

6 July 2020

**SCHOOLS FORUM**

Tuesday, 14 July 2020 at 9.15 am  
Microsoft Teams Conference Call

**A G E N D A**

**1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES**

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members are asked to declare any interests in the items under consideration and in doing so state:

(1) the type of interest concerned either a

- (a) personal interest
- (b) prejudicial interest
- (c) disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI)

and

(2) the nature of the interest concerned

If any member requires advice on declarations of interests, they are advised to contact the Head of Democratic Governance in advance of the meeting.

**3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** (Pages 1 - 10)

To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2020.

To consider any matters arising, not discussed elsewhere on the Agenda.

**4 PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE** (Pages 11 - 14)

To receive an update on recent Public Health activities.

**5 LOCAL AUTHORITY AND INCLUSION UPDATE** (Pages 15 - 16)

Paul Turner, Head of Service for School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion to provide an update on the recent Local Authority and Inclusion developments.

**6 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT YEAR END BUDGET MONITORING 2019-2020** (Pages 17 - 20)

Mark Golden, Finance Manager, to provide an update.

**7 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET MONITORING 2020-2021** (Pages 21 - 24)

Mark Golden, Finance Manager, to provide an update.

**8 HIGH NEEDS** (Pages 25 - 62)

Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources to provide an update on relevant High Needs developments.

**9 DIRECTED REVISION OF SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS** (Pages 63 - 66)

Kirsty Thompson, School Funding Officer to provide an update.

**10 SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING DATES 2020-2021**

To consider and agree the meeting dates for Schools Forum in 2021:

Tuesday 12 January 2021

Tuesday 9 March 2021

Tuesday 15 June 2021

Tuesday 12 October 2021

**11 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

To agree the date of the next meeting as Tuesday 13 October 2020.

**Other information:**

For queries regarding this agenda please contact Danielle Bowater, Democratic Governance Adviser, Tel: 01253 477202, e-mail [danielle.bowater@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:danielle.bowater@blackpool.gov.uk)

Copies of the agendas and minutes of the Schools Forum are available on the Council's website at [www.blackpool.gov.uk](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk)

# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 3

## MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING - TUESDAY, 10 MARCH 2020

### **Present:**

#### **Primary School Head Teachers/Representative**

Ms J Hirst, Bispham Endowed  
Dr E Allen, St John Vianney

#### **Special School Maintained Representative**

Ms K Haworth, Woodlands

#### **Special School Academy Representative**

Ms S Fielder, Chair of Governors, Park Community Academy

#### **Academy School Representatives**

Ms A Bailey, Highfield (Star Academies)  
Mr S Brennand, Unity  
Mr R Farley, Westminster  
Ms T Harrison, Thames  
Ms J Heywood, Revoe  
Mr D Medcalf, St Georges  
Mr E Vitalis, Marton / South Shore (Bright Futures)

#### **Pupil Referral Unit**

Ms W Casson, Educational Diversity

#### **Non-Schools Members**

Mr N Adams, Staff / Teacher Associations  
Ms A Baines, Staff/Teacher Associations  
Mr S Hughes, Blackpool and the Fylde College  
Mr R Rendell, Early Years Strategic Group

### **In Attendance:**

Councillor K Benson, Cabinet Member for Schools, Education and Aspiration

Ms N Dennison, Public Health Specialist  
Mr D Maddocks, Senior Accountant (for Mr M Golden)  
Mr P Sharples, School Funding and Private Finance Initiative Manager  
Mr P Thompson, Head of SEND  
Mr P Turner, Head of Service for School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion  
Mrs H Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources  
Mrs D Bowater, Democratic Governance Adviser (minutes)

Ms L Franey, Head of Delivery, Blackpool and Oldham Opportunity Area, Department for Education (Item 6)  
Ms H O'Neill, St Mary's Catholic College, Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust (BEBCMAT) (observing items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8)

## MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING - TUESDAY, 10 MARCH 2020

### 1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Introductions were made and apologies for absence were received from Michelle Lonican, Our Lady of the Assumption and Dean Logan, Roseacre (Achievement Through Collaboration). It was recognised that Darren Maddocks was in attendance in place of Mark Golden and Helen O'Neill was observing the meeting. It was noted that Liz Franey from the Department for Education would attend for item 6 of the agenda to provide an update on the Continuum of Provision.

It was reported that Paul Sharples would be leaving his role at Blackpool Council and the Forum recorded their thanks to him for his support and wished him every success in his future role.

### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were noted.

### 3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Schools Forum held on 14 January 2020 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting pending the correction of the spelling of Derek Medcalf and the reference to Dr Elaine Allen in the attendance section.

Matters arising from the minutes were noted:

**Item 3: Election of Chairman** - it was noted that the election of the Chairman of the Schools Forum would be until July 2020 rather than January 2021 due to the retirement of Jo Hirst.

**Item 5: Minutes of the October 2019 meeting, Children's Centre update** – Hilary Wood confirmed that the process had concluded and the costs had been collated. The total cost was approximately £297k, an overspend of £47k on the available budget for 2019/20.

**Item 5: Minutes of the October 2019 meeting, Illuminate Funding** – in some cases certain barriers had been experienced with the process of applying for and receiving the Illuminate funding. It was agreed that Hilary Wood would discuss the issue with Paul Bainbridge.

**Item 5: Minutes of the October 2019 meeting, Risk Protection Arrangements** – it was reported that the risk protection insurance available to academies would be extended to maintained settings. As the Council's current insurance contract was entering the second year of a three-year arrangement, maintained schools would be contacted in the new financial year in respect of future options.

**Item 12: De-delegation of services and retention of funding for education functions 2020/21** – the balance relating to the fund for union duties would be available at the next meeting following the year-end closedown.

## MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING - TUESDAY, 10 MARCH 2020

### Resolved:

- **Hilary Wood to discuss the process of applying and receiving the Illuminate Funding with Paul Bainbridge.**
- **Hilary Wood to present the balance relating to the fund for union duties to the forum at the next meeting.**

### 4 PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

Nicky Dennison, Specialist in Public Health provided the update report. It was reported that the Free School Breakfast scheme funded by Public Health would be reviewed in conjunction with the school food plan and more healthy eating options. A consultation with schools would be undertaken to evaluate the current process and ways to improve the system; followed by a consultation with parents. In response to a question, it was noted that there was no central funding for the breakfast scheme and it was solely funded by Public Health. It was reported that some funding from the Sunday Times Charity Appeal had been received to address holiday hunger and the results of a bid for funding from the Department of Education for summer activities was awaited.

Colleagues were asked to note that there was a Bystander Stakeholder event on 19 March 2020 following the recent pilot in Blackpool. It was also noted that Very Brief Advice Training for Tobacco Dependence was available for school and college staff.

In response to a question as to whether tobacco advice was available for parents as raised at a previous forum, it was noted that no further updates were available.

Following a question relating to free period products available in schools including primary and special schools, Nicky Dennison agreed to check whether they were widely available.

It was agreed that the Public Health update report would be circulated to all headteachers for information.

### Resolved:

- **To circulate the Public Health update report to headteachers for information.**

### 5 LOCAL AUTHORITY AND INCLUSION UPDATE

Paul Turner, Head of Service for School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion provided the update report. Schools Forum members were asked to agree to the advertisement for the School Safeguarding Adviser role on a fixed term contract. It was outlined that the role would focus more on early help and supporting schools as well as providing ongoing school focussed training. Jeremy Mannino would continue to respond to school safeguarding concerns and investigating complaints. The fixed term role would be on a reduced salary scale and the difference between the salary and that of the School Safeguarding Adviser would be returned to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

In response to a query, it was noted that the post was temporary rather than permanent

## MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING - TUESDAY, 10 MARCH 2020

due to Jeremy Mannino assuming the role of Head of Virtual School on a fixed term basis. It was also noted that the role would be advertised on a local government salary scale but that this would not restrict applications for education staff.

Following consideration, Schools Forum agreed to the proposal to advertise to fill the School Safeguarding Adviser role on a fixed term contract as outlined.

Paul Turner provided further updates from the Local Authority and it was noted that St Nicholas School had received a Section 8 Ofsted visit. In relation to academies, Highfield Academy had received an Ofsted monitoring visit.

It was reported that the Local Authority had been selected again for a visit from the Standards and Testing Agency to look at the effectiveness of moderation arrangements.

The Inclusion data was considered and the picture for 2019-20 was largely similar to 2018-19. A significant number of absences were recorded due to the Norovirus and winter vomiting bug from both pupils and teachers.

In addition, it was reported that Century Tech could provide a free training offer to schools in the event of school closures due to Coronavirus and Paul Turner would circulate the relevant information to schools.

It was also reported that the pupil welfare service offered to maintained schools would gradually increase to become aligned with the service level agreement offered to academies. An anticipated 10% increase in costs was expected. In response to a question, it was noted that there would also be an increase per pupil for the cost of the off-site school visits system, Evolve.

Finally, Paul Turner confirmed that the Local Authority could no longer subsidise the Children's University; schools were welcome to administer the scheme themselves or in partnership with Blackpool and the Fylde College, but the Local Authority would now be unable to provide the non-statutory initiative at a subsidised rate.

It was agreed to share the Local Authority and Inclusion update report with headteachers for information.

### **Resolved:**

- **Schools Forum agreed to the proposal to advertise to fill the School Safeguarding Adviser role on a fixed term contract.**
- **To share the Local Authority and Inclusion update report with headteachers for information.**

## **6 CONTINUUM OF PROVISION**

(Liz Franey was in attendance for this item only)

Liz Franey, Head of Delivery for Blackpool and Oldham Opportunity Area attended the

## MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING - TUESDAY, 10 MARCH 2020

meeting to provide an update on the Continuum of Provision project at the request of the Schools Forum. It was reported that the project supported Priority Two of the Opportunity Area delivery plan to provide support for vulnerable children and families to improve attendance and outcomes and reduce exclusions. It was recognised that continuing high levels of permanent exclusions placed pressure on the Local Authority's alternative provision budget.

The governance arrangements were outlined to show how the project would be monitored and where the information would be considered.

The project progress was reported. It was noted that there were two monitoring meetings each term including the headteacher, project lead and Opportunity Area lead and the first meetings took place in February 2020. Details on the costs were scheduled to be presented at the end of March 2020 and an update would be available for Schools Forum following these meetings.

A question was raised as to why the report suggested that there had been a reduction in the number of Elective Home Education pupils, when other data presented to the Forum showed that numbers were 40 higher than at the same time last year. It was clarified that the rate of increase since the start of this year was lower than over the same period in the previous academic year, so the rate of increase was reducing.

A question was raised whether primary schools could have been included in the pilot, it was acknowledged that secondary schools were targeted as their statistics were significantly higher than national figures. It was acknowledged that there was good practice within primary settings.

In response to a question as to whether there would be funding available elsewhere for a primary project, it was noted that there would not be funding on the scale of the Continuum of Provision project, but a small pilot might be feasible.

