

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

GATESHEAD SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING

Thursday, 14 March 2024

PRESENT: Councillor Peter Lague (Chair)
Councillor(s): S Gallagher, Julie Goodfellow, Steve Haigh, Alison Hall, Kilner, Michelle Richards, Jacqui Ridley, Brendan Robson and Domenic Volpe

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor(s):

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): Sarah Diggle, G Haley, Paul Harris, Christina Jones, Mustafaa Malik and Ethel Mills

48 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence received from Sarah Diggle, Councillor Gary Haley, Paul Haris, Christina Jones, Ethel Mills, Mustafaa Malik, Jacqui Ridley and Dominic Volpe.

49 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 15th February 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

50 EARLY YEARS FUNDING - UNDER 2'S CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The Forum received a report on the results of the Early Years Under 2-Year-Old funding consultation.

The under 2-year-old consultation documents were sent to all early year settings on the 16th February 2024 with a closing date on the 1st March 2024.

The results showed overall positive response to the proposals in the consultation with 77.78% agreeing proposal 1 and 94.44% agreeing on proposal 2.

As this is a new funding formula with limited actual data available, the formula will be reviewed during the 2024/25 financial year.

RESOLVED:

- i. The School forum notes the responses from the consultation.
- ii. The School forum approves 5% top slice to contribute to the early years funding team with the remainder added to the inclusion fund.
- iii. The School forum approves a single funding rate for all settings of £9.937 per hour.

51 SPECIAL SCHOOLS FUNDING

The School Forum received a report for the proposed increased special school top up funding.

In 2024/25 it is proposed the unit of funding is increased by 0.5% to be in line with mainstream schools minimum funding guarantee (MFG) percentage. There are no proposed changes to the top up or fixed cost special schools formulas 2024/25.

Residential funding: There are no current residential units operating in special schools in Gateshead. It has been proposed this funding is removed by 2026/27, with the funding phased out over period.

The allocations for additional funding allocated alongside the special schools funding formula to special schools and pupil referral units will be on the same basis as for 2024/25. This includes additional funding for increased costs, and teachers pay and pension grants.

RESOLVED:

- i) The School Forum approved the 0.5% increase in the special school unit of funding for special school top up funding.
- ii) The School Forum approved the phased removal of residential funding.

52 DEDICATED SCHOOL GRANT MONITORING - QUARTER 3

The Forum received a report on Quarter 3's Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) projected outturn position for 2023/24.

The Council's budget for 2023/24 is £110.550m, with a projected outturn for the year of £111.103m. The overspend is due to:

- +£222k special schools in financial difficulty approved by Schools Forum
- +£526k top ups
- +£409k SEN Support Services
- -£81k Support for Inclusion
- -£579k Early Years Block as actual places are less than estimated

The reserves balance was £3.965m as of 31 March 2023 and factoring in the overspend of £0.553m and the Early Years clawback for 2022/23 of £0.182m would decrease the balance to £3.230m on 31st March 2024.

RESOLVED:

- i) The School Forum notes the report.

53 MAINSTREAM TOP UPS 2024/25

The School Forum received a report on the proposed mainstream school top up rates from April 2024.

The proposal was for mainstream school top ups to increase in line with mainstream schools minimum funding guarantee (MFG) of 0.5%, due to the dedicated schools grant high needs block overspending in 2023/24, and a significantly smaller increase in high needs block funding for 2024/25 than received in 2023/24 .

RESOLVED:

- i) The School Forum approved the mainstream top up increased for 2024/25.

54 HIGH NEEDS COMMISSIONED PLACES 2024/25

The School Forum received a report on the proposed commissioning arrangements for High Needs Places for 2024/25.

In 2024/25 all special schools and Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) will receive funding of £10,000 per commissioned place. Additionally Resourced Mainstream Schools (ARMS) will receive £6,000 per place for a pupil that is main or current registered at the school and £10,000 for a vacant place or a pupil subsidiary registered at the school.

The School Forum received a table with the commissioned places for 2024/25.

RESOLVED:

- i) The School Forum noted the report.

55 MAINSTREAM MAINTAINED SCHOOLS IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY

The School Forum received a report on the distribution of the Maintained Schools in Financial Difficulty in Gateshead.

The Local Authority received £179,028.20 from the Department of Education for additional funding to support individual schools in financial difficulties. This will be one off funding and will not continue in future years.

In consultation with EducationGateshead it was proposed that the below will criteria be used to allocate funding :-.

- Schools that had an opening and closing balance deficit for 2022/23.
- Schools that had a closing deficit of over £20k at the end of 2022/23.
- Schools that have a projected deficit balance at the end of 2023/24.

Funding will be allocated on a proportional basis as per the year end deficit of 2022/23.

RESOLVED:

- i) The School Forum approved the report.

56 2024 - 25 COMMITTEE DATES

The proposed dates were put forward to the Committee for 2024/25.

- Thursday 19th September 2024
- Thursday 7th November 2024
- Thursday 12th December 2024
- Thursday 9th January 2025
- Thursday 13th February 2025
- Thursday 13th March 2025
- Thursday 8th May 2025
- Thursday 10th July 2025

RESOLVED:

- i) The School Forum requested all dates be emailed to the Forum for further consultation.

57 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 16TH May 2024 at 2pm via Microsoft Teams.

Chair.....