

Leeds Schools Forum

Microsoft Teams Meeting
 Thursday 24 June 2021 at 16:30

Membership (Apologies in Italics)	
GOVERNORS	HEADTEACHERS
Primary (6 seats)	Primary (6 seats)
Sue Tuck <i>David Kagai</i> John Garvani Jatinder Ubhi <i>Andrew Neal</i> Helen Richardson	Ireland Wood <i>St Nicholas</i> Broadgate Swarcliffe Primary <i>Adel St John's Primary</i> Wykebeck Primary
	John Hutchinson Helen Stott Peter Harris <i>Julie Harkness</i> Jo Smithson Emma Wraight
	St Theresa's Catholic Primary Allerton C of E Primary Farsley Farfield Primary <i>Carr Manor Community School</i> Greenhill Primary Fieldhead Carr Primary
Secondary (2 seats)	Secondary (2 seats)
<i>Barbara Trayer</i> David Webster	<i>Allerton Grange</i> Pudsey Grangefield
	<i>Delia Martin</i> Lucie Lakin
	<i>Benton Park</i> Wetherby High
Special (1 seat)	Special (1 seat)
Russell Trigg	East SILC, John Jamieson
	Diane Reynard
	East SILC
Non School	Academies – Mainstream (10 seats)
<i>Angela Hynes</i> Helen Gratton Patrick Murphy <i>Louise Turner</i> <i>Angela Cox OBE</i> Dan Cohen	<i>PVI Providers</i> <i>PVI Providers</i> Schools JCC <i>16-19 Providers</i> <i>Catholic Diocese</i> Jewish Faith Schools
	David Gurney <i>Danny Carr</i> <i>Neil Miley</i> John Thorne <i>Emma Lester</i> <i>Siobhan Roberts</i> <i>Joe Barton</i> <i>Anna McKenzie</i> Rob Dixon <i>One vacancy</i>
	Cockburn School Dixons Academy <i>Dixons Academy</i> Co-op Academy Priesthorpe <i>Woodkirk Academy</i> <i>Cockburn John Charles</i> <i>Woodkirk Academy</i> <i>Richmond Hill</i> Cockburn School
Local Authority Reps:	
<i>Sal Tariq, OBE, Director</i>	Academy – Special School (1 seat)
Tim Pouncey, Chief Officer Strategy & Resources	Mary Ruggles
Louise Hornsey, Head of Service, Finance	Springwell Leeds North
Lucie McAulay, Head of Service, Finance	
<i>Val Waite, Head of Learning Inclusion</i>	Academy – Alternative Provision (1 Seat)
<i>Shirley Maidens, Finance</i>	Vacancy
Rebecca McCormack, Lead for Admissions & Family Information	
Elizabeth Jackson, Finance	
Claire Swift, Finance	
Richard des Forges, Finance	

Item	Title	Actions
1	<p>Apologies Apologies were received from Neil Miley, Delia Martin, Julie Harkness, Angela Hynes, Barbara Trayer, Emma Lester and Joe Barton.</p> <p>It was reported that Ian Goddard had left Ebor Gardens/Victoria Primary. Action: to check.</p>	LG
2	<p>Introductions and Schools Forum Membership The Chair welcomed Helen Richardson to the Forum.</p>	
3	<p>Minutes of last meeting and Matters Arising</p> <p>3.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record.</p> <p>3.2 <i>Page Three, Item 6.3.3:</i> The Office for National Statistics has just released the local, regional and national data on birth rates. There continues to be a decline with figures in Leeds down to around 9k in 2020 from a peak of 10.3k in 2012. Action: Circulate the information.</p> <p>3.3 <i>Page Four, Item 7.2:</i> the breakdown of alternative provision places and AIP places to be circulated before the next meeting.</p> <p>3.4 <i>Page Four, Item 7.3:</i> An update on the DfE consultation to be given under Any Other Business.</p>	TP LH
4.0	<p>Schools Balances Outturn Report 2020</p> <p>4.1 <u>Final position at 31 March 2021</u> The summary headline figure for Maintained and Extended Schools shows a surplus of £38.7m; an increase of £14.3m in comparison to the previous year. Within that schools saw an increase of £15.3m from a surplus of £18.2 in 19-20 to £33.5m at the end of 20-21. Although there is an overall surplus there are some schools with a deficit balance. However this has decreased by 11 schools with only 12 in deficit. On the flip side 10 schools have balances greater than 15% over three consecutive years. One AIP is in a similar situation where it will have to submit an application to retain the balance.</p> <p>4.2 The significant increase in balances is predominately due to Covid for example schools received base funding, additional Covid funding and at the same time savings were made in general expenditure. It is anticipated that there will be a catch up on spend in 2021-2022.</p> <p>4.3 Extended schools have seen a reduction in balances due to closures or having to operate with smaller groups and higher ratios. This is not unexpected.</p> <p>4.4 AIPs have increased by £200k due to one AIP having to recover their financial position.</p> <p>4.5 Clusters are fairly steady with an increase of £84k. A question was raised relating to the £2.4m balance in Clusters and why it is so high.</p> <p>4.6 The appendix to the report lists all school balances for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. Secondary schools have some of the biggest swings in balances and as mentioned early this is felt to be largely due to the effects of Covid.</p>	

