



# Item 5 Minutes

**Meeting** Schools Forum      **Date** Thursday 21 September 2023  
**Location** Via Microsoft Teams  
**Present**

✓ Present
D Deputy
A Apologies
O Absent

Name	Organisation	Representing	12.07.23	21.09.23
Anthony Gollings	St Thomas More	RC Diocese	✓	O
Angi Gibson	Hadrian Park Primary	Primary	✓	D (Wayne Myers)
Claire Garbutt	St Columba's Primary School	Academy	✓	O
Claire Withers	Fordley Primary	Primary	N/A	✓
Colleen Ward	Coquet Park First School	Primary	✓	✓
David Watson	St Thomas More	Academy	✓	✓
Diane Turner	Tyne Met	16-19 Provider	A	O
Finn Wilcock	Southridge First School	Primary	✓	✓
Gavin Storey	Cullercoats Primary	Primary	O	✓
Joanne Thompson	Holystone Out of School	Early Years PVI	✓	✓
John Croft	Sir James Knott	Nursery	✓	✓
John Newport	Marden Bridge Middle School	Middle	✓	✓
Karen Croskery	North Tyneside Student Support Service	PRU	✓	✓
Kelly Holbrook	Longbenton High School	Secondary	✓	✓
Kerry Lillico	Grasmere Academy	Academy	✓	O
Laura Baggett	Monkhouse Primary	Primary	✓	A
Lesley Griffin	Wellfield Middle School	Governor - Secondary	A	✓
Louise Bradford	Diocese	C of E Diocese	✓	✓
Matt Snape	Marden High School	Secondary	✓	✓
Paul Johnson	Churchill Community College	Secondary	A	✓
Peter Gannon	Silverdale School	Special	✓	A
Peter Thorp	Redesdale Primary	Governor - Primary	A	A
Philip Sanderson	Kings Priory	Academy	✓	✓
Phil Kemp	Trade Unions	Trade Unions	✓	D (Candida Mellor)
Rob Harker	Carville Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Stephen Baines	Holystone Primary	Primary	✓	✓
Steve Wilson	Whitley Bay High School	High	✓	✓
<b>In Attendance:</b>				
Mark Longstaff	Director of Commissioning & Asset Management	NTC	A	✓

Jon Ritchie	Director of Resources	NTC	A	✓
Claire Emmerson	Head of Finance – Deputy S151 Officer	NTC	✓	✓
Andrew Brown	Principle Accountant, Finance	NTC	✓	✓
Jane Cross	Senior Business Partner, Finance	NTC	✓	✓
Diane Thompson	Senior Accountant – Schools Finance	NTC	✓	✓
Christina Ponting	Senior Manager – Schools HR	NTC	✓	✓
Mary Nergaard	PA to Director of Commissioning & Asset Management	NTC	✓	✓
Lisa Cook	Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion	NTC	✓	✓
Mark Mirfin	Assistant Director, SEND Transformation	NTC	✓	✓
Ian Wilkinson	Strategic Lead, Education and Inclusion Review	NTC	A	✓
Julie Firth	Director of Children’s Services	NTC	A	A
Amanda Frankish		NTC	N/A	✓
Richard Keilty		NTC	N/A	✓

## Minutes of Meeting

Ref	Item	Action
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome / Apologies for Absence</b>	
	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and issued a reminder that the meeting is live streamed to the public on the Authority’s YouTube Channel.</p> <p>See table above for apologies.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Attendance Register / Membership / Roles and Responsibilities</b>	
	<p><b>Roles &amp; Responsibilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reminder of roles and responsibilities for Forum Members was provided.</li> </ul> <p><b>Attendance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See table above.</li> </ul> <p><b>Membership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Claire Withers has replaced Jill Wraith as a Primary representative. ML welcomed CW to the group.</li> <li>Gavin Storey has renewed his term of office</li> <li>Continue to carry 2 vacancies following the step down of Michael Young (Primary Governor representative) and David Bavaird (Secondary Governor representatives).</li> <li>CP noted nominations for a Secondary Governor representative were requested before the summer break, however, none were received.</li> <li>Peter Thorpe has also stepped down as a Primary Governor representative, creating a third vacancy.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ACTION: CP to work with each locality to recruit replacements for the three vacancies above.</b></li> </ul>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Virtual Public Meeting / Observers</b>	
	The Chair welcomed the public/observers to the meeting.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Declaration of Interest</b>	
	None declared.	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Minutes of the last meeting</b>	
	Minutes agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
	<p><b>Page 3, Item 6 – Matters Arising – David Bavaird:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sadly, since stepping down from Schools Forum, David Bavaird passed away over the summer period.</li> <li>• On behalf of Schools Forum the Chair intends to write to David’s widow to pass on our condolences and best wishes. If any members have any memories or comments that they wish to add please forward them to CP or PG.</li> </ul> <p><b>Page 3, Item 6 – Matters Arising – Schools SLAs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting scheduled for 29 September.</li> </ul> <p><b>Page 10, Item 9 – Reports from Services for 2024/25 Financial Year Proposal:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be picked up on the agenda.</li> </ul> <p><b>Page 13, Item 10 – DfE Safety Valve Intervention Programme:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full set of slides were circulated 27 July.</li> </ul>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Annual Review of the Schools Forum Constitution</b>	<b>Christina Ponting</b>
	<p><b>a) Election of Chair</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nominations were requested.</li> <li>• Peter Gannon has confirmed that he is happy to continue in the role of Chair which was supported by Forum.</li> <li>• Peter Gannon was therefore duly re-elected as Chair.</li> </ul> <p><b>b) Election of Vice Chair</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nominations were requested. None were received</li> <li>• <b>ACTION: Nominations to be received before the next meeting.</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Mark Longstaff</b></p> <p><b>Vice Chair</b></p>
		<b>All</b>

