

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE FORUM

RESOLVED

- (1) The minutes of the meeting of the Forum, held on 14th July 2020 were agreed as a correct record.**

4. MATTERS ARISING THROUGH CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

No matters arose during consideration of the minutes of the previous meeting.

5. SCHOOLS BUDGETS

Barnsley Scheme for Financing Schools (2020)

Mr Amahwe presented a report which outlined the proposed changes to the Scheme as mandated by the Department for Education (DfE). The changes were as follows:

- With effect from the 2021/2022 funding year each school must submit a 3-year budget forecast each year, at a date determined by the local authority between 1 May and 30 June.
- A new requirement for schools to submit a recovery plan to the local authority when their revenue deficit rises above 5% at 31 March of any year. The 5% deficit threshold will apply when deficits are measured as at 31 March 2021.
- That instead of taking out insurance, a school may join the Secretary of State's risk protection arrangement (RPA) for risks that are covered by the RPA. This came into effect from 1 April 2020.

RESOLVED

- (2) The Schools Forum notes the proposed, mandated changes to the Barnsley Scheme for Financing Schools and their proposed implementation for the 2021/22 funding year.**

Schools Budget Outturn 2020/21: Latest Position

Mr Amahwe commented upon and responded to questions from Mr Bowen and Ms Drinkhill concerning the latest position on this year's Schools Budget and referred to the following:

- Revisions to the approved schools' budget
- School balances and surpluses
- Outcomes of a recent consultation between the Local Authority and maintained schools on the impact of Covid-19 on school budgets, together with the action being taken to tackle cost pressures, including claims for the reimbursement of exceptional costs from the DfE
- The factors leading to the current over commitment of expenditure in the Centrally Retained DSG Budget(s) notably special and high-needs provision, upon which Ms Sleight reported on the action to be taken to manage and mitigate these cost pressures

RESOLVED

- (3) The Forum notes the latest, projected outturn position for the schools' delegated budget and the centrally retained DSG budgets, particularly the projected deficit position on the High Needs Block.**

Schools National Funding Formula (NFF) Allocations and Budget Planning (2021/22)

Mr Amahwe also reported upon the recent, national school funding settlement and the key changes in the funding arrangements for local schools during 2021/22. Members of the Forum noted the following:

- Provisional allocations for the Schools and High Needs Blocks, together with Central Schools Services
- Confirmation that there would be no changes to the range of funding factors in the local formula. These would continue to address historic under funding together with the principle of allocating funding based on need.
- Key changes to national schools funding guidance relating to the Schools Block and High Needs Block
- Arrangements in the event of transferring a percentage of funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block.

Mr Amahwe proceeded to answer questions from Mr Bowen, Ms Drinkhill and Mr Greaves on the proposals, including the impact on schools relating to teachers pay and pension contributions, together with the minimum funding level for each pupil in both primary and secondary phases.

Forthcoming Consultation On Proposed Changes To The Local Funding Formula For Schools

Mr Amahwe and Ms Sleight referred to the arrangements and timetable for consulting schools on the following proposed changes to the Local Funding Formula:

- Ensuring the primary to secondary funding ratio continues to be aligned to the NFF to avoid any future cliff edge effect in the transition to a hard formula.
- To review AWPU unit values across both primary and secondary phases in terms of sufficiency and comparability to the NFF (*It should be noted that the AWPU values for secondary schools in Barnsley's local formula is currently aligned to the NFF values, whilst the primary schools AWPU is at a higher level than NFF*).
- The funding formula reflects central government policy of supporting schools that consist of pupils with additional needs and ensuring they receive sufficient funding to tackle low attainment. The additional funding for 2021-22 would provide scope to consider the sufficiency and proportion of funding allocated through these factors, including deprivation, prior attainment and the progress of pupils for whom English is an additional language.

