

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

GATESHEAD SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING

Thursday, 10 February 2022

PRESENT:	Peter Largue (Chair)	Trade Union Representative
	Sarah Diggle	Secondary Maintained Governors
	Jacqui Ridley	Primary Governors
	Andrew Fowler	Secondary Academies
	Alison Hall	Primary Maintained Schools
	Julie Goodfellow	Primary Academy Headteachers
	Steve Haigh	Secondary Academy Headteachers
	Mustafaa Malik	Primary Headteachers
	Ethel Mills	PVI Sector Representative
	Michelle Richards	Special School Headteachers
	Domenic Volpe	Maintained Secondary Headteachers
	Christina Jones	Pupil Referral Unit
	Councillor Sheila Gallagher	Elected Member
	Julie Vincent	Special Schools

IN ATTENDANCE:	Carole Smith	Gateshead Council
	Terence Appleby	Gateshead Council
	Steve Horne	Gateshead Council
	Anthony Ward	Gateshead Council
	Julie McDowell	Gateshead Council
	Rachel Pizzey	Gateshead Council
	Rosalyn Patterson	Gateshead Council

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Denise Kilner, Martin Flowers, David Brophy and Paul Harris.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Further advice is still being awaited regarding Financial Difficulty Funding.

3

SECTION 98 DISCRETIONARY FREE SCHOOL MEALS

The Forum received a report proposing to use DSG for schools to provide a meal to children when their parents have no recourse to public funds.

It was noted that this affects a small number of schools and once these families are entitled to claim for Universal Credit they will be entitled to free school meals. It was felt that to have a meal at school is a very important part of the day to help these children integrate and interact with other children.

The Forum felt that it was important for these children to receive a meal and questioned whether there was asylum seeker funding that could be accessed for this use. It was confirmed that the asylum seeker funding received by the authority is ringfenced and that this situation sits outside of that due to how these families have come to Gateshead and there is no Home Office funding available for these families.

It was noted that Gateshead has been a pathfinder as the authority was not told to provide education for these children, however it was felt necessary to get these children into school and with the support of schools they are receiving an education and a hot meal. It was confirmed that for other asylum seekers in the area there is a local agreement through the Fair Access Panel to equitably distribute pupils, however they would have permanency and receive free school meals unlike these children.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum approved the use of DSG reserves to fund schools that are educating children of parents supported under Section 98 of the IAA, until the school is able to apply for discretionary FSM as the parents move to be supported under Section 95 of the IAA, and that funding is at the rate in Gateshead's mainstream funding formula for FSM.

4

FORMER EDUCATION SERVICES GRANT

The Forum received a report seeking approval to centrally retain the former retained duties element of the Education Services Grant.

It was confirmed that this is not a top slice and that this funding has never been funding allocated to schools and is funding that was previously funded in a different way.

It was suggested that it would be beneficial for the Schools Forum to review the elements of section 251. It was agreed that a report can be brought back to the next Forum on what is funded from the Central Schools Services Block once funding has been allocated.

The Forum thanked officers for the report and the time spent to make this easy to understand.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum noted the information in the report and

approved the central retention of funding allocated for retained duties.

5 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT MONITORING AND BROKERING GRANT

The Forum received a report on the outcome of the DfE's consultation on ceasing the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant.

It was reported that despite responding to the consultation that the grant should remain, the DfE is planning to phase this out over two years. The DfE advised Schools Forums to look at de-delegating for these services but for Gateshead the timescales were too prohibitive to do so. The grant will reduce by 50% next year and will not be there the following year. Therefore, the authority is looking at SLAs for 2022/23 and SLAs and/or de-delegation from 2023/24.

It was confirmed that there will be not staff reductions on the back of this and the level of service will be maintained through SLAs initially.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum noted the content of the report.

6 DSG QUARTER 3

The Schools Forum received a report on the quarter 3 projected outturn position of DSG.

It was reported that there has been just under £2m reduction in the Council-led DSG due to academy conversions and an in year Early Years clawback. This clawback has wiped out the expected underspend position reported in quarter 2.

The in year underspend now stands at £404,000, together with the early years adjustment of £230,000, the reserve balance will increase to £2.415m at March 2022, compared to £2.241 in March 2021.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum noted the content of the report.

7 HIGH NEEDS COMMISSIONED PLACES

The Forum received a report on the proposed commissioning arrangements for High Needs Places for 2022/23. It was noted that there has been no change from last year.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum noted the report.

8 EARLY YEARS FUNDING FOR 2, 3 AND 4 YEAR OLDS 2022-2023

The Forum received a report on the Early Years Funding modelling for 2022/23.

It was noted that the formula has not changed, however the rates have increased. For two year olds the funding to the authority has increased by 21p per hour and 17p per hour for 3 and 4 year olds. The two year old funding will be passported to providers. It is proposed that the early years funding will be top-sliced by up to 5% for central services and the Inclusion Fund.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum noted the updated EYSFF factor values and noted the two-year-old funding rate.

9 MAINSTREAM SCHOOL FUNDING

The Forum received an update report on the amendments to the APT requested by the DfE around the new process for Rates. The amendment was made which resulted in a small overspend of the total school block DSG of £386.38.

RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum approved the change in the central Growth Fund to eliminate the schools block overspend of the DSG which eliminates the need to alter any funding allocations to schools.

10 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 17 March 2022 at 2.00pm.