

<b>Meeting title</b>	<b>SCHOOLS FORUM</b>
<b>Date</b>	Tuesday 27 <sup>th</sup> September 2022 – via Teams
<b>Forum Members Present</b>	Jo Marsh (Chair), Jo Stoling, Kevin Burnett, Louise Malik, Steven Mackay, Louise Malik, Alan Williams & Claire Crowther & Roz Lambert
<b>Forum Members Not Present</b>	Dawn Sage
<b>Observers</b>	Cllr Dine Romero, Andrew Heard (DFE)
<b>Officers Present</b>	Christopher Wilford, Richard Morgan, Rosemary Collard, Philip Frankland Becky Biddlecombe (notes)
<b>Officers Not Present</b>	Mary Kearney-Knowles, Mandy Bishop
<b>Distribution</b>	As above plus Theresa Gale: Education Director, Diocese of Bath & Wells Cllr. Richard Samuel: Cabinet Member Resources Cllr. Kevin Guy: Leader of the Council Cllr. Vic Pritchard: Chair of PDS Panel Mandy Bishop, Wendy Jefferies, Andy Rothery, Jeff Wring, Paul Hiscott, Olwyn Donnelly
<b>Next meeting</b>	<b>6th December 2022</b>

<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies Received</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
	<p>JM: welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted as above. JM confirmed that the meeting was quorate.</p> <p>Dawn has not attended- RM has confirmed Dawn will be leaving the forum replacement confirmed</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	<p>Members were reminded to complete the declaration of interest forms once per year and to declare anything pertaining to the papers being presented.</p> <p>Declarations were made as follows.</p> <p>Claire Hudson – School Governor</p> <p>Dine- Son attends Beechen Cliff school</p> <p>AW- trust and CEO of Farrington Gurney high Littleton</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Minutes of the last meeting (28th June 2022)</b>	
	<p>KB Page 3 – under fourth paragraph under LM</p> <p>EHCP – ECHP</p> <p>Page 4 – Under transfers DFE intend to send out notional advance for school budget</p> <p>DR- Item 3 –councillor remero – SB Romero</p>	

Everyone happy to accept minutes

**Actions from previous meeting –**

Salary Sacrifice – AW – to send to Jo, haven't had a chance to put the policy together. Looked at pensions for a salary sacrifice for people near to retirement. Amend wording from JS to AW

DR - to share letter from the minster with the group, once received circulate with the minutes.

KB – Matters arising – The school standards board was re-scheduled, I'm not sure if the teacher assistant recruitment has been talked about yet? Also, the meeting CW mentioned SEND CPD provision was also going to be discussed at that particular meeting. So, is there any update on those two please?

CW – yes, we did talk about SEND as part of the DFE recovery presentation we did a very broad discussion back end of July at Wellsway, on-going discussion still going on, recruitment around TA's in the market, again no immediate conclusions

JM – for RM to looking to understand large proportion EHCP's increased when other authorities have had no increases. It was said this will be on continuing agendas. That will be a theme this year as part of the recovery plan

RM – Yes this is part of our recovery plan and data we have analysed

AW- lots of local authorities are catching up on the EHCPS

CW- the SEND team have seen Significant rise, over the pandemic there has been a 10% increase in the community .

**KB –** Just above section 4 on page 2 there is a note about guidance for Ukrainian pupils. Does RM feel as a part of the matters arising about the consultation we had online and some of the comments made and whether he wants it recorded under matters arising or AOB.

RM - I was going to raise this as an AOB, we had the guidance from the DFE about Ukrainian funding, we sent out our proposal online, and the feedback from everyone was it was positive way forward, we have put in plans to track and make the payments, but we haven't fully confirmed the plan yet as we haven't confirmed numbers with school. Payments should be with schools as soon as we practically can. Futura trust, worried about the amount of resource being held back for council prioritises, providing we can show how much is left at the year in that we can distribute.

KB- query passed on, ideally speed was the essence. Could the greater criteria be applied here if they need more or less support? That was a query passed on by a local colleague, the speed would be over riding with those considerations.

RM – the main difficulty with trying to apply need whether a child or family are English speaking for example is relatively easy, any trauma would be more difficult and trying to find resources to direct it that way. We went for straight forward approach easiest way for schools to make sure the resources will get to them. Will happen within a week or so.

