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SCHOOLS FORUM
Agenda

Date Wednesday 10 July 2024

Time 4.00 pm

Venue

Notes 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST- If a Member requires any advice on any item involving a possible declaration of interest which could affect his/her ability to speak and/or vote he/she is advised to contact Paul Entwistle or in advance of the meeting.

2. CONTACT OFFICER for this Agenda is Tel. 0161 770 5151 or email

Item No

1 Schools Forum - Wednesday 10th July 2024 4.00pm (Pages 3 - 20)

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SCHOOLS FORUM 10 JULY 2024

To Members of the Schools Forum

Finance Directorate
Schools Finance Team
Oldham Council Offices
Spindles Shopping Centre
George Street
Oldham
OL1 1HD

Tel: 0161 770 4925

Dear Colleague,

Re: SCHOOLS FORUM 10 JULY 2024

Please find attached the agenda and papers for the next meeting of the Schools Forum to be held at **4.00pm** on Wednesday 10 July 2024 via Microsoft Teams.

If you are unable to attend this meeting, please email your apologies to schoolsteam.finance@oldham.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

Andy Cooper

Senior Finance Manager

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Agenda

SCHOOLS FORUM

Wednesday 10 July 2024 4.00pm
Teams Meeting

		Approx duration	Officer	Papers
1	**Welcome and Apologies**		Chair	
	Apologies/Declarations of Interest			-
2	**Minutes and Matters Arising**	5 mins	Chair	Attached
	Minutes of meeting held on 18th March 2024			
3	**Schools Forum Constitution including appointment of vice chair**	5 mins	tbc	Verbal
4	**DSG Funding Update**	20 mins	Vicky Gibbons	Attached
5	**School Balances**	20 mins	Clare Roper	Attached
6	**Proposed Dates for future meetings for 2024/25**	5 mins	Chair	
	Any other business – Must be notified to vicky.gibbons@oldham.gov.uk or by telephone 0161 770 4925 24 hours before the meeting			
	Dates of next meeting: TBC			

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Oldham Council

Minutes

Meeting of Schools Forum

Monday 18 March 2024
via Microsoft Teams
at 4.00pm

Present:

Liz Travis	Holy Trinity CE Primary (In the Chair)
Iain Windeatt	Trade Union Representative
Stuart Ash	Oldham Sixth Form College
Karl Newell	Crompton House School
Anthony Leighton	The Cranmer Trust
Nigel Woodworth	New Bridge Academy
Kate Hoggard	Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector
Tracy Cavangh	Holy Rosary RC Primary School

Also Present:

Tony Shepherd	Head of Schools and Learning
Amber Burton	Assistant Director SEND and Inclusion
Andy Cooper	Senior Finance Manager
Jean Coombs	Clerk

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies for absence were received from Rob Higgins, Paul McGrath, Matthew Bulmer, Vicky Gibbons and Clare Roper.

1.3 Members were requested to declare any business, pecuniary and personal interests. No declarations were made.

2 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING: There were no matters arising.

3 SCHOOLS FORUM CONSTITUTION

Andy Cooper gave un update on the Schools Forum Constitution.

Main points referred to:

3.1 The proposed changes are determined by the required representation based on the pupil numbers, in relation to primary and secondary schools, and the split between Maintained and Academies.

3.2 As a result, the primary representation should increase by one to eight; and the secondary representation is to remain at six. The Director of the Oldham Learning Board is to be removed and the fourth non-voting Local Authority representative is to be the Director of Education, Skills and Early Years.

3.3 Three new members have been appointed, but there are still five vacancies.

3.4 Stewart Ash asked what his designation was now on the Forum. Andy Cooper agreed to discuss that outside the meeting, but that his skills and knowledge would be an asset to the group.

3.5 Karl Newell asked who the secondary maintained school representative was. He was informed that there was a gap in their representation.

3.6 Andy Cooper pointed out that when members do not attend for three consecutive meetings they can be deemed as having resigned.

3.7 It was agreed that the Schools Forum representation would be the first agenda item at each meeting.

3.8 A member asked if a delegate could be sent to the meeting on a representative's behalf and could they vote. The response was that a delegate could be sent and could vote, but that if the representative did this for three consecutive meetings, then they would be deemed as having resigned.

3.9 Amber Burton asked whether she could attend as a non-designated Local Authority attendee. She was informed that she was welcome to attend as needed.

