

## Formula Review Meeting

### Minutes

Friday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Microsoft Teams Meeting

#### Present:

Jo Briggs (Chair)  
Dave Bevitt  
Alex Devany (part)  
Claire Whalley  
Julie Cheung  
Susan Tailor  
Kath Greenhalgh  
Adeel Sahi

Primary Head Teacher  
Primary Governor  
Secondary Head Teacher  
Primary Head Teacher  
Primary Head Teacher  
Special Head Teacher  
Primary Business Manager  
Secondary Business Manager

Lisa Butcher  
Julie Edwards  
Helen Joseph

Head of Finance  
Schools Finance Manager  
Schools Finance Officer

**Apologies:** Apologies were received from Dominic McKeon and Matthew Wilkinson.

#### 1. Welcome

JB welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### 2. Minutes 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Minutes were agreed. JE gave an update on the meeting that is due to take place with Fresh Pastures, it is hoped a new system will be in place from January. The safety valve meeting with DfE took place in July. LB informed the group about the discussions that took place. Bernie Brown asked the DfE what would happen as a result of the work that has taken place so far by the LA. A further meeting with DfE is scheduled for October after which LB can update the group.

#### 3. Impact of Covid – Grants and School Meals

JE informed the group on current and new grants that have been announced by the Government. Funding for the Recovery Grant will be paid for academic year 2021/22 based on pupil premium eligible numbers. The School Led Tutoring grant will be paid from 2021/22 to 2023/24 – reducing each year. This grant will be based on 60% of pupil premium numbers (Y1-Y11) and any unspent grant will be clawed back. JB asked that due to the complexity and implications of the School Led Tutoring grant could head teachers be briefed by Schools Finance. The Tuition Partners and Academic Mentor subsidies will continue in 2021/22.

JE explained how School Meals intend to charge for free school meals and universal free school meals for the summer term, based on April numbers where there have been bubble closures. JB mentioned how the number of paid meals served so far this term had substantially reduced due to the price increase.

**Action :- JE to attend next Primary Heads meeting and to contact Tony Purcell regarding Secondary Heads.**

#### **4. DSG Monitor Quarter One 2021-22**

JE presented the quarter one statement and explained the reasons for the projected variances on each block. The largest variance, an overspend of £1.98m on High Needs, is due to the budget being based on 20-21 projected outturn but the estimated spend includes growth. There is now a separate line for the 0.5% transfer to High Needs from Schools Block. The monitor will be shared with Executive Member next week.

#### **5. School Funding Arrangements 2022-23**

JE updated the group on the changes to the National Funding Formula (NFF). Due to Covid and long term move to the NFF, there are no major changes planned. The soft formula will remain in place for 2022-23. 2-3% increases on most of the NFF formula factors. Other changes include:

- FMS6 data will be obtained from the October census in line with other factors
- Calculation of school sparsity distances
- 2019 assessment data will again be used for Low Prior Attainment calculations
- Mobility funding will be based on the actual date a pupil entered a school between January and May due to the May 2021 census not taking place
- ESFA will pay billing authorities directly for school business rates, schools will still be required to report this cost in their budgets.
- The Minimum Per Pupil Levels remain mandatory
- LA's have the freedom to set the Minimum Funding Guarantee between +0.5% and +2% per pupil
- Local authorities will continue to be able to transfer up to 0.5% of their Schools block to other blocks of the DSG, with schools forum approval. It was noted that should a Schools Forum not approve such a transfer, then the LA must contact the Secretary of State for approval by November. JB suggested that Amanda Hulme or Dominic McKeon could attend Schools Forum to give them some assurance as to progress on how this money will be used. Also be useful for Clusters to be briefed.

JB asked if schools will receive additional funding for the planned increase in employers' national insurance costs. JE replied that it had been reported additional funding would be paid to schools but no details as to if this is part of the 2-3% increase above.

The 2022-23 provisional allocations for the DSG have been published. Bolton would receive an additional £6.384 million for Schools Block and £4.732 million for High Needs Block. The change to the Early Years Block hasn't been confirmed yet. Central School Services Block will again reduce by 20% for historic commitments and increase for on-going responsibilities with a net change of £3,000.

## **6. National Funding Formula Consultation**

JE outlined the first stage of the NFF consultation which launched on 8<sup>th</sup> July and requires a response by 30<sup>th</sup> September. The consultation is seeking feedback on the proposals of what the direct NFF should look like, and the transition towards it. The proposal is to include all NFF funding factors but there needs to be further development of premises and growth funding factors.

JB mentioned that a number of primary schools had admitted below PAN in reception this year. JE explained that the proposed Falling Rolls Fund would be applicable to schools where the drop in numbers was temporary and the schools were Good or Outstanding at their most recent Ofsted inspection.

It was discussed that there are 2 references to academies being treated differently to maintained schools in the consultation, growth fund re popular growth and pooling of resources between schools, this seems to contradict the NFF principles of the same funding for all schools.

JE confirmed that further consultations will follow and that Schools Forum will be asked for their comments before the LA responds.

## **7. Schools Forum Agenda**

JE presented the programme of meetings for the academic year 2021/22.

## **8. Forward Plan**

JB asked if the Formula Review meetings will remain online and everyone agreed this seems to work well. It was also agreed that the High Needs update be included at each meeting with any extraordinary meetings to be scheduled as necessary.

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## **9. Any Other Business**

None.

## **10. Date of Next Meeting**

To be arranged.

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