

<b>Meeting title</b>	<b>SCHOOLS FORUM</b>
<b>Date</b>	Tuesday 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2023 – via Teams
<b>Forum Members Present</b>	Jo Marsh (Chair), Kevin Burnett, Louise Malik, Mary Cox, , Alun Williams, Clare Crowther, Roz Lambert, Tim Howes, Hayley Trottmann
<b>Forum Members Not Present</b>	Jo Stooling Steven Mackay, Emily Massey
<b>Observers</b>	Cllr Dine Romero
<b>Officers Present</b>	Christopher Wilford, Richard Morgan, Mary Kearney-Knowles, Mandy Bishop, Becky Biddlecombe (notes), Phillip Frankland, Olwyn Donnelly, Rosie Cullis, Rosemary Collard
<b>Officers Not Present</b>	Will Godfrey
<b>Distribution</b>	As above plus Ed Gregory 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>	28 <sup>th</sup> March 2023

<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies Received</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
	JM: Welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted from JS and WG.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	Members were reminded to complete the declaration of interest forms once per year and to declare anything pertaining to the papers being presented.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Minutes of the last meeting (6<sup>th</sup> December 2022)</b>	
	<p><b>Changes to minutes –</b> KB – page 4 – name spelling halfway down Page 12 – OD to clarify information</p> <p>OD clarified information as follows: The numbers we have proposed at each KS are as follows: KS1 – 8; KS2 – 8; KS3 – 15; KS4 – 24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Matters arising – page 1 and 2 clarifications around CW and DR and page 3 JM. KB to send points for clarification and collate replies for BB</li> </ul> <p>Clarification points for SF Minutes dated 27-09-22 are as below in blue highlighter after comment recorded in italics: <b>p1:</b></p>	<b>KB</b>

	<p><i>DR - to share letter with minster with group when minutes are circulated and any responses. Will send chaser email to minister.</i>  DR replied - I still haven't heard back from the minister.</p> <p><b>p2:</b>  <i>CW- great to hear the SEND are helping the community. Areas have seen Significant rise, over the pandemic there has been a 10% increase in the community just to clarify</i>  CW - Sorry Kevin, I am not sure about the first bit. However, the second bit should be - All areas have seen Significant rise. Over the pandemic there has been a 10% increase in SEND across the country - just to clarify</p> <p><b>p3:</b>  <i>JM – no SM, put of special schools I have links and communicate with them.</i>  I cannot decipher so I think it is better to strike the comment as it adds little context/content.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matter arising – page 8: KB asked RM whether we know the outcome of the application made to the DFE to apply a local exceptional premises factor. RM said he wasn't aware that a reply had yet been received. RM to confirm at next meeting</li> </ul> <p>Forum minutes accepted.</p>	<b>RM</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Budget Update 2023-24</b>	
	<p>RM – the forum agreed to the consultation responses, and we have input that data into the DFE APT portal for the national funding formula. The results of that are shown in appendix 1 and these are the factor values that will now be applied in 23/24. We are still waiting for the DFE to confirm. The average increase in each sector is 4.72% in primary and 4.52% in secondary. As soon as we get the ratification from the DFE, we will notify schools and show them the calculation sheet to show how much budget they will receive.</p> <p>The DFE have created a new additional grant for mainstream schools. Which replaces the supplementary grant. The DFE have added an additional 2 billion for overall school spending.</p> <p>Pupil premium grant increases is in line with the national funding formula; the factor values have been announced for 23/24 onwards.</p> <p>We have had an increase in the early years funding of 5.64%, however this does not reflect the cost-of-living increases, and there are still pressures in the early years sector.</p> <p>High needs block funding is the biggest increase we have seen, 10.79% which was good news. We are also building the increase into the safety valve proposal, which is still showing us having a predicted deficit of 19.6 million by the end of this financial year. The safety valve programme will support us with that.</p> <p>We are intending to send guidance to each school as soon as the DFE ratify our data submission.</p>	