Following discussion around devolved budgets, it was acknowledged that Schools Forum could decide whether alternative provision funds should be devolved to schools. It was acknowledged that the alternative provision budget line was set to reduce resulting from the Continuum of Provision Project.

Assurances were sought on value for money and it was asked whether there was any devolution of funding this year. It was noted that the only devolution of funding from the High Needs Block this year was to support the Continuum of Provision project. It was also noted that the project was funded for one year only.

Assurances were sought as to who would quality assure any new provision should the current alternative provision landscape change?

As a positive, it was acknowledged that secondary schools were working towards more inclusive provision as a result of the project.

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### Resolved:

- A clear outline of the budget and the options to be determined and discussed at the next meeting.

### 7 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET MONITORING 2019/20

Darren Maddocks, Senior Accountant, provided a report on the budget position of the 2019/20 Dedicated Schools Grant and the amount of Dedicated Schools Grant reserves as at 31 January 2020.

A forecast overspend of £2.501million was reported, an increase of £1.206million due to an increase in mainstream top up funding and an increase in out of area and special school provision. The predicted deficit forecast at March 2020 was £2.918million however the out of borough costs were increasing on a month by month basis.

In response to a question, it was noted that an increase in 'mainstream top up' resulted in a shift in the number of SEND pupils remaining in mainstream settings due to a positive change of culture and ethos to meet the needs of pupils in mainstream settings. A child without an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) but with additional needs could also now access mainstream top up funding.

In response to a further question, it was noted that new to area pupils were increasing the demands on the budget. It was noted that where pupils moved to the area and had high needs, this could not be predicted. It was also noted that there was no additional financial help from the government in these instances; the amount provided per high needs child of £4k did not cover placement costs. It was recognised that the government were launching a high needs review therefore robust data was required to illustrate the picture in Blackpool schools.

The report was noted.

### 8 HIGH NEEDS UPDATE

Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources provided an overview of the latest developments relevant to the High Needs Budget. As with other areas, Blackpool was experiencing financial pressures on its High Needs Budget. A medium term financial plan had been developed to monitor forecast expenditure against its High Needs Budget and factor in predictions of where savings may be achievable.

Despite the additional government funding, pupil numbers in Special Schools and Out of Borough placements continued their upward trend, leading to a position where costs exceeded funding allocations by more than £1m per year. It was assumed that the deficit against the Dedicated Schools Grant would reach over £4million by the end of 2020/21 rising to almost £9m by the end of 2024/25.

Efficiencies were being identified to address the overspend, looking at key areas of Special School provision, use of SERFs and tackling out of Borough placements.

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Expressions of interest had been requested from mainstream settings where they could accommodate provision for pupils with special education needs and disabilities reducing the expense of out of borough provision.

From comments, it was noted that secondary schools did want to support the initiative however there was a struggle with space in school buildings. A consultation on the use of SERFs would be undertaken between March 2020 and May 2020 to determine how they could be utilised. It was noted that the High Needs Funding Working Group could be used to feed back outcomes.

Following discussion, it was noted that the Local Authority would consult on all options to provide savings, resulting in an options paper outlining the savings and risk of using each option.

It was recognised that schools should encourage parents to choose a school placement for their child based on meeting their specific needs and not actively promote one school or deter from another. It was requested that headteachers worked together to encourage this message. It was also requested that the Local Authority issue robust messages to school settings on this subject.

Finally, it was noted that there would be two independent meetings facilitated by the Isos Partnership in March and May 2020 to discuss placements and headteachers and Chairs of Governors would be invited.

Hilary Wood reported that the forecast deficit at 31 March 2020 was more than 2% of the Dedicated Schools Grant allocation but the Department for Education (DfE) had revised its processes around deficit recovery therefore it was unclear whether Blackpool would be invited to provide the DfE with a deficit recovery plan.

In response to a question, it was noted that the timescales for consultation for next year's schools national funding formula had not been determined however there would be a two stage consultation.

(Councillor Benson, Roger Farley, Neil Adams, Simon Hughes and Simon Brennand left the meeting)

### **9 EARLY YEARS FUNDING FORMULA 2020/21**

Paul Sharples, School Funding and Private Finance Initiative Manager provided the update report. Schools Forum was asked to agree the local authority's proposed formula for Early Years funding for three and four year olds early education for 2020/21, as well as the value of the Inclusion Fund for 2020/21 and note the funding rate for two year olds of £5.09 per hour.

It was commented that there had been a closure of five settings within the town which could result in a reduction of early year's provision. It was also commented that the increase

## MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING - TUESDAY, 10 MARCH 2020

in staff wages had not been acknowledged in the increase. Hilary Wood reported that the rates had increased by 1.84%, which was less than the increase in the National Minimum Wage rate. The Department for Education had been made aware of the situation and agreed to raise the issue with the Treasury.

Following discussion, the voting school and Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) members agreed to the recommendations.

### **Resolved:**

- **To agree the local authority's proposed formula for Early Years funding for three and four year olds early education for 2020/21, as well as the value of the Inclusion Fund to raise from £10k (2019/20) to £30k (2020/21) and note the funding rate for two year olds of £5.09 per hour.**

### **10 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET PROPOSAL 2020/21**

Hilary Wood provided the update report to outline the proposals for the use of the Dedicated School Grant in 2020/21. Schools Forum was asked to agree to the proposal for future use of the DSG.

It was acknowledged that the provisional estimates outlined in January 2020 had been updated and presented.

The surplus funding from the Schools Block of £101k would be transferred to the High Needs Block to help offset ongoing pressures as agreed at the January 2020 Schools Forum meeting. Additionally, the surplus of £8k from the Central Schools Block was proposed to be transferred to the High Needs Block.

The High Needs Block spend was predicted at £23.617m against an allocation of £22.276m. The pressure of £1.34m would be partially offset from other blocks and result in an overspend of £1.232m.

Finally, on the Early Years Block, the allocation of £8.733m was shown as a breakeven position. The increase of 1.84% in funding from central government equated to 8 pence per child per hour in the provider rate. A review of local authority expenditure for early years had identified £44k savings to help to increase provider rates by 1pence per child per hour as well as increasing the Early Years Inclusion Fund from £10k to £30k.

Following a vote, Schools Forum agreed to the future use of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) as outlined in the report.

### **Resolved**

- **To agree the proposal for the future use of the DSG as outlined in the report.**

## MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING - TUESDAY, 10 MARCH 2020

### 11 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The Forum noted the date of the next meeting as Tuesday 16 June 2020 at 9.15am, @thegrange, Bathurst Avenue, Blackpool, FY3 7RW.

### Chairman

(The meeting ended 12.16)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:  
Danielle Bowater Democratic Governance Adviser  
Tel: 01253 477202  
E-mail: [danielle.bowater@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:danielle.bowater@blackpool.gov.uk)

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**Report to:** **SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**Relevant Officer:** Judith Mills, Consultant in Public Health  
**Date of Meeting:** 14 July 2020

## **PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE**

### **1.0 Purpose of the report:**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the following:

- Psychological first aid in emergencies training
- Smokefree Blackpool services (age12 years+)
- Fluoride Milk
- Relationships and Health Education
- Blackpool Summer of Fun

### **2.0 Recommendation(s):**

2.1 To receive the updates.

### **3.0 Background Information**

#### **3.1 Psychological first aid in emergencies training**

To inform schools about a new e-learning module from Public Health England. It is aimed at all frontline and essential workers and volunteers.

This course teaches the key principles of giving psychological first aid in emergencies and aims to increase awareness and confidence to provide this support to people affected by COVID-19.

The course is free, and no previous qualifications are required. By the end of the course, outcomes will include: understanding how emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic can affect us, recognising people who may be at increased risk of distress and understanding how to offer practical and emotional support. The course takes around 90 minutes to complete and is also available in three sessions for the learner to complete at their own pace. The training is available here

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/psychological-first-aid-covid-19/1>

#### **3.2 Smokefree Blackpool Services (Age 12 years+)**

Free helpline – A new helpline has been set up to support individuals quit. They can access an Advisor by contacting the new FREE helpline number 0808 196 4324. Individuals will be able to speak to an advisor for advice and support on stopping smoking and access FREE

nicotine replacement therapy or Champix to support their quit attempt.

Support via an app - The quit smoking App is like having a specialist advisor supporting individuals on a 24/7 basis - all available from the comfort of your smart phone. The App can help people to quit at any time of the day and can give support when it is most needed. The App has been tested and especially chosen by our expert team and we're confident it will help individuals to quit. It's FREE to download for Blackpool residents. Visit the Public Health website to find out more at [www.healthierblackpool.co.uk](http://www.healthierblackpool.co.uk)

Support via your local pharmacy or GP practice – visit the Public Health website for further details or contact Smokefree Blackpool helpline 0808 196 4324

### 3.3 **Fluoride Milk**

To advise that all the Primary Schools have received the Milk Fluoride leaflets for the children who are starting in Year 1 in September 2020. If schools have any problems in relation to the scheme they need to contact Alan Shaw, Public Health Practitioner on [alan.shaw@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:alan.shaw@blackpool.gov.uk)

### 3.4 **Relationships and Health Education**

Relationships and Health Education will become mandatory from September 2020. The DfE has given some flexibility to this and would like schools who are ready to begin teaching RSE and HE to commence as originally planned from September. However, because of COVID- 19 some schools may not have had a chance to engage with parents/carers, finalise policies to be accessible on their website, prepare the new curriculum content etc. So, if schools are part way through this process they have until the Summer term to organise. With the proviso that all schools will be teaching RSE and HE from the start of the summer term 2021.

Nicole Ronson (PSHE Support Officer) has been working with the PSHE leads in nearly all of the schools across Blackpool, providing training, networking opportunities and support as well as creating and managing two specific websites.

The first is a Teacher/school staff website, containing quality assured lesson plans from Early years to KS4, local service information, a Corona Virus tab as well as national charities and support mechanisms. This website has been shared with the PSHE Leads who have been invited to share this site with their wider school team. Since its launch in February 2019, there have been just short of 2,700 visits to the site.

<https://sites.google.com/headstart.blackpool.org.uk/pshe-parentcarer-site/home>

The second is a PSHE Parent/Carer website which was devised to be a “one stop shop” for Parents and Carers to visit to find out more information to help their family and to find out more about PSHE and ways to support the subject at home. You are invited to share the link on your school social media, website and/or newsletters, which I know several schools are doing already. Since the launch of the website, this academic year, the website has had over 1600 visits.

<https://sites.google.com/seaside.blackpool.org.uk/pshe/home>

If you need any further advice or information, please contact  
[Nicole.ronson@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:Nicole.ronson@blackpool.gov.uk)

### 3.5 **Blackpool Summer of Fun**

The Blackpool Holiday Activities Partnership are working with the Opportunity Area to develop a programme of Summer Holiday activities. The purpose of the project is to develop a Blackpool town-wide approach to holiday activities and food to help tackle COVID-19 recovery priorities. The aim of the project is to build upon existing activity in Blackpool ensuring that there is coherence and consistency to a joined-up approach that will deliver:

- Food and activities for CYP and families, particularly targeting those in need
- Learning catch up
- Behavioural/mental wellbeing/continuing connection with school
- NEET prevention

Plans are currently being developed with a range of Council departments, Head Start, Better Start, and third sector providers to provide the activities and food over the summer holiday period, which will be ready for the start of the Summer holidays.

