**TRAFFORD BOROUGH**

**MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM**

**8th NOVEMBER 2022**

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| **DAY/DATE/TIME** | **VENUE** |
| TUESDAY 8TH NOVEMBER 2022  MAIN MEETING: 2PM | Trafford Town Hall  Committee Rooms 2 & 3 |
| Christine Clarkson | Clerk to Schools Forum  0161 912 4404  Christine.clarkson@trafford.gov.uk |
| **FORUM MEMBER ATTENDEES:** | |
| **Maintained Primary Headteacher Representatives (9) of which 5 attended:** | |
| Clive Searle | Worthington Primary |
| Tom Johnson | Seymour Park |
| Darren Morgan | Kings Road Primary |
| Louise Owens | Broomwood Primary |
| Wayne Hitchcock | St Mary’s Primary (Sale) |

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| **Primary Academy Headteacher Representatives (2) of which 0 attended:** | |
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| **Maintained Primary Governor Representatives (3) of which 2 attended:** | |
| Karen Smyth | Urmston Primary |
| Philippa Williamson | All Saints Primary |

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| **Maintained Secondary Headteacher Representatives (3) of which 2 attended:** | |
| Kate Worsley | Blessed Thomas Holford |
| Nicola Doward (CHAIR) | Stretford High |

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| **Academy Secondary Headteacher Representatives (7) of which 3 attended:** | |
| Gemma Tunstall | Wellington |
| Louise Simpson | Altrincham GGS |
| Danielle Taylor | Altrincham College |

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| **Maintained Special School Headteacher Representative (1) of which 1 attended:** | |
| Sally Judge | Delamere |

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| **Academy Special School Headteacher Representative (1) of which 0 attended:** | |
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| **Trafford Alternative Education Provision Headteacher Representative (1) of which 1 attended:** | |
| Linda Thompson | TAEP |

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| **Non School Members (7) of which 1 attended:** | |
| Dee McKenzie | PVI Representative |

Total members = 34

Quorum = 14 (40%)

Number in attendance = 15

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| **OBSERVERS ATTENDEES:** | |
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| **TMBC OFFICER ATTENDEES:** | |
| Christine Clarkson | Accountant – Childrens’ / CLERK |
| Anne-Marie Steadman | Senior Accountant – Childrens’ |
| Michelle Perry | Senior Accountant – Childrens’ |
| Graeme Bentley | Director of Finance |

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| **APOLOGIES** | | |
| Alison Kelly | Moorlands | |
| Stephanie Gill | Altrincham Grammar for Girls | |
| Judith Stott | Old Trafford Community School | |
| Adele New | Trafford Council – Lead member for Education | |
| Amy Nield | Finance Manager – Children’s | |
| Karen Samples | Director of Education, Standards, Quality & Performance | |
| Jo Patterson | Navigation Primary | |
| Riffat Wall | | Urmston Grammar |
| Joanne Daley | Urmston Grammar | |
| Debbie Vrlec | Victoria Park Infant School | |
| Rebecca Smith | Sale Grammar | |
| Kieran Done | St Ambrose College | |
| Kaye Gallimore | NEU | |
| Councillor Adele New | Lead Member for Education | |

1. **WELCOME ALL AND APOLOGIES:**

In Judith Stott’s absence the Vice- Chair (Nicola Doward) chaired the meeting. She welcomed everyone to the first face to face meeting since the pandemic.

The above apologies for absence were accepted.

**2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 21st June 2022**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

**3. MATTERS ARISING**

**Maternity allowance –** this will be covered under agenda item 8.

**Teachers’ Pension Indexation** – information has been forwarded onto schools following the last meeting.

**4. FORUM MEMBERSHIP**

**Appointment of Chair/ Vice Chair**

Anne-Marie reported that both Judith Stott (Chair) and Nicola Doward (Vice-Chair) had agreed to continue for the academic year 2022-23. As there had been no other nominations she asked members to agree their nominations.