<p>4.7</p> <p>4.8</p> <p>4.9</p> <p>4.10</p> <p>4.11</p> <p>4.12</p> <p>4.13</p>	<p>SILC balances: The £2.5m surplus balance carried forward by SILCs was questioned mainly due to the High Needs Block deficit. It was explained that the funding for SILCs can be complicated and results in budgets being more difficult to forecast.</p> <p>It was suggested that Heads with experience of budgeting could provide support to inexperienced/new Heads to help them produce a more balanced budget. Finance confirmed that training is held for new Heads. This is being revamped for September and will be provided through a mixture of online resource and course delivery.</p> <p>Table two provides an analysis of surplus and deficit balances. Three schools have been lost to academisation and eight more schools are in a surplus position. This leaves 12 in deficit.</p> <p>Fifty-two schools had surplus balances above 15%, an increase of 34 from the previous year. Of these, 10 had a surplus for more than three years in a row – nine primary schools and one SILC. The Schools in Financial Difficulty Panel will be asking those 10 to complete an application to justify retention of the surplus. As a result of the high number of schools in this category and taking into account the impact of the pandemic the remaining 42 schools will not be asked to complete an application.</p> <p>Deficit balances –benchmarking information will be provided for 2020-2021 later in the year. However 2019-2020 showed 12% nationally, 12.9% for Yorkshire and Humber and 12.5% of schools in deficit in Leeds. Of these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 is below £10k • 4 are between £10k and £100k • 4 are between £100k and £500k • 2 are between £500k and £1m • 1 is over £1m <p>A discussion was held around surplus balances and whether a stronger message should go out to schools advising that the money is there to spend on children and young people and carrying forward a surplus of 15%+ is no longer justifiable. It would also be helpful if schools could confirm that they have a robust action plan in place to bring the budget down.</p> <p>Extended Services: In previous years extended services with a small deficit has required the school to transfer money from the school budget to balance the position. As a result of Covid this will not be the case this year and schools will be asked to submit a deficit action plan. It was felt that it would be a good opportunity for schools to pause and look at the ongoing viability for those provisions</p>	
<p>5.0</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>5.2.1</p> <p>5.2.2</p>	<p>DSG Outturn Report 2020</p> <p>There is an in-year underspend of £821k on the general DSG and £1m on de-delegated services.</p> <p><u>Schools Block</u></p> <p>This budget is mainly allocated to primary and secondary schools with a small amount to the de-delegated services growth fund.</p> <p>There is an underspend of £777k of which £531k is in the growth fund. It was agreed at February’s Schools Forum that the underspend be carried forward to 2021-2022 to help the growth fund this year.</p>	

5.2.3	An underspend of £1m is reported against the de-delegated contingency fund. This is mainly as a result of a reduced number of bids last year from schools in financial difficulty.
5.2.4	For the last couple of years the surplus has been refunded to schools on a proportionate basis. For 2021-2022 it is proposed that the surplus remains in the DSG balance. Given the level of deficit there will be a requirement to submit a deficit action plan to the DfE. By retaining the surplus it will reduce the impact on schools and potentially the transfer of funds from the Schools Block to the High Needs block.
5.3	<u>Early Years</u>
5.3.1	Over the course of the last year there has been a great deal of uncertainty around projections. The block ended the year with a surplus of £2.2m, although the amount cannot be confirmed until the final allocation is received in November. It is proposed to use most of the £2m and make an exceptional one off payment to providers in recognition of the difficulties over the year. No decision has been taken as to whether the payment is paid solely to PVI providers with the exclusion of schools and Little Owls children's centres or paid out across the sector. An application process has been discussed previously at the Forum and was dismissed due to the burden on all concerned.
5.3.2	<p>A number of comments were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributing surplus funds to PVI providers only would penalise some schools who have a well balanced budget. • Concern that the local authority would be setting itself up as judge and jury and the equitable approach would be to split the surplus among all settings. • Do we have figures/evidence of hardship in the Early Years sector, given that nurseries could use the furlough scheme? • Is there a precedence from other local authorities or advice from the government • Every £1 redistribution reduces the balance and will result in completing a deficit reduction plan again. • Could the surplus be ring fenced and used to provide catch up sessions for the most disadvantaged children in those settings?
5.3.3	It was explained that settings are running a business and any overheads/increase in cost would have to be passed on to the parents. Some settings are too small to claim furlough and also the funded hour does not cover salaries/overheads.
5.3.4	The DfE does not stipulate what should be done with the surplus. Local authorities are obliged to pass at least 95% of the funding through to the sector. Some local authorities distribute any surplus whilst others offer different kind of payments, eg quality payments to those good or outstanding.
5.3.5	Although there is no definite proposal at this stage one option would be to look at the number of hours settings were paid last year and repay 20p per hour as a supplementary payment.
5.3.6	Although it is not a Schools Forum decision the group feel that the surplus should be refunded to the sector and targeted if possible.
5.3.7	The two year old cohort has increased over the last year and there has been an increase of children eligible for the Early Years Pupil Premium. Entitlement is based upon the Spring census and is used for eligibility for the following year.

