

**Meeting of the Schools Forum  
Held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 1.30pm  
via MS Teams Digital Platform**

**MINUTES**

**Quorum: 40% (8 of the 18 current School/Non-School Members)**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>Organisation - School Members</b>	<b>Attended</b>
Rachel Lewis	Hindley Sure Start Nursery	Yes
Louise Curran	Rowan Tree Primary	Apologies
Anne Isherwood	Three Towers Alternative Provision Academy	Apologies
Tracy Mingaud-Cunningham	Primary Governor	Yes
Adrian Hardy	Secondary Governor (Chair)	Yes
Gary Hayes	Orrell St James Primary	Yes
Fiona Quinlivan	Howe Bridge St Michael's Primary	Yes
Julie Hassan	St Oswald's Catholic Primary	Yes
Wendy Hughes	Golborne All Saints Catholic Primary	Yes
Lisa Hobden	St Patrick's Catholic Primary	Yes
Alan Birchall	Byrchall High	Yes
Andy McGlown	St. Peters RC High School	Yes
Martin Wood	The Deanery High School	Apologies
Paul Davies	Fred Longworth High School	Yes
	<b>Organisation - Non School Members</b>	
Sue Morris	Care Love Learn Childcare Limited	Not in attendance
Peter McGhee	St John Rigby College	Yes
Max Atkins	Wigan NEU	Yes
Need nominated member	Diocesan Representative	
	<b>Organisation- Nominated observers</b>	
Cllr Jenny Bullen	Cabinet Member	Apologies
Karen Parkin	NEU	Yes
Mike Wilkinson	Wigan NASUWT	Yes
Vacancy	Unison	
	<b>Organisation - In Attendance</b>	
Mark Rotheram	LA Finance – Strategic Finance Manager	Yes
Kirsten Reid	LA Finance – Group Finance Manager (Schools)	Yes
Cath Pealing	Assistant Service Director, Education	Yes
Jo Sullivan	Clerk to the Forum, Wigan Council Governor Services	Yes

## 1. Election of Schools Forum Chair and Vice Chair

Nominations had been received in advance of the meeting:

**Chair nomination/s:** Adrian Hardy

**Vice Chair nomination/s:** Alan Birchall

Mr Hardy and Mr Birchall accepted the nominations.

Mr Hardy was **elected** as Schools Forum Chair for 2023/24.

Mr Birchall was **elected** as Schools Forum Vice Chair for 2023/24.

## 2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Anne Isherwood (Three Towers), Cllr Jenny Bullen, Martin Wood (The Deanery High School) and Louise Curran (Rowan Tree Primary School).

## 3. Agreement of Any Other Urgent Business to Be Added to the Agenda

No other business was raised.

Members noted the following:

- Forum Membership (constitution reviewed in September 2022, to be reviewed every 2 years) – no changes this year.

The meeting asked that the Liverpool Diocese be approached to appoint a representative to the Forum. This would ensure that both Roman Catholic and Church of England Diocese alternately had the opportunity to nominate the faith representative on the Forum.

## 4. Previous Minutes

Members **confirmed** that the minutes from the Forum meeting held on **29<sup>th</sup> June 2023** were a correct record.

## 5. DSG Underspend 2022/23 – *moved to next meeting*

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

***ACTION – DSG Underspend 2022/23 to be included on next agenda.***

## 6. Schools Block Funding Formula 2024/25

Members had received a summary of the published information in respect of the funding formula for 2024/25 in advance of the meeting.

Kirsten Reid highlighted:

- The Government had confirmed that the overall school budget for 2024/2025 would be £59.6bn.
- Key changes in the funding formula had been shared in the report (1.9% increase per pupil, baseline 7.6% higher than last year).
- Basic entitlement increase of 1.4%.
- Local Authority permitted to set minimum funding guarantee (MFG) between +0% and +0.5% per pupil.
- Pupil numbers were very similar to last year.
- £5.035m increase, 1.97% this year.
- Last year, 2.04% increase compared with 2022/23 so slightly smaller growth this year.
- Final allocations would be available in December so updated figures would be provided when available.
- Proposal to set MFG at maximum of 0.5%.
- Noted that figures indicative and not final figures.