**Decision – All Members agreed the nominations of Judith Stott (Chair) and Nicola Doward (Vice Chair) for the academic year 2022-23.**

Anne-Marie then presented the current Membership List, updated as several members had resigned/ retired over the Summer. She asked that this be reviewed by all and any amendments to be forwarded to the clerk of Forum

Those members whose membership has expired have confirmed their agreement to continue. There are currently vacancies for 1 mainstream primary, 1 academy and 1 Post 16 representatives, together with several vacancies for substitutes. A primary member reported that A McDowell and J O’Brien are no longer substitutes. Sector Representatives were asked to raise at relevant Groups to obtain nominations to fill the vacancies. Anne-Marie raised that there was a vacancy for a Diocesan Representative and the other Diocesan representative does not attend. Forum members agreed this position was acceptable as there is representation for the Voluntary Aided Schools by School Members.

**Action – Sector Representatives to obtain nominations to fill vacancies from the relevant Peer Groups.**

A primary member raised the importance of having a balanced representation on Sub-Groups. At the recent Mainstream Sub-Group there had only been primary representatives, and he felt it important secondary school interests were represented. The Chair agreed; she will take this back to the Secondary Heads Group to ensure future representation.

**5. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG) 2022-23 AND 2023-24**

Michelle Perry presented a report outlining the DSG current projected position for 2022-23 as at period 4 together with the provisional allocation for 2023-24.

The projected position at period 4 shows an overspend of £0.724m broken down between blocks as below.

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| **Table 1: P4 budget monitoring** | **DSG Budget 2022/23**  **£m** | **Expected Outturn**  **2022/23**  **£m** | **Difference**  **2022/23**  **£m** |
| **Schools Block (SB)**  **Central Schools Services Block (CSSB)**  **High Needs Block (HNB)**  **Early Years Block (EYB)** | 194.344  1.527  37.383  17.539 | 193.982  1.505  38.492  17.537 | (0.361)  (0.022)  1.109  (0.002) |
| **Total** | **250.793** | **251.516** | **0.724** |

The 2023/24 DSG provisional allocations by block are shown below overall totalling £259.941m (these will be updated for October and January census, the High Needs place change notification, January 23 ILR data and the import/export adjustment).

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| **Table 2 – Provisional DSG Allocations 2023/24** | **Schools Block**  **£m** | **Central Schools Services Block**  **£m** | **High Needs Block**  **£m** | **Early Years Block**  **£m** | **Total**  **£m** |
| **Provisional DSG Grant 2023/24** | 202.086 | 1.482 | 38.834 | 17.539 | **259.941** |
| **DSG Grant 2022/23** | 194.344 | 1.527 | 37.383 | 17.539 | **250.793** |
| **Difference** | 7.742 | (0.045) | 1.451 | 0 | **9.148** |

Schools Block has increased by £7.742m (4%); this includes schools supplementary grant which is rolled into the National Funding Formula (NFF) in 2023-24. 2023-24 is the first year of transition to the NFF; Trafford already replicates the NFF rates in its local funding formula. The provisional school budgets for 2023/24 will be updated and re-issued once pupil data is received, usually mid-December. The 2023/24 Authority Proforma Tool budget information will be submitted to the ESFA by the 20th of January 2023 and 2023/24 final budgets sent to schools thereafter.

The report outlined the current funding rates for each factor in the formula which will be applied for 2023-24. The permissible Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) range under the Regulations can be set between 0% and 0.5%.

A Primary Member passed on his congratulations to the Local Authority Officers for providing robust data, options, and advice over the past years to assist Members in making decisions in relation to managing the movement to the NFF. In his opinion he believes this has put schools in Trafford in a strong position in comparison to those in some other LA’s and avoided a ‘cliff-edge’ situation in funding for schools. Michelle Perry thanked the Member for his support and added that it was a partnership arrangement between the LA and schools.

A Primary Member asked if there had been any update on the national insurance rate changes which has a direct correlation to the Schools Supplementary grant. Michelle responded that this had been raised with the DfE and there were currently no further updates.