- To adopt the Government's recommended Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) level, which would reflect the increased funding for 2021-22. However, we would consider some options (via modelling) on increased MFG levels where it offers greater protection to underfunded schools.
- Where necessary, to consider the capping of gains (in addition to scaling) for individual schools to ensure that the Formula is affordable and to achieve a more equitable distribution of gains.
- The percentage transfer of funding from the Schools Block to help address ongoing cost pressures in the High Needs Block

RESOLVED

(4) The Forum notes the recently announced schools funding settlement for the Borough during 2021/22 and the allocations for Barnsley

(5) To note the impending Local Authority consultation with schools on the proposed changes in the funding arrangements for schools and that the outcomes of the consultation will be reported to the next meeting of the Forum.

6. HIGH NEEDS BLOCK EXPENDITURE: SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS PROVISION

Special Educational Needs Performance and Finance Report (Quarter 1: 2020/21)

Ms Sleight and Mr Lynch presented the latest, published quarterly report on the progress made towards improving the range of outcomes for children and young people with SEND in the Borough, including meeting demand for school places. In particular, reference was made to the following:

- Trend data on the percentage of children and young people who have been issued with an EHCP compared to the National and Regional Averages.
- The steps being taken to commission SEND school places within local mainstream schools and local satellite provision.
- Developments in the broader SEND system in Barnsley.
- The deficit in the High Needs Block, together with variations in other, associated budgets, including home to school transport and the action being taken to manage and mitigate cost pressures and keep children safe during the Pandemic.

RESOLVED

(6) The Forum notes the latest, published SEND Performance and Finance Report and that the Quarter 2 report be submitted for consideration at the next meeting.

7. IMPACT OF COVID-19 UPON SCHOOLS IN THE BOROUGH

School Recovery Planning and Learning Catch-Up Arrangements in the Borough (Paper 'F' attached)

Ms Sleight and Mr Lynch also reported on the arrangements in place to support schools in restoring provision following the first national lockdown. Reference was made to the following:

- School recovery plans and risk assessments
- Infection rates, school attendance, staff absence and maintaining Covid-19 secure learning environments
- Engaging parents and families on the importance of children returning to school and participating in learning.
- Identifying challenges to pupils' progress caused by the lockdown, targeting intervention and the approach to be taken to enable all pupils, including those from vulnerable and disadvantaged groups to catch up with lost learning.
- The home and remote learning *Offer* available from schools
- Steps taken by schools in the Borough to access external funding and resources to support the physical, social and emotional wellbeing of pupils.

RESOLVED

(7) The Forum notes the arrangements in the Borough's schools to restore provision following their full re-opening in September.

8. PROPOSED SCHEDULE AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR MEETINGS OF THE FORUM (2020/21)

Ms Sleight presented a report which outlined, firstly, the reasons why the virtual meetings of the Schools Forum to be held on 21st January and 19th March next year would need to be changed in order to avoid an unanticipated conflict in Members' diaries. Secondly, Ms Sleight accounted for why today's meeting could not be live streamed due to a very recent change in the technology used to 'Web cast meetings of bodies of the Council. The next meeting of the Forum would be live streamed via *Connect Remote* and Ms Sleight added that a series of online tutorials would be arranged to enable members of the Forum to receive the full benefits of using this technology beforehand.

RESOLVED

(8) That the virtual meetings of the Schools Forum currently scheduled for 21st January and 19th March 2021 be re-arranged to take place on 20th January and 12th March 2021 respectively.

(9) That members contact the Clerk to the Forum with their preferred date for participating in an online tutorial concerning how to use *Connect Remote*.

9. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Mr Sanderson announced that today would be final meeting which Mr Lynch would be attending prior to taking up the post of Service Director (Education, Skills and Early Years) at Oldham MBC. Members of the Forum joined Mr Sanderson in thanking Mr Lynch for his work in supporting the business of the Forum and wished him every success in his new role.

In concluding today's virtual meeting Mr Sanderson thanked members of the Forum for their attendance and contribution.

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Signed by the Chair of the Barnsley Schools Forum