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| Meeting | Schools Forum |
| Date | 26 March 2024 |
| Time | 2pm to 4pm |
| Venue | Teams |

Attendees

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| Chair | Jo Marsh |
| Core Group | Alun Williams, Christopher Wilford, Fiona Skinner, Jo Marsh, Jo Stoling, Kevin Burnett, Louise Malik, Mary Kearney-Knowles, Richard Morgan, Roz Lambert, Hayley Trotman, Mandy Bishop, Mary Cox, Laura Donnelly, Fiona Skinner, Olwyn Donnelly, Mandy Bishop, Becky Biddlecombe (notes) |
| Apologies received | Paul May (Cllr), Claire Hudson, Clare Crowther, Will Godfrey, Rosemary Collard, Philip Frankland, Mark Thompson, |

| 1. | Welcome and Apologies | ACTION |
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| | JM welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies noted as above. | |
| 2. | Declarations of Interest | |
| | Members were reminded to complete the declaration of interest forms once per year and to declare anything pertaining to the papers being presented. | |
| 3. | Minutes of the last meeting | |
| | Matters arising – KB end of item 9. CW to feed back to forum on the consultants. RL- point 8 amend initials | |
| 4. | DSG Safety Valve update | CW |
| | Discussion was had regarding the DSG Safety Valve update, CW shared the Safety valve presentation showing the recent updates. Comments KB - Discussed 7 local authorities who have also joined the safety valve programme, it does seem the DfE are using the safety valve programme as a back door to cut funding on SEND and some LA's are refusing to join the programme. After all, the current situation is that the High Needs deficit sits with the DfE and NOT the LAs. What parts of B&NES important proposed SEND capital work is connected to the safety valve plan? RM –I think all the capital projects have gone through different channels and are not connected directly to the safety valve programme. The council override to the accounts making the DSG overspend a problem |  4.0 Safety Valve in BNES -schools forum |

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| | <p>for the LA accounts occurs on 31st March 26. This is something we have to bear in mind, and we will need to consider this as part of the negotiation.</p> <p>MB – Our chief exec and director of finance and Mary have signed up to the safety valve programme, the capital is different but incredibly important. It is important we submit a plan that we are all comfortable with.</p> <p>MB – Thanked the members, the fact we have send provisions and AP provision and residential is a big success. We couldn't have done this without this partnership arrangements.</p> <p>KB – The B&NES Plan is a very good one and I think we just have to bear in mind that we shouldn't be taking things out of the plan to satisfy the DfE when all elements are needed to make the necessary difference – especially if the DfE request more and more changes to 'save money'. (We also have to bear in mind that the DfE demanding more savings or changes could well adversely affect the B&NES Plan and have no guarantee of affecting the ever-increasing rise in EHCPs.)</p> <p>KB – did the consultants find anything that needed changing in the B&NES Plan?</p> <p>CW – they just pointed out items they wanted to look at more closely and looking at the data in the early years. The Consultants felt that B&NES was doing the right things.</p> <p>Actions –</p> <p>CW to circulate consultant's report to forum members.</p> <p>OD told members there is a conference around mental health in schools taking place on 2nd May.</p> | |
| 5. | LA Commissioned Services | OD |
| | <p>Discussion was had regarding the LA Commissioned services. OD expressed to members that we need to ensure we are directing discretionary spending from the Dedicated Schools' Grant (DSG) in the most efficient way to ensure it has maximum impact and meets strategic objectives for pupils with SEND and vulnerable learners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three services in scope as their contract terms are coming to an end: Nurture Outreach Service (NOS), Student and Family Support Service (SAFS) and Family Support & Play (FSAP) service. • The NOS supports 26 of our most vulnerable students who have experienced significant trauma and are at high risk of being unable to sustain their placements in Reception at mainstream schools. The service is embedded within schools, with NOS practitioners working in classrooms alongside teaching and support staff so that they bring the added value of embedding good practice. It is proposed to extend Nurture Outreach Service (NOS) contract to March 2026. • In recent years, referrals from the Behaviour & Attendance Panels to the SAFS service have increasingly been focused on |  <p>5.0- Follow up Paper to Schools Forum re E</p> |

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| | <p>prevention to support vulnerable learners to attend school. The SEND & AP Advice Service is due to start in September '24 but will not be fully operational until the end of the academic year. Terminating the SAFS contract, before the advice service is up and running, would lead to a vacuum in the support available to schools and so it is proposed that there is a direct reward for 12 months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The FSAP service has a broad reach, supporting families and children but does not have a specific focus on SEND and vulnerable learners. The DSG contributes just under half of the funding, £199,000, and the proposal is to take the difficult decision to no longer contribute DSG funding once the contract ends in October 2024. <p>Comments</p> <p>KB – Thanked OD, and asked whether the savings that she is suggesting on that service is anything to do with the resubmission of the safety valve plan? Also, will the cost savings be sufficient?</p> <p>OD – this is about re investing money and not saving it. It is looking where we can get the best value for the money we invest. With a well targeted investment, we can make good use of this. We are hoping to shore up that SEND support for schools. The money is being reinvested into our SEND Collaboration for BaNES.</p> <p>MC – I think this is a horrible decision to have to make, I think this makes perfect sense.</p> <p>KB – will this decision and its impact be reviewed and what will the time scale will be?</p> <p>OD – everything will be reviewed.</p> <p>Decision to be made whether the school forum members approve of OD paper for all 3 decisions – all forum members agreed with 1 abstention.</p> | |
| 6. | Homes for Ukraine Grant | RM |
| | <p>RM explained to members the current update on the paper for the Homes for Ukraine Grant. Paper attached.</p> <p>KB – wondered if any monitoring has been done to see what other LAs are doing?</p> <p>RM – we have allocated money in line with other LAs and done it in separate tranches. Schools can decide how best to use the money. There is no restriction on how the school utilises it. A few schools were surprised with the third allocation, they will now utilise this the best they can.</p> |  <p>6.0 Homes for Ukraine.doc</p> |
| 10. | AOB: | |
| | <p>KB – Pointed out that LM had raised the issue around sustainability for special schools a little while ago when we knew B&NES had been</p> | |

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| | <p>granted the go ahead for its new special school.</p> <p>JS – flag that nationally and special schools have put together a paper for the DfE. Time to start challenging. JS will circulate the paper</p> <p>JM- said that Schools’ Forum would champion the cause – as it does for Early Years</p> | |
| 11. | Date of next meeting: 25th June 2024 | |

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