	<p>KB – Is there a reason behind the increase in minimum funding guarantee numbers - like falling roles or something?</p> <p>RM - No, it's linked to the number of schools that are coming off the minimum per pupil funding because the minimum per pupil funding was increased significantly last year. It therefore impacts with schools staying on that minimum per pupil this year. The MFG and MPP funding interact with each other, and to some extent contradict each other within the calculation. So, because we see schools now on a level of funding that is above the minimum per pupil that the DFE say is the minimum, any increases they get are only the minimum funding guarantee increase.</p> <p>HT – I just had a question around the figures in table one, did they include the transfer from the school's block to the high needs block or are they just the pure?</p> <p>RM – They are the pure dedicated schools grant figures, before the transfer of the 0.5% to High Needs but the factor values in the NFF that are in the annex show the factor values after the school's block transfer. So those are the factor values that are funded after the school's block transfer.</p> <p>LM- You said you were going to share information with academies will this be shared with the trust as well?</p> <p>RM – I think sharing this information directly with the trust will be easier. (MAT representatives agreed)</p>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>DSG – Safety Valve Programme</b>	
	<p>CW – We did an extensive update around our plans. Since we last met in December, various people from the LA have been in discussion with the safety valve team and particularly with the safety valve advisors. (Richard Morgan, Rosemary, Rosie and Olwyn). We discussed the description of how we're going to do things when we're going to do them, and how we're going to oversee them.</p> <p>We had a formal date to submit all of our documents on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January, which we did. RM had the brunt of that and had a huge template to complete. We developed several action plans to develop our programme. We did have the announcement of the additional funding and Richard had to do more work to factor in what that would look like. Some additional work that we had to do was to add an additional year to our safety valve plan. We negotiated with the DFE to add another year because part of the savings for our plan involves the application of a new special free school.</p> <p>We had the application of the special free school. The free school bid has gone in, we also have been invited by the DFE to Bid for additional capital funding. We submitted documents on 13<sup>th</sup> January, and we had our feedback meeting with the DFE, and we had to present the aspects of our plan, and aspects around delivering the action plans. It was a good session; we thought the challenges we got back were fair and we have done some additional work to respond to some of the challenges. We have been invited by the safety valve team to formally submit our plan, what we can't do at this stage is share the final details.</p>	

Outcome is that we have been invited by the safety valve team and representatives from the DFE to formally submit our plan for ministerial approval. Once we are formally accepted into the program, we will share the final details of all that information. But hopefully once we have got some approval, they will advise us what we can share and can't share. We've said that we want to brief our school's forum members as much as we can.

The final submission goes in this Friday, we will hear back in early March possibly earlier. There is a lot of positive feedback from the advisors with the work we are trying to do, we are very conscious that this is just the beginning we will also be subject to rigorous monitoring.

Richard and Rosemary will start to get some formal feedback from the DFE on the send review which is when we submitted our feedback as a local authority back in July and I'm sure some of you as leaders also provided feedback to the proposals. Unlike the education white paper, the SEND Paper is all going through with some changes which is going to be a result of the feedback. The reason we have highlighted that particular piece of legislation is because I think there is a lot in the SEND system that needs to be addressed through some reform of how it's delivered and some of our work, particularly in the early help / early intervention part of our work needs the support of the SEND Paper reforms to go through.

We've talked about this work here before, but it's worth highlighting that I think this is the important part of what we're trying to do, because this is all about working alongside schools and developing additional services to provide greater support to teaching staff, SENDCOs, parents, and carers around that SEN support part of the provision which schools oversee. This is a piece of work that's being led by Olwyn Donnelly, and we've got Julie Dyer, who is supporting us with this, and you've all very kindly provided us with your Inclusion Leads for different MATs and they're involved in designing and developing this work. What we've done as part of our plan is also created an investment of up to £1m pounds through the block which will be invested in multi-agency services to identify, and support SEND.

Another key part of our plan is around sufficiency and suitability of placements. Which is around making sure that we've got the right provision in our local area, making sure that we've got the right offer from our independent special schools and colleges and we're getting good value for money.

A real key part of this is trying to learn where we need to develop a different offer. This is the work that Rosemary has got dedicated time to oversee, and those plans are starting to take shape now. The primary ones we have got some good plans, but we need to do more work there.

RC - We are still looking for some primary schools to come forward if they can, although I think we have probably investigated all those that have got space. But at the moment there may be a bit of wiggle room with the grant. So, we may go back out and ask about extensions or additional new builds on primaries. We've got three or four that have come forward. Three are definite that they will go ahead, but they're at various stages and various timings, and one that was still waiting to sort of finalize on. We've got 3 secondaries in as potentials.

