Leeds CITY COUNCIL

LEEDS SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 14 November 2019, 4.30 – 6:30pm at Merrion House

Membership (Apologies in Italics)			
GOVERNORS		**HEADTEACHERS**	
Primary (5 seats)		Primary (6 seats)	
Sara Nix	*Rawdon Littlemoor*	John Hutchinson	St Theresa's Catholic Primary
Jim Ebbs	Woodlesford	*Helen Stott*	*Allerton C of E Primary*
Sue Tuck	Ireland Wood	Peter Harris	Farsley Farfield Primary
David Kagai	St Nicholas	Julie Harkness	Carr Manor Community School
John Garvani	Broadgate	Jo Smithson	Greenhill Primary
		Vacancy	
Secondary (2 seats)		Secondary (3 seats)	
Barbara Trayer	*Allerton Grange*	*Delia Martin*	*Benton Park*
David Webster	Pudsey Grangefield	Lucie Lakin	Wetherby High
		vacancy	
Special (1 seat)		Special (1 seat)	
Vacancy		Diane Reynard	East SILC
Non School		Academies – Mainstream (9 seats)	
Vicky Hallas-Fawcett	PVI Providers	David Gurney	Cockburn School
Vacancy	PVI Providers	Danny Carr	Dixons Academy
Patrick Murphy	Schools JCC	*Adam Ryder*	*Bruntcliffe Academy*
Louise Turner	*16-19 Providers*	John Thorne	Co-op Academy Priesthorpe
Angela Cox OBE	Catholic Diocese	Emma Lester	Woodkirk Academy
Dan Cohen	Jewish Faith Schools	Ian Goddard	Ebor Gardens/Victoria Primary
		Siobhan Roberts	Cockburn John Charles
		Joe Barton	Woodkirk Academy
		Anna McKenzie	Richmond Hill
		Academy – Special School (1 seat)	
		Scott Jacques	*Springwell Leeds Academy*
		Academy – Alternative Provision	
		Ben Mallinson	Stephen Longfellow Academy
Local Authority Reps:			
		Louise Hornsey, Principal Financial Manager	
Tim Pouncey, Chief Officer Strategy & Resources		Simon Criddle, Head of Finance	
Phil Mellen, Deputy Director Learning		Val Waite, Head of Learning Inclusion	
Minutes:			
Lesley Gregory, PA			

Item		Action
1.0	**Apologies**	
1.1	Apologies were noted.	
2.0	**Introductions**	
2.1	The Chair welcomed new member Danny Carr.	
3.0	**Minutes of previous meeting**	
	Agreed	
4.0	**Matters Arising**	
4.1 **4.2**	Disapplication request: The request has not been submitted yet. Dialogue ongoing with the Wellspring Academy Trust. We have until the end of the financial year to submit the request but we should be in a position to submit it shortly. Schools in financial difficulties Fund: to be discussed under any other business.	
5.0	**High Needs Estimates 2020/21 and 2021/22**	
5.1 **5.2** **5.3** **5.4** **5.5** **5.6** **5.7**	The report provides more detailed information around the latest projections for funding and spend in 2020/21. Whilst we do not know the amount of funding we will receive in 2021/22 potential funding has been estimated based on facts and trends. We now know most of the allocation for 2020-21 but there are certain elements of the formula we won't know until later. A grant allocation from the Government will see the Block receive an estimated £12.84m which is the maximum funding we can get. Whilst it is one of the biggest uplifts nationally, there is a cap in place which amounts to £4.6m for Leeds. The projected deficit this year is around £4m. It is possible that we could get more funding in 2021/22, however we need to address the shortfall in year. High Needs Grant Income: Assumptions have been made on grant funding available for 20-21. An estimate has been made for 2021-22 funding based on what the national funding has increased by. High Needs Expenditure: A lot of work has taken place to understand trends and implications in terms of place funding. Services provided by Children and Families are the same, however an increase has been built in for pay awards which are unavoidable. Other potential costs have yet to be factored in, including any issue if the disapplication request for Springwell is unsuccessful with potential backdated costs to be accounted for. A separate line has been introduced for new special schools places to highlight the costs of funding these places.	