Michelle then went on to outline the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB). This reduces year on year; the reduction for 2023-24 is £45,000. The proposed budgets for 2023-24, which need approval from Members are:

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| **Central Schools Services Block** | **2023/24 Budget**  **£** |
| Admissions  Primary Targeted  School Funding Forum  Prudential Borrowing  Gas Tests in Schools  DfE Licences  Contingency  ESG Retained Duties | 526,693  75,000  5,100  77,000  2,651  214,200  1,620  580,000 |
| **Total** | **1,482,264** |

A Primary Member requested if details of spend and criteria for the Primary Targeted Support Fund could be provided. It was agreed this would be provided for the January meeting.

**Decision – Schools Forum approve the spend on CSSB for 2023-24 as outlined above. Agreed – 15, No – 0, Abstentions – 0.**

**Action – the LA provided details of spend and criteria for the Primary Targeted Support Fund for the January meeting.**

**6. HIGH NEEDS BLOCK SUB-GROUP**

The minutes of the High Needs Block (HNB) Sub-Group have not yet been approved and will be forwarded when approved. Anne-Marie gave a verbal update of the meeting.

The meeting looked at the HNB budget position as outlined in the previous item. With the current projected overspends and deficit brought forward it is estimated the total deficit position on the HNB at the end of 2023/24 will be in the region of £3.1m. This is mainly due to pressures on Placements both in and out of Borough. The LA is currently working on a Deficit Management Plan and options paper in consultation with the DfE to manage this deficit.

The members then looked at the changes to Special School Budgets and pressures faced by the Special Schools. School budgets will increase by 3% for 2023-24, however a number are experiencing severe funding issues. Special schools will be asked to submit updated 3-year Budget Plans for review by the LA.

A primary member raised the issue of special school place funding (£10k in special schools) noting this had not increased for several years and this must be difficult for special schools to manage. Anne-Marie replied that the amount is set nationally.

A primary member asked if it was likely the LA would be asking to transfer the 0.5% permissible from Schools Block to HNB for 2023-24. Anne-Marie confirmed this was unlikely as the DfE would not allow changes to minimum pupil funding levels (MFL) last year.

There was a lot of general discussion by all members greatly concerned about the lack of funding for the HNB, the projected deficit position and pressures facing the special schools. A primary member asked why the MFG can’t be operated across all schools so that mainstream schools can support special schools (and all children across the Borough). Anne-Marie responded that the Regulations require they operate under 2 separate formulas so this was not possible. A Special School Member said she had been raising funding issues in the sector for several years but always felt the sector were considered a low priority for government. Another member asked what the projected deficit position might be in a few years’ time if the proposed free school was not approved; this has not been calculated but is likely to be around £10m.

Anne-Marie outlined that this is a national issue and not particular to Trafford. Trafford is a member of the F40 Group (Group representing the lowest 40 funded LAs in the country) and they were lobbying government on this issue.

The Chair suggested the LA gather and circulate to Forum all current lobbying being presented by various groups on this issue and this be considered by Forum. Following this Forum could look at ways of adding to this to present to government.

**Action – the LA provide details to Forum of all current lobbing taking place in relation to School funding.**

**7. MAINSTREAM SUB-GROUP**

Michelle Perry presented the minutes of the Mainstream Sub-Group. The Group had looked at the DSG, De-delegation for 2023-24, provisional school budget information for 2023-24 and the SEN Protection Pot.

She then went on to present provisional school budget information for 2023-24 based on the provisional DSG and NFF together with comparative data from 2022-23. The key changes are prioritising deprivation/ disadvantaged pupils by increasing FSM6 and IDACI factors by 4.3% with other factors increasing by 2.4%. The permissible MFG range is between 0% to 0.5%. The provisional budget information provided highlighted those schools on the MFG (14 out of 83 schools) and those on the MFL (33 out of 83 schools) seeing individual school budget increases around 0.5%.

A primary member said this presented a grim picture with schools facing costs pressures in the region of 10% and funding levels much lower than this. Other members agreed with one Head outlining that her school had recently re-negotiated its electricity contract and was facing an increase in costs of 500%.

It was requested the LA attend the next primary Heads meeting to present this provisional budget information.