JS – membership shifts and changes?

**Action -**

RM – we have a couple of gaps in our memberships, we will try and encourage them to send a rep.

<b>4.</b>	<b>Schools Forum - Self Assessment</b>	
	<p>JM /RM – looked at questions and thought of responses we could thrash out for most of the questions. We haven't put anything in 15 or 17. Just want to hold those two in particular as a side.</p> <p>In general, you have had the paper in advance if there is anything striking you or you would like to urge us for evidence from your felt experience. There are a couple of areas we thought we could re-focus on, I will draw our approach to questions 15 and 17, of course it wasn't right for me and Richard to form an opinion on that in terms of chairing. One thing I suggest it may be helpful if there are any comments for anything we can do in regard to chairing it would be really helpful, but if you would be happy to send a comment through to Richard or the clerk then we will populate that back.</p> <p>JM – 17 was where we wanted to spend most of our time, on reflection we felt 17 was probably the question we couldn't form the opinion especially the trust and academy members. If people could give 5 minutes for reflection and how we should answer the question. Question 17 is about how we seek opinion from our local areas and sometimes for schools who aren't represented here, are there other members we could reach out to not in the membership group.</p> <p>JM – Any thoughts?</p> <p>KB – I send out my notes straight after the meeting, just to say this is what was discussed today if there are any questions or queries, this goes to all union representatives. That's how I get messages out</p> <p>SM – I feedback to BET meetings</p> <p>RL – through early years reference group, if it is something urgent but not as effective as KB method that notes are sent out.</p> <p>CC- I agree with Roz, the early years sector is vast but if you look at the private, voluntary, and independent and child minders it is a very wide forum to try and get the voices across, but I think we could try and do better at the early years reference group. But things do get sent out via Julie and Phillip especially if there are points that need to be heard.</p> <p>LM – I think where there are formal points of decision, we don't share papers/minutes from the meetings.</p> <p>JM –I have links and communicate with them. Most cases if it is financial things it is shared with Chris or Rosie. But in most cases the voice is heard, and the information is shared.</p> <p>JS – amend the chairing if there is any feedback happy to take it. representation self-evaluation as a group? Anything to change or happy to keep as a record for things to focus on in the next year</p> <p>KB – very happy Jo.</p> <p>JM – adopt this as a note to ourselves, element of practice. We will continue to drive this and speak in a years' time to discuss to see how we feel and what demands have been done. But I do appreciate you all turning up to these meetings. Thank you</p>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>DSG – Safety Valve Programme</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RM – In terms of what has happened. In summer we submitted our DSG deficit programme to the DFE, we were formally invited to attend the safety valve programme. The first meeting is next</li> </ul>	

Wednesday 5th October, and we are in the process of developing our presentation as part of that process. The plan itself has 6 strands to it which is listed in the paper, action we are taking under each strand. We show latest iteration of our financial plan which shows that by 2026/27 we are anticipating that our cumulative deficit will be in the region of 23.8 million.

- The plan itself will require us to create new provision locally. Which is one of the big strands of our practice.
- RC was going to explain all the actions planning to take on that.
- CW – we are in our first meeting with the safety valve team next Wednesday, as RM said we have been invited to join the recovery programme, it depends how confident the DFE feel about our plan for road to recovery alongside the significant contribution. We have created a plan that we think will work for overall children transformation programme, which will be led by Will Godfrey who is chief executive of the council. We will be bringing some additional support and capacity for this.
- We can only deliver hand in hand with schools. We have looked at areas we will need help, I also want to highlight members of safety valve team may come to school's forum for questions/discussion or may have individual meetings with members of school's forums or school communities.
- 6 main strands, the first strand – Those independent placements, particularly the ones funded by our joint agency pool JAP. Which is where we have a contribution. We have had a significant increase with those children with health needs.
- We started this work a while back independent review of the budget main needs, where are the service gaps, provision gaps, also to review contribution gaps, contribution increase. We believe the LA and the DSG are paying too much into the budget should be increase contribution from health partners. Future conversation that will be happening.
- Formal review completes November and will have a series of actions that we will have to work through to address that specific budget pressure
- RC – aware of difficulty of places in banes in special schools, having a knock-on effect sending children out of county. Started a programme to increase the local resource base provision within B&NES, I'm working with the schools for resource bases, I will be visiting the schools to put forward plans, hoping to increase the provision in the next few years by 50 pupils
- Increase capacity for existing special schools by 25 pupils
- OD – BOP officially early years education service, occupies the bottom floor underneath three ways and when we were looking at the re-commissioning process in our conversation with stakeholders/parents' key elements need to provide additional training out into mainstream settings and urgency for alternative location for BOP's so that space could be given to three ways for capacity.

