

Meeting title	SCHOOLS FORUM
Date	Tuesday 15 th December 2020 – via Zoom
Forum Members Present	Jo Marsh (Chair), Roz Lambert, Kevin Burnett (2.38pm), Steven Mackay, Alun Williams, Jason Brown, Louise Malik, Collen Collett, Sara Willis, Dawn Sage, Claire Crowther, Jo Stooling
Forum Members Not Present	
Observers	
Officers Present	Richard Morgan, Chris Wilford, Rosemary Collard, Elizabeth Parr (Administrator)
Officers Not Present	Mary Kearney-Knowles
Distribution	As above, Theresa Gale, Cllr. Richard Samuel, Cllr. Dine Romero, Cllr. Vic Pritchard, Jeff Wring, Wendy Jefferies, All Head-teachers Claire Hudson
Next meeting	12 January 2020, 2pm via Zoom

		ACTION
1.	Apologies Received	
	<p>The following apologies were received: Introductions invited around the table.</p> <p>Note: The Chair noted that the meeting would be recorded in the interest of accurate note taking.</p> <p>Action: Record the meeting</p>	EP
2.	Declarations of Interest	
	<p>All attendees were asked to complete a Declaration of Interest Form and send to Justine Kill/Elizabeth Parr prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Received to date – Steven Mackay and Alun Williams</p> <p>Action: Please complete as appropriate</p>	All
3.	Minutes of the last meeting (29th September 2020)	

	<p>Action: Change attendees, Sara Willis was present, Dawn Sage was not present.</p> <p>Action: Page 3 – reproduce table once formal allocations received from DSG. No formal allocations received yet, but RM will action for January’s meeting.</p> <p>Noted: Minutes accepted as accurate subject to the above changes</p>	<p><i>EP/JK</i></p> <p><i>RM</i></p>
4.	<p>National Funding Formula</p>	
	<p>Richard Morgan</p> <p>A consultation was sent to all schools for completion by 16th November and the appendix 4.1 shows a just shy of 70% response. Responses to the questions were generally favourable although negative to 1 question.</p> <p>We will debate each question and make recommendations to Cllr Kevin Guy to make a formal decision:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Should the LA mirror the increase to support small remote schools, by increasing the maximum sparsity factor value from £26,000 to £45,000 for primary schools, and from £67,600 to £70,000 for secondary schools? No additional comments from the forum. <p>Action: the forum approves to recommend to Cllr Kevin Guy - Sparsity factor should be revised to match the NFF allocation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2) Should the LA increase the 2021-22 local formula funding core factor values as close as it can to the 3% except for the free school meals factor which will be increased at 2 % inflation as described in the consultation? Any comments on split site factor. No additional comments from the forum. <p>Action: the forum approves to recommend to Cllr Kevin Guy - to increase formula funding factor values by 3% or 2% depending on FSM.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3) Should the LA set the MFG at +2.0% change in pupil funding in 2021-22 compared to the revised 2020-21 baseline? <p>Richard – all bar one school agreed, although one didn’t respond.</p> <p>Question: Louise – should we expect a reduction in NFF provisional values in lieu of the pay freeze?</p> <p>Answer: Richard - suspects not as never changed before.</p> <p>Question: Steven – is there a possible caveat with announced move to main pay scale minimum of £30k in 2022?</p>	<p><i>RM</i></p> <p><i>RM</i></p>

Answer: Richard – this is an increase for people at the bottom of the scale, so the increase will be minimal.

Action: The forum approves to recommend to Cllr Kevin Guy - Keep in line with NFF.

RM

- 4) Should resources allocated by the DfE for the LA schools block not be sufficient to support the NFF in full, do you agree that the LA introduce a cap on gains for 2021-22 to restrict schools with the largest gains to balance the schools block allocation?

Richard - the exact figures will not be known until Thursday. The funding values were created a year ago and the DfE have not confirmed if the recent census figures with 13-15% increase in FSM will be taken into account. Methodology: 3 options, 1) use a cap, 2) reduce all formula factors, 3) wait until Thursday, which means we will be late 'put on the naughty step'.

Debate and Q & A

Louise – Cap preferred. If we reduce the formula factors we will be further away from NFF and we should try to stay as close to this as we can. Small schools are getting the smallest increase and they need the support as will be harder hit.

Jason – are the schools who gain historically the schools that are under-funded? Get all schools up to the level of minimum funding and apply local factors reduction is preference.

Alun -where would the additional money come from if we don't apply a cap?

Richard – multiple ways to do this. Use the cap mechanism, amend all local factors by small % or choose specific formula factors, i.e. analyse school by school and apply reduction on all formula factors. Personal view to apply to all formula factors then you are treating everyone equally.

Alun – small schools would be disadvantaged as sums of money are more important than percentages. What is the likelihood that the schools block would not be sufficient?

Richard – we don't know which schools should be capped. All schools are guaranteed a 2% increase, nobody would be allowed to drop below 2%. It is likely to be a small amount from £105m budget or approx. £100-£200k, i.e.0.2%. We need to have a mechanism pre submission to DfE to understand the effect. DfE Regional Finance meeting on Thursday so will know more later this week.

Jo - 60% have voted for no cap.

Steven – What have we done in previous years?

Richard – used various mechanisms over last 5 years. When NFF first came in we implemented a cap. Twerton headteacher commented on this and we moved away from the cap 3 years ago.

Steven – cap there due to significant shift in funding. Now we are moving closer to NFF.

Noted: 14:38 Kevin Burnett joined the meeting after difficulty accessing the link.