Work is on-going with schools to look at whether premises can be used to support the holiday offer. In addition schools are being asked to work with the Opportunity Area to help communicate/promote the programme and to support in identifying the most vulnerable children and families that would benefit from taking part in the activities.

### 3.6 **Immunisations**

Thank you to schools for working with Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust in facilitating access to children in schools where possible or helping to find alternative venues and solutions to allow for the school based immunisations to take place. We will continue to support and advise you in this work as needed.

Public Health await national confirmation of the cohorts in the expanded flu programme. The only cohort confirmed are Year 7 (1<sup>st</sup> Year Secondary School) and work has begun with school based immunisation teams so they can begin to prepare how this will be undertaken.

### 4.0 **Acronyms**

DfE – Department for Education  
RSE – Relationships and Sex Education  
HE – Health Education  
PSHE – Personal, Social and Health Education  
NEET – Not in Education, Employment or Training

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**Report to:** **SCHOOLS FORUM**

**Relevant Officer:** Paul Turner, Head of Service for School Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion

**Date of Meeting:** 14 July 2020

## LOCAL AUTHORITY AND INCLUSION UPDATE

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To provide a high level overview of recent developments within the Local Authority to the forum.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To note the contents of the report.

### 3.0 Background Information

#### 3.1 LA update

Schools have now all returned, with limited cohorts. Over 3500 pupils accessed schools in the week beginning 29 June 2020. Plans are in place for a full return of pupils in September.

The Local Authority successfully advertised and filled the School Safeguarding Advisor role on a fixed-term contract, to focus more upon early help and supporting schools in this area of safeguarding, as well as providing ongoing school-focused training. This position will be at a reduced salary rate and the difference between this salary and the salary of the School Safeguarding Advisor will be returned to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The intention is to continue with this arrangement for two years. The post is called Schools Early Help and Safeguarding Officer. The successful candidate will start in September.

Ofsted inspections have been suspended since the last Forum meeting due to Covid 19.

The Blackpool School Improvement Board strategy has been drafted and sent to Headteachers and CEOs for comment by the end of the term.

The consultation on the Alternative Provision (AP) and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy ended on the 2 July 2020.

There is a draft town-wide literacy strategy that will be out for comments / consultation over the summer period.

#### 3.2 Academies

No updates.

**3.3 Statutory Assessment and Moderation**

This has been suspended throughout the Covid closure.

**3.4 Inclusion update**

No updates since the previous forum meeting due to Covid closure.

**4.0 Acronyms**

DSG – Dedicated Schools Grant

AP – Alternative Provision

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disability

**Report to:** **SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**Relevant Officer:** Mark Golden, Finance Manager  
**Date of Meeting:** 14 July 2020

## **DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET MONITORING 2019-2020**

### **1.0 Purpose of the report:**

- 1.1 To report the budget position of the Dedicated Schools Grant for the Financial Year Ended 31 March 2020 - Appendix 6(a).
- 1.2 To report the amount of Dedicated Schools Grant reserves as at 31 March 2020 – Appendix 6(b).

### **2.0 Recommendation:**

- 2.1 To note contents of the report.

### **3.0 Background:**

- 3.1 As reported at previous Forum meetings there are significant pressures on the High Needs Block.
- 3.2 Work is ongoing to manage the cost pressures with the development of a High Needs Block Medium Term Financial Plan incorporating an inclusion strategy and the opening of a new social, emotional and mental health Free School. However, expenditure continues to out strip Department for Education funding in the short term.
- 3.3 The High Needs Budget over spent by £1.462m in 2019-20 as a result of previously reported pressures in special schools, maintained top up funding and out of borough placements.
- 3.4 The Early Years Block over spent by £33k relating to a slightly higher demand for childcare places than budgeted.
- 3.5 The Schools Block under spent by £18k which was mainly as a result of the net saving from the Children’s Centre redesign.
- 3.6 Schools Forum set a deficit budget of £1.207m for the 2019-20 financial year, adding the over spend of £1.477m has resulted in a total in-year deficit of £2.683m. Therefore the position as at 31 March 2020, after incorporating the brought forward balance, is a deficit of £3.105m.

3.7 Maintained School balances increased slightly from £2.38m to £2.39m over the year to 31 March 2020, no schools are in deficit with an average balance as a percentage of School Budget Share at 11.6%.

**4.0 List of Appendices:**

- 4.1 Appendix 6(a) - Dedicated Schools Grant 2019-2020 Budget Monitoring Report to 31 March 2020.  
Appendix 6(b) - Dedicated Schools Grant Reserves as at 31 March 2020.

**List of Acronyms:**

DSG	-	Dedicated Schools Grant
LA	-	Local Authority
HNB	-	High Needs Block
SSA	-	Special Support Assistant
ESFA	-	Education and Skills Funding Agency
SERF	-	Special Education Referral Unit
PRU	-	Pupil Referral Unit

## Appendix 6(a) - Dedicated Schools Grant 2019-2020 Budget Monitoring Report to 31 March 2020

Service	2019/20						Comments
	Budget	In Year Adj.	Recoupment	Adjusted Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	
<b>Schools Block</b>							
Local School Budget							
- Delegated	82,313	0	(64,123)	18,190	18,190	0	
- Third Party & Public Liability Insurance (de-delegated)	0	0	0	0	0	0	
- Union Duties (de-delegated)	18	0	0	18	18	0	
- Free School Meals Eligibility Checks (de-delegated)	12	0	0	12	11	(1)	
- Education Functions (retained)	158	0	0	158	158	0	
Pupil Growth Contingency	77	0	590	667	667	0	
	82,578	0	(63,533)	19,045	19,044	(1)	
<b>Central School Services Block</b>							
Servicing of Schools Forum	15	0	0	15	15	0	
Licences & Subscriptions	85	0	0	85	85	0	
School Admissions	153	0	0	153	153	0	
Contribution to Combined Budgets - Children's Centres	1,000	0	0	1,000	983	(17)	
Former ESG Retained Duties							
- Education Welfare	204	0	0	204	204	0	
- Asset Management	57	0	0	57	57	0	
- Statutory / Regulatory Duties	77	0	0	77	77	0	
	1,591	0	0	1,591	1,574	(17)	
<b>Total Schools Block</b>	<b>84,169</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(63,533)</b>	<b>20,636</b>	<b>20,618</b>	<b>(18)</b>	
<b>High Needs Block</b>							
<b>Special Schools</b>							
Place Funding	4,677	0	(2,565)	2,112	2,314	202	Increase in numbers
Top-up Funding	2,470	0	0	2,470	2,768	298	Increase in numbers
<b>SERFs</b>							
Place Funding	320	0	(80)	240	240	0	
Top-up Funding	105	0	0	105	111	6	
Transport	77	0	0	77	54	(23)	Transport SLA
<b>Pupil Referral Units</b>							
Place Funding	2,533	0	0	2,533	2,533	0	
Top-up Funding	1,303	0	0	1,303	1,147	(156)	Higher than expected Charge to Schools
Other AP	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Mainstream Schools</b>							
Top-up Funding	833	0	0	833	1,250	417	Increased demand
Exceptional Circumstances Funding	163	0	0	163	119	(44)	Forecast Lower than Predicted
Post-16 Education	2,023	0	(696)	1,327	1,334	7	
Out of Borough	4,440	0	0	4,440	5,081	641	£549k Placements, £92k Transport SLA
Specialist Advisory and Referral Service (SARS)	1,082	0	0	1,082	1,028	(54)	Non Staffing Savings
Access and Inclusion	335	0	0	335	508	173	Continuum of Provision
Other High Needs Central Services (Management, Central Support Costs, Admin Support, Pension Top-slice)	772	0	0	772	767	(5)	
<b>Total High Needs Block</b>	<b>21,133</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(3,341)</b>	<b>17,792</b>	<b>19,254</b>	<b>1,462</b>	
<b>Early Years Block</b>							
2 Year Old Grants	1,750	(131)	0	1,619	1,788	169	
Early Years Pupil Premium	111	(11)	0	100	99	(1)	
3 & 4 Year Old Grants	6,659	(274)	0	6,385	6,266	(119)	
Early Years Inclusion Fund	10	0	0	10	10	0	
Disability Access Fund	47	0	0	47	47	0	
Early Years Central Services	421	0	0	421	405	(16)	
<b>Total Early Years Block</b>	<b>8,998</b>	<b>(416)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8,582</b>	<b>8,615</b>	<b>33</b>	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>114,300</b>	<b>(416)</b>	<b>(66,874)</b>	<b>47,010</b>	<b>48,487</b>	<b>1,477</b>	
<b>Dedicated Schools Grant Income</b>	<b>(113,093)</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>66,977</b>	<b>(45,701)</b>	<b>(45,701)</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Post-16 funding from the EFA</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(103)</b>	<b>(103)</b>	<b>(103)</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(113,093)</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>66,874</b>	<b>(45,804)</b>	<b>(45,804)</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>In year (under)/over spend</b>	<b>1,207</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,206</b>	<b>2,683</b>	<b>1,477</b>	

**Appendix 6(b) - Dedicated Schools Grant Reserves as at 31 March 2020**

Description	Brought Forward 1st April 2019	Total Forecast Expenditure FY 2019-20	Forecast Surplus / (Deficit) at 31st March 2020	Comments
DSG Reserve	(421,849)	2,682,909	(3,104,758)	

**Report to:** **SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**Relevant Officer:** Mark Golden, Finance Manager  
**Date of Meeting:** 14 July 2020

## **DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET MONITORING 2020-2021**

### **1.0 Purpose of the report:**

- 1.1 To report the budget position of the 2020-21 Dedicated Schools Grant as at 31 May 2020 - Appendix 7(a).
- 1.2 To report the amount of Dedicated Schools Grant reserves as at 31 May 2020 – Appendix 7(b).

### **2.0 Recommendation:**

- 2.1 To note contents of the report.

### **3.0 Background:**

- 3.1 The monitoring report at appendix 7(a) reflects the budgets as approved at the March 2020 Schools Forum.
- 3.2 Early budget monitoring is forecasting a £193k over spend against a deficit budget of £1.232m. Therefore, the total in-year shortfall is estimated at £1.425m. Added to the brought forward deficit of £3.105m the resulting forecast DSG deficit by 31 March 2021 is £4.530m.

### **4.0 List of Appendices:**

- 4.1 Appendix 7(a) - Dedicated Schools Grant 2020-2021 Budget Monitoring Report to 31 May 2020.
- Appendix 7(b) - Dedicated Schools Grant Reserves as at 31 May 2020.