- Consider what new budget should be, current block payments 200,000 a year have paid an additional 22,000 a year to cope with additional factors.
- Waiting list has become quite significant, if we are requiring them to move to a new provider for net contract, we will have to factor in some rental costs around an additional 30,000 a year.
- If council accommodations become available, then the council cannot hold onto the 30,000 but we need that option for providers for rent and building upkeep.
- New budget to be increased to £260,000 a year taking on £22,000 plus additional £30,000 for rent plus 3% up list £260,000.
- LM – it says 50 resources and how many places at each school. There are a lot more places than that. Wanted to clarify what is happening with resource spaces
- RM – 50 places is what we stated as our original strategy, when we put out for our proposal, but our exact number will depend on RC and the schools.
- LM – what is taken into consideration with the numbers? DSG plan
- RM – we have used a different number to 50, can't remember exact but it is high possibly 66.
- RC – might be a tool but depends on what work I do with school and what they can manage
- JM – the BOP service is hugely needed for BANES and first steps have done a great job running this year. BOP have been great for keeping young people in reception year to keep them in and I fully support the finance slightly raising to make sure the service is working well
- RL- there is conflict of interest, question for the amount that is going to be allocated to early years specialist contract, I don't think 3% uptake will cover the costs for staffing costs. The salary increase must come now, the staff are not paid much and will suffer from the cost-of-living crisis.
- JM- thank you for your interested and discussing this difficult place we are in.
- KB – apart from adding my thanks and congratulations who provide an excellent service, these sort of changes that have mentioned do they fall in the general high needs budget and what is being done.
- RC- resource bases or BOP
- KB – BOP
- RM – affectively what we are proposing, we will spend more money than we are currently spending in order to re-house them to somewhere else. It will release space in three ways school and will create more space and show a significant saving overall. In terms of spending on BOP we will be spending more money on BOP as we will be paying for rent but will create sufficiency in

the system.

- KB – so we will get more back to what we are spending?
- RM- yes that is correct
- JM – note request in that increase in spend, everybody has asked questions about the spend, so we will carry on with the paper
- RC – Bid for free special school is underway, we are working with an agency to put the bid together there is an open evening on 4<sup>th</sup> October in the community space above library in Keynsham. Has anyone had any invites?
- JM – no invites been received; RC will check invites are sent out
- The bid is for us to have 120 place special generic school in Keynsham/chew area. I haven't caught up with any agencies yet, to find about the land search I will tomorrow. It will be in the hands of DFE if bid is successful, it will then go to MATs if they want to run the special schools. Will be from 4-19 and we will be in the hand of the DFE. The next place is the MATs to see if they will help. That is number four
- Number 5 is to increase local provision across the board for all different needs, to ensure we aren't sending children out of county, it does save a lot of money has massive advantages of having children locally.
- OD – Number 6, create right SEND support, another key strand creates right system for BANES, reduce growth in EHCP's for strands.
- Engaged a consultant, Julie Dyer will be doing that. One of the strands will be to follow up work that Jo and Sarah are doing with the SENCO's follow up self-evaluation, so we have a map of what is going on, second area looking at agreed SEND CPD across BANES to avoid duplication and fill in any gaps.
- Looking at how we deliver training, how to work with 5 county teaching hub alliance that are keen to resource some of that training?
- Other strand, key features of LA key agreement, one strong agreement, BANES SEND commitment, accessible for parent's, underneath which would be the schools sending reports, SEND handbooks any other support documents that is the third strand.
- Fourth strand, look at exactly what is the system of SEND support that would work best for all settings? System of HUBS, MATs to lead on certain areas? Centralised services, big piece of work.