RESOLVED: that Schools Forum approve the revised Schools Forum Constitution for 2024-25

4 EARLY YEARS FUNDING 2024/25: OUTCOME OF PROVIDER CONSULTATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the absence of an Early Years Representative, Tony Shepherd outlined the results of the Early Years finance and funding consultation. The actual responses were provided in the meeting papers and the conclusion to set different rates for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds was also outlined in the paper. The response to the consultation by the maintained sector was poor.

A member raised the issue of slow payouts of the funding and a general lack of response when queries were raised. This was not seen by all members, but

Amber Burton is to look into these specific issues, with the member who raised the query, and Tony Shepherd, Andy Cooper and the MAT will be copied into the response to the issues.

RESOLVED: that Schools Forum note the outcome of the provider Early Years funding consultation for 2024/25,

5 PROPOSED DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS FOR 2024/25

The proposed meeting dates will be sent out in due course.

The election of a Vice Chair is to be on the next agenda.

(There being no further business, members were thanked for their attendance and the meeting was declared closed at 16.25pm).

Signed: ¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬_____
Chair

Date:
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Joint Report:
Director of Finance
Director of Education, Early Years and Skills

Item 3 – Dedicated Schools Grant Final Outturn 2023/24 and Budget Update for 2024/25 and 2025/26

Schools Forum – 10th July 2024

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report provides an update on the following:

- The final 2023/24 outturn for the Dedicated Schools Grant (sections 2.1 and 2.2)
- An update to the Dedicated Schools Grant budget for 2024/25 and 2025/26 (sections 3)

2. Outturn 2023/24 and Budget Update 2024/25 and 2025/26

2.1 Table 1 below compares the 2023/24 outturn and updated forecast for 2024/25 and 2025/26 to the position reported to the last meeting in January 2024.

Table 1 – DSG Update 2023/24 to 2025/26

DSG Summary 2023/24 to 2024/25	2023/24 Outturn £000	2024/25 Forecast £000	2025/26 Forecast £000
Schools Block (excludes central services)	240,592	255,312	255,312
Central Schools Services Block	2,461	2,352	2,352
Early Years Block	15,748	17,771	17,771
High Needs Block – pre/post 16	59,146	61,749	62,870
Two Year Olds' Funding	3,653	12,721	12,721
Early Years Pupil Premium	226	425	425
Early Years Disability Access Fund	130	216	216
Total Grant	**321,956**	**350,546**	**351,667**
Budget Requirement			
Individual Schools Budgets	241,031	255,928	255,312
Early Year Funding Delegated to Schools	6,785	8,440	8,240
High Needs Funding for Schools (including Post 16)	45,471	47,685	49,713
Total Delegated to Schools	**293,287**	**312,053**	**313,265**
Central Schools Services	2,461	2,352	2,352
Central Early Years Services	1,047	915	915
Central High Needs Services	11,373	12,800	12,800
Three and Four Year old PVI's	7,765	8,998	8,998
Under two & Two Year Old Funding	3,480	12,339	12,339
Total Retained Centrally	**26,126**	**37,404**	**37,404**
Early Years Pupil Premium	226	425	425
Early Years Disability Access Fund	130	216	216
Budget Requirement	**319,769**	**350,098**	**351,310**
(Deficit)/Surplus	**2,187**	**448**	**357**
Balance brought Forward	899	3,702	4,150
Provisional (Deficit)/Surplus	**3,086**	**4,150**	**4,507**
Anticipated Growth underspend committed for 24/25	616		
Balance Carried Forward	**3,702**	**4,150**	**4,507**

2.2 The actual in-year surplus for 2023/24 was £2.187m, which when added to the surplus of £0.899m brought forward from 2022/23 and with a positive adjustment of £0.616m for Growth underspend committed in the following year produces a cumulative (provisional) surplus of £3.702m as at 31 March 2024, this position is subject to external audit and Department for Education approval.