5.8	Work has been completed looking at schools that have more high needs pupils than expected. As a result there will be an increase cost to the High Needs Block.	
5.9	It was confirmed that this year's budget is based on last year's census.	
5.10	Overall Position: There is a surplus balance on general DSG of £1.097m which has been brought forward into this financial year. Accounting for anticipated variances on other DSG blocks the deficit is expected to be £4,164m in 20/21 and £3.671m in 2021/22.	
5.11	The High Needs budget for 2021/22 has a built in a budget of £4.1m to repay the deficit anticipated this year with an assumption that it will be repaid over three years. One of the risks is Government legislation around local authorities going into a deficit of more than 1% (£6m for Leeds). If this happens we would have to submit an action plan on how we propose to recover the deficit within three years. The Government is also consulting on whether local authorities can keep the DSG ring-fenced out of the general fund reserves.	
5.12	SEND Places and Funding: Since 2014 there has been an 80% rise in EHCPs; this is much higher than other cities (50%). It translates into half of the projected special school places and there is no sign of the rise slowing down. The issue is around the complexity of children arriving in schools with complex communications and autism related difficulties. Leeds does have high levels of poverty and deprivation which also adds to the problem.	
5.13	Pre-5's/early years is a big problem with children not being able to communicate and these cases are turning in to EHCPs. The Three A's strategy is a top priority and has a real focus on rectifying problems with communication and speech.	
5.14	The take up of the pre 2 year old offer is only 67% whereas Newcastle has a 100% take up. The Authority also has better outcomes against key stage one and two. Talks are taking place with Newcastle to look at how they are targeting eligible families. We are also investigating whether we have the provision in the right area of the city. It was mentioned that the 30 hour offer is only available to working parents and it would be good to expand the offer to non-working parents.	
5.15	We are allowed to transfer 0.5% from the schools block of the DSG which is about £2.6m. Any more would have to be approved by the Secretary of State and this is unlikely to be agreed to.	
5.16	Schools Forum noted the report.	
6.0	**School Funding Proposals 2020/21**	
6.1	Schools Forum will be asked to vote on a number of recommendations listed in this report and these will be detailed later in the meeting.	
6.2	We are still in a transitional year with funding based on the national funding formula although we do have some influence on how we do things locally. It is important to note that the funding is based on the census from October 2018. The ESFA also provides an allocation for growth in the formula based on changes between the 2018	

	and 2019 census. This amount will not be confirmed until December and if insufficient funding is available this may result in changes to the formula.	
6.3	In response to the consultation 84 responses were received with the majority opting for option 2 which provides a reduced minimum funding guarantee of 1% and an increased cap on gains of 3.96%. All other factors are in line with the national funding formula.	
6.4	Every year details on spend for the central schools block is brought to the Forum. It is anticipated that there will be a small amount of spare funding which can go towards the High Needs Block. This is due to a historic cost reduction which means the funding we are expected to receive will be greater than costs. 2020/21 is likely to be the last year this will be the case, because the ESFA is reducing funding. We do not know at this stage how the reduction will be applied beyond 2020/21.	
6.5	We have followed established principles in previous years to move as close as possible to the national funding formula, bearing in mind we are preparing to move some of the money to the High Needs Block. Various factors feed into the formula: the needs of pupils and funding protection so that every school gets a minimum amount per year. There is a cap on the amount per pupil which makes the formula affordable. It is likely that we will get an additional £20m funding coming through the formula next year after the proposed transfer to the high needs block and before considering growth funding.	
6.6	6.6 Minimum funding for primary schools included in the consultation is £3.75k for Primary and £5k for secondary. This is in line with DfE guidance.	
6.7	It was explained that Schools Forum is consulted on the formula however the final decision lies with the Council and will be taken in January. At this stage the local authority does not have a preference on the two options consulted on.	
6.8	The allocation given so far does not include an amount for growth and this will not be confirmed until December. This leaves us with a little uncertainty at moment as if the amount allocated is insufficient then this would affect the funding that can be delivered to schools through the formula.	
6.9	PFI Schools: a lot of work has been done recently to make sure the situation is stable going forward and one of the things done in the formula is to exclude PFI funding when calculating the minimum funding guarantee as this would skew the figures. Permission was sought from the DfE to do this for 2019/20 and a further request will be submitted for 2020/21 in order to ensure PFI schools receive the correct amount of funding.	
6.10	***VOTING RESULTS***	
6.10.1	Schools Forum is asked to consider and vote on a proposal to transfer £2.65m from the schools block to the high needs block in 2020/21. **Agreed** unanimously (20 votes)	

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6.10.2	Schools Forum is asked to consider and vote on a proposal to transfer up to approximately £250k from the central schools services block to the high needs block in 2020/21 (with the final amount being subject to confirmation of costs and funding). **Agreed** unanimously (20 votes)	
6.10.3	Maintained school members of Schools Forum are asked to consider and vote on a proposal for a contribution in 2020/21 by maintained schools towards the severance costs of maintained school staff, to be applied as a per-pupil amount of £2.50. **Agreed** unanimously (10 votes)	
6.10.4	Schools Forum is asked to consider and indicate their preference for the schools funding formula for 2020/21: • Option 1: A cap on gains of 3.83%. All other factors are in line with the National Funding Formula (see table below), including the minimum funding guarantee of 1.84%. **No Votes** • Option 2: A reduced minimum funding guarantee of 1% and an increased cap on gains of 3.96%. All other factors are in line with the National Funding Formula (see table below). **Agreed** unanimously (20 votes)	
6.10.5	Schools Forum was thanked for the quality and level of debate around these proposals. The Finance team was also thanked for the work they did to provide meaningful information in a short space of time.	
7.0	**7.0 Forward Plan**	
7.1	Noted by the Forum.	
7.2	It was originally hoped to consult maintained schools on de delegation at the same time as the funding proposals however details of the settlement were late. This will now take place in December and be reported to the January Schools Forum meeting.	
7.3	Early Years action plan to go on to forward plan for February 2020.	
8.0	**8.0 Any Other Business**	
8.1	Schools in financial difficulty budget - maintained schools only After discussion it was agreed that all maintained Schools Forum representatives would form the Panel. Meetings will take place prior to the main meeting.	
9.0	**Next Meeting** 16 January 2020 16:30 to 18:30 Merrion House Meeting Suite Room 3; Merrion House Meeting Suite Room 4	