

<b>Meeting title</b>	<b>SCHOOLS FORUM</b>
<b>Date</b>	Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup> September 2023 – via Teams
<b>Forum Members Present</b>	Jo Marsh (Chair), Jo Stoling, Kevin Burnett, Louise Malik, Roz Lambert, Fiona Skinner, Hayley Trotman,
<b>Forum Members Not Present</b>	Alan Williams, Emily Massey
<b>Observers</b>	
<b>Officers Present</b>	Christopher Wilford, Richard Morgan, Mary Kearney-Knowles, Becky Biddlecombe (notes), Phillip Frankland, Laura Donnelly, Olwyn Donnelly, Claire Galloway
<b>Officers Not Present</b>	Mandy Bishop, Will Godfrey, Paul May, Tim Howes, Mary Cox, Rosemary Collard
<b>Distribution</b>	As above plus Ed Gregory Education Director, Diocese of Bath & Wells Cllr. Member Resources Cllr. Kevin Guy: Leader of the Council Cllr. Dine Romero: Chair of PDS Panel Mandy Bishop, Wendy Jefferies, Andy Rothery, Jeff Wring, Paul Hiscott, Olwyn Donnelly
<b>Next meeting</b>	<b>26th September 2023</b>

<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies Received</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
	<p>JM: Welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted as above.</p> <p>JM also reiterated the approach of acknowledging Nolan Principles of working in public organisations</p> <p>Copy of Nolan Principles to be sent to forum members</p>	<b>BB</b>
<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>KB - I am currently the Branch Secretary and Regional Treasurer (SW) for the NAHT, I am a Foundation Governor at Farrington Gurney School – part of MSNP Trust, I am currently vice-chair of B&amp;NES SACRE (representing NAHT), I am a co-opted member on the Council's Children and Adult Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p>OD- I am a governor at St Marys catholic primary school.</p> <p>JS – I am governor at Bath and Wells academy trust at St Stevens and catholic education trust</p>	

<b>3.</b>	<b>Minutes of the last meeting</b>	
	<p>Changes to minutes – No changes</p> <p>Forum minutes accepted.</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>DSG – Safety Valve Programme Quarter 2 monitoring</b>	
	<p>CW – the papers provided give you a narrative on the plan.</p> <p>RM –Finance - the out-term position from last year 2022/23 1.5 million worse than we had out in our submission when we had originally agreed. On 23/24 monitoring what we are observing is that the position for 23/24 is significantly worse than what was in our safety plan. This is mounting to a £4 million pound over spend. There is an increase in EHCPs and that is impacting on the cost of individual schools to accommodate those children.</p> <p>CW – the biggest pressure is the growth in the EHCPs we are averaging 110 applications in the year, which has added lots of pressures. We are making good progress and we would have done good things in B&amp;NES. We are hoping to have a joined-up offer on alternative provision, OD has been working closely on this. Claire has also been appointed to help.</p> <p>Rosemary collard has been working hard on the special AP schools. We have the additional capital finance from the DfE to develop the residential project.</p> <p>LM – are we making sure the special school are sustainable into the future? Can we look at a funding mechanism that is suitable for provisions as prices go up?</p> <p>CW – me and Richard have been having this conversation. We will wait to see the settlement for the DSG.</p> <p>RM – we have some of the allocations for next year, but not all of them yet. There are elements in the funding regime that get overlooked because they don't fall into the certain provisions. We need to look at this and accommodate this in our budget decisions.</p> <p>CW – the special school, we are in the process of getting some feedback on the applicants who were going to run the special school, this isn't too far off. The sites are in the Keynsham area, we are working with the DfE for suitability of their sites. There are pieces of works we haven't progressed; this is simply because some of the staff have now left the authority or doing other pieces of work. We now have Laura Donnelly who has started we are ensuring the SEND team have the right resources. We need to advise the DfE of our resources.</p> <p>KB – thanks for the update, on the paper page 3 on special schools have there been any reactions for students or parents to the possibility of being removed from those and moved more locally?</p>	