	<p>CW - Obviously mentioned before, we've submitted the Free School Special bid with our work that we've done our data with the primary advisory group. We believe we've got a really strong case for sufficiency. We should find out imminently. We feel positive about it as soon as we have news everyone will be updated. We are looking at a free AP school, the submission is due to be sent off this week. That is a primary and secondary AP school, we are seeing lots of exclusions in the B&amp;NES area, we are confident about that one.</p> <p>As I mentioned at the top of my verbal update, we've also bid for additional funding from the DFE for a small 16 place school with a 8 Bed residential unit on it and this is to try and deliver needs and care for children. We don't have any outcome on that one yet, but we will be hopeful. Some very bespoke provision for children who have got the most complex needs. Health education needs, particularly around their mental health this is provision we don't have in B&amp;NES. We become increasingly reliant on using the independent sector.</p> <p>That is the backbone of the plan that we're hoping to deliver over the next six years It's a six-year safety valve plan and it's not to be underestimated the work that we need to do and the ongoing help and support of our partners. We also need to start to see that SEND review to be implemented as well so we can see what the legislative reform is there to support the work that we're trying to do locally.</p> <p>LM – In that field of partnership that you were just talking about, it'd be good if there was an opportunity for schools and trusts to share with the local authority some of the changes that they were having to make to the way that they deliver the ordinarily available provision within schools. It would be good to see how that links into the use of their notional SEND budget with the pressure that schools are under both financially and with the level of SEN in school. It would be really good if we could have a forum within which we could discuss that, so that we make sure that we're not creating problems of communication between the LA and between us and our communities, and that we're all singing from the same song sheet.</p> <p>CW – pick this up with Olwyn D and organise a separate forum to take place for LM to attend to discuss the information above.</p> <p>JM – when will we hear back?</p> <p>CW – early March</p> <p>RC – Send review – the most recent information that I've had on that is that we're going to get what's called an improvement plan. I'm not quite sure what that means, but that's what's going to come giving recommendations, I think rather than anything very specific. I think that's hopefully due about March / April time around about Easter.</p>	<p><b>Action – CW/OD</b></p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Early Years Funding Formula</b></p>	
	<p>PF – We're in the middle of a three-year round, announced by the DFE whereby they gave us figures which are highlighted at the beginning of the</p>	

paper. These figures aren't cumulative, they're add-ons to the original base budget. It has increased this year, but they are forecast to go down next year. This forecast- is predicated by a decrease in the number of children.

The main reason there is an increase this year, which has allowed for an increase in the actual funding rate, is because they've added an extra £20 million into the £180 that had already been identified. This has been added because of providers highlighting the previous problems caused in particular by wage increases, not least the increase to the national living wage. There are unfortunately many on a low income within the sector, so this is often what people are paid.

The DfE have also added what they identified to be the early years part of the teacher's pay and pensions grant (TPPG) into the base budget.

The result is an increase the hourly rates for both the two-year-olds offer - which is limited to around 40% of children across the country, slightly fewer in B&NES generally because it is dependent mainly on income criteria linked not just to benefits but also low income. The area is slightly below the national average in terms of children who are eligible, but there is a very good take up rate from those who are able to access it.

There is also an increase to the three- and four-year-olds entitlement, which is a universal offer of 15 hours and for some an additional 15 hours depending on family income criteria in order to support people with some of their childcare costs. There is a range of funding per hour, depending on where you are in the country, but the Council is very close to the bottom of the three- and four-year-old funding rate, despite the fact that there have been some slight tweaks in the way that the Department for Education have actually set up the formula following a consultation last summer.

The whole of the two-year-old increase will be passed through as it is not allowed to draw down on. The three / four-year-olds offer, is eligible for a 5% Council drawdown to deliver the services around early years - including getting the funding to the providers, CPD and other professional support services. In addition, it provides and offer support to childminders.

There are two supplements for deprivation. A small universal deprivation supplement, providing settings with a small fund which they can use specifically to help pupils in certain circumstances, and then one which is directly linked to the early year's pupil premium.

The remaining area that must be addressed within setting this formula is the allocation of what was formally the TPPG There has been a lot of discussion amongst local authorities since this was introduced, both at regional forum and at national briefings that the DfE ran. If it were to be taken out of the funding, that would have an impact on the base rate of funding that would be offered to all providers and then the allocation would have to be through an additional supplement added back to the formula.

Some councils have a quality formula addition in the way that they fund; this is usually historically linked back to a time when the DfE provided money to each council to reward graduate leadership. That was withdrawn at the early part of the last decade. Some Councils continued to provide formulas on containing an early year's graduate leadership supplement and so those who still have it are considering allocating this additional sum through that. It

	<p>wouldn't just be for schools it would be allocated across the whole sector, because the funding formula has to provide equitability across all provision. In Bath and North East Somerset that would mean introducing another supplement to distribute that funding and making it available now.</p> <p>Last time there was a supplement on that basis, all providers had to be asked individually to establish what their leadership was at the graduate or qualified teacher level, and the amount of time that they were spending leading practice, because that is the critical factor for improving outcomes. This represented a substantial piece of supplementary work for a small amount of money. It is possible to look at undertaking that exercise again but given the late stage in launching the formula for next year, this is something to push forward through another discussion in the next financial year. The reference group was consulted and there were a couple of comments back outlined in the paper.</p> <p>The Forum was asked to approve the formula as outlined in the paper having also considered the summary of the impact of the funding that those increases will make. These are: a change to the two-year-old rate, an uplift to the 3 plus base rate and an extra 2p an hour within the early years pupil premium.</p> <p>All forum members agreed with proposal.</p> <p>JM – work out an appropriate time with PF and DR to discuss further and send another letter to Ministers</p>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p><b>Action – JM/PF</b></p>
<b>7.</b>	<b>A.O.B.</b>	
	None	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Date of next meeting: 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023</b>	