

**SCHOOLS FORUM****Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020, 2pm****via Teams online****Attendees:**

Julie Bevan (JB)	Chair
Ming Zhang (MZ)	Education, Participation & Skills – Service Director
Amanda Paddison (AP)	Education, Participation & Skills – Head of Business & Access
Jo Siney (JS)	Education, Participation & Skills – Head of SEND
Louise Jenkins (LJ)	Education, Participation & Skills – Finance Officer
Helen Slater (HS)	Education, Participation & Skills – Finance
Sue Smith (SS)	Early Years and Childcare Manager
Karen Cook (KC)	RC Diocesan representative
Karen Lilley (KL)	Early Years representative
Annmarie Allchurch (AA)	CE Diocese representative
Ciara Moran (CM)	PAPH representative
Heidi Price (HP)	PAPH representative
Stephen Martin (SM)	Maintained Nursery Schools
Lisa Hartley (LH)	CEO PLP
Matthew Bindon (MB)	Alternative Provision representative
Dan Roberts (DR)	PLT representative
Martyn Cox (MC)	PLT representative
Aaron Meredith (AM)	PAPH representative
Amanda White (AJW)	Clerk to Schools Forum

**Apologies:**

Alison Botham (AB)	Director of Children's Services
Wendy Cording (WC)	PAPH representative
Lisa Boorman (LB)	Secondary representative
Justine Mason (JM)	PLT representative
Andrea Hemmens (ASH)	SHAP representative
Ben Manning (BM)	Post 16 representative
Matthew Corrigan (MC)	PLT representative

1. <b>WELCOME &amp; APOLOGIES</b>	<b>Action</b>
As above.	
<b>2. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING ON 11 NOVEMBER 2020</b>	
Minutes agreed.	
<b>3. MATTERS ARISING</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SS to update Forum regarding sustainable business models for providers: Ongoing support for settings during the pandemic. Business support has also been provided by Hempsall's and the DfE. With webinars and grants. Ming Zhang has confirmed that headcount will go ahead as normal in January. Support for providers continues to be discussed at Budget Modelling Group.</li> <li>▪ LJ confirmed that the Disapplication request with regards to an historic exceptional funding grant for an offsite sports facility for All Saints Academy had been approved.</li> <li>▪ Annmarie Allchurch nominated for Deputy Chair for Schools Forum by Julie Bevan, seconded by Heidi Price.</li> </ul>	
<b>4. 2021/22 FUNDING CONSULTATION RESPONSES</b>	
<p>The consultation document 'Funding of Maintained Schools and Academies from 2021 to 2022' was sent to all Plymouth schools on Friday 27th November 2020 inviting schools to respond to the proposals contained within the document by Friday 11th December 2020.</p> <p>The consultation contained nine recommendations, as detailed in paper 4.1; the figures are estimates only and will change once pupil data has been updated with the October census information. Final figures will be presented to Schools Forum in January 2021. LJ stated that recommendation 9.6 regarding PFI related to an increase of £251k in the maintained schools PFI factor. However, the recommendation also includes an increase of £14k to a special school within the High Needs Block as per the consultation document.</p> <p>Three responses were received in total; one maintained primary school, one maintained secondary school and one multi academy trust.</p> <p>It is proposed that recommendations 9.1 to 9.9 contained within the consultation document are actioned and included on Plymouth's updated Authority Proforma Tool (APT) once it has been received from Central Government. Final allocations will be reported to Schools Forum in January 2021.</p> <p><b>Recommendations 9.1 to 9.9 in the consultation document approved by Schools Forum.</b></p>	
<b>5. 2020/21 BUDGET MONITORING</b>	
The Council receives funding for schools through the Dedicated Schools Grant. The grant funds expenditure either directly through the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) or incurred by the Council on behalf of schools.	

Any over or underspend on the DSG are carried forward. The distribution of the ISB element of the grant is in accordance with the schools funding formula and the overall DSG has to be approved by the Schools Forum.

The 2020/21 DSG allocation has been decreased due to the following:

- Reduction of £0.038m for the High Needs Block allocation, due to reduced deductions compared to budget setting and import/export adjustments notified.
- Reduction of £0.831m relating to 2019/20 Early Years block - £0.300m of this adjustment was accrued for at year end, the rest has been offset against in-year Early Years Block savings.

The current forecast DSG underspend is -£1.316m (last forecast reported was an underspend of -£1.389m).