	<p>CW – this is one area of work that has been stalled. We can't just move a child, there would be a process where look at annual reviews and checking we have the right provision locally.</p> <p>KB – on page 4 – under additional activity – we will place additional safety valve officer of INMS.</p> <p>CW – this will be looking at the capacity of staff for those annual reviews.</p> <p>KB – £7.68m safety valve contribution – is this a one off?</p> <p>RM – this is the DfE payment in 2022/23. the full safety valve agreement it is staggered, over 5 years with payments in each year.</p> <p>JM – the increase in numbers of the EHCPs, in terms of the recovery plan, does the spend acceleration affect how we would help the early intervention services?</p> <p>CW – no, this would be the last thing I would get rid of.</p>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Outcome of RIT Pilot and Recommissioning of SAFS</b>	
	<p>OD – Last March 2022, I last came to school's forum. We wanted to put in place a pilot to offer early, 'rapid' intervention to children who were at risk of emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA). The pilot was to be funded by a one-off source of funding which could fund 55% and the remaining 45% from schools contributing the AWPU for the duration of the intervention (10-12 weeks).</p> <p>The schools used the service a different way than originally envisaged. Rather than focusing on that medium level of need or flickering attendance, the majority of schools choose to bring in the team to support children with more complex and entrenched issues due to budget constraints and the impact having to make a financial contribution.</p> <p>The SAFS team and Mentoring Plus carried out a post-pilot evaluation and identified key themes where they had the biggest impact namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to detailed referral information so that the most appropriate cases could be identified and accepted.</li> <li>• The importance of family/carer buy-in and commitment to working with the RIT practitioner and school</li> <li>• The length of time of the intervention, 16 weeks was more effective.</li> </ul> <p>The evaluation described some notable successes e.g. one young person who had a 44% attendance and following support from RIT actually was able to attend school and to sit all of his GCSE's.</p> <p>We're in the process of drawing together a new service specification for the Student &amp; Family Support Service (SAFS) and the learning from RIT</p>	

will inform the new service specification.

KB – at the end of the paper under the conclusion, you mentioned you would like to consult re-potential increases with SAF, is that increase a spend to save situation?

OD – we have analysed feedback from surveys to schools and from our stakeholder steering groups and the consensus is that an increase in capacity would be welcomed. Currently, SAFS is able to work with 36 pupils at any one time and there are long waiting lists. The suggestion is for there to be an increase in capacity to allow SAFS to work with 48 pupils at any one time.

KB – At the end of the RIT is there evidence of a saving?

OD – I'm not sure there was huge money saved, although a percentage of pupils didn't go onto HERS as a result. RIT focused on EBSA The SAFS are slightly different. The biggest growth has been in preventive work for students at risk of exclusion.

KB - So the money that could increase the SAFS caseload would not prevent students going into HERS but rather be preventative action.

OD – It wouldn't be directed at preventing referrals to HERS, the biggest growth in their referrals over the last few years has been in preventative work and SAFS form part of our continuum of support for vulnerable students.

KB – So would that feed into the safety valve programme or is it already in there somehow?

OD – we haven't considered it, but I think it would feed into the safety valve I mean it would save children moving into AP.

RM – Yes, it would be part of the safety valve programme. It's really to try and identify things that are still required. Like this project. The question is should we increase the capacity of that Commission by the request which is 1/3 and if so that we can deal with the issues that have been faced by schools at the same time.

RL - I was just wondering if this work as fell into the family support and play contract?

OD – This does not fall into this directly; all early help services align.

JS – in terms of consultation, how many schools have participated?

OD – there are 5 secondary schools.

JS – are there any gaps in the consultation we can go away in the group and look at?

