

Leeds Schools Forum

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Thursday 5th October 2023 at 16:30

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

Item	Title	Actions
1.0	Welcome and Apologies	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted and introductions made.	
2.0	Schools Forum Membership	
2.1	<p>Vacancies remain for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 x Primary Governor 1 x PVI Nursery Provider vacancy 1 x Alternative Academy vacancy 1 x Primary Headteacher vacancy 4 x Academy Headteacher vacancy 1 x Academy Special Provision 1 x SILC Governor 1 x SILC Principle 1 x Non-school representatives <p>Action: Action John Rob and Mary are happy to continue. Kate will organise the elections. Peter is going to Primary Headteacher Forum on 17th October to promote Schools Forum membership.</p>	
3.0	Minutes of Previous Meeting	
3.1	The minutes were agreed.	
4.0	Matters Arising	
4.1	DC has drafted communications that will go on Leeds for Learning to promote membership of the School Forum.	
4.1.1	5.7.1 a proposal to refund the High Needs Block transfer is further on in the agenda.	
4.1.2	AOB: Would anyone like to chair the Schools Forum going forward? Peter is happy to continue chairing and John will step in in Peter's absence as vice chair.	
5.0	DSG MONITORING REPORT 23/24	
5.1	LM went through the Dedicated Schools Grant 23/24 Budget Monitoring Month 5 report.	
5.1.2	<p>Key highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Report projects in year overspend of £924k, which represents 0.18% of the estimated funding. ● Projected to have an overall surplus by the end of the year. 	
5.1.3	<p><u>Schools Block</u> The majority of the Schools Block is allocated to primary and secondary schools. The De-delegated budget has an underspend £233K. Current projections on the Growth Fund shows an underspend of £339k compared to the budget set in January.</p>	
5.1.4	<p><u>Early Years Block</u> Still very early in year to project however it is anticipated that this block will be on budget. Hourly rate increased in 23/24 and in July the Government increased the rate again from September 2023 Even with increase on hourly rate, the block is still expected to be balanced.</p>	

<p>5.1.5</p> <p>5.1.6</p> <p>5.1.7</p> <p>5.1.8</p>	<p><u>High Needs Block</u></p> <p>There is a projected overspend of £1,304k on the High Needs Block. The projected overspend includes £3.3m transfer in from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block.</p> <p>There has been an increased growth in EHCPs with 60% more applications. Last year there was an underspend in Out Of Authority placements, and it is expected to be the same this year.</p> <p>Top-ups to institutions is projected to be overspent by £3,347k. Within this, the largest increase is in top-ups paid to mainstream schools (£3,255k).</p> <p>The additional £6k blocks budget is projecting a pressure of £2.2m.</p> <p>In total, this means mainstream schools will receive £9.5m more than 22/23.</p> <p>Invest to Save is underspent. KJ advised that the original proposal included 2 rounds of recruitment for leadership, both internal and external and there were not enough candidates. This in turn contributes to underspend. £299K is projected to be spent from £1m budget. Some of the money been spent on consultancy costs and adverts.</p> <p><u>Central schools service</u></p> <p>Minimal underspend on Admissions.</p> <p><u>Reserves</u></p> <p>A refund totalling £1,250k has been made to all schools that contributed to the de-delegated surplus at the end of 2022/23.</p> <p>Forum asked to note the position included in the report.</p>	
<p>6.0</p>	<p>DSG MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024/25</p>	
<p>6.1</p> <p>6.1.2</p> <p>6.1.3</p> <p>6.1.4</p> <p>6.1.5</p> <p>6.1.6</p> <p>6.1.7</p>	<p>The Report outlines the projection.</p> <p>Overspend of between £14.4m and £50m if we don't change anything and most of that overspend is on the High Needs Block.</p> <p>The proposal in July was to reverse the transfer to the High Needs Block. In light of the revised projections, this is no longer recommended.</p> <p>The high needs cap is now called the Gains Limit Factor and Leeds is one of 32 Local Authorities to be subject to the factor and capped.</p> <p>It was noted by Forum member that this is a big change from the summer when we thought we had surplus money and is no longer the case.</p> <p>High Needs Block funding has increased on annual basis over recent years and the assumption for 24/25 is a 5% increase but this is expected to reduce to 3% in future years, based on the most recent information from DfE.</p> <p>The national picture is that there is increasing high needs demand and Leeds continues to see high demand in accordance with national trends.</p> <p>In tables 1 and 2 of the paper, the largest increase in expenditure in these projections is in High Needs funding to mainstream schools.</p>	

