

## Leeds Schools Forum

Microsoft Teams Meeting  
 Tuesday 18 July 2023 at 16:30

<b>Membership</b> (Apologies in Italics)	
<b>GOVERNORS</b>	<b>HEADTEACHERS</b>
<b>Primary (6 seats)</b>	<b>Primary (6 seats)</b>
<i>David Kagai</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>St Nicholas</i></span>	John Hutchinson <span style="float: right;">St Theresa's</span>
<i>John Garvani</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>Broadgate</i></span>	Peter Harris <span style="float: right;">Farsley Farfield</span>
<i>Jatinder Ubhi</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>Swarcliffe</i></span>	Julie Harkness <span style="float: right;">Carr Manor Community School</span>
<i>Victoria McWalker</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>St Margaret's Horsforth</i></span>	<i>Emma Wraighte</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>Fieldhead Carr</i></span>
<i>Stratis Koutsoukos</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>St Nicholas</i></span>	<i>Rebecca White</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>Sharp Lane</i></span>
<i>Bradley Taylor</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>Kirkstall Valley</i></span>	<i>One vacancy</i>
<b>Secondary (1 seat)</b>	<b>Secondary (1 seat)</b>
<i>David Webster</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>Pudsey Grammar</i></span>	Delia Martin <span style="float: right;">Benton Park</span>
<b>Special (1 seat)</b>	<b>Special (1 seat)</b>
Russell Trigg <span style="float: right;">East SILC, John Jamieson</span>	Diane Reynard <span style="float: right;">East SILC</span>
<b>Non School</b>	<b>Academies – Mainstream (11 seats)</b>
<i>Angela Hynes</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>PVI Providers</i></span>	David Gurney <span style="float: right;">Cockburn School</span>
<i>Vacancy</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>PVI Providers</i></span>	Neil Miley <span style="float: right;">Dixons Academy</span>
<i>Nick Tones</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>Schools JCC</i></span>	John Thorne <span style="float: right;">St Mary's Academy Menston</span>
<i>Christopher Thornton</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>16-19 Providers</i></span>	Joe Barton <span style="float: right;">Woodkirk Academy</span>
<i>Dan Cohen</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>Jewish Faith Schools</i></span>	Rob Dixon <span style="float: right;">Cockburn School</span>
<i>Peter McQuillen-Strong</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>Catholic Diocese</i></span>	<i>Gavin Hosford</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>Green Meadow</i></span>
	<i>Rachel Colbourn</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>Bramhope Primary</i></span>
	<i>Sarah Talbot</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>East Ardsley</i></span>
	<i>Maria Williams</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>Brigshaw High</i></span>
	Kate Burton <span style="float: right;">Alder Tree Primary</span>
	Simon Princep <span style="float: right;">Abbey Grange CofE</span>
<b>Officers</b>	
Tim Pouncey, Chief Officer Strategy & Resources	<b>Academy – Special School (1 seat)</b>
<i>Louise Hornsey, Head of Service, Finance</i>	Mary Ruggles <span style="float: right;">Springwell Leeds North</span>
<i>Shaheen Myers, Deputy Director Learning</i>	
Lucie McAulay, Head of Service, Finance	<b>Academy – Alternative Provision (1 seat)</b>
<i>Val Waite, Chief Officer Learning Inclusion</i>	Vacancy
Elizabeth Jackson, Finance	
Shirley Maidens, Finance	
<i>Chris Sutton, Admissions and Family Information Lead</i>	

