

**Meeting of the Schools Forum  
Held on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 1.30pm  
via MS Teams Digital Platform**

**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	Yes
Anne Isherwood	Three Towers Alternative Provision Academy	Yes
Tracy Mingaud-Cunningham	Primary Governor	Yes
Adrian Hardy	Secondary Governor	Apologies
Gary Hayes	Orrell St James Primary	Yes
Fiona Quinlivan	Howe Bridge St Michael's Primary	Apologies
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 (Chair)	Yes
Andy McGlown	St. Peters RC High School	Yes
Martin Wood	The Deanery High School	Apologies
Paul Davies	Fred Longworth High School	Apologies
	<b>Organisation - Non School Members</b>	
Sue Morris	Care Love Learn Childcare Limited	
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	Yes
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

The meeting was quorate.

# MINUTES

Alan Birchall took the Chair.

## 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Adrian Hardy (Secondary Governor), Paul Davies (Fred Longworth), Fiona Quinlivan (St Michael's), Martin Wood (Deanery).

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

The following item was raised for discussion:

- School's finance software package.

## 3. Previous Minutes

Members **confirmed** that the minutes from the Forum meeting held on **7<sup>th</sup> December 2023** were a correct record.

There were no matters arising from the minutes which were not included on this agenda.

High Needs Group – Anne Isherwood volunteered to be involved with the group.

## 4. 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 (KR) highlighted:

- Using NFF with a deadline of Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 for submission.
- The model gave an indicative budget of £264m, including Growth funding and Mainstream Schools Additional Grant. Following deduction of rates, total funding would be £262m.
- The Forum had agreed to transfer £500k to High Needs Block.
- Slight variation due to pupil numbers (in report).
- There would be some slight adjustment to the rates funding but there would be no impact on the level of school funding.
- No capping or scaling had been applied.
- KR referred to the appendices of the report circulated in advance of the meeting.

**Q.** What was appendix 3 showing?

**A.** We had taken the original budget calculated this time last year. Once the mainstream supplementary grant had been received, these figures had been added together.

**Q.** NNDR Rates Early Years. Why did our 2 maintained nursery schools still pay NNDR rates?

**A.** All schools still had a ratable value but the EFSA top sliced it from the school's block and paid the council direct. They did not do this with the early years block.

This would be investigated further as the nursery schools could not identify how they were receiving this money.

Members signed off the formula and school level allocations for 2024/25 and:

- **Agreed** the total growth fund for 2024/25.
- **Agreed** the allocation of the Central School Service Block (CSSB) funding.

## 5. **Early Years DSG 2023/24**

Members had received the EY DSG allocation for 2023/24 and the proposed early years rates and level of central spend in advance of the meeting.

Mark Rotheram highlighted:

- There had been a huge expansion of early education care entitlement over 2- and 3-year-olds.
- 3-and 4-year-old rate increased to £5.55 per hour.
- 2-year-old formula rate increased to £7.85 per hour.
- 9-month-old and up to 2-year-olds £10.69 per hour.

**Q.** Could you clarify how the Government's teacher's additional pay grant for those nursery settings who had qualified teachers had been allocated?

**A.** We could provide a breakdown of funding and check this.

Members noted the contents of the report and **agreed** the proposed rates and level of central spend.

## 6. **Dedicated Schools Grant – High Needs Block Budget**

Members had received the High Needs report (2024-25 budget) in advance of the meeting.

KR:

- We now had DSG allocations for 2024-25 including High Needs funding.
- Local Authorities would continue to receive additional teachers pay grant which would be passed onto eligible special and AP schools.
- For 2024-25 the funding floor was 3%.
- We had received £53.561m for High Needs and the report showed how this had been broken down along with comparisons to last year.
- The report detailed how and where the funding would be used.
- Indicative deficit £5.497m.
- There was potential that the EFSA may adjust this allocation at points during the year to reflect changes in high needs places and the import/export adjustment for out of borough pupils.

- The funding band calculations had been circulated to Members in advance of the meeting.

**Q.** Place funding was £10k, same as the previous year. How long had it been this figure?

**A.** Around 8 years and this was set by the Government. This was not moving pace with increased SEND numbers.

Members **agreed** the high needs budget for 2024/25 and noted the information provided regarding the work with the High Needs forum sub-group and ongoing recovery planning.

High Needs Subgroup meeting arranged for Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 10am.

## 7. Any Other Urgent Business

### School's finance software package.

The ESS FMS school finance contract was due to end in March 2025. Demonstrations had taken place by providers, and we were now at the point of procurement. Kirsten Reid would consult with colleagues and agree a provider for schools. A paper would then be sent out to Forum Members to consult with their localities.

**Q.** Would this impact on academies?

**A.** No, they used a different finance system.

## 8. Future Meeting Dates

Meeting dates (all via MS Teams):

- 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 2:24pm.

### **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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