6.1.8	Schools Forum discussed the imbalance between anticipated DSG income and projected levels of expenditure. It was advised that the advice about the 3% increase has been there for about 18 months, and we can't assume what the increase will be going forward and that 3% is reasonable as we only get notified 1 year in advance.	
6.1.9	<p>There was a discussion on table 3 (HNB projected income and expenditure) of the paper and the movement of projections in the HNB.</p> <p>A question was asked around where the assumptions come from about the number of children to be funded in the future and what is the basis for this assumption?</p> <p>KJ advised that there has been a 118% increase in EHCP requests. Needs are increasing, so in turn the numbers are high. Schools Forum discussed EHCPs and FFI in relation to national understanding of the needs and the effect in Leeds.</p>	
6.1.10	<p>This will be under constant review and changes will be made as and when needed.</p> <p>The key query was how the projection of up to £50million of overspend in 26/27 was reached.</p>	
6.1.11	Action to provide further information as regards assumptions in HNB projections, particularly around SEN Top-Ups and £6k blocks.	SM/TP/ VB
6.1.12	<p>KJ explained that the DfE has established 9 Change Programme Partnerships (CPP) across England as part of the SEND and AP reforms. Leeds is one of four LAs working in the Yorkshire and Humber CPP. The programme will be trialling the proposed changes to the SEND and AP system with support from the DfE and partners from health and care.</p> <p>KJ will represent Leeds and we will implement changes. Those national changes will benefit Leeds.</p> <p>The steering group for this work requires representation from across the education sector and other stakeholders. The aim of the group is to steer the direction of the testing of the reforms and ensure it reflects the needs of the sector they are representing.</p>	
6.1.13	A new special free school opened in September 2023 and there have been increases in places available in existing schools. Along with the funding increases required, top ups to special schools (maintained, academies and free schools) are projected to increase from £24.1m in 2022/23 to £31.2m in 2024.	
6.1.14	The 24/25 High Needs Block minimum funding guarantee has dropped to between 0 – 0.5% and the inflationary impact will affect schools and high needs settings.	
6.1.15	<p>It was noted that, since 2017/18 a total of £19.15m has been transferred to the High Needs Block from other funding blocks of the DSG, to redirect funding to settings to support special educational needs pressures (£17.50m from the Schools Block and £1.65m from the Central School Services Block).</p> <p>It was noted that, with effect from the end of 2019/20, new provisions were added to the School and Early Years Finance Regulations that require local authorities to carry forward any DSG overspends or deficit balances to the following year. Such deficits were ringfenced to be dealt with from future DSG income, rather than being funded by the Council, unless otherwise authorised by the Secretary of State. This provision for ringfencing DSG deficits was originally due to be withdrawn at the end of 2022/23. However, it has now been extended to the end of the 2025/26 financial year. If the provision is not extended further the council would require sufficient funding available in other reserves to offset any DSG deficit. As Leeds does not currently have a DSG deficit, a DSG management plan is not currently needed.</p> <p>Schools Forum noted the DSG medium term projections.</p>	

7.0	SCHOOL FUNDING UPDATE 2024/25	
7.1	Local authorities are required to consult with schools on proposals for funding arrangements and report back to their Schools Forum. Schools Forums are then responsible for either making decisions or providing views on the various proposals, in line with the powers set out by the DfE.	
7.1.2	<p>It was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocations are based on the October 2022 census. • DfE will move forward with plans for direct national funding formula. • £525m has been provided nationally to support teachers' pay award in 23/24 and in 24/25 this will increase to £900m. • There is a change to allocation for split sites funding. • For the first time this year, there is provision for a falling rolls fund. We already mirror national funding formula. • Looking at following the ESFA system for school business rates 	
7.1.3	The Schools Block funding formula is proposed by LA and will go to consultation.	
7.1.4	Growth funding will be allocated to local authorities as part of the Schools Block based on growth in pupil numbers between the October 2022 and October 2023 censuses. Growth funding allocations for 2024/25 will not be confirmed by the ESFA until December 2023.	
7.1.5	LA will have discretion on whether to have a falling rolls fund; the criteria is restrictive and Schools Forum will have to agree this. Work is ongoing with the Sufficiency and Participation Team to determine the merits of a falling rolls fund.	
7.1.6	JT asked how falling rolls affect schools when the population is decreasing. VB said that falling rolls is to support schools in staying open and solvent where there is an expectation of an upturn in numbers.	
7.1.7	<p>High Needs Block</p> <p>The High Needs Block (HNB) indicative allocation for 2024/2025 is £133,934k. This is an increase of £6,474k compared to 2023/24 after taking into account the supplementary high needs funding received in 2023/24.</p>	
7.1.8	Leeds will receive the maximum increase of 5%.	
7.1.9	<p>Central School Services Block</p> <p>The indicative allocation for the Central School Services Block (CSSB) in 2024/25 is £5,090k which is a decrease of £16k compared to 2023/24. Funding for this block is split between historic commitments and ongoing services.</p>	
7.1.10	<p>Early Years Block</p> <p>As in previous years, the Early Years Block allocation is based on pupil numbers in the January census and therefore allocations for 2024/25 have not yet been released.</p>	
7.1.11	<p>De-delegation of services</p> <p>Schools Forum can agree that some funding for maintained primary and secondary schools is retained centrally each year, so that the council can provide certain services to schools that they would otherwise have to pay directly from their budget (such as reimbursing schools for the cost of staff on maternity leave). This arrangement is known as de-delegation and we will be consulting with maintained mainstream schools later in the autumn on the proposals for their de-delegated contributions in 2024/25.</p>	

7.1.12	24/25 funding consultation will begin on 9 th October and run to 1 st November 2023 and will cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local schools funding formula • Any proposals to transfer funding between the blocks of the Dedicated Schools Grant • Maintained school contributions to severance costs. 	LM
7.1.13	Liz and Lucie will be attending a Head Teachers' briefing and encourage everyone to respond to the consultation.	
7.1.14	A proportion of schools do not contribute to the Schools Block transfer. LM to advise on numbers. It is anticipated that an increased number of schools would contribute in 24/25.	
8.0	Any Other Business	
8.1	It was reported that maternity pay and splitting of parental leave is having an impact on some school finances. SM said the number affected is small so far and it is unlikely to have a significant effect on de-delegated maternity budgets	
9.0	Meeting Dates for 2023-24 and Forward Plan	
9.1	The next meeting on 16 th November will consider the results of consultation on the formula and block transfers.	
9.1.2	Tuesday 16 th January Authority Proforma Tool deadline 22 nd February early years entitlement rates, budget monitoring.	
10.0	Close	
	The next meeting will take place via MS Teams on Thursday 16th November at 1630-1830.	