Item	Title	Actions
1.0	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted and introductions made.	
2.0	<b>Schools Forum Membership</b>	
2.1	<p>Vacancies remain for:  1 x PVI Nursery Provider vacancy.  2 x Alternative Academy vacancy.  1 x Primary Headteacher vacancy.  1 x Academy Headteacher vacancy</p> <p><b>Action:</b> to re-advertise the Primary Headteacher vacancy.  <b>Action</b> Piece of work required before summer to get more members.</p> <p>Chair recognised that this is Diane and John's last Forum, both Chair and panel thanked them for their service and wished them well.  Peter has been consulting with Dave Clark regarding advertising the vacant posts on Leeds for Learning and within newsletters to schools.</p>	
3.0	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>	
3.1	The minutes were agreed.	
4.0	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
4.1	<p><u>5.3.5</u>  RM advised the panel of the number of 2-year-olds within the city.  2021/22 there was 5% fall in 2-year-old population, in 22/23 is a fall of 3.7%.</p>	
4.2	<p><u>5.4.7</u>  RM advised on the number of children attending OOA placements.  In 2021/22 there were 189 children in out of area placements in 2022/23 this fell to 183.</p>	
4.3	TP advised that an OOA placement can cost around £50K.	
4.4	<p><u>6.12</u>  Balances as a percentage of school budget, this is approximately 6.99%.  DfE would class anything 5% and below as too low.</p>	
4.5	<p><u>6.2.2</u>  All recommendations have been completed.</p>	
5.0	<b>Dedicated Schools Grant 2022/23 - Reserves</b>	
5.1	<p>TP presented the report.</p> <p>The total surplus balance on general DSG reserves is £7m and the biggest contributor to the underspend was the High Needs Block underspend of £6.8m.</p>	
5.1.2	It was noted that the Local Authority is not comfortable with the high balances and there needs to be an agreement on how the balances are dealt with. This underspend is unlikely to reoccur, so it needs factoring into any decisions that are made, as we do not want to overspend.	
5.1.3	<p>De-delegated reserves relates only to mainstream schools. Schools Forum agreed to the reimbursement of £1.25m back to maintained schools, pro rata to their original contributions. This constitutes a key decision and TP has set in motion an intention to take this decision.</p> <p>TP advised this is a one-off contribution from reserves.</p>	

5.2	<u>Section 3</u>
5.2.1	In November 2021 Schools Forum agreed to a Schools Block to High Needs Block transfer of £3.127M, the contributing schools were maintained and academies. An option to consider is a reversal of this transfer for 2022/23. The transfer was funded by 60% of the schools in Leeds and we would need to make sure the money went back to these contributing schools.
5.2.2	Conversations have been held with the EFSA and their view is to submit a disapplication request if this was required for 2023/24. Disapplication requests are difficult to get approved as there needs to be exceptional circumstances and it is uncertain whether it would be agreed that these are exceptional circumstance. The decision time frame is also lengthy and therefore a decision is unlikely to be made before the Autumn.
5.2.3	The other option is to put the £3.127M into the 2024/25 formula, this would take a little longer to reach school budgets, but there would not be the need for a disapplication request.
5.2.4	Questions were raised around the underspend though this information was covered in the DSG outturn position paper at June's Schools Forum.
5.2.5	TP said that one of underspends was as a result of OOA placements. This was a late change so unable to forecast. Some underspends occurred by the council due to difficulty recruiting and the delays in the Invest to Save proposals. However, special school places and FFI did overspend in 22/23.
5.2.6	Discussion was had around the proposed refund to schools and how this may affect their school balances. If the schools were to receive the refund in January, it could result in surplus excess balances. Agreed that it would be better for the schools to be informed of any, so that they are able to forward plan when it goes into their next budget 2024/25.
5.2.7	Further consideration was given to potentially applying to ESFA for a disapplication and if this did not work then look to incorporate into 2024/25 funding formula. LM explained that the complexities around disapplication mean that as we go out for consultation on the schools funding formula 2024/25 in October, it would be difficult to meet ESFA deadlines and be able to adapt the APT formula in time. Schools Forum did not raise any objections to incorporating this into the 2024/25 funding formula.
5.2.8	Further consideration will be given to this proposal following the completion of the DSG MTFS 2024/25 and the latest projected High Needs position 2023/24.
5.2.9	TP advised that we cannot guarantee we would not ask for a future inter-block transfer pending analysis of the recent funding announcements and the ongoing Medium Term Financial Strategy work.
5.3	<p><u>DfE announcements.</u></p> <p>SM explained that there have been six policy documents released by the DfE and work is ongoing to assess the implications of these. However, the main headlines are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core school funding has increased.</li> <li>• Minimum per pupil funding levels are increasing.</li> <li>• Mainstream schools additional grant from 2023/24 is rolled into the base for 2024/25.</li> <li>• New funding to LA's for a falling roles fund 24/25, though LAs do not have to implement a falling rolls fund.</li> <li>• High needs 4.3% increased funding nationally</li> </ul>

- The reduction in grant as a result of the gains limit factor for Leeds 24/25 is £2.9m, this gains limit factor is part of formula and is likely to remain so.
- EFSA will send out final figures in December.