	<p>OD – Without a doubt, I've consulted with all the with the chairs of the BNA panels and they have fed in their responses by Carolyn Favager-Dalton is representing them. We have contacted several parents directly who have used SAFS, I think we were able to contact at least six.</p>	
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>School Funding consultation</b></p>	
	<p>RM – the DfE have released the formula for 24/25. We have put this together in a consultation document in order to gather information for what views schools have. The paper itself is a simple covering letter, the consolation draft we have created with the intention of this coming back to us on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November.</p> <p>As part of the national funding formula the DfE want to roll all additional grants that have supported the formula into the base lines except the teachers grant TPG. Overall, the national formula will increase schools funding by 2.7% per pupil, and with the teachers paying grant will continue and will generate 8.5% per pupil increase by 2025.</p> <p>The DfE are looking to amend parts of the national funding formula to what they call tightening it in readiness for a direct funding formula allocation whereby the DfE would actually issue school funding, formula details and guidance directly to individual schools. BANES is following the NFF, we are deemed to be mirroring it as they describe, which means that we are following the methodology and have our funding value factors very close to the NFF values.</p> <p>There is a national formulaic approach which we now need to follow in relation to the Split site factor – we currently have 3 schools attracting our local factor, but we will only have one school that will qualify under the new national regime which is Hayesfield secondary school. Those schools that are no longer going to be provided with the split site factor will be protected by having the local factor included in their baseline funding.</p> <p>In the consultation document, it explains that the DfE have allowed the freedom to set a minimum funding guarantee between 0% and plus 0.5 % and it is our suggestion as part of the consultation, to set the local MFG 0.5%.</p> <p>We need to check the resources under the NFF and if they match the factor values. We need to look at having either a caps on the gains, or a scaling back of all factors.</p> <p>The DfE are asking local authorities to look at the Notional SEND budgets. The national average is at 11% ours is at 10.61% of the school's block, we believe we do not need to change methodology.</p> <p>LM – Highlighted an issue she had observed in some of her schools with regard the MPPFL. In 2023-24 the increase was only 0.5% and this had created a funding position that was affecting the lowest funding schools. The minimum funding level, in the information for 24/25 the level is due to go up by 2.4%? but that the lower level in 2023-24 would</p>	

	<p>be built into the baseline of those schools. She highlighted a letter written to ministers to explain this and asked if the Forum would write too, if it found similar results.</p> <p>RM - I'd make a comment and I agree with everything you said, Louise. The schools that were on the minimum per pupil funding level have effectively been restricted in the funding that they got in 23-24.</p> <p>JM – that is a specific question that should we as a group highlight that and make it known that some of our schools as a collective are being disadvantaged.</p> <p>RM agreed to investigate the issue for all B&amp;NES schools to consider drafting a letter from the forum to highlight the issues to the DfE.</p> <p><b>Vote taken - All forum members agreed.</b></p>	<b>RM</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Growth Fund Methodology</b>	
	<p>RM – The DfE are planning to create a national growth fund mechanism as part of that they have started by insisting that local mechanisms are doing something similar across the country. They are suggesting there should be a minimum funding for growth funds, and they have set that at levels, this is below what we currently fund. What the papers does is describes what the DfE are recommending of £1550 and adjusted for area cost adjustment. We currently have one that funds above that around £2000 per pupil, the paper tried to explain the impact on growth fund for individual schools.</p> <p>The paper needs to be built into of consultation document, it is quite complex. I am asking if the forum agree with the questions we are asking, do we want to try and bring our formula factors in line with the DfE, or do we want to increase our formulas with planned budgets, or over time bring our factor values what the DfE are suggesting?</p> <p>The pupil number growth has increased, we believe our funding formula will be much lower than it was in the current year, the demands we are likely to pay out are likely to be less.</p> <p>LM – the £1550 is lower than was Banes pay, but in the paper with the DfE, it indicates it is for a part year.</p> <p>RM – we read that as the annual allocation at £1550, we did this based on the guidance from the consultation for guidance. We have matched the two together and we can get very close to both factor values, we believe their figure is an annual figure an academy would get the factor value across the two years.</p> <p>KB – I believe the forum did review this a while ago, I did comment is everyone happy for the factors to be used. I remember Alun Williams was very happy with it. If this becomes a DfE national thing, you will get this regardless, you will hang onto a unique Banes situation. I take it from the comments made, this isn't a transfer from the school's budget.</p> <p>RM – the growth fund is part of the school's block. The allocation is decided by the DfE if we do not allocate it, as per our mechanism this forms part the DfE overall position and this goes into high needs deficit.</p> <p>KB – if the DfE give us money for this growth fund, how can we say we want</p>	