2.3 This represents an improvement of £0.141m compared to the projected outturn surplus of £3.561m that was reported to the January 2024 Schools Forum meeting. Table 2 below provides further detail in relation to the movements across the three years when compared to the position reported to the last meeting in January 2024. An underspend on Early Years (£0.324m) and an increase in the Growth funding carried forward into 2024/25 (£0.071m) is offset by a net increase in expenditure of £0.254m within the High Needs Block

Table 2- Analysis of Movements 2023/24 to 2025/26

DSG Management Plan 2023/24 to 2025/26	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000
Balance b/fd	899	3,561	4,387
Change in surplus / (deficit) from previous year	2,662	826	476
As reported in January 2024	**3,561**	**4,387**	**4,863**
Additional funding:			
Schools Block			
Central School Services Block			
Early Years Block		524	524
High Needs Block		275	300
Movement in Funding	**0**	**799**	**824**
Additional adjustment to budget requirement :			
SB-Adjust Growth Underspend c/fd	71	-71	
HNB- Increased costs special schools	-61	92	0
HNB- Resourced	-49	-60	-47
HNB- Post 16	57	-128	-33
HNB- EHCP's	19	-11	-64
HNB- Additional requirement Out Of Borough	-220		
HNB- Recommit £275k additional High Needs Block funding		-275	-275
Early Years underspend (schools)	324		
Early Years (offset by additional income)		-724	-524
Movement in Budget Requirement	**141**	**-1,177**	**-943**
Net In Year Movement	**141**	**-378**	**-119**
Adjustment to Opening Balance		141	-237
Total Movement	**141**	**-237**	**-356**
Revised Surplus	**3,702**	**4,150**	**4,507**

2.4 The January 2024 Schools Forum was advised, that there would be an estimated in-year surplus for 2024/25 of £0.826m and that this in turn would produce a closing cumulative surplus of £4.387m when added to the forecast surplus brought forward of £3.561m.

2.5 Based on revised funding allocations (additional £0.799m) and updated expenditure projections (additional £1.177m), the forecast in-year surplus has reduced by £0.378m to £0.448m for 2024/25. The cumulative surplus at the end of 2023/24 of £3.702m is however £0.141m higher than the previously reported position, resulting in a net reduction of £0.237m and a revised cumulative surplus of £4.150m.

2.6 Similarly for 2025/26, the combined effect of revised funding allocations (additional £0.824m) and updated expenditure projections (additional £0.943m) is to reduce the forecast in-year surplus by £0.119m to £0.357m for 2025/26. After taking account of the adjusted opening balance (£0.237m) the cumulative surplus at the end of 2025/26 of £4.507m is £0.356m lower than the £4.863m reported the previous meeting in January 2024

2.7 It is an important element of the financial management of the Authority that the DSG is not in a deficit position, clearly the financial position of the DSG; the surplus reported in 2022/23 has significantly increased in 2023/24. The DSG is forecast to continue generating in year surpluses in each of 2024/25 and 2025/26 and close with a forecast cumulative surplus of £4.507m. It should however be noted that the current position is cumulatively £0.356m worse than the position reported in January 2024.The forecast position for 2024/25 and 2025/26 is actually £0.497m worse when taking account of the £0.141m improved outturn position

2.8 Table 3 analyses the movement by the 4 funding blocks that comprise the DSG. It shows the in year surplus or deficit for each of the four blocks from 2023/24 to 2025/26 and the total cumulative impact on the DSG, arriving at a forecast surplus of £4.507m at the end of 2025/26

Table 3 - DSG Summary by Funding Block

DSG Summary by Block	2023/24 Outturn £000	2024/25 Forecast £000	2025/26 Forecast £000		Total 2023/24 to 2025/26 £000
Schools Block					
Income	-240,592	-255,312	-255,312		-751,216
Anticipated Growth underspend	-616				-616
Expenditure	241,031	255,928	255,312		752,271
In year -Surplus/ Deficit	**-177**	**616**	**0**		**439**
Central Services					
Income	-2,461	-2,352	-2,352		-7,165
Expenditure	2,461	2,352	2,352		7,165
In year -Surplus/ Deficit	**0**	**0**	**0**		**0**
High Needs Block					
Income	-59,146	-61,749	-62,870		-183,765
Expenditure	56,844	60,485	62,513		179,842
In year -Surplus/ Deficit	**-2,302**	**-1,264**	**-357**		**-3,923**
Early Years					
Income	-19,757	-31,133	-31,133		-82,023
Expenditure	19,433	31,333	31,133		81,899
Sub Total	**-324**	**200**	**0**		**-124**
DSG Totals					
Income	-322,572	-350,546	-351,667		-1,024,785
Expenditure	319,769	350,098	351,310		1,021,177
Total in Year Surplus	**-2,803**	**-448**	**-357**		**-36,08**
Surplus Brought Forward	-899	-3,702	-4,150		-899
Cumulative Surplus	**-3,702**	**-4,150**	**-4,507**		**-4,507**

2.9 Pressure within the DSG and in particular services within the High Needs Block is increasing both locally and nationally where both demand for and the cost of services continue to grow exponentially year on year. Therefore, it is vitally important that the level

of scrutiny and management intervention that has returned the DSG to a surplus position is upheld to ensure that the surplus is maintained in future years.

