Growth Funding as in previous years. • Total funding available to distribute is £138.773m • Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) to be set at 2.00% with a Capping at 4.99% • Authority Proforma Tool to be submitted on 21 January 2022 • Schools Block Allocation Model was shown on screen <p>Discussion followed around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Query raised in relation to the Pay Award. CP noted that for support staff, matters had not been concluded with the respective TU's, as national ballot outcomes remained outstanding until February 2022 for some Trade Unions. • It was likely that this would coincide with conversations for the 2022/23 year commencing in April and it may therefore result in the employer's representatives and respective Trade Unions looking at wider conversations for the 2021/22 and 2022/23 year. Therefore, schools 	

still needed to factor this in budget considerations for 2021/22 as this matter had not yet been resolved.

- For teaching, the DfE had confirmed there was to be no pay award for 2021 (with the exception of some very narrow limitations) and had opened up consultation with the STRB on pay matters for 2022/23 and 2023/24. It could be that any underspend in 2021/22 could be supportive of future spending on pay.

ii. High Needs Block

- Funding allocation of £128.747m which is a 7.6% increase from 2021/22 including the teachers PA and TPG
- Current pressure of £4.247m in year and £8.720m relating to previous years. Total pressure of £12.967m
- Schools Forum consultation voted against the 0.5% transfer
- Forum should note the significant pressure which is set to rise further
- Draft High Needs Recovery Plan has been submitted for review by the DfE
- Forum will have to consider a Block transfer in future as part of the High Needs Recovery plan to support the transition
- It is proposed that a working group consisting of Forum members, Schools and Local Authority officers is set up in 2022/23 to come up with a proposal

Discussion followed around:

- The Chair noted the importance of involving schools in this process
- DW asked if the additional grant increase of £1.7m is to go on top of the figures shown today or if they were included. CE confirmed that this is to go on top as it was a late announcement.

ACTION: CE to update the slides and the report then recirculate to Forum

CE

iii. Early Years

- Funding allocation of £13.971m which is a small increase from 2021/22
- The Authority has modelled proposals for the 2022/23 formula and these have been shared with the early years sub group. The rates as per the report were agreed by Forum.

iv. Central School Services Block (CSSB)

- The CSSB was outlined on screen
- Funding allocation of £1.724m which is a net reduction of £8.15% made up of a 20% reduction (£0.199m) linked to historic commitments and an increase of 5.22% (£0.045m) linked to ongoing functions
- Net reduction to be accommodated by a reduction in School Support Services of £0.143m, a reduction of £0.020m for EIP and a slight increase in the National Copyright Licences of £0.10m
- Continuing work on the Schools Support Services Review ready for 2023/24
- Overview of the budgets that now form part of the CSSB was shown on screen