5.4	<u>High Needs Block</u>
5.4.1	The overspend on the Block was £2.3m. This position includes a combined total of £3m agreed to transfer from both the schools block and the central services schools block. One of the larger areas was SEND top ups at £1.9m. This was as a result of the continuing increase of children requiring high needs funding and an increase in post-18 placements. These were offset by an underspend in top up funding at SILCs of £314k. The out of area placements and residential budget was overspent by £2.5m. This has been brought about by the growing number of EHCPs and increased parental awareness of schools available outside of the authority.
5.4.2	Services provided by Children and Families were underspent by £604k. This is largely due to a combination of vacant posts and delays in recruitment.
5.4.3	A question was asked around the high expenditure in the Sensory Service compared to other SEN services with an outturn of £2+m. The underspend of £374k was also raised. It was explained that this was due to the difficulty recruiting to vacant posts. Permanent recruitment will close the gap.
5.4.4	Autism: Heads are finding an increasing number of children have autism and getting support is incredible difficult.
5.4.5	Vine: The college is currently situated in the Queenswood centre. The quality of the building is not conducive to providing good educational settlement so the local authority is rebuilding the provision for Leeds City College on the new Trinity Academy site. It has provided the Authority with an opportunity to increase the number of places commissioned from the college to 80.
5.5	<u>Central Schools Services Block</u> Funding from this block is used to carry out essential functions provided by the local authority. It is split between historic commitments and ongoing responsibilities. There is currently an underspend of £143k due to delayed recruitment and vacancies in the Admissions Service.
5.6	<u>2020/21 Reserves</u> There is currently a deficit of £3.1m in the GENERAL DSG and a surplus of £1m in the de-delegated schools grant. As a result a deficit action plan will have to be submitted to the DfE. An updated action plan will be brought to a future Schools Forum.
5.7	<u>Initial View 2021-2022</u>
5.7.1	It is too early in the year to present a meaningful projection however there are a number of issues which will affect it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the carry forward deficit of £2m • £500k used to fund the growth fund • Assumption of the £2m exceptional early years payment
5.7.2	This will result in a deficit balance carried forward to 2022-2023 of £5.7m. The budget already assumes a £1.2m overspend. The figure is subject to change throughout the year and updates will be provided later in the year.
5.8	The Forum noted the recommendation and initial projection for 2021-2022.
5.9	Claw back of 15%+ school budgets: It was suggested that surpluses of 15%+ should be clawed back to help bring the deficit down on the Dedicated Schools Grant budget.

	Action: A summary to be brought to the next Schools in Financial Difficult Panel for discussion.	LMc
6	Any Other Business	
6.1	<p><u>DfE national consultation on the financial transparency of maintained schools</u></p> <p>The local authority disagreed with most of the proposals as they made little/no difference to Leeds. The major issue for the local authority is the cap on DSG funding which equates to about £20m and at present there is no indication that the cap will be removed. The five year financial modelling is kept up to date illustrating the impact of the cap and what it would look like if it was removed. Results of the much wider review are needed to understand the impact on Leeds going forward.</p>	
6.2	<p><u>Deputy Director for Learning</u></p> <p>Recruitment to the vacancy is now complete and the new Deputy Director for Learning, Shaheen Myers, from the Coop Multi Academy Trust, will be joining the Authority in early August.</p>	
7.0	<p>MEETING DATES FOR 2021-22 AND FORWARD PLAN</p> <p>All meetings will take place at 1630-1830 and use MS Teams until further notice</p> <p>Thursday 7 October 2021</p> <p>Thursday 18 November 2021</p> <p>Tuesday 18 January 2022</p> <p>Thursday 17 February 2022</p> <p>Schools In Financial Difficulty Panel will take place on the same day at 1500-1600.</p>	

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