

**DARLINGTON SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**11<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

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**MINUTES OF MEETING TUESDAY, 17<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2022**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

D Judson (Swift Academies (Chair)); P Ayto (Reid Street (Vice Chair); M Butler (Education Village); P King (Fed of Mowden Schools); H Dummett (Federation of Darlington Nursery Schools); J Blackham (Mount Pleasant); P Richardson (Head of Skills & Employability); J Skirving (Bishopton Redmarshall CofE, CE Diocese); K Reid (Polam Hall); M Fryer (Hummersknott); P Norman (St Bedes RC); K Lyle( )

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

E Clennell (Finance Manager); J Aconley-Foster (Finance Officer); Tony Murphy (Assistant Director Education & Inclusion)

**APOLOGIES**

Councillor Clarke; Sally Hudson (Rise Carr College); Nicole Gibbon (St Aidan's); Mike Shorten (Bishop Hogarth); Shirley Welsh (Whinfield); Jennifer Moorhouse (Carmel College); Marco Ramsey (St Johns)

**1. Welcome, Introduction & Register/Declaration of business interests**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**2. Minutes of Meeting 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

Minutes were agreed from the previous meeting as a true record.

### **3. Budget Update 2021/22**

The Finance Manager took members through a previously circulated written report outlining the year end budget position for 2021/22.

The following key items were highlighted to Forum:

- The final budget position was an in year overspend of £295,080, which along with clawback from the early years block of £367,227 has increased the overall deficit to £5,895,580 once the brought forward deficit is added.
- The early years block was estimated to underspend, however the final true outturn position will not be known until November once the final 2021/22 allocation adjustment is received and will be ringfenced to cover any clawback.
- Year end balances in the central school's block will be used to smooth reductions in the historic central school's block over future years.
- The high needs deficit would be carried forward for recovery through the high need's recovery plan.

#### Recommendations

Forum noted the year end budget position.

Forum approved the carry forward of budget proposals from 2021/22 into 2022/23

### **4. High Needs Update**

The update from the Assistant Director of Education covered some national context explaining an increase in demand locally. Both national and local statistics were shown to give members an understanding of the post covid increases in demand to SEND services. There is the highest rate of EHCP since the reforms of 2014 nationally. Requests for these plans started to increase in the 2020 calendar year.

As of January 2021, there were 795 EHC plans in Darlington, but as of January 2022 there was 848. This is a local increase of 6.7% compared the national increase of 9.9%.

The SEND review has been published in the green paper. TM encourages forum members to put forward consultation responses.

The DfE are supporting local authorities around historic deficits and budget plans for in year high needs recovery and more guidance is expected to come nationally.

The high needs provision capital allocations were discussed – the LA is to begin a consultation on the use of this funding. The funding is not ring-fenced year on year or ring fenced to school years.

MB noted to forum that if we increase placements revenue costs will increase with those additional places.

The local area SEND inspection was discussed – whilst there were lots of positive reflection on services, education provision and parent-carer forum there were two areas of significant concern. This information is available in the inspection paper. Post inspection, we have been asked to submit an action plan to Ofsted and CQC around these two areas.

## **5. High Needs Budget Plan 2022/23**

The finance manager presented the proposed high need budget for 2022/23 based on the spending profiles of the prior year with full year growth. It was noted to members that we had received additional funding for the high needs block which equates to £2.2m with the supplementary funding included.

It was noted that some of the place funding had increased for BHA and Heathfield and these changes will be reflected in the reports once the new DSG levels are published.

The new Tees Valley SEMH school build has been delayed, however the school is due to open partially in September in a temporary base and the following September the new build should be completed.

The supplementary grant was discussed, and work is ongoing to agree the distribution.

## **6. 2022/23 Academic Year Meeting Dates**

The following dates for future school forum meetings were agreed:

Tuesday, 11th October 2022 - 2pm

Monday, 16th January 2023 - 2pm

Tuesday, 7th March 2023 – 2pm

Tuesday, 16th May 2023 – 2pm

## **7. Any Other Business**

- No other business.

### **Date/Time/Location of next meeting**

**11<sup>th</sup> October 2022, 2pm – 5pm**

**Microsoft Teams**