Jo – as a group we are concerned for the smaller/disadvantaged schools. Is there a methodology we could use to support them the most?

Richard – it would be difficult to protect a particular group of schools without doing extensive analysis and provide a rationale to decide which method to adopt. Personally believes a % allocation off all factors is easier and more transparent.

Jo – Proposal to vote: 1) no cap (all accept this) 2) reduction across all factors 3) wait until Thursday when we know more.

Alun – not enough information to know what the impact will be and would be happy to wait

Richard – You are voting to recommend to the cabinet member not to approve. What is your preferred proposal? Council decision on 20th January and recommendation to Cllr Kevin Guy to make the decision by Wednesday/Thursday this week latest to follow the process.

If we don't process the decision for tomorrow, then we can't submit to DfE and this could impact on allocation to schools.

Chris – what if the amount was higher, i.e £500-750k we don't know who the bigger winner/losers are?

Alun – it is so difficult to make this decision without all the information as we don't know the outcome.

Louise – would prefer to take off of AWPU due to risk of impact to disadvantaged and smaller schools.

Steven – figures for funding, certainty around the minimum figures and factoring out the rolling of the grants (£4000 primary and £5150 secondary)

Richard – Note that every school will get the absolute minimum funding even if capped. Look at example, i.e. Twerton minimum funding guarantee + 2% is protected. (£4180 minimum actual is more like £5500)

Richard - Recommendation to adopt an even % decrease on all formula factors as a lot of work has gone into producing the formula factors.

Further discussion around impact on different schools, AWPU and grants.

Jo – take a vote. Do we wish to consider an AWPU - Louise only. Majority voted all factors reduction.

Action: The forum majority vote that if there is a reduction then it should be taken across all factors. Recommendation to Cllr Kevin Guy.

RM

	<p>5) Do you agree to extend the current arrangement to transfer 0.5% of Schools Block funding to the High Needs Block for 2021-22?</p> <p>Jo are you happy to vote or reject or ask any questions?</p> <p>Noted: all in favour of the above.</p> <p>Action: Decision taken to approve transfer</p>	<i>RM</i>
5.	AOB	
	<p>Climate Change</p> <p>Jo - Does the climate change fit with the forum for influencing factors? Many schools have declared carbon neutrality by 2030. Should we have as an item on the January agenda?</p> <p>Alun – due to the size of the MSN MAT Trust they do complete a return on sustainability as part of the Trust’s improvement plan. It is difficult due to the permissions needed from DfE unless there is a monetary value (2 competing ministers/departments, DfT and DfE).</p> <p>Roz – early years providers do not work together on climate change but do so individually.</p> <p>Louise – have put in a bid for decarbonisation fund from the DfE. Not sure that the schools forum can influence this.</p> <p>Richard – possibly best on the Schools Standards Board? Council Climate Change team, MAT CEOs get together.</p> <p>Kevin – moving projects forward will need someone to move this forward, i.e. the council</p> <p>Liz – added on the chat Schools Climate Conference organised by Cllr Tom Davies, invite Heads, CEOs?</p> <p>Alun – carbon emissions have reduced since Covid due to less travel. Can we take this forward, i.e. do not travel to meetings unnecessarily post covid.</p> <p>Jo – Concludes that we don’t feel that this fits on the forum’s agenda. Meetings could continue to be online as we move out of covid.</p> <p>Kevin – apologies for lateness due to not receiving link. Would like to bring up from previous meeting as couldn’t see in the minutes. Letter from Schools Form, Early Years funding, Cllr Kevin Guy to endorse? Clarification on numbers and source of referrals from Family Support and Play service and commissioning timetable? DfT tool to generate how the LA recovers deficits in High Needs Block?</p> <p>Action: Richard to chase up Early Years letter with Cllr Kevin Guy.</p> <p>Action: Child and Family Placement will attend the January meeting. Add to next agenda DSG, £199k towards commission of £400k commission 3 years + 1 + 1 contract starting September.</p> <p>Richard - DfE high needs management tool, modified several times, and now on version 3, still not yet completed, do not need to be completed, but will be used to record and monitor high needs budget.</p>	<p><i>RM</i></p> <p><i>RM</i></p>

Bring to January meeting or if not the March meeting.

Richard – press announcements on FSM vouchers for Christmas, emphasise that it does include Early Years settings and providers. Press announcements did include Early Years settings however it did not get sent out to them. This will be sent out this afternoon to Early Years settings (Heidi). All to encourage parents to apply for FSM meals at Christmas.

Kevin – NFF the forum not knowing what outcomes will be, please note for the future that it is ridiculous to expect us to make recommendations when we do not have the full information.

Jo – Thanks and Happy Christmas to all and we will see you all in January. 12th (15th) Jan agenda will be sent out soon, let us know of any agenda items.

Noted: Kevin's email is:

Kevin.burnett@nhatofficials.org.uk

Kevin did not receive the link for this meeting from Richard, but did from Justine, please check your records.

Richard/Jo

You may want to delete below this line

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Everyone left the meeting except the Chair and Richard, conversation continued....

Richard - If Cllr Kevin Guy makes a decision based on today's recommendations, we may not need 12th Jan meeting. Agenda will be light, although child and family place support commission need a decision, but could be delayed until March, or meet February 1st

Jo – schools will be busy in January, especially now secondary school testing announced. Either a very short meeting and get business done, or wait until March?

Richard – will get papers prepared and potentially meet on Feb 1st. Richard will let people know now. Early Years funding formula decision can wait for March.