**Action - the LA attend the next primary Heads meeting to present provisional school budgets for 2023-24.**

**8. DE-DELEGATION**

Anne Marie presented a paper outlining the current position on de-delegated items for 2022-23.

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| **De-delegated budget monitoring** | **Carried forward in reserves (£)** | **Budget 22/23 (£)** | **Expected outturn 22/23 (£)** |
| Behaviour Support Services  Licences/Subscriptions  Staff costs supply cover – Maternity  Staff costs supply cover - Union duties  Redundancy | 0  150  128,525  24,920  553,322 | 52,568  0  281,550  54,027  220 | 52,568  0  281,550  54,027  220 |
| **Total** | **706,926** | **388,365** | **388,365** |

Forum were also presented with a letter from the Unions requesting Forum support in de-delegating funding for union duties in 2023-24.

It is proposed the same items be de-delegated for 2023-24. Forum are asked to agree this in principle with the rates being presented for approval at January Forum. A primary member had previously asked that the rates for maternity payments from the Fund be re-considered as they have not increased for several years. Anne-Marie reported that, despite underspends in previous years, it is expected that the Fund will be fully utilised in 2022-23 and for rates to be increased to current salary levels would require an increase in the per pupil rate of approximately £7.50.

**Decision – Forum approve de-delegation in principle for the following items (mainstream schools only). Rates to be presented to January Forum for agreement.**

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| **Item** | **Sector** | **Agree** | **No** | **Abstentions** |
| **Behaviour Support** | **Primary** | **5** | **1** | **1** |
| **Licences/ Subscriptions** | **Primary/Secondary** | **9** | **0** | **0** |
| **Staff costs supply cover – Maternity** | **Primary** | **7** | **0** | **0** |
| **Staff costs supply cover – Union** | **Primary** | **7** | **0** | **0** |
| **Redundancy** | **Primary/Secondary** | **9** | **0** | **0** |

**9. SEN PROTECTION POT**

Michelle Perry presented details of allocations from the SEN Protection Pot for 2022-23. The Fund totals £426k and allocates funding to those schools with proportionately more pupils with Education, Health, and Care (EHC) Plans on the January 2022 census when compared to the notional SEN budget and measured the percentage of the notional budget required to support HN pupils. In terms of affordability, protection will set at 49% in 2022/23 with 23 schools receiving additional funding from the SEN Protection Pot.

A primary member asked why there seemed to be more schools in the South of the Borough than other areas. Michelle agreed to take back to the EHC Team and ascertain if there is a particular reason for this.

A secondary member asked if the figures are based on January 2022 and if this would be updated for the latest census. Michelle confirmed it would not as January census is year on year.

A secondary member asked why it seemed there are delays in getting the funding for EHC Plans for Year 7 pupils starting in secondary schools. Michelle will forward this query to the EHC Team.

**Action – Michelle to follow up on 2 queries with the EHC Team, why there seemed to be more schools in the South of the borough receiving SEN protection and why there is a delay in receiving SEN delegation monies for Y7’s - both to be reported back to Forum.**

**10. UPDATE ON EARLY YEARS**

Anne-Marie provided a verbal update on Early Years funding. A further meeting with the Early Years Reference Group meeting will be held in early December.

**11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

A primary member asked if Councillors in Trafford were aware of the funding position and difficulties schools in Trafford were facing. There was much discussion around this with members noting there was no elected member at the meeting and considered it important that the Elected Member for both Education and Finance attend Schools Forum meetings, so they were aware of issues and able to lobby on school’s behalf.

The Director of Finance reported that the LA was a member of the F20 Group (in addition to the F40 Group) – which is the 20 lowest funded councils in the country and these Groups were lobbying on behalf of Councils. The Chair referred to the importance of Forum being made aware of the lobbying being undertaken by these Groups (covered in Agenda Item 6).

**Action – The minutes record Forum’s concern that no Elected Member attended the meeting and request attendance at future meetings. As Item 6, details of all lobbying taking place on behalf of schools be collated and reported to Forum members.**

**Date of the next Funding Forum meeting:**

**Tuesday 17th January 2023 at 2pm – venue to be confirmed nearer the time.**