	<p><b>c) Declarations of Interest – All Members</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Vice Chair</b></span></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As noted in Item 4</li> </ul> <p><b>d) Members Attendance</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Christina Ponting</b></span></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As noted above.</li> </ul> <p><b>e) Notification to all Schools / Governors Membership</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Christina Ponting</b></span></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annually and as changes occur notifications are sent to all Schools including vacancies.</li> </ul> <p><b>f) Action Plan / Self-Assessment and Constitution – Annual Review</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Christina Ponting</b></span></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CP noted that she has already made some amendments to the constitution and has received some comments from Members.</li> <li>As per previous years, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) have not yet released updated guidance which they often do in September/October.</li> <li><b><u>ACTION:</u> If any Members have any suggested changes to the constitution or if there is anything that they feel is unclear, please forward the details to CP</b></li> <li>CP advised that the Action Plan/Self-Assessment and the annual review of the constitution would be shared with members for their consideration and brought to the November meeting for approval.</li> </ul>	<b>All</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Schools Finance Update</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Claire Emmerson</b></span>	
	<p>CE talked through the presentation on screen. Main points to note as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Schools Budget Balances</b></li> <li>Summary by phase was shown on screen (Tabel 1 of the report)</li> <li>The outturn in 2022/23 showed a deficit of £0.382m rising to £19.030m in 2025/26</li> <li>Deficit positions have been forecast in the past, but it has not materialised quite so quickly, forecasts rely on data provided by Schools following submission of their 3-year budget plans in May. Previous submissions by schools have shown that year 2 and year 3 budget plans vary significantly from actual outturns achieved. This has implications for Strategic Planning with the Authority as the reliability of the forecasting</li> </ul>	

may not give an accurate indication of the likely outcome. A reminder of the need for accurate forecasting was provided. Impact of Academisation was also discussed.

- It was noted that the deficit balances of some schools now exceed those that are in surplus.
- **School Deficits, Schools in Financial Difficulty & Growth Funding**
- Fourteen schools in deficit. Five have recovery plans that show them coming back into balance. Overview of the detail was provided. Work continues with these schools.
- Further sessions with schools in financial difficulty are scheduled and there is potential to reduce the schools in deficit to 10 schools.
- The ESFA have announced an additional £40m funding nationally to assist schools. Details of the arrangements for how the funding will be distributed and targeted to individual schools or local authorities are yet to be released.
- The Authority are reviewing the ESFA's website for any updates on a regular basis and will update further as soon as information becomes available.
- Growth Funding allocations for 2023/24 are already over-allocated with a further three schools to be considered.
- A meeting is provisionally set with the Schools Forum finance subgroup on 16 October.
- All proposals from the subgroup for Schools in Financial Difficulty and Growth Funding will be presented for approval at the next Schools Forum meeting in November.
- **High Needs Block Update**
- The Authority's DSG management plan forecast a 2022/23 year-end pressure of £17.9m. The outturn position for 2022/23 was healthier than forecast, at £17.392m. When including the DfE's first payment of £7.8m to the Authority, the outturn position for 2022/23 was £9.592m.
- At the 2022/23 year-end close down, the Authority was in active discussion with our maintained special schools regarding pupil numbers and funding. These discussions are now concluded and reflected in the revised position.
- 2 submissions have been made to the DfE as part of the Safety Valve Programme
- Overview of the DSG Management plan was provided.
- The DSG Management Plan did include the 0.5% transfer.

- When we get to the end of the DSG management plan, if the plan is followed as stated this brings us back into a balance position.