	<p>this allocated in a certain way?</p> <p>RM – we have a policy which explains our mechanism for schools. At the moment in the current financial year and last year we had a similar under spend. Next year our allocation might be only £100, in that scenario that's a call on the DfE.</p> <p><b>Vote Taken - All forum members agreed for the paper being part of the consultation.</b></p>	
8.	<p><b>DFE Consultation on funding for the new Early Years Entitlement (EYE)</b></p>	
	<p>PF – The DfE recently ran a consultation on the new EYE funding launched after the last forum meeting and closing before this one. It mostly ran during the school summer break. We have tried to encourage providers to get involved in this, we have written out to the sector several times to encourage them to respond.</p> <p>The background to this consultation relates to this year's budget in March. It was announced that there would be new entitlements for working families in order to help them with child care costs. This is a new entitlement for 2 year olds and falling to 9 months old later next year. Initially it will be 15 hours rising to 30 hours over 38 weeks of the year in 2025. The first part is starting next April, which is 6 months away and we are picking up bits of information but don't have the full details.</p> <p>The consultation was in three parts, first is the formula they are intending to use for distribution on funding, second was on the impacts based on what they know of the DfE budget and the third is the framework rules for distribution.</p> <p>We already fund 2-year-olds, that is for disadvantaged families. Between 30-40% of families can qualify for this scheme based on lower incomes and/or benefits. This will continue.</p> <p>Funding has always been calculated on a different methodology from how the three- and four-year-old funding has been calculated and it's been beneficial to BANES.</p> <p>With the new funding being targeted for working families, it is the DfE intention to put everyone onto the same methodology for distribution of funding. What was detailed in the consultation showed a decrease in the funding for the 2 year old rate compared with the uplift funding from the last paper at the previous forum meeting. The DfE had also supplied a September uplift for 3- and 4-year-old funding.</p> <p>In the paper the funding that will be received by the council for 2-year-olds will fall from next April per hour. They also provided an indicative rate for the nine-month-olds funding for when that starts. As this is this is an area that we've never funded in the Council before, we don't know whether that will be sufficient or not. That will be up to our providers to tell us.</p> <p>Prior to implementing the new funding, we need a formula for</p>	

	<p>distribution. The DfE are encouraging Councils to align with the methodology of the 3- and 4-year-old formula. There will be a mandatory deprivation supplement.</p> <p>Another area the consultation covered is what Councils can draw down out of the funding, currently a maximum of 5% on the 3- and 4-year-old budget. They have said in the next financial year that up to 5% can be applied across all of the new funding streams, but the following financial year 25/26 they are decreasing this to a maximum of 3%.</p> <p>This has an implication, particularly on the new 2-year-old rate, because if we are drawing down to pay for services provided by the Council this will reduce the hourly rate. The provider is currently getting a base rate of £7.96.</p> <p>They will be introducing a new early as pupil premium for the children under 3 which currently only applies for the universal offer. This may help to boost the funding for the part of the cohort of children currently eligible for the existing 2 year old offer. We now won't know anything further until November and the DfE DSG announcement is in December.</p> <p>They will expect us to provide SEND support and expanding the entitlement will bring more SEND children in for additional support.</p> <p>RL – most provider have put the increases in, PF have you seen any advice that can be passed onto parents for future?</p> <p>PF – we have been invited to a DfE regional event on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November, I imagine there will be people asking questions at this time.</p> <p>HT - What is the impact on a three- and four-year-old funding rates moving forward because like Ros, we have sort of forecast increases in income in the earlier settings across the trust?</p> <p>PF – the DfE have announced for the 3-year budget next year there will be another uplift. They have not announced by how much.</p> <p>JM- provider in our area, I have asked them to make sure to keep you informed about the local authority groups as it was alarming the number of providers for us in our locality beginning to say their financial viability is very short. Is there's anything else, do you think we could do as a forum or back in our own individual institutions to promote this?</p> <p>PF – by all means this would be helpful. By the December meeting I will be bringing an update for panel members.</p>	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Homes for Ukraine Grant Funding</b>	
	<p>The paper looks at how the money is coming into the authority; the paper looks at how much we've allocated to schools and settings.</p> <p>We have highlighted the additional cost the authority has incurred in staffing, £9845 for across various teams who have done should we say admissions to schools, organising transport and the financial side. A particularly large increase on that large cost of £81,000 on transport to for individual Ukrainian pupils but leaves a remainder of about</p>	



	<p>£179,000.</p> <p>We had an individual Ukrainian pupil pexed by one of our schools and we are looking now to allocate some form of alternative provision for this individual child, this could be expensive around £30,000. I am asking forum members, if we can make an allocation back to schools of £100,000 and leave the £79,000 at the local authority until we get to year end.</p> <p>JS – how many pupils is this across?</p> <p>RM – 89 pupils roughly.</p> <p><b>Vote Taken - All forum members agreed.</b></p>	
<b>10.</b>	<b>AOB:</b>	
	<b>None</b>	
<b>11.</b>	<b>Date of next meeting: 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023 online</b>	

DRAFT