### **List of Acronyms:**

DSG	-	Dedicated Schools Grant
LA	-	Local Authority
HNB	-	High Needs Block
SSA	-	Special Support Assistant
ESFA	-	Education and Skills Funding Agency
SERF	-	Special Education Referral Unit
PRU	-	Pupil Referral Unit

## Appendix 7(a) - Dedicated Schools Grant 2020-2021 Budget Monitoring Report to 31 May 2020

Service	2020/21							Comments
	Budget	In Year Adj.	Recoupment	Adjusted Budget	Forecast Outturn	Previous Month	Variance	
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	
<b>Schools Block</b>								
Local School Budget								
- Delegated	88,191	0	0	88,191	88,191	0	0	
- Third Party & Public Liability Insurance (de-delegated)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
- Union Duties (de-delegated)	18	0	0	18	18	0	0	
- Free School Meals Eligibility Checks (de-delegated)	14	0	0	14	14	0	0	
- Education Functions (retained)	161	0	0	161	161	0	0	
Pupil Growth Contingency	180	0	0	180	180	0	0	
	88,564	0	0	88,564	88,564	0	0	
<b>Central School Services Block</b>								
Servicing of Schools Forum	16	0	0	16	16	0	0	
Licences & Subscriptions	88	0	0	88	88	0	0	
School Admissions	160	0	0	160	160	0	0	
Contribution to Combined Budgets - Children's Centres	800	0	0	800	800	0	0	
Former ESG Retained Duties								
- Education Welfare	212	0	0	212	212	0	0	
- Asset Management	59	0	0	59	59	0	0	
- Statutory / Regulatory Duties	80	0	0	80	80	0	0	
	1,415	0	0	1,415	1,415	0	0	
<b>Total Schools Block</b>	<b>89,979</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>89,979</b>	<b>89,979</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>High Needs Block</b>								
<b>Special Schools</b>								
Place Funding	5,000	0	0	5,000	5,090	0	90	Increase in numbers
Top-up Funding	3,048	0	0	3,047	3,038	0	(9)	
<b>SERFs</b>								
Place Funding	320	0	0	320	320	0	0	
Top-up Funding	111	0	0	111	112	0	1	
Transport	48	0	0	48	48	0	0	
<b>Pupil Referral Units</b>								
Place Funding	2,208	0	0	2,208	2,208	0	0	
Top-up Funding	1,112	0	0	1,112	1,112	0	0	
Other AP	165	0	0	165	165	0	0	
<b>Mainstream Schools</b>								
Top-up Funding	1,550	0	0	1,550	1,557	0	7	
Exceptional Circumstances Funding	96	0	0	96	134	0	38	Based on Early Forecast 20/21
Post-16 Education	2,082	0	0	2,082	2,082	0	0	
Out of Borough	5,344	0	0	5,345	5,347	0	2	
Specialist Advisory and Referral Service (SARS)	1,064	0	0	1,064	1,064	0	0	
Access and Inclusion	698	0	0	698	738	0	40	Cost of Oracle building until Dec 20
Other High Needs Central Services (Management, Central Support Costs, Admin Support, Pension Top-slice)	772	0	0	772	772	0	0	
<b>Total High Needs Block</b>	<b>23,618</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23,618</b>	<b>23,787</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>169</b>	
<b>Early Years Block</b>								
2 Year Old Grants	1,650	0	0	1,650	1,650	0	0	
Early Years Pupil Premium	100	0	0	100	100	0	0	
3 & 4 Year Old Grants	6,529	0	0	6,529	6,553	0	24	Additional Cost of Early Years Placements due to Covid
Early Years Inclusion Fund	30	0	0	30	30	0	0	
Disability Access Fund	47	0	0	47	47	0	0	
Early Years Central Services	377	0	0	377	377	0	0	
<b>Total Early Years Block</b>	<b>8,733</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8,733</b>	<b>8,757</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24</b>	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>122,330</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>122,330</b>	<b>122,523</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>193</b>	
<b>Dedicated Schools Grant Income</b>	<b>(121,098)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(121,098)</b>	<b>(121,098)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(121,098)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(121,098)</b>	<b>(121,098)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>In year (under)/over spend</b>	<b>1,232</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,232</b>	<b>1,425</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>193</b>	

**Appendix 7(b) - Dedicated Schools Grant Reserves**

Description	Brought Forward 1st April 2020	Total Forecast Expenditure FY 2020-21	Forecast Surplus / (Deficit) at 31st March 2021	Comments
DSG Reserve	(3,104,758)	1,425,000	(4,529,758)	

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**Report to:** **SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**Relevant Officer:** Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources  
**Date of Meeting:** 14 July 2020

## HIGH NEEDS UPDATE

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To update Schools Forum members on latest developments relevant to the High Needs budget.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To note the contents of this report.

To agree the support for the proposals outlined in Appendix 8B (Blackpool's vision for exceptional SEND and Alternative Provision – Proposals for change June 2020).

### 3.0 Background Information

- 3.1 As reported in previous meetings, Blackpool, along with many other areas around the country, is experiencing financial pressures on its High Needs Budget. In order to better understand Blackpool's financial position, a medium-term financial plan has been developed to monitor forecast expenditure against the High Needs Budget, and factor in predictions of where savings may be achievable.
- 3.2 The medium-term plan has been revised to take account of updated forecasts (see Appendix 8A to this report).
- 3.3 Despite additional government funding, pupil numbers in special schools and Out of Borough placements are continuing their upward trend, leading to a position where costs exceed funding allocations by £1.2 million in 2020/21, reducing to over £600k per annum in future years. Using this set of assumptions, the cumulative deficit against the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) would reach over £4 million by the end of 2020/21, rising to more than £7 million by the end of 2024/25.
- 3.4 It is therefore clear that, despite the additional funding from central government, radical action is still required in order to reverse the continuing upward trend in costs.

## **Blackpool's Vision for Exceptional SEND and Alternative Provision**

- 3.5 At the informal meeting of Schools Forum on 16 June 2020, members considered the local authority's vision for the future landscape of SEND and Alternative Provision, and a number of proposals to deliver the vision (see Appendix 8B to this report). The financial summary contained within the paper shows how the proposals could realise financial savings of up to £1.8 million per annum, recovering the majority of the DSG deficit over the life of the medium-term financial plan.
- 3.6 The vision and proposals were shared with school leaders following the meeting, and views sought. In total, seven responses were received, representing the views across 12 Blackpool schools and academies.
- 3.7 While the response rate was relatively low, those who did respond supported eight of the nine proposals either fully or to some extent, and only one respondent did not support the other proposal. A summary of the responses can be seen at Appendix 8C to this report.
- 3.8 The consultation also collected comments from respondents on each of the proposals, and the local authority would like to thank those colleagues who took the time to share their views. These views will help to shape the next stage of the design of solutions.
- 3.9 Given the level of support expressed, the local authority intends to move forwards with the implementation of the proposals in close liaison with those stakeholders involved, and with appropriate engagement with parents and carers.

## **Lotus School update**

- 3.10 As previously reported, Lotus Special School is due to open on Langdale Road in September 2020, and will provide 48 places for 10 to 16 year olds with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. This is a vital part of the High Needs medium-term financial plan, as it will provide cost effective local provision, and avoid the need to place pupils in more expensive out of borough independent settings.
- 3.11 The construction of the building is well underway and, despite some initial setbacks due to Covid-19, continues to be track to be completed for the planned opening in September 2020. The local authority is liaising closely with Champion Education Trust regarding the identification of pupils who will take up places in the new school, and the broad assumptions that had been made within the medium-term plan have now been replaced with more accurate forecasts of costs, as well as savings elsewhere in the High Needs budget.

**List of acronyms:**

DSG – Dedicated Schools Grant

**List of Appendices:**

Appendix 8A: High Needs Medium-Term Financial Plan

Appendix 8B: Blackpool’s vision for exceptional SEND and Alternative Provision – Proposals for change June 2020

Appendix 8C: Summary of responses to SEND and Alternative Provision consultation

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**High Needs Block Medium-Term Financial Plan**

Forecasts exclude inflationary impact, and costs and income are stated at 2020/21 levels

Service	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Notes Current Version
	Actual £000s	Actual £000s	Forecast £000s	Budget £000s	Budget £000s	Budget £000s	Budget £000s	
<b>High Needs Block</b>								
New Free School (opening September 2020 - c£1m pa when full)	-	-	397	829	1,002	1,050	1,050	Assumes 24 places from September 2020, increasing to 40 from September 2021 & 48 places from September 22
<b>Special Schools</b>								
Place Funding	4,093	4,879	4,950	4,921	4,900	4,900	4,900	Special School places: from April 2020 290 (P), 85 (HF), 120 (W); from September 2021 290 (P), 80 (HF), 120 (W)
Top-up Funding	2,548	2,768	2,781	3,240	3,502	3,537	3,570	Special School top-up: based on March 2020 figures
<b>SERFs</b>								
Place Funding	395	320	320	320	320	320	320	Highfield and Marton SERFs decommissioned from September 2018
Top-up Funding	153	111	112	112	112	112	112	Highfield and Marton SERFs decommissioned from September 2018
Transport	64	54	48	48	48	48	48	
<b>AP Provision</b>								
PRU - Place Funding	2,580	2,533	2,208	1,913	1,850	1,850	1,850	Reduced from 250 places to 200 from September 2020, 185 from September 2021
PRU - Top-up Funding	1,260	1,147	1,112	881	908	908	908	Forecast numbers:- September 2019 to March 2020 240, April to August 2020 272, September 2020 to March 2021 182, April to August 2021 215, September 2021 to March 2022 147, April to August 2022 178, September 2022 to March 2023 152
Other AP		-	165	165	165	165	165	
<b>Mainstream Schools</b>								
Top-up Funding	984	1,250	1,556	1,556	1,556	1,556	1,556	
Exceptional Circumstances Funding	64	119	134	134	134	134	134	
Post-16 Education	2,031	2,030	2,082	2,082	2,082	2,082	2,082	
Out of Borough	4,187	5,081	5,347	4,819	4,454	4,314	4,314	Based on 16 year-olds leaving, 40 new placements each year @£30k per place, offset by transfers into new Free School starting in September 2020
Specialist Advisory and Referral Service (SARS)	1,044	1,028	1,064	1,064	1,064	1,064	1,064	
Access and Inclusion	232	508	738	581	581	581	581	
Other High Needs Central Services	767	767	772	772	772	772	772	
(Management, Central Support Costs, Admin Support, Pension Top-slice)								
<b>Total High Needs Block Expenditure</b>	<b>20,402</b>	<b>22,594</b>	<b>23,785</b>	<b>23,436</b>	<b>23,450</b>	<b>23,393</b>	<b>23,426</b>	
Available High Needs Block funding	18,957	19,496	22,416	22,609	22,723	22,756	22,756	Includes additional funding for new Special Free School
Additional High Needs Block allocation in-year	296	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Schools Block Transfer	400	431	109	-	-	-	-	
Central Schools Services Block			8					
Council Funding	400	-	-	-	-	-	-	
<b>HNB (Surplus) / Deficit</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>2,667</b>	<b>1,252</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>727</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>670</b>	
<b>Cumulative HNB (Surplus) / Deficit</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>3,016</b>	<b>4,268</b>	<b>5,095</b>	<b>5,822</b>	<b>6,459</b>	<b>7,129</b>	
<b>Movement</b>		<b>2,318</b>	<b>(1,415)</b>	<b>(426)</b>	<b>(99)</b>	<b>(90)</b>	<b>33</b>	

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# Blackpool's vision for exceptional SEND and Alternative Provision – Proposals for change June 2020

Blackpool Council



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## Introduction -

It has been acknowledged for many years that Blackpool is one of the most deprived local authorities in England. The Council's Town Prospectus '2030 Agenda for Action' makes clear the scale of the challenge.