6.2b	<p>De-Delegation including Centrally Retained</p> <p>CE talked through the presentation on screen. Main points to note as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil numbers have been adjusted to take into account those schools that academising in April 2021 • Total mainstream pupil numbers applied = 21,962 • Each line to be agreed by mainstream schools eligible to vote • The majority of per pupil rates remain the same • Changes were outlined <p>Discussion followed around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line 6: EMTAS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ LB raised some queries on EMTAS, the reductions in the team from last year and the value for money and requested a report from EMTAS at the July meeting. ○ CE noted that there was a significant reduction when we moved to the NFF of circa £0.200m. CE also noted that it is too late at this stage to review the service further before the budget is set. However, we can look at this again for the next financial year. ○ LB noted that Forum should be receiving reports from services on an annual basis ○ <u>ACTION:</u> MN to update the forward plan to add ‘Reports from Services in Receipt of Funding’ to the July meeting. • Line 5: Maternity/paternity/adoption cover scheme, including Union facility time costs and Jury Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DB asked if the £27 rate is still insufficient. ○ CE noted that this covered 100% for last year. ○ CP noted that the report issued via email in November along with the latest figures indicated that the numbers were slightly under expectations. ○ The recommendation is to continue at this level. As previously noted there is usually a 3 year peak and this year and last year have been dip years suggesting a possible peak next year. In addition, we don't yet know the impact of Covid. • Line 6: High Borans – Peter Thorpe made a declaration of interest in this item. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CE noted that the service has done a fully commercial offer which would be an increased rate of approx. £18 per pupil. It is now for Schools Forum to decide if they want to pay the commercial rate or agree the de-delegated sum. ○ Whilst there some members were in favour of the proposals, the majority requested further consultation. ○ CE noted the limited timescale for this to happen as Authority Proforma tool needs to be submitted on 21 January. This would mean that votes would be required by the end of next week ○ GS noted concerns over the impact of removing this funding and moving towards a fully commercialised model. PG noted that we have received a report on the commercial model last year ○ LB asked if there could be a hybrid model. PG noted that this could be looked at but not for this year. We would need to make a decision on whether or not we support for another year then review for the following year. 	MN
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CE noted that a survey could be issued to Forum members who would then be required to consult with their sector or local partnership area and respond on their behalf as there would not be enough time to consult with Schools directly then bring a vote back to Forum • CE outlined the timeline for the budget setting process <p>Recommendations Schools Forum is asked to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note update on the allocations for 2022/23 for each of the four funding blocks and the proposals for the distribution of funding Noted • Note the changes to the Schools block funding and the impact of the changes following 100% movement to the NFF, approve the £0.250m falling rolls funding and £0.250m growth fund for 2022/23 Noted and approved • Approve the services funded under CSSB as outlined in table 7 Approved • Acknowledge the pressure in the High Needs block Acknowledged • Acknowledge the changes to Early Years funding allocations proposed for 2022/23 and approve the funding formula to be used in 2022/23 as per the report. Acknowledged and approved • Approve the de-delegated items rate per pupil outlined in table 8. Approved with the exception of Line 6: High Borans. <p>Overview of the votes on a line-by-line basis as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Line 1: Budget to Support Mainstream Maintained Schools in Financial Difficulty = Approved ○ Line 2: Support for Vulnerable Headteachers = Approved ○ Line 3: Support for EMTAS = Approved ○ Line 4: Assessment of Free School Meals Eligibility = Approved ○ Line 5: Maternity/paternity/adoption cover scheme, including Union facility time costs and Jury Service = Approved ○ Line 6: High Borans = Deferred to a vote via survey <p><u>ACTION:</u> Survey to be carried out with Forum Members on the options for Line 6: High Borans.</p>	CE
6.3	Mash Update	Julie Firth
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CP reminded Forum that an update was given on the MASH hub in November 2018 and that Forum asked at that time for an update on the role to be presented back to Forum in November 2021, however, this was deferred to January 2022 • Julie Firth (JF) was invited to the meeting and provided an update as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In the last 12 months there has been an increase in referrals which has resulted in some pressures on the team ○ Approximately 20% increase in referrals ○ The Education Post came in to affect in September 2020 and an overview of the role was provided as follows. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Act as the education representative in the Live Case discussions ▪ Act as a voice for Schools within the decision making process ▪ Have a responsibility in keeping Schools informed ▪ Take part in strategy meetings ▪ Provide advice and guidance to schools about processes, safeguarding and early help ▪ Provide education information to the Youth Justice Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The service continues to receive positive feedback that the role is highly valued by Schools and Partners ○ Schools are the second highest referrer after the Police ○ The Professional Advice Line went live in January 2020 and is predominantly used by Schools ○ MASH plays a critical role in the system for safeguarding and supporting Children and Families. The team meets fortnightly to review the performance data and ensure that the service is meeting the objectives required ○ Monthly live audit meetings are carried out to look at the quality of the decision-making by assessing a random selection of referrals ○ Recently reissued the escalation policy ○ Just completed a review looking at cases of children with multiple contacts over the last 12 months ○ An overview was provided on the increase of child protection plans and children coming into the care system. This is replicated across the region and nationally. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair thanked JF for the update to Schools Forum and for the work carried out by the MASH Team 	
7.	Any Other Business	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JN raised a query regarding Catering Services via email to the Chair and noted he was happy for this to be covered in the July meeting along with the other issues raised earlier in the meeting. 	
8.	Date of next meeting	
	Wednesday, 23 March 2022 at 12:30pm, via Teams.	



Item 6.1

Briefing note

To: Schools Forum

Author: Claire Emmerson

Date: 23 March 2022

Purpose of the Paper:

Information	√
Consultation	
Decision	

Title of Briefing: Finance Update

Purpose of Paper

- 1.1 This paper provides an outline of the overall school's position after the second termly monitoring which took place in January and February 2022. A summary of the High Needs budget monitoring position as at the end of January 2022 is included in section 3.
- 1.3 The paper also gives an update of the survey in relation to the proposed budget tool replacement.

Update on second termly monitoring position for 2021/22

- 2.1 Forum will recall that in 2020/21 it was reported that schools had a year-end outturn of £3.722m, against a forecast budgeted deficit of £6.755m. The first monitoring of 2021/22 reported that a £3.902m deficit was forecast against the initial estimated budgeted deficit position of £5.993m, which was an improvement against budget of £2.001m. It should be noted that 7 schools have joined the catholic multi academy trust in 2021/22 and the figures reported for 2021/22 do not include the budgets or balances for these schools.

The second budget monitoring for the financial year has recently been completed, with a few outstanding queries still being worked through. Initial forecasts across all school phases (as shown in table 1 below) now reflect a forecast deficit of £3.585m, which is an improvement since the first monitoring of £0.317m. This also reflects an overall improvement against budget of £2.408m.