Members commented that in the past we had held a sub-group to look at the modelling of the funding.

A discussion ensued where Members discussed the funding and how it could be modelled. The increase of 2% last year was not sufficient meaning this was also a massive cut and there would be a lot of work needing to be done this year.

The Local Authority School's Finance Team **agreed** to carry out some modelling of the funding and report back to the next forum.

Members **agreed** that the models would be calculated at 0.5% MFG.

Members **agreed** to move the date of the next Forum meeting to allow enough time for colleagues to consider the new models, to Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December. Local Authority Finance would have new models prepared by 16<sup>th</sup> November and sent to all Members, for them to consult with localities.

***ACTION – next meeting agenda.***

## **7. De-Delegation 2024/25**

Members had received the 2024/25 de-delegation values 2024/25 report in advance of the meeting.

Kirsten Reid highlighted:

- A 1.97% uplift had been applied to the amount per pupil.
- These were indicative values until the census had been published.
- Small variation from October 2021 census.

The recommendation to approve the proposed values was **agreed** by Members.

## 8. High Needs Block Finance Update

Members had received the high needs finance report in advance of the meeting.

Kirsten Reid highlighted:

- £2.2m increase, 4.3%.
- Additional teacher's pay increase for eligible alternative provision and special schools.
- Continue to offer MFG on higher needs.
- ESFA had confirmed that they would be slowing their growth funding in 2024/25 and 2025/26 despite demand for funding increasing.
- Overall deficit increase of £2.5m on last year.
- Increase in demand through all age ranges including early years.
- Increased need for special schools.
- Increased requirement for additional funding for 1:1 support in maintained schools.
- EHCPs had also increased by over 300 this year.

**Q. Increase in independent schools? What had they increased their costs by?  
A. 7.3% on average increased costs. 14% increase from one school which we had not accepted. 162 pupils in September 2023 compared to 125 September 2022. The complexity and demand were increasing.**

There had been over 100 requests for special school places from Early Years to Reception. This was increasing year on year.

**High Needs Sub Group – Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November at 12:30pm. Members invited.** This meeting would enable some understanding of the pressures on the High Need Budget to be given along with an update on progress with the mitigation measures that had been put in place in the past year. The meeting could also advise on the extent of any DSG contribution to the HNB which should be included in the financial modelling for schools.

*Andy McGlown withdrew from the meeting at 2:12pm.*

The Local Authority were conscious that top up funding had not increased for a number of years. We had carried out lots of modelling, but none had been beneficial to schools.

**Q. Underspend on resourced provision. Why was that?  
A. This had been queried as we only had around 6 places not filled. This would be looked at again. This could be provision that we were setting up, but building was not yet finished.**

Members talked through pressures, underspend and overspend. The in year overspend was £2.5m.

Overall, the funding had not increased however the demand was growing year on year. The High Needs Subgroup would look at the funding modelling in more detail.

Recommendation **agreed**. Members of the group to consist of Andy McGlown, Alan Bichall, Gary Hayes, Rachel Lewis, Peter McGhee, Adrian Hardy, Cath Pealing, Charmaine Taring, Kirsten Reid and Mark Rotheram.

#### **9. Permanent Exclusion Contribution**

Members had received the permanent exclusion contribution report in advance of the meeting and were advised to liaise with colleagues in each phase for discussion. However, the members present could not see an alternative to the current system and so a vote was taken on whether it should continue. The meeting decided to retain the current position.

Members **agreed** that schools would continue with the contribution.

#### **10. Funding for Trade Union Facilities Times**

Members **agreed** to continue to fund the work of trade union representatives.

#### **11. Any Other Urgent Business**

No other business had been raised.

#### **12. Future Meeting Dates**

- High needs Sub Group Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023
- Autumn 2 – Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 1.30pm
- Spring 1 – Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 1.30pm
- Spring 2 – Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 1.30pm
- Summer 1 – Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 1.30pm
- Summer 2 – Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 1.30pm

The meeting closed at 2:31pm.

#### **Background documents (available for public inspection):**

Appendices to the circulated briefing reports disclose important facts on which the reports are based and were relied upon in preparing the reports. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy, please contact the Forum Clerk

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