*'The statistics are stark. Low wages, low employment rates, high levels of benefit claimants and high exclusion rates from school mean that child poverty is unacceptably prevalent in the town. During a decade of dwindling budgets for local authorities the town has managed to maintain a level of optimism and ambition...And with young people underperforming at GCSE level, aspirations in the town are frequently low.'*

The creation of the Blackpool School Improvement Board and the establishment of the Blackpool Opportunity Area in 2017 provided added stimulus and energy as well as, in the case of the Opportunity Area, over £6m of government funding. The Blackpool Opportunity Area's ambition is to ensure 'no Blackpool child is left behind'. To achieve this, local schools, colleges, businesses and community organisations were brought together to form the Opportunity Area Board and to work alongside the existing school improvement board structure. Collectively, we all want to challenge perceptions and expectations about Blackpool, and raise the aspirations of children, young people and families, and of the professionals who work to educate and support them.

Within the population of children and young people in Blackpool a significant proportion require additional help and support to achieve their full potential. Many of these children and young people are successfully educated in their local school whilst others require more specialist support and guidance.

It is our belief that Blackpool children should be educated in a local school. Collectively, we do our utmost to make the experience relevant, enjoyable and of the highest quality. We judge a child's experience of education not only by how well they do educationally, but also how well they develop emotionally and grow personally, developing an ability to cope in their future lives and becoming resilient. We are proud of the many children and young people who are a credit to their families and to the town.

The perceptions of Blackpool and the quality of the education that they receive are changing. There is greater ambition and more targeted support and intervention than in recent years. These improvements have reinforced our commitment to the principle of local schools for local children. We know that when Blackpool children stay within Blackpool they generally achieve well and often better than when they have to access specialist provision out of borough.

We know that the local authority must provide a clear vision and strategy for the future. This is the only way we can ensure that all vulnerable children and young people achieve their full potential and 'no Blackpool child is left behind'. We believe that schools and colleges should be at the forefront of the delivery of these services, wherever possible. The local authority must have oversight and establish the framework for the relationships with a

wide range of service deliverers. We are setting out our view on the vision, strategy and framework in this consultation document.

We believe that we need to work with all interested and relevant partners to further improve the provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities and those with high needs, within the town. This paper brings together the significant discussions that have taken place in the past few months including the expressions of interest regarding Special Educational Needs Resource Provisions and proposals for the work of the Pupil Referral Unit and the development of school based specialist resource centres.

We welcome constructive comments on our proposals and hope that we can unite behind a plan that overflows with ambition, realism and co-operation.

Diane Booth  
Director of Children's Services  
June 2020

## The Vision we hope for is simple: -

**All children and young people have the right support and opportunities at the right time, so that they become resilient, happy and successful in their adulthood.**

Blackpool is committed to early intervention and prevention, providing early help in a timely way so that the needs of local children and young people do not increase. Making sure that we identify needs early and provide the right support, is key to improving outcomes for children and young people.

We want the journey from childhood to adolescence and through to adulthood to be a good and positive experience for every child and young person. We want them to be given the right information, advice and guidance in the right way and at the right time depending on their needs. We want young people's experience of adolescence to be one where taking informed risks, making choices, being challenged and challenging boundaries is about the journey in adulthood.

We want to provide a well-planned continuum of provision from birth to age 25. This means high quality, well-integrated services across education and health and social care, which work closely with young people, their parents and carers to meet individual needs without unnecessary bureaucracy or delay. This will be in universal and mainstream settings wherever possible and where more specialist help is needed, we will aim to provide the majority of this in Blackpool.

We want to ensure that there is a clear rationale for the proposals we are making. We are trying to extend the range of specialist provision available within our secondary schools, under their leadership and we want to increase the specialist support that is available through specialist teachers and resourced provision in our primary schools. Our intention is to delegate as many resources and as much funding to schools as possible so that they are able to take a much stronger lead across the spectrum of educational provision within Blackpool, rather than the Council acting as the sole commissioner. We believe that we can achieve this whilst maintaining the Council's statutory duties.

**But we are under no illusion, there remain some important problems and issues to resolve together to enable us to achieve our ambition of excellent local schools for all local children and young people.**

- The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) will heavily overspend and runs the risk of failing some vulnerable children in the medium term.
- The government has made clear it will expect robust plans to eradicate any overspend over time. If this is not achieved there is the potential of the government removing control of the grant.
- The proportion of the DSG grant spent on 'Out of Borough' placements, top up payments and placements in Blackpool for children and young people with SEND is very high.
- The Council has embarked on a review of SEND provision and has requested expressions of interest from local schools to establish specialist provision. This approach

will significantly improve the educational experience for many children, reduce the travel involved and be more cost effective.

- Blackpool's excellent special schools are full with limited opportunities to increase capacity.
- Pupil referral provision in Blackpool is strong but largely focused on admitting children and young people to the PRU.
- Despite strong Special Educational Needs Resource Facility (SERF) provision and a strong Pupil Referral Provision, we need to ensure that they are even more successful in reintegrating local children back into their local schools.
- The range of local alternative provision is currently limited, resulting in some young people being educated outside of the town at great expense and with, at times, disappointing outcomes.
- There is limited specialist, short term provision, including 'medical' provision, in the town where children can be 'dual registered'.

**We want to harness the collective knowledge and experience of every stakeholder in Blackpool and to work in partnership, with real tenacity, agreeing and then delivering the changes that we must make. The way forwards must be a collaborative Blackpool solution that draws on the best practice available locally and nationally.**

In supporting all vulnerable children in Blackpool, the Council must ensure:

- A. That there is sufficient quantity, quality and range of provision available.
- B. That the available provision is used effectively bearing in mind financial constraints, all parties' legal responsibilities and the agreed strategic direction.
- C. That the local provision is judged as being effective because of the way that it responds to local needs, because of the outcomes achieved by the children and young people and because best value is assured.

### **Why?**

Currently, not all children are as well prepared for the next stages of their journey as they could be. *We must make these changes so that all children make good progress in their learning and move easily to the next stage of their education and so that every child's needs can be met as far as possible in their local community.*

### **What are we proposing and what is changing?**

The proposals set out on the following pages bring together the cases for change across all aspects of support and provision for High Needs pupils, including SEND, inclusion and Alternative Provision. The proposals have been formulated in collaboration with education system leaders and reflect a strategic approach to realising our shared vision for Blackpool's children and young people.

# Proposal 1 – Enhanced SEND and inclusion advisory support for schools

## Case for change

Currently there is a small central service provided by the local authority's Inclusion Team. The skills through the Advisory Teachers within this team cover Sensory Support, SLCN Support, Cognition and Learning Support and SEMH Support. The team offer a limited core offer. Schools also have access to support from a Special School Offer and an offer from Educational Diversity.

Most pupils who are permanently excluded in Blackpool are from the Secondary sector. Many of the reasons why these pupils are permanently excluded are long-standing and could be prevented through early identification and specialist support within the Primary phase. Our current level of support is not able to meet the needs of the pupils identified at SEN Support in all areas of Categories of Need.

## Proposal

The proposal is to address SEN issues fully when they first appear by supporting both practitioners and the children through a graduated response so that their needs continue to be met as they progress through their education.

To do this we will enhance the SEND Support Offer available to settings/schools by building a model of practice built upon a strong evidence base, delivered by a highly skilled set of practitioners. To do this we plan to use expertise from within the Local Authority and the Pupil Referral Unit to build a partnership model that enhances on-site provision and support to schools.

The model will be committed to 'closing the gap' in terms of attainment and draw on available expertise in the following areas:

- *Social Communication and Interaction*
- *Social Emotional and Mental Health*
- *Speech Language and Communication*
- *Cognition and Learning*
- *Physical and Sensory*

The support offer will include a core offer for each school funded through the High Needs Block and a traded offer that schools can purchase if they wish.

Core Offer (funded through the HNB):

- Working with individuals and groups of pupils through observation and specialist assessment to deliver a range of interventions that address individual learning needs.

- Supporting professional development by providing lower level bespoke training and SENDCo Networks.

Traded Offer:

- Detailed bespoke packages of support for individual children.
- Developing knowledge about / increasing the range of teaching approaches.
- A comprehensive range of SEND related training.
- Whole School Training delivered to individual schools or across a cluster.

### What we want to accomplish

This proposal will offer an enhanced, flexible and tailored service. We believe that this will better meet individual school needs, including through support to individuals and groups of pupils, as well as the development of staff through structured professional development.

We will provide support for schools, particularly those in early years and primary settings, so that children ‘at risk’ of exclusion are helped at an earlier stage by specialist support. This will ensure Blackpool children and young people get the “**right placement at the right time**”.

We want to support our schools to reduce the levels of PEX in the Secondary sector by addressing issues at their earliest point of identification, by providing specialist intervention and support for the pupils who are identified, before they reach the point of crisis.

### Financial impact

An advisory teacher for cognition and learning and three family support workers will bolster the current central team. These new posts will have a particular focus on supporting children with Autism and will ensure that the Local Area is fulfilling its duties under the Autism Act. Additional costs will be offset by increased income from schools for the traded offer.

While this proposal will result in a more costly model than that currently in place, it aims to rectify the current under-resourcing of early intervention and support to pupils, particularly in primary schools. It is anticipated that it will help to enable a greater proportion of pupils with additional needs to be appropriately supported, and enhance the skills of those professionals working with them. In this respect, this is an invest-to-save proposal that will lead to a more effective system and better outcomes for children.

Proposal	Full-year saving/ (cost)	Timescale for full implementation	Projected 5 year cumulative savings/ (cost)
Enhanced SEND and inclusion advisory support for schools	Net nil	Year 1	Net nil

## Proposal 2 – In-school Inclusion provision in the Secondary Academy sector

### Case for change

We want to give schools greater ownership over how the High Needs Block funding allocation is spent, through specific SLAs drawn up with individual schools, or groups of schools, that address the long-standing issues in Blackpool and improve the town-wide offer to children and families.

In a coordinated attempt to establish sustainable, high quality inclusion provision in schools, we undertook a joint endeavour between Blackpool Council and the Opportunity Area, funded through DFE funding, core Council funding and Opportunity Area grants in 2019.