2.3 Table 1: Second Monitoring Results for Schools – 2021/22

Phase	Outturn 2020/21 £m	Budget Plan 2021/22 £m	Monitoring 1 2021/22 £m	Monitoring 2 2021/22 £m	Variance To Budget £m
Nursery	0.124	0.082	0.074	0.089	0.007
First	1.291	0.832	0.910	0.841	0.009
Primary	6.056	3.061	3.537	3.544	0.483
Middle	1.013	0.414	0.506	0.630	0.217
Secondary	(5.577)	(9.808)	(8.915)	(8.559)	1.249
Special / PRU	0.815	(0.574)	(0.014)	(0.130)	0.444
Total	3.722	(5.993)	(3.902)	(3.585)	2.408

2.4 The improvement in the forecast is despite the impact of increasing energy costs within schools, along with the ongoing impact of COVID-19. The improvement in forecast outturns for schools includes one additional school which is now forecasting an unauthorised deficit over £5,000 in 2021/22. This school is currently showing a forecast that is £0.039m worse than budget at the second monitoring, as shown in table 2.

2.5 Table 2: Emerging Deficit Schools in 2021/22

School	Budget Plan 2020/21 £m	Monitoring 1 2020/21 £m	Monitoring 2 2020/21 £m	Variance To Budget £m
King Edward Primary	0.026	0.026	(0.013)	(0.039)

2.6 There were six schools with deficits identified at budget setting after considering recovery plans and their current forecasted positions are shown in Table 3 below. One of these schools is identified as in structural deficit. All bar one of these schools are showing improvements reflecting plans put in place to mitigate their deficit positions, showing an overall £1.032m improvement against budget and a favourable movement of £0.121m since the first monitoring. The schools still showing adverse variances are working to mitigate the causes of further unforeseen pressures.

2.8 Table 3: Existing Deficit Schools in 2022/22

	Budget Plan 2021/22 £m	Monitoring 1 2021/22 £m	Monitoring 2 2021/22 £m	Variance To Budget £m
Greenfields Primary	(0.084)	(0.084)	(0.130)	(0.046)
Ivy Road Primary	(0.198)	(0.175)	(0.190)	0.008
Norham High	(3.969)	(3.819)	(3.863)	0.107
Longbenton High	(2.618)	(2.305)	(2.253)	0.365
Monkseaton High	(5.689)	(5.527)	(5.457)	0.232
Beacon Hill	(1.241)	(0.979)	(0.875)	0.366
TOTAL	(13.799)	(12.889)	(12.768)	1.032

- 2.7 Additional governance arrangements and monitoring meetings have been put in place with the six existing deficit schools. School Improvement, HR and Finance officers will continue to meet with Head Teachers and Governing Body representatives for all schools in deficit to monitor the specific requirements of each individual school's deficit and recovery plans to support bringing them back into balance.

High Needs Block

- 3.1 The High Needs block ended 2020/21 with a pressure of £8.880m. Forum should note that the High Needs block forms part of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) which is ring-fenced and does not form part of the General Fund. This overall pressure in the High Needs block is in line with the national and regional picture and Forum will be aware of the high level of interest in special needs provision and associated funding issues in the national media.
- 3.2 The forecast at January 2022 for the High Needs block has worsened since the last report with an anticipated in-year pressure of £4.533m (November, £3.673m) reflecting a rise in demand for special school places within the Authority and a general increase in complexity of children supported in special schools and within mainstream schools. A breakdown of the in-year pressure is shown in Table 4 below.

3.3 Table 4: Breakdown of High Needs in Year Pressures at January 2022

Provision	Budget £m	Forecast Feb £m	Variance £m	Comment
Special schools and PRU	15.519	17.803	2.284	Pressure on places for children with profound, Multiple Learning Difficulties, Social Emotional and Mental Health problems and Autism Spectrum Disorder
ARPs/Top ups	4.120	5.375	1.255	Pressures in pre 16 top ups e.g. Norham ARP
Out of Borough	2.890	3.735	0.845	Increased number of children placed outside North Tyneside Schools
Commissioned services	3.888	4.037	0.149	
In year Total	26.417	30.950	4.533	
2020/21 b/f			8.880	
Cumulative Total			13.413	

Budget Tool Update

- 4.1 Forum will recall that following demonstrations and a survey of schools' opinions, there was an agreement for the Authority to secure a budget tool on behalf of schools. The Authority contracted with School Business Services to provide a budget tool, which was made available to schools from November 2021 and is to be recharged to individual schools as part of the 2022/23 finance SLA
- 4.2 Initial training on use of the new budget tool has been carried out by the provider, and schools have pre-loaded their budget data as at November 2021 in preparation of budget planning for 2022/23 to 2024/25 3-year budget plans.
- 4.3 Budget training, incorporating the new budget tool, is being rolled out as part of the finance SLA from week commencing 21st March, with schools needing to prepare and submit budgets by the May 2022 deadline.

Recommendations

- 5.1 Schools Forum is asked to:
 - Note the forecast position for schools after the second termly monitoring process;
 - Note the latest position for the High Needs Block as reported in February; and
 - Note the update on the new Budget tool for use in the 2022/23 to 2024/25 budget planning cycle.