### **Safety Valve Intervention Programme**

- MM noted that the presentation slides will take the group through the Term 2 return to the Department for Education (DfE) that was submitted on 15 September. MM noted that the full submission has been circulated and recommended that colleague read the full document.
- An overview of what will be covered was provided.
- **Headlines and budget**
- Currently on track to reach a positive in year balance on the High Needs Block by the end of 2027/28
- The Authority forecasts a 2023/24 year end pressure of 10.473m
- The DfE announced in June 2023 that the Authority will also receive Capital funding of £4.681m.
- The Authority is required to provide progress reports to the DfE three times per year; the first was in June 2023, and this resulted in a payment of £0.650k made by the DfE to reduce the cumulative High Needs Block deficit. The second submission was made in September 2023, identifying that the Authority remains on track; the DfE will confirm with the Authority in due course if and when the second payment of 650,000 will be made. The third submission for 2023/24 is due in December 2023.
- **C&YP in North Tyneside with an EHCP, and comparative data**
- North Tyneside rate for EHCPs has risen steadily to 3.7% compared to a national average of 3%
- For Children under 5 with a maintained EHCP there has been a 266% increase between 2019 and 2022, with a 16% increase in those age 20-25.
- **Percentage of EHCPs per age group:**
- Under 5s = 1% have an EHCP compared to a national average of 0.7%
  - 5- to 10-year-olds = 4.5% have an EHCP compared to a national average of 4.2%
  - 11- to 15-year-olds = 6.9% have an EHCP compared to a national average of 5.5%

- 16- to 19-year-olds = 5.3% have an EHCP compared to a national average of 4.1%
- 20- to 25-year-olds = 0.7% have an EHCP compared to a national average of 0.9%. This is the only one age group where North Tyneside is lower, largely due to a review of EHCPs for those post 16 during 2022, resulting in EHCPs ceased where they no longer required one.

- **Children and Young People Placements (Special):**

- There are just under 800 pupils (38%) in special schools compared to a national average of 28%; and there are 87 (4%) in Independent Specialist Provision (ISP), Non-Maintained Special Schools (NMSS) and Specialist Post-16 provision compared to a national average is 7%

- **Children and Young People Placements (ARPS):**

- Forecast shows that we needed 138 ARP places in January 2024 through to 253 by January 2028. Currently have 137 which included 27 unfilled ARP places. Overview of the challenges discussed.

- **Children and Young People Placements (Not in education, employment or training (NEET)/Unknowns):**

- There are 3 young people in North Tyneside with an EHCP that have an unknown Education, Employment and Training status
- North Tyneside has the lowest percentage of children who are NEET at 11% compared to a national average of 15% and unknowns equate to 4%, compared to a national average of 32%

- **Investment in SEND**

- A reminder was provided of the strategic priorities and workstreams and that over 70 Head Teachers and SENCOs are involved in the various steering groups
- The percentages shown donate those Headteachers and SENDCOs that agree or strongly agree that we should progress each of the priorities.
- MM thanked all those that are involved in the work that has taken place so far.
- Overview of the investment already made was provided as follows:
  - General Fund:
    - Approval has been provided by the Authority for the development of the 0.5 Early Years SEND Hub.
    - Trialled a Whole School Send Audit in one school

which provided great feedback. Now have audits scheduled at a further 20 first/primary schools and 5 middle/secondary/high schools. MM encouraged schools to contact Education North Tyneside to benefit from this offer.

- Preparation for Adulthood Team launched September 2023 and now in place
- NHS England/Bernardos
  - Mental Health Support Team in Schools with over 38 schools supported via NHS England
  - Neurodiversity Team established with partners
- High Needs Block and Capital Investment:
  - Investment in Moorbridge
  - Review of Commissioned Services
  - £1.000m in Capital Investment funding agreed for Inclusion
  - Maintained Special Schools: Working with Southlands in developing an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) base and working with Beacon Hill on moving their sixth form to the Balliol site.
- MM noted that this is a collective effort and thanked all those involved for their contribution.
- Overview of the significant engagement that has been carried out was provided. MM noted that he is happy to meet with anyone who may want to receive more information.
- Significant investment from General Fund, ICB, Barnardo's and Capital Allocations.
- It was noted that the delivery of the current strategy and programme of work is predicated on a 0.5% transfer.
- ML noted the partnership working that has been carried out across the system and that the first two submissions has received positive feedback from Government.
- JC noted that the consultation documents will be getting sent out to schools but there are also some drop in sessions that are being scheduled.
- **ACTION: JC to email the details for the Drop-In Sessions**
- DW queried if Schools Forum need to also acknowledge the growing pressure on the Schools Block
- CE acknowledged the comment raised and agreed to amend the report accordingly.
- **ACTION: CE to revise the Finance Report recommendations**

JC

**to include a recommendation to acknowledge the growing pressure on the Schools Block**

- JR provided reassurance that the growing pressures has been acknowledged in the recent Ambition for Education report to Cabinet and as well as in other areas and in discussions with Government.

