

SCHOOLS FORUM

17 January 2017

Commenced: 1.30pm **Terminated: 2.20pm**

Present:	Janet Rathburn (Chair)	Primary Schools – Academies
	Andrew Foord	Special Schools – L/A Maintained
	Lisa Gallaher	Primary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Scott Lees	Primary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Bev Alford	Primary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Des Howlett	Primary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Steve Marsland	Primary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Karen Burns	Primary Schools - Academies
	Angela Ogden	Governor, Secondary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Anthony McDermott	Governor, Primary Schools- L/A Maintained
	Pam Hirst	Governor, Primary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Susan Marsh	Governor, Primary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Gill McFadden	Secondary Schools - Academies
	Richard O'Regan	Secondary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Janet Burns	Secondary Schools – L/A Maintained
	Maureen Brettell	Pupil Referral Services
	Elaine Horridge	Diocesan Representative
	Anne Slater	NUT
	Councillor J Fitzpatrick	First Deputy (Performance & Finance)
	Councillor L Travis	Executive Member (Lifelong Learning)
	Bob Berry	Assistant Executive Director (Learning)
	David Thompstone	Senior Resource Manager

Apologies for absence:	Jeffrey Mellor	Governor – Special Schools - Academies
	Brendan Hesketh	Secondary Schools - Academies
	Helen Hayes	Diocesan Representative
	Robin Elms	Special Schools – L/A Maintained
	Anton McGrath	14 – 19 Sector

56. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 18 October 2016, having been circulated, were approved as a correct record.

57. FINAL SCHOOL OUTTURN BALANCES 2015/16

Consideration was given to a report of the Assistant Executive Director (Finance), which provided information on the reconciled school balances at 31 March 2016 and updates from Schools relating to the potential use of those balances.

It was explained that the final level of school balances as at 31 March 2016 was £7.187 million, a decrease of £1.602 million on the balance reported at 31 March 2015. Summary details were also provided of the cumulative level of Tameside school balances for the previous three financial years.

Appendix A to the report provided a detailed breakdown of each school's balances as at 31 March 2016 and highlighted those schools with balances in excess of the permitted thresholds (8% for

primary and special schools and 5% for secondary schools). It also contained details of the proposed use of those balances provided by Schools since the last report to Forum in October 2016.

Appendix B to the report showed the movement in school balances since 31 March 2013 at an individual school level.

A discussion ensued about those schools that had made spending commitments but had not yet followed these through and also those schools who were providing the same reasons repeatedly. Concerns were expressed that some of the figures were historical with schools holding onto large balances and not spending on the children. Members enquired whether more information could be sought from those schools holding onto large historical balances and the Forum to be provided with an update on this. It was agreed that a meeting would be arranged with those schools with excess balances by the Resource Management Services. It was suggested that the meeting include a representative from the secondary schools, primary schools and governors sectors.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the content of the report be noted;**
- (ii) That the continuation of the existing excess revenue surplus balance monitoring mechanism for schools within the borough be agreed i.e. planned commitments were required for revenue surplus balances in excess of 8% of delegated revenue budget for Primary and Special schools and 5% of delegated revenue budget for Secondary schools. Agreed that commitment details be reported to the Schools Forum, which would have the opportunity to consider a redistribution mechanism for any uncommitted revenue balances above permitted thresholds;**
- (iii) That it be noted that any school which had or was projecting a deficit budget position either during or by the end of the existing three year budget period would be required to submit a deficit budget recovery plan to ensure a balanced budget was delivered. The associated recovery plan would require the approval by the Governing Body and the Section 151 Officer of the Council in accordance with sections 4.4 to 4.9 of the Tameside Scheme of Financing for Schools. The development or recovery plans with associated schools would commence during the current term to ensure they were approved by the Governing Body and Section 151 Officer of the Council during the current financial year; and**
- (iv) That a meeting with those schools with excess balances be arranged by Resource Management Services and which to include a representative from the secondary schools; primary schools and governors sectors.**

58. SCHOOL NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA CONSULTATION STAGE TWO

Consideration was given to a report of the Assistant Executive Director of (Finance), which detailed the proposals contained with the second stage of the national funding formula for Schools consultation.

Members were informed that the Department for Education (DfE) had carried out the first stage of a consultation during Easter 2016 in relation to arriving at a National Funding Formula to allocate the Dedicated Schools Grant. The DfE released the second stage of the consultation on 14 December 2016 and the main proposals and how they would affect the funding of education in Tameside were summarised.

Members were informed that the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) was the primary source of funding for Schools. The estimated total target funding to be allocated to Tameside at the end of the proposed changes was £172.242m. The estimated allocation of DSG funding for the first year of the National Funding Formula (NFF) of 2018/19 was £170.706m. The equivalent baseline value for the same elements of DSG funding in 2016/17 was £169.122m, which represented an estimated increase of £1.584m (0.94%) in the first year of the NFF and an increase of £3.120m

(1.84%) being the ultimate target amount. The timescale for reaching the final target figure was still unclear at this stage.

The effect of the NFF within the elements of the DSG covered by the consultation, were summarised for each block of funding:

- The central services schools block;
- The schools block; and
- The high needs block.

Appendix A of the report contained details of the individual School level effects of the target funding and 2018/19 funding compared to the baseline funding in 2016/17.

Members were informed that the full consultation documents could be accessed via the following link: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/schools-national-funding-formula2/>.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted.

59. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair raised a query from Flowery Field Primary Academy in relation to a potential additional growth funding allocation that had been discussed with representatives from the Resource Management and Education Services in December 2016. The Senior Resource Manager advised that this proposal would be part of the 2017/18 funding formula proposals report being tabled at the 14 February 2017 meeting.

Members were informed of the cessation of the distribution service for schools due to the service no longer being financially viable. The service would be withdrawn with effect from February 2017 and schools would be notified of this in writing.

60. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Senior Resource Manager informed members that a further meeting of the Forum was required at on 14 February 2017. The meeting was needed in this timescale to enable Forum members to consider the proposed funding scheme for 2017/18 before it could be formally approved by the Council and submitted to the DfE by early March 2017.

RESOLVED:

To note the date of the next meeting of the Schools Forum as Tuesday 14 February 2017.