CW – The detail of it is being worked through, we will nominate a SEND lead that we can form a working party with. There is an email that hasn't been sent yet that will be distributed soon.

JM – how many reps from MAT sector?

CW- for MATS most MATs will have a lead for SEND and working out how many MATS, representative for stand alone. I will be chasing; from main streams we have an improvement advisor who will volunteer.

	<p>JM – Any other questions?</p> <p>KB – Just to hope who is involved that somewhere it is stressed that is it very sensible and helpful early intervention is key to have and create a send support system. I hope that the DFE will notice any further cuts that schools plug into around that, because what’s the point in trying to encourage the self-supporting system, if more funding cuts mean its drained away or affected.</p> <p>AW- economic policy, I’ll be surprised if we have any money left to do anything</p> <p>LM – financial plan, by the time we get to 2026/27 we will still have a deficit of 24 million, looking at contribution from council. Not trying to be critical, notes the problems we are having. Even if all of this comes off, we will still have a deficit.</p> <p>RM – the council have committed to put a 1million pounds in building up from 2024/25 looking to get into balance by 26/27.</p> <p>RM – does have continued transferred from school’s block to high needs block that has been in place for at least 5 years, and we are looking to continue the arrangement.</p> <p>LM – funding in general query, wanted to make sure the forum understands the financial position that we are going to find ourselves in, specifically around pay awards, around energy costs, these will have knock-on effects. Looking at massive impacts, we are going to have to significantly reduce provision and look at the budgets.</p> <p>CW- you have made a point about the plan and challenges. Your comments are welcome, we need to get increased momentum with this, we are finalising the presentation, carrying out section risks on pressures on schools’ budget, costs, external services. It will have a significant impact on the delivery of this plan.</p> <p>JM – thanking you for the update, we want a positive outcome for schools.</p>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>National Funding Formula Consultation</b>	
	<p>RM – Alterations to the system that they have put in place, the DFE are preparing themselves for the transition, there is a need for us to consult with schools still for 23/24 we have attached a draft consultation paper ready for approval to be distributed. School forum if they agree we can distribute it to schools so we can get responses back through the MATs by November. Any comments on consultation paper or methodology of consulting schools.</p> <p>LM – impact of NFF, detailed work over summer that I realised an implication of NFF to do with supplementary funding grant, came separate to us for 23/24 being built into the funding. I didn’t realise disproportionate impact on schools depending on whether they are protected by the minimum pupil for funding level or not, and what I identified is those schools who are not protected are getting increase of 2.3% percent, those protected getting increases of 0.5%. I don’t know if this was intended, so on top of everything else some schools are receiving much lower increases than others.</p> <p>RM – I am concerned by the suggestion as would expect around 2%increase</p> <p>LM – not giving them a minimum gain only 0.5% gain.</p>	

	<p><b>Action - RM and LM to have separate discussion over this.</b></p> <p><b>Following the discussion LM was correct and the protection offered to schools who were on the minimum per pupil allocation would effectively only see an increase of 0.5% per pupil in line with the MFG methodology for 2023-24. – anything happening?</b></p> <p>KB – on the consultation paper 2.11 – can you confirm if BANES is allowed to do split site funding or separate halls</p> <p>RM – under current arrangement, for 23/24 we are using local formula therefore split site and allocation for resources under the special premises factors are still locally decided. We would still be allowed to continue with the arrangements. When it is a direct formula the DFE are consulting, with removing elements such as split sites and those changes to national scheme could affect some of our schools, we are only 1 player out of 150 who have responded, saying how they shouldn't change that methodology but will be up to the DFE to decide on that guidance.</p> <p>KB – under section 3 – have you put somewhere, I thought we now had to say why we are transferring the point 5, and what is that exactly is that going to cover?</p> <p>RM – that is under national direct funding formula, when it is introduced at the moment it is left at an open question</p> <p>JM – as a group we will wait for you to send the consultation. Look forward to receiving back in our day jobs.</p> <p><b>Action - RM to send out consultation</b></p>	RM/LM
7.	<b>Exceptional Premises Factor</b>	
	<p>RM – couple of our schools get exceptional premises factor, from back in 2013 and it is because the two individual schools in questions have to hire halls as part of the curriculum, mainly PE and for collective worship. Under DFE guidance, allowed it as exceptional items for the last 5 years. Back in March the DFE said we should have been consulting on changes because it was 5 years old which we missed. I did send out an email request for support but in that period the DFE allowed us to extend the period for a year on the proviso we consult schools on keeping this element of our formula for 23/24. In this paper I have a consultation which will be part of the schools national funding formula, whether if the schools should continue to have exceptional premises factor as per document I have produced.</p> <p>Disapplication request to DFE supported by Forum providing responses to consultation are favourable.</p> <p>RM – send out consultation document</p> <p>KB – declaration of interest governor of Farrington Gurney school who</p>	