The Council funding was a “one off” as the opportunity for Councils to transfer funding to DSG has now ceased, due to legislative change. To allocate funding to these provisions in the future we must, collectively, realise savings elsewhere.

### Proposal

Following the success of the introduction of a grant to secondary schools in 2019-2020 to support the development of specialist in-house provision, we intend drawing on the DSG to continue allocating annual funding over a three-year period. It is hoped that the Opportunity Area will be in a position to match-fund the High Needs allocation in 2020-21. This will help to further strengthen this provision, off-setting the costs to the High Needs Block of the DSG, by reducing the numbers of permanently excluded pupils. This funding is contingent upon a maximum of three permanently excluded students per secondary school, per academic year, and penalties of £10k per pupil will continue for permanent exclusions above this level in the school or across the trust.

Reducing permanent exclusions from the historical highs to the current lows is a major achievement and is the reason why we are keen to try and maintain some level of support for this work, acknowledging that it is at an early stage of development. Unfortunately, the reduction in permanent exclusions only frees up a proportion of the £120,000 that was granted to schools in the 2019-20 school year. We therefore believe that a three-year, incremental reduction in these payments, down to a yearly payment of £40,000 by 2021-22 school year, is a reasonable ambition. This level of funding is covered by the reduction in High Needs costs generated through fewer permanent exclusions.

We also propose to extend the Illuminate funding of £2k per pupil to apply to secondary pupils admitted to mainstream schools through the In-Year Fair Access Panel in order to facilitate inclusion for those hard-to-place pupils.

This approach sees some continuation of the financial support offered last year. We expect that as the provision becomes more established each school can begin to consider establishing service level agreements with other providers, including local secondary schools

so that expertise is shared for the benefit of all Blackpool children and young people. We would like the funding to be more but the Council is constrained, however, we hope that schools can contribute to costs through an improved funding formula allocation for Blackpool secondary academies from September 2020.

To ensure transparency and reduce burden on individual schools and/or multi academy trusts we will establish a quality assurance panel, chaired by an independent person, to ensure that the provision meets the needs of the pupils and the town.

**What we want to accomplish**

We are confident that this proposal will deliver a sustainable, inclusive provision in each Secondary Academy that maintains the town-wide level of PEX at 24 or lower in each school year at Secondary level. We are also confident that schools will be in a position to reintegrate the pupils who have been permanently excluded from other schools, after a period of supportive and therapeutic work with an AP provider, due to this endeavour providing increased space and capacity at the PRU to work with the pupils most in need.

**Financial impact**

The funding pattern is detailed here –

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Amount available per Secondary Academy</b>	<b>OA match funding</b>
<b>2019-20</b>	<b>£120,000</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>2020-21</b>	<b>£80,000</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>2021-22</b>	<b>£40,000</b>	<b>No</b>

(We are seeking to joint fund this proposal in 2020-2021 with the Opportunity Area providing £320,000)

There will be a charge to Secondary Academies of £10,000 per PEX if they exceed 3 PEX per year. This will be reviewed in 2021-22 with a view to reducing the allowable number of PEX to 2 per school in 2022-23, with the potential of freeing up some funding to continue the funding and reducing the over-spend in the HNB.

The Illuminate pot of £40k will be doubled to allow for the extension of funding to secondary pupils admitted through the In-Year Fair Access panel.

Additional funding may be available to any school who wishes to provide a specialist SEND or AP resources, to meet a specific need in Blackpool, which reduces our high-level costs as a town, at the same time as meeting the needs of pupils and improving outcomes.

Proposal	Full-year saving / (cost)	Timescale for full implementation	Projected 5 year cumulative savings / (cost)
In-school Inclusion provision in the Secondary Academy sector	(£40k)	N/A	(£183k)

## **Proposal 3 – Realign the work of the primary behaviour SERFs with Educational Diversity primary provision**

### **Case for change**

In Blackpool currently there are four SERF units across three schools, providing a maximum of 32 places, which have predominantly been working at full capacity. The success rate of reintegrating the children back into their mainstream provision has decreased over the last couple of years and this is an indication of the complexity of the children's needs and the concern around their needs positively being met within mainstream settings.

### **Proposal**

The proposal is to realign the work of the central support teams towards early, preventative services for those children who present with behaviour challenges in mainstream settings. In addition, we will provide short term interventions with a view to the successful reintegration of the pupils into their 'home' schools, through the establishment of:

- 1 x KS1 SERF Provision with capacity for 8 children.
- Increased KS2 PRU Provision with capacity for an additional 16 children.

All provision will be with an insistence upon the dual-registration status of the pupils, working with the referring school during the length of the placement, supported by specialist staff within the referring school.

Referring schools will continue to be able to access places at the KS1 SERF provision without charge (although pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding will have that funding transferred to the host school). Places in the KS2 PRU provision will be chargeable in line with existing rates for dual registered pupils.

Initial consultations with the schools that currently host SERF provision and with Educational Diversity have taken place. Two schools are willing to close their SERF provisions, with the third willing to retain theirs for the purpose of KS1 pupils.

### **What we want to accomplish**

We want to provide increased support to mainstream schools so that they can more effectively manage and meet the needs of children with SEND, especially as they transition to the secondary phase.

### **Financial impact**

While this proposal is predicted to release a modest saving, the main benefit is anticipated to be the enhanced support for mainstream schools leading to improved practices within schools and better outcomes for children.

Proposal	Full-year saving	Timescale for full implementation	Projected 5 year cumulative savings
Realign the work of the primary behaviour SERFs with Educational Diversity primary provision	£126k	Year 1	£451k

## **Proposal 4 – Revised PRU offer focusing upon short-term interventions and reintegration**

### **Case for change**

Historically, since 2012, when a decision was made to reduce levels of PEX by educating large numbers of pupils in the PRU, the numbers of children have hit a peak of over 300 on a number of years, only recently reducing rapidly because of the measures that we have collectively put in place. Outcomes for pupils who are educated in alternative provision are statistically much lower than for those pupils in mainstream schools and by reducing the numbers of pupils in the PRU we have made steps to address this.

Furthermore, the Hospital School / Medical provision in Blackpool has recently had a heavy focus upon pupils who struggle with their mental health. Waiting times for CAMHS are lengthy and many children wait a considerable length of time to access an appointment and may find it difficult to access these appointments when they are available.

### **Proposal**

As the number of permanently excluded pupils has fallen in the past year there is now an opportunity to refocus the work of the PRU towards preventative services by providing more short-term intervention with a view to the successful reintegration of pupils into their 'home' school.

We will improve the specialist mental health provision within the Hospital School offer so that children receive the best quality, supportive, therapeutic offer, tailored to their needs. On site at the PRU there will be a specialist mental health practitioner who can provide tailored, specific support to children, so that they can then reintegrate back to their referring school with a package of support and ongoing access to CAMHS, where required. Pupils who are accessing this support will receive an increased level of "top-up" which will fund this practitioner.

### **What we want to accomplish**

The Pupil Referral Unit will be freed up to educate those pupils who are truly in need of specialist support and intervention, improving their outcomes by successfully reintegrating them back into mainstream settings, or providing them with high quality care and education, in low numbers and allowing them to progress on to further education, training or work. This will be achieved by keeping the numbers on roll at the PRU low and by enhancing the provision that they offer, on a dual-registration basis.

We will also build upon the current specialisms of the PRU, building the provision so that it is an outstanding provider of alternative provision, with a highly relevant, high quality curriculum and pathways into employment or training for all.

We want to have a highly effective, supportive provision that focuses upon improving the mental health of children at our Hospital School / Medical provision. This will be in partnership with the NHS providers in the local area.

**Financial impact**

Although the cost of a place at the school may increase, it is anticipated that the enhanced support in place for pupils and for schools will result in fewer pupils accessing provision, and spending a shorter length of time in the PRU, thereby reducing overall costs. Further work between the Local Authority and the School is required to further explore and quantify potential savings. Cautious estimates showing the reduction of commissioned places to 150 pupils could realise the savings shown in the table below.

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Full-year saving</b>	<b>Timescale for full implementation</b>	<b>Projected 5 year cumulative savings</b>
<b>Revised PRU offer focusing upon short-term interventions and reintegration</b>	£732k	4 years	£1,564k

## Proposal 5 – A widened AP landscape

### Case for change

The range of provision for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion is currently limited so the Council is looking to support alternative solutions in the town and to support more creative provision within mainstream schools.

For many years we have only had one source of alternative provision in Blackpool, at the PRU. This places lots of pressure upon one point in the system. Since 2017 we have had The Alternative School and since 2019 we have had a small independent school provision through Hexagon Care at the old Hawes Side Library site. We believe that we need at least 320 AP places in Blackpool, available through a range of providers, to ensure that all the pupils who access AP are not educated together, which causes significant issues in terms of both education and safeguarding.

### Proposal

We will encourage a small number of providers to establish themselves in Blackpool and to fill any gaps in available provision.

### What we want to accomplish

We wish to establish a vibrant, well-resourced, competitive market in AP in Blackpool that allows all pupils to access high quality AP in various different provisions, at a reasonable cost, quality assured by the partnership. To do this we will establish an AP quality assurance panel, made up of Head teachers and LA officers to ensure that our children only access high quality provision.

**All children and young people have the right support and opportunities at the right time, so that they become resilient, happy and successful in their adulthood**

### Financial impact

The financial impact will be small, as the places will largely be available for direct commissioning by schools. Where places are commissioned directly by the LA, these will be few in number and will come from existing funding streams earmarked for existing additional AP places.

Proposal	Full-year saving	Timescale for full implementation	Projected 5 year cumulative savings
A widened AP landscape	No direct savings to High Needs Block	N/A	No direct savings to High Needs Block

## Proposal 6 – Specialist Vocational centres in Blackpool for 14-16 learners

### Case for change

We have always had post 16 courses of very high quality in Blackpool and pupils have been able to access “bridging” units with these providers. Typically, they have been unsuccessful for some pupils, who require a work placement or vocational pathway that leads directly into work, or work based training at 16. These have been low in number in Blackpool. Thousands of jobs each year are available in the North West in catering and professions linked to catering.

### Proposal

We are proposing to establish a small number of specialist curriculum pathways in Blackpool, in collaboration with post-16 providers to reduce the numbers of young people who become NEET.

The first of these will be a specialist catering provision, for up to 25 young people, as a partnership between Blackpool Council and Blackpool and the Fylde College. The catering provision will be based at Highfield Day Centre and will deliver NVQ Level 1 and Level 2 courses for Y10 and Y11 students.

### What we want to accomplish

We want to broaden the access to these courses so that we have a small, but sustainable offer in place, to reduce the level of NEETs in Blackpool and to contribute to our town’s economy.

### Financial impact

There is a small financial impact which involves buying the equipment to establish the provision, which is c£50,000. Local Authority capital funds will be used to meet these costs.

The cost of provision will be around £2000 per pupil, payable by schools, and will be across 3 days per week. Some places will be reserved for “Our Children” through the Virtual School, in partnership with our Secondary Academies.