#### 5.4 Section 4

Changing the window of application for FFI is an acknowledgement of the work that stems from the FFI round tables. More time is required to be able to work through FFI round tables feedback, we can then come back to School Forum with revised proposals for FFI in the autumn. If there is a spike in applications due to the change in the application window, we will need some DSG reserves to see it through at the start. It is difficult to say how this will work yet.

#### 5.5 Section 5

5.5.1 There have been some difficulties with recruitment and retention within STARS, SENIT and the Sensory services, this has contributed to the underspend on the High Needs Block. The underspend is not likely to occur next year.

5.5.2 It is recognised that there is real issue with recruitment and retention, this is also a national issue, this contributes to services not having enough staff to undertake the workload.

5.5.3 Discussion around schools being able to have the money to source their own services, such as educational psychologists. TP advised that EP and SENSAP services cannot be funded by DSG High Needs Block

5.5.4 There were discussions on a Digital Platform geared around the Leeds local offer, this would need looking at and would be a one off spend, it is unlikely that this would be ready this year but would provide a model for the city that school SENCOs can use.

#### 5.6 Section 6 Early years block

5.6.1 Early Years Block has consistently underspent. Over the years the Early Years Block has effectively subsidised the High Needs Block pressures.

5.6.2 In 2022/23 the council took a calculated risk to increase the hourly rate without additional funding and whilst there was still a year end surplus 2022/23 this was not to the extent of previous years.

Since the last Schools Forum, the DfE has announced the following increase in funding which will form an Early Years Supplementary Grant to local authorities.

- Increase of £1.91 on the hourly rate for 2-year-olds
- Increase of 12p on the hourly rate for 3- and 4-year-olds

5.6.3 There is still some work ongoing to look at the surplus and the best way to use it within the early years block and some proposals are being worked through. All proposals will come back to Schools Forum for consultation.

5.6.4 A question was asked around whether the increase was expected. It was noted that although we were aware that the increase was coming, it was larger than expected on funding for 2 year olds.

5.6.5 Communication has gone out to the sector to make them aware of the DfE funding announcement, and that it will be effective from September 2023.

5.6.6	TP confirmed that as a Local Authority we are responsible for Early Years planning sufficiency and there is not an area within the city where there are not childcare places needed.	
5.7	<u>Conclusion</u> TP summarised the report and discussions around the refunds and surplus.	
5.7.1	Proposal to refund high needs block transfer and included within the 2024/25 funding formula for academies and maintained schools pro rata to their original contribution.	
5.7.2	Balance of available DSG reserves around £4.4m this is a prudent level due to the increasing number of children with SEND needs and increasing complexities.	
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
6.1	PH asked if anyone would like to take on roll of chair. If so, a discussion can be held at the October meeting.	
6.1.2	As required by the ESFA LM informed Schools Forum of a proposed change to the schools funding APT 2023/24. Subsequent to the submission of the 2023/24 APT at the beginning of the year an adjustment has been identified that needs to be made in relation to just 5 Leeds PFI schools. To correct this issue and ensure these schools receive the correct funding allocations for the current year the ESFA has advised that we will need to resubmit the APT and reissue funding statements 2023/24.	
6.1.3	LM confirmed that this will just impact on 5 PFI schools and they will see additional funding. There will be no impact on any other schools / academies funding level or funding statements. Once confirmed by the ESFA we will be writing to the schools impacted to notify them of the change and revised funding allocations.	
6.1.4	Schools Forum did not raise any concerns or objections to the proposal.	
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Meeting Dates for 2023-24 and Forward Plan</b>	
7.1	The next meeting will take place via MS Teams on 5th October 2023 at 1630-1830.	