	<p>is affected, very much in favour for help for the curriculum</p> <p>AW- trust and CEO of Farrington Gurney and High Littleton – did respond to consultation</p> <p><b>JM – propose forum happy with the Approach – All forum members agree</b></p>	<b>Agreed</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Early Years Formula Consultation</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PF – updated on recent changes/tweaking by the DFE is then sent to councils to set a local formula. PF then summarised the consultation that took place mainly through the summer, explaining that there is no extra money resulting from the proposed changes still being worked from same base budget. Much of the consultation is about updating the data sets that are used in order to calculate what Councils are given before it is then put in a formula to distribute to the providers.</li> <li>• The result of this, subject to possible change some of these data sets which are still over a decade old and could be re-visited is that the figures quoted are not final confirmation. The indication is that the outcome would be an uplift in what we receive for 2-year-olds of 3% and for 3+ years old it would be 4.5%. Part of that uplift for children age 3+ includes the teachers’ pay and pensions grant for nursery provision which was previously included in the schools funding formula. This part has been added for the early year sector into the base early years figure allocated to Councils. This is not ring fenced, but it is an extra 5p per hour and it could be argued to be an artificial boost to take it up to 4.5% figure.</li> <li>• The changing data sets results tend to be in pennies rather than pounds. We encouraged the sector to respond to the consultation individually and we sent out many reminders to do so. This paper is to draw the forums attention to this matter. When the results are published, we will have to go back and revisit the formula and engage with early year reference group to bring paper back to for Budget meeting to discuss. The consultation has now closed.</li> </ul> <p>JM – Thank you Phillip, we will note the time frame we are aware early years is critical for getting things right</p> <p>CW – I just noticed in the budget on Friday, they were trying to reduce child costs, is this a done deal or should any other details be announced?</p> <p>PF – there is a lack of clarity, on-going consultation of ratio of staff to children and whether that is a repeat of that argument. Wait for more detail, hopefully in the next 8 weeks</p> <p>SM – reading between the lines, something to do with the support the people get for families and probably about ratios, it’s very likely this is</p>	

	<p>what they'll do.</p> <p>JM- Any more questions and comments?</p> <p>KB – Thanks PF and how remarkable the early years sector is</p> <p>RL – just want to add in to thank PF for all his work and explaining this to me. Thanks for all your support and letters to the government highlighting these issues</p> <p><b>Action – chasing and following the actions</b></p> <p>SM – The only silver lining is that the national insurance rise for employers will be beneficial I'm assuming that is coming off?</p> <p>AW – It is happening, and it is a lot of money</p> <p>SM – it isn't significant over a period, but it is another reason why they won't give additional funding for schools</p> <p>JM – The provision will have to be different with the level of funding. thanks, PF, for the paper</p> <p>KB – can you ask Chris; Roz point storing up potential problems needs to be emphasized if it isn't there</p> <p>CW – it is one of the things that is in the risk section, as the level of need and not to mention the children in early years</p> <p>JM – thank you and this is a theme we want to push and feel it starts with our early year's partners</p>	
<b>9.</b>	<b>A.O.B.</b>	
	<p>OD – at the beginning of the new year, I came to SSB about school pilot project. The Rapid intervention team, two practitioners have been appointed and have received referrals. The reception I have had has been very positive and have been keen to get in early. The RIT has been successful.</p> <p>AH – big thank you for letting me come along and observe, it's important that we understand what is going on in schools to feedback.</p>	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Date of next meeting: 6th December 2022</b>	