Proposal	Full-year saving	Timescale for full implementation	Projected 5 year cumulative savings
Specialist Vocational centres in Blackpool for 14-16 learners	No direct savings to High Needs Block	N/A	No direct savings to High Needs Block

## Proposal 7 – Creation of SEND Resource Provision in mainstream schools

### Case for change

Blackpool Council maintains and commissions a range of provision for children with special educational needs (SEND). Most children with SEND will have their needs met in their local mainstream schools. All schools have delegated SEN budgets to help them to support children who have SEND but who do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan, that is, children who are at “SEN Support”. In the case of children with Education, Health and Care Plans, the school’s resources will be supplemented by additional funding provided by Blackpool Council. There is now a high level of pressure for places in our local special schools which needs to be addressed, as well as increasing numbers of children transferring to non-Blackpool special schools.

Blackpool will never be entirely self-sufficient in being able to meet the needs of all children with SEND locally. However, there is scope to develop more local provision so that more children are able to have their needs met in local schools and within their own communities. Historically in Blackpool there have been Special Educational, Resource Facilities (SERFs). This proposal is to create long-term specialist education provision in mainstream schools in Blackpool for children with Education, Health and Care plans.

The cost of specialist placements outside of Blackpool is rising to a significant extent. The rate at which these costs are rising is not sustainable in the long term and could lead to a reduction in local SEND support services in order to move resources into specialist placements. There has been previous top-slicing of mainstream school budgets to ease pressure on the overspend in the High Needs funding block due to the high numbers of children in special and out of area schools. This proposal would allow the resource provision created to passport more money to meet the needs of children with SEN in mainstream schools.

It is fully acknowledged that there will always be some young people who require very specialist provision which cannot be provided within Blackpool. However, if we can create additional local provision to meet the needs of some of these young people, this will have benefits for those young people and their families and will also enable us to contain costs of specialist placements and protect local SEND support services.

### Proposal

The establishment of further in-Borough specialist provision to reduce the level of Out of Borough Placement, supported by central support services and outreach.

It is proposed that the provision will be managed by the schools on a daily basis. The provision will be monitored and quality assured by the Local Authority and place allocation will be through the LA Decision Making Panel.

Following an invitation to mainstream schools to express an interest in establishing resource provision for pupils with EHC Plans, four primary schools have come forward with proposals for the establishment of provision as follows:

- 8 place ASD / 24 place MLD
- 12 place SEMH
- 12 place SEMH
- 12 place MLD

The local authority is in the process of discussing the details of these proposals with the four schools in order that they can be progressed as appropriate and in a timely manner.

While no expressions of interest have been received from secondary schools, the local authority is continuing to engage with colleagues in that sector regarding the potential opportunities to create similar provision for secondary pupils, ***in particular to meet ASD needs.***

#### **What we want to accomplish**

- Reduce out-of-borough costs and pressure on the high needs block.
- Reduce pressure on Park pupil numbers.
- Reduce transportation costs on high needs block and the local authority budget.
- Reduce travel times for pupils who require specialist provision.
- Provide SEN provision for children locally to meet their needs and support transition arrangements to future services or education provision, including transition into mainstream setting where this appropriate.
- Support schools to develop SEN Inclusive cultures and to support the SEN knowledge and development of staff.

#### **Financial impact**

This proposal has the potential to realise significant savings for the High Needs block, at the same time as having a positive impact on the outcomes for Blackpool's children and improving inclusive practice across schools. Forecasts set out in this section are cautious whilst discussions take place, and it is hoped that greater savings may be achievable.

The precise funding arrangements are still being discussed with schools, however it is anticipated that for those pupils that can be diverted from out-of-borough placements, there could be savings of up to £17k per pupil, depending on the level of need. For those pupils who may be placed in the new resource provisions as an alternative to Special School Provision, the same per pupil savings will not be achieved, however, it will increase the capacity of the Special Schools to be able to accommodate pupils within the available space, thereby avoiding the need to increase the future number of pupils attending out-of-borough settings. This supports the principle of Blackpool schools for Blackpool children.

Some capital works will be required, the costs of which will be met from local authority funding.

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Full-year saving</b>	<b>Timescale for full implementation</b>	<b>Projected 5 year cumulative savings</b>
<b>Creation of SEND Resource Provision in mainstream schools</b>	£599k	2 years	£1,847k

## Proposal 8 – Optimise local specialist provision by occupying the Oracle building

### Case for change

Given the growing number of pupils in all three Special Schools, the local authority is working in partnership with those schools to identify opportunities to manage numbers at more affordable levels and offer alternative models of delivery. The occupancy of the three special schools is currently at maximum capacity, with the risk that an increasing number of pupils will need to be placed in more expensive out of borough placements should alternative creative solutions not be identified.

Over the last seven years, the number of pupils in the three special schools has increased by 66%, as can be seen in the table below:

	January 2013			January 2020		
	Primary/ secondary	Post-16	Total	Primary/ secondary	Post-16	Total
<b>Highfurlong</b>	29	22	51	73	10	83
<b>Park</b>	155	0	155	256	35	291
<b>Woodlands</b>	70	21	91	106	14	120
<b>Total</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>494</b>

Over the same period, the cost of funding the three special schools has increased from £4.8 million to £7.7 million, just over 60%. There has been significant capital investment in the special school estate, but the future forecast of pupil numbers means that the capacity will be inadequate without further action.

### Proposal

Create a high quality, cost effective and local post-16 Hub for children with SEND. This hub will provide the following:

- 16-19 provision for more able learners with SEND with a deep commitment to support mainstream re-integration or further training and employment at Y12, Y13 or Y14 through formalised mainstream college and school placement links and apprenticeship offers. Providing choice for children, young people and families.
- 19-25 provision for more dependent and complex learners, typically 19-22 educational provision supplemented by social care support for community independence which could extend to 25 as required. This could offer tailored support, including short-term support blocks to teach independence in the context of supported living. Our ambition would be to support a Social Enterprise to provide ongoing paid/voluntary employment.

The use of the Oracle building would offer post-16 capacity and has the potential to release pre-16 capacity in special schools through a re configuration of groupings.

In developing the Oracle provision, it is anticipated that space could be ‘freed up’ in the special school estate to deliver an Intensive Support Centre (ISC) serving Blackpool Children and Families. The ISC would serve a population of 12 pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), complex autism and associated communication and interaction needs including severe challenging behaviour. The ambition of such a provision would be to develop communication skills, learning to learn skills and sensory regulation to support re-integration into existing specialist provision. Through partnership with social care, there could be capacity to offer quality, safe respite for this complex pupil group.

**What we want to accomplish**

- Reduced OOB costs and pressure on the post-16 high needs block.
- Reduce transportation costs on high needs block and the Local authority.
- Reduce travel times for pupils who require specialist provision.
- Provide SEN provision for children locally to meet their needs and support transition arrangements to future services or education provision.
- Create capacity in the special school estate to cope with current demand for places.
- Create an Intensive Support Centre to meet SEND needs locally and reduce the need for OOB placements.

**Financial impact**

Reduction in costs of OOB specialist placements for pupils who can access the Intensive Support Centre. The cost of the OOB provision is significant per pupil. We anticipate a saving of £10k plus per pupil who would access the proposed Blackpool provision.

In respect of Post 19 there is a current provision in Blackpool providing support at £35k per pupil with a capacity of 20 pupils. This new provision would save £200k on current costs for those 20 pupils based on the new costing model for this provision when compared to the current model.

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Full-year saving</b>	<b>Timescale for full implementation</b>	<b>Projected 5 year cumulative savings</b>
<b>Optimise local specialist provision by occupying the Oracle building</b>	£320k	3 years	£773k

## **Proposal 9 – Reduce the High Needs places that are commissioned through external agencies to take control of the marketplace and to reduce our costs**

We currently commission places with a number of private providers. These are expensive options and we believe that we can provide a similar provision for a lower cost, or can use our commissioning power to reduce the costs of these placements.

### **Proposal**

We will proactively address the commissioning position in relation to OOB placements, reducing costs and / or bringing provision “in-house” to reduce the cost.

### **What we want to accomplish**

We will put in place longer-term contracts with AP providers that bring stability of service, combined with clear KPIs and cost-effectiveness to ensure that children only access high quality placements that represent value for money. Any AP provider that wishes to provide places for Blackpool children will have to work through our commissioning framework and be quality-assured and held to account by the partnership through the contractual agreements and the AP Quality Assurance Panel.

### **Financial impact**

The budget assigned to “Other AP” will be reduced from £165k to £100k from 2022/23 financial year as the LA reduces the amount of places that it commissions directly, as the emphasis will be placed upon schools to directly commission places and to retain responsibility for pupils in AP.

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Full-year saving</b>	<b>Timescale for full implementation</b>	<b>Projected 5 year cumulative savings</b>
<b>Reduce the High Needs places that are commissioned through external agencies to take control of the marketplace and to reduce our costs</b>	£65k	2 years	£195k

## Summary Finances

We remain confident that the proposals outlined above will successfully address the financial challenges the council and its schools face while at the same time increase the range and type of provision available in the town.

Proposal	Full-year saving / (cost)	Timescale for full implementation	Projected 5 year cumulative savings / (cost)
<b>1 Enhanced SEND and inclusion advisory support for schools</b>	Net nil	Year 1	Net nil
<b>2. In-school Inclusion provision in the Secondary Academy sector</b>	(£40k)	Year 1	(£183k)
<b>3. Realign the work of the primary behaviour SERFs with Educational Diversity primary provision</b>	£126k	Year 1	£451k
<b>4. Revised PRU offer focusing upon short-term interventions and reintegration</b>	£732k	4 years	£1,564k
<b>5. A widened AP landscape</b>	No direct savings to High Needs Block	N/A	No direct savings to High Needs Block
<b>6. Specialist Vocational centres in Blackpool for 14-16 learners</b>	No direct savings to High Needs Block	N/A	No direct savings to High Needs Block
<b>7. Creation of SEND Resource Provision in mainstream schools</b>	£599k	2 years	£1,847k
<b>8. Optimise local specialist provision by occupying the Oracle building</b>	£320k	3 years	£773k
<b>9. Reduce the number of other AP places “bought” through the HNB</b>	£65k	2 years	£195k
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£1,802</b>		<b>£4,647</b>

## Impact on High Needs Medium-Term Financial Plan -

The table below sets out the potential impact of these proposals on the 5-year projections for the High Needs Block up to 2024/25. Given the current uncertainties around Covid-19, calculations have been carried out based on a cautious start date for all the proposals from September 2021. However, if any of the proposals can be safely implemented in advance of this date, they will be progressed, with the possibility that savings could be realised sooner.

The table also reflects a possible contribution from the Central Schools Services Block in relation to the historic commitments funding following the review of Children's Centres. While no announcements have yet been made about the timescales for unwinding this funding, it has been assumed for this purpose that the funding will continue to reduce from the original £1 million by 20% each year over a 5-year period.