2.10 Implementation of the programme of work funded under the Delivering Better Value in SEND combined with the complimentary work undertaken in the North West Change Partnership Programme (NWCPP) and the Early Language Support for Every Child initiative (ELSEC) will be pivotal in the consolidation and future sustainability of the of the DSG in Oldham and work will continue throughout 2024/25 and beyond to hopefully ensure that the projected surplus position is maintained going forward.

3. Actions/ Recommendations

3.1 Schools Forum is requested to note:

1) The draft 2023/24 outturn for the Dedicated Schools Grant
2) The current DSG budget for 2024/25 and 2025/26 and the forecast consolidated position as at 31 March 2026

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Report of the Director of Finance

Item 4. School Balances 2023/24

Schools Forum – 10 July 2024

1. Purpose of the Paper

1.1 The purpose of the paper is to update members on the level of actual school balances for 2023/24 for maintained schools.

2. Background

2.1 All schools receive their delegated budget share based upon the Local Funding Formula.

2.2 All schools via their governing body have delegated powers and responsibilities to manage and deploy their financial resources in accordance with their agreed aims and objectives to achieve the best outcomes for pupils.

2.3 Maintained schools are permitted to carry forward any year end surplus/deficit recorded at the 31 March into the following financial year on the condition that they conform to the rules of the Balance Control Mechanism Scheme.

2.4 The Balance Control Mechanism Scheme is included in Oldham's Scheme for Financing Schools.

3. Oldham Final Position 2023/24

3.1 The tables below summarise school balances for the Financial Year 2023/24 by sector and the change in position from 2022/23. A total of 62 schools' balances are included in the table below.

Table 1 School Balances 2023/24

Sector	2022/23	2023/24	Movement	Percentage movement from 2022/23
Primary	£4,750,447	£4,942,489	£192,042	4.04%
Secondary	£3,352,113	£3,256,493	(£95,620)	(2.85%)
Special	£278,576	£379,214	£100,638	36.13%
Total Schools	**£8,381,136**	**£8,578,196**	**£197,060**	**2.35%**
Asset Purchase Scheme	£2	£2	£0	0%
Total	**£8,381,138**	**£8,578,198**	**£197,060**	**2.35%**

3.2 The table above identifies that school balances before the Asset Purchase scheme movement have increased overall by £0.197m or 2.35% compared to 2022/23. This excludes the Asset Purchase Scheme which represents funds currently loaned to schools.

3.3 School balances showed an in-year surplus of £8.578m at the end 2023/24 which includes a very small amount for the asset purchase scheme.

3.4 The above amount includes a total of £0.318m held on behalf of three schools who had converted to academies during the year but the balance had not yet been agreed and paid over to them as at year end.

3.5 Seven schools had deficit balances at the end of 2023/24 totalling £0.262m.

3.6 "S*urplus*" school balances are defined as balances which are greater than 12% of the current year's original school budget share for all schools (excluding pupil premium).

3.7 The table below summarises **surplus** school balances above the limits and the number of schools for 2023/24 by sector together with the change from 2022/23. Across all sectors, balances have increased by 46.22%.

Table 2 Surplus School Balanced 2023/24

Sector	2022/23 Surplus Balances	2022/23 No of schools	2023/24 Surplus Balances	2023/24 No of schools	Movement	Movement No of Schools
Primary	£329,837	5	£627,683	7	£297,846	2
Secondary	£899,171	2	£1,098,292	1	£199,121	(1)
Special	£25,368	1	£108,184	1	£82,816	0
Total	**£1,254,376**	**8**	**£1,834,159**	**9**	**£579,783**	**1**

3.8 The total surplus balances were £1.834m. Of the 9 schools with surplus balances, 6 have submitted an official plan to the LA to carry the balances forward. The deadline for submittal of Utilisation of Balances to the LA is 5th July so at the time of writing the report, we await submissions from the remaining 3 schools.

3.9 The decision regarding whether there will be any removal of surplus balances from schools will be reviewed once we have confirmation of whether acceptable plans have been submitted from each school to carry them forward.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Members of Schools Forum are asked to note the contents of this report a further update will be given at the next Schools Forum meeting.

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