**Recommendations**

Schools Forum is asked to:

- acknowledge the 2023/24 to 2025/26 school budget plans and the proposed impact on the DSG balances;

**Acknowledged**

- agree the plan for considering financial difficulty and additional growth funding allocations;

**Agreed**

- acknowledge the pressure on the High Needs block and the update for the Authority's Safety Valve Intervention Plan

**Acknowledged**

- acknowledge the growing pressure on the Schools Block

**Acknowledged**

**2024/25 Funding – Plans for Consultation on the Local Funding Formula**

- Overview of the provisional DSG Block Allocations was provided on screen. It was noted that these are estimates as the Census has not yet been carried out.
- Total allocation of £208.266m
- Impact of changes to Teachers Pensions and possible income to support employers was discussed, Information will be shared as soon as it is available.
- A reminder that North Tyneside has already moved to following the NFF was provided. The following updates to the NFF were provided.
  - Revised approach for split sites
  - Includes 2023/24 Mainstream schools' additional grant
  - Factors increased by 0.5% to 2.4% with PFI linked to RPIX
  - New methodology for allocating and funding Falling Rolls
- Extract from the operational guide on Schools Forum powers and responsibilities was shared on screen.
- Consultation will commence on Monday 25 September and run to Friday 20 October. Results will be presented to Schools

**CE**

Forum in November along with the recommendations based on the results.

- This forms part of the Local Authority's budget proposals and consultation process.
- Overview of the budget process was provided.
- CE noted that Schools Forum is responsible for making the decision on the 0.5% and that this decision is not made by the Local Authority. However, if Schools Forum disagree with the recommendations of the Authority the DfE can adjudicate with the final decision resting with the DfE.
- In line with previous years, the Authority will consult with schools on the following areas:
  - Continued use of NFF factors.
  - Allowing the Authority to set the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) and capping, based on affordability.
  - Setting the growth funding and falling rolls values at the amounts calculated in the NFF, plus recovery of current over-allocations.
  - Consultation on a 0.5% school block transfer to the high needs block. If the decision of Schools Forum is not in favour of the transfer, the Authority can submit a disapplication request. If the DfE reject that request work will need to be undertaken to identify how to meet the DSG Management Plan.
- Overview of the planned engagement sessions was provided as follows:
  - Survey goes live Monday 25 September
  - Consultation closed Friday 20 October
  - Results presented to School Forum Wednesday 8 November
  - Deadline for disapplication request 18 November
  - DSG Proposed at North Tyneside Cabinet meeting 27<sup>th</sup> November; Cabinet decision January 2024.
- DW raised a query on the relationship of the 0.5% to the MFG and requested some more understanding on this, noting that some schools will be protected by the MFG and some won't.
- CE noted that the Authority will be doing a lot of modelling on the impact to individual schools and that she will be liaising with the team on the best way to present this to schools collectively as well as to individual schools to allow schools to make an informed decision. CE noted that there are a

	<p>number of changes that can be implemented to ensure that the plans equitable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FW queried if there is any early feedback following the earlier consultation with headteachers as to whether the 0.5% transfer from schools is likely to be approved in November.</li> <li>• MM noted that there were 19 responses. A number have said yes, they are supportive. For those that have said no, this has been based on their own concerns about their own individual budgets.</li> <li>• GS noted that it needs to be fair across all sectors.</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>Schools Forum is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• acknowledge the changes to funding for 2024/25</li> </ul> <p><b>Acknowledged</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approve the plans for consulting with schools on the 2024/25 LFF plan</li> </ul> <p><b>Approved</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>ACTION:</u> Copy of slides to be circulated after the meeting.</b></li> </ul>	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Reports from Services (EMTAS and School Support Services)</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unfortunately, LC was unable to present at the meeting.</li> <li>• ML asked if Forum Members had a preference on how they would like to receive the requested reports.</li> <li>• No preferences were raised.</li> <li>• <b><u>ACTION:</u> Item to be added to the agenda for the next meeting to provide an update.</b></li> </ul>	<b>MN</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
	<p><b>Claire Emmerson:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ML noted the work carried out by CE in relation to Schools Forum. CE has been a credit to the Finance and Resources Team and will continue to do so in her new role. On behalf of Schools Forum, ML placed on record his thanks for CE's significant contribution to the Authority and to Schools Forum.</li> </ul>	
<b>11.</b>	<b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>	
	Thursday, 9 November 2023 at 12:30pm, via Microsoft Teams.	