This is made up of the following; Unchanged from previous forecast:

- Schools Block – underspend of -£0.413m relating to negative funding adjustments for growing secondary schools due to reduced Autumn NOR.
- Early Years – underspend of -£0.189m relating to closure of settings and reduction in SEND packages in summer term due to Covid.
- High Needs Block - previous forecast (-£0.787m).
- High Needs Block – underspend of -£0.713m and relates to the residual contingency budget, a result of the additional £3m HNB funding in 2020/21. £0.600m to be ringfenced for Alternative Provision proposals.

Papers 6.1 A and B give more detail regarding budget monitoring.

The table below shows the year end forecast DSG balance. Previous forecast year end DSG surplus was £0.587m

<b>DSG Balance Reconciliation (£m)</b>	
Balance b/f from 2019/20 - deficit	0.202
Forecast underspend 2020/21	(1.316)
Ringfenced for Alternative Provision proposals	0.600
<b>Forecast year end DSG (surplus) balance</b>	<b>(0.514)</b>

Maintained Schools Health Check:

The financial stability of maintained schools is monitored using the budget monitoring returns. 2 maintained schools and 1 maintained nursery school ended the financial year with a deficit.

Quarter 2 monitoring returns from schools show that 4 maintained schools and 1 maintained nursery school are projecting a deficit at year end.

Any maintained schools forecasting a deficit position will be expected to enter into a licenced deficit agreement with the Local Authority where a 3 year plan will be produced to enable the school to eliminate their deficit within 3 years.

**Short Term and Medium Term Risks and Issues**

Rating	Detail	Mitigation/Further Actions
<b>Amber</b>	<p><b>High Needs</b></p> <p>Funding for 2012/22 confirmed at an additional £3m. However, it is likely that beyond this funding will be, at best, static.</p> <p>Plymouth needs to consider the stability and sustainability of the High Needs Block over the longer term.</p>	<p>Continuing good governance</p> <p>Implementing recommendations from BMG and further BMG work, especially on proposals for invest to save projects</p> <p>Consider future sustainability of High Needs Block</p>

**6. HIGH NEEDS BLOCK UPDATE**

Budget Modelling Group met on 26th November 2020, and discussed the following with regard to the additional High Needs Block allocation in 2021/22:

- Consideration was made to a risk assessment around use of funding and requirement to ensure that decisions made are an efficient and effective use of funding and are sustainable for the future. We need to be mindful that future funding levels beyond 2021/22 are uncertain.
- BMG has set up a sub group to look at funding Trauma Informed training for Plymouth Schools – this group will have met twice by the date of Forum.
- BMG has looked at initial proposals for funding Transition Support for Home Education pupils. These proposals are being worked on and presented again at a future BMG meeting.
- Exceptional Cohort Funding for Mainstream Schools – discussed and approved a 10% increase in the exceptional cohort funding rate (currently £3000), as this was not increased when all the other top-up banding rates were increased in 2020/21. The approximate cost of this is £45,300, however this could be slightly different as the formula is reworked annually.
- Band 8 and 8+ review – subject raised as an area requiring consideration, to be reviewed at a future BMG meeting.

Recommendation - BMG recommends that Forum approve a 10% increase to the Exceptional Cohort banding rate in 2021/22 to £3,300 per pupil over the expected number, per the existing calculation.

**Recommendations Agreed by Schools Forum.**

Primary and Secondary AEP proposals: (refer to additional papers 6.2 and 6.3).

Recommendations for forum approval – actions per paper 6.2:

- An Inclusion Project Board will be established in partnership with schools (primary, secondary, special and AP) and the local authority.
- This Project Board will oversee the development of this work, including the vision, outcomes to be achieved, KPI, impact evaluation and final costings of the projects.
- The Project Board will monitor the evaluation of the pilots and coordinate the proposals of sustainable provision.
- Future High Needs Funding requirement proposals will be reported back to Schools Forum in order to be considered within the HNB Budget Modelling Group plan for 2021/22.

	<p>Discussion regarding the setting up of an independent board to implement these proposals. MZ would like to move fast in setting this up and link with PLT/PAPH, look at who needs to sit on the board and its terms of reference.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Papers 6.2 and 6.3 to be shared with PAPH/PLT</li> <li>▪ MZ and JS to look at who will sit on this board to ensure the right people involved.</li> </ul>	<b>JS/MZ</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>PROPOSED DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021</li> <li>▪ Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021</li> <li>▪ Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021</li> <li>▪ Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021</li> <li>▪ Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021</li> </ul>	