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000
Proposal 2 – secondary inclusion	-23	-40	-40	-40	-40
Proposal 3 - SERFs		73	126	126	126
Proposal 4 - PRU		81	223	528	723
Proposal 7 - Resource Provision		175	474	599	599
Proposal 8 - Oracle		62	138	253	320
Proposal 9 - Other AP		0	65	65	65
Total projected savings	-23	351	986	1531	1802
DSG deficit at start of year	3016	3541	3416	2757	1663
In-year deficit per Medium-term financial plan	1252	826	727	637	670
Use of historic commitments funding	750	600	400	200	
DSG deficit/(surplus) at end of year	3541	3416	2757	1663	531

As can be seen from the table above, the proposals, combined with the contribution from historic commitments funding, should allow for the recovery of the majority of the cumulative DSG deficit by the end of 2024/25. In-year savings thereafter would allow for the writing off of any remaining deficit plus scope for re-investment of funding into priority areas.

## Conclusion -

We appreciate that some of the proposal outlined in the document are ambitious and that realigning resources to best support schools will be challenging. But by trying to eliminate the High Needs budget overspend in a determined fashion over a five-year period, we can also ensure children have the right provision available at the right time and we can reduce the need for out of area expensive education placements, whilst ensuring children have their needs met locally.

By supporting school staff directly and providing specialist CPD opportunities we anticipate this will enhance teaching and learning in schools and ensure staff are equipped with the tools needed to identify and intervene early with children who are presenting with challenging behaviour or SEND.

We can also deliver an appropriate alternative provision curriculum that will further support schools, children and families within their own schools. This will have a positive impact on children's educational outcomes and improve their life chances once they leave school. Having this alternative offer will also ensure children can remain in school and have a career path that suits them. **All children and young people have the right support and opportunities at the right time, so that they become resilient, happy and successful in their adulthood.**

## Consultation Questions

### **Proposal 1 – Enhanced SEND and inclusion advisory support for schools**

We are interested in your views on this proposal and seek your assistance in identifying any risks associated with this proposal.

### **Proposal 2 – In-school Inclusion provision in the Secondary Academy sector**

We are interested in your views on this proposal and seek your assistance in identifying any risks associated with this proposal.

### **Proposal 3 – Realign the work of the primary behaviour SERFs with Educational Diversity primary provision**

We are interested in your views on this proposal and seek your assistance in identifying any risks associated with this proposal.

### **Proposal 4 – Revised PRU offer focusing upon short-term interventions and reintegration**

We are interested in your views on this proposal and seek your assistance in identifying any risks associated with this proposal.

### **Proposal 5 – A widened AP landscape**

We are interested in your views on this proposal and seek your assistance in identifying any risks associated with this proposal.

### **Proposal 6 – Specialist Vocational centres in Blackpool for 14-16 learners**

We are interested in your views on this proposal and seek your assistance in identifying any risks associated with this proposal.

### **Proposal 7 – Creation of SEND Resource Provision in mainstream schools**

We are interested in your views on this proposal and seek your assistance in identifying any risks associated with this proposal.

### **Proposal 8 – Optimise local specialist provision by occupying the Oracle building**

We are interested in your views on this proposal and seek your assistance in identifying any risks associated with this proposal.

### **Proposal 9 - Reduce the number of other AP places “bought” through the HNB**

We are interested in your views on this proposal and seek your assistance in identifying any risks associated with this proposal.

## **HOW TO RESPOND**

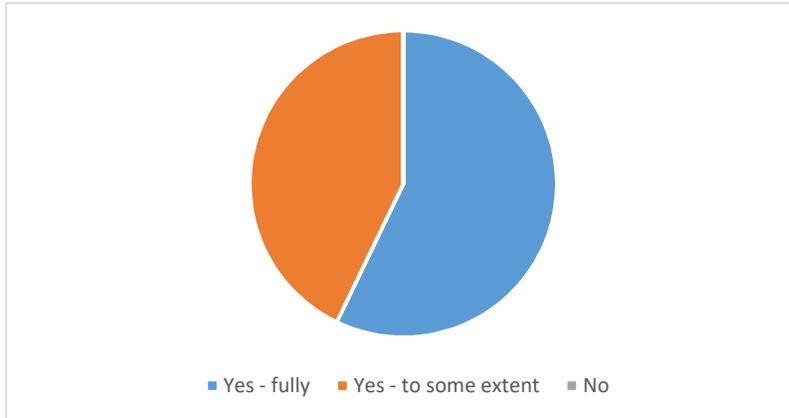
Please complete the online form found *[link to follow]* by 1<sup>ST</sup> July 2020. Following a review of all comments and suggestions made we intend to present the agreed Action Plan to an extraordinary meeting of the Schools Forum to be scheduled for July 2020.

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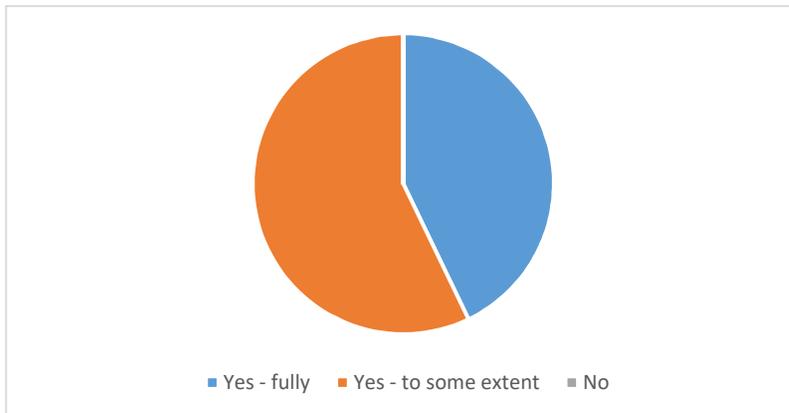
## Appendix 8C

### Blackpool's vision for exceptional SEND and Alternative Provision – Proposals for change June 2020 – summary of consultation responses

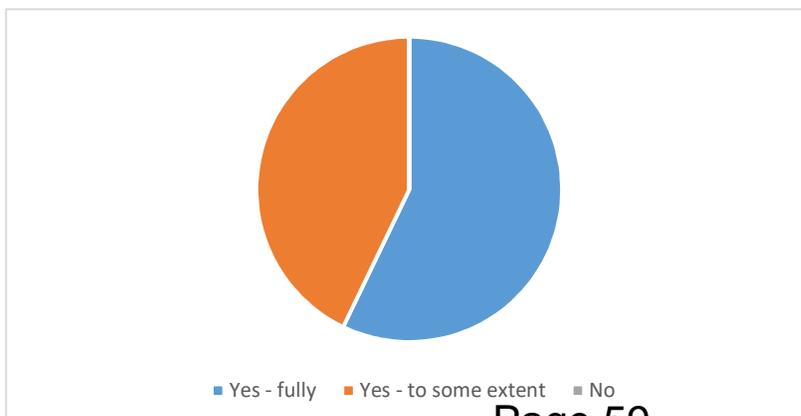
Proposal 1 - Enhanced SEND and inclusion advisory support for schools Do you support the principles of this proposal?



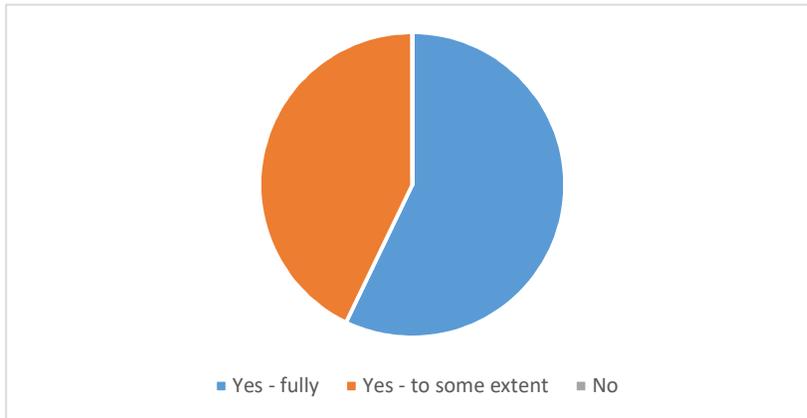
Proposal 2 - In-school inclusion provision in the secondary academy sector. Do you support the principles of this proposal?



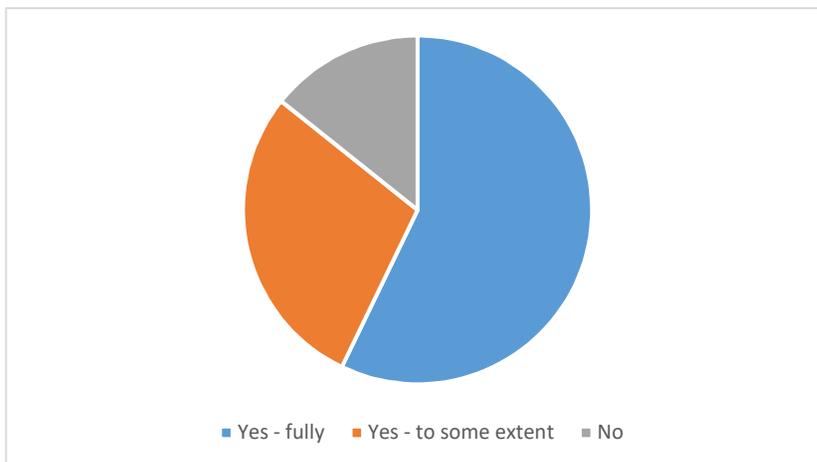
Proposal 3 - Realign the work of the primary behaviour SERFs with Educational Diversity primary provision. Do you support the principles of this proposal?



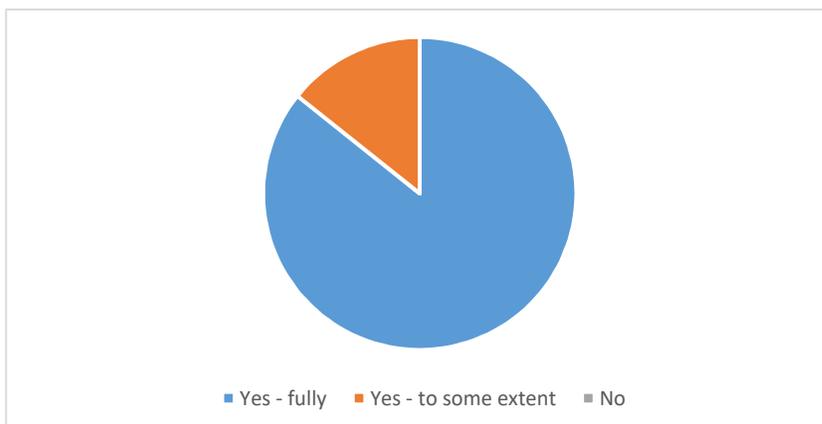
Proposal 4 - Revised PRU offer focusing on short-term interventions and reintegration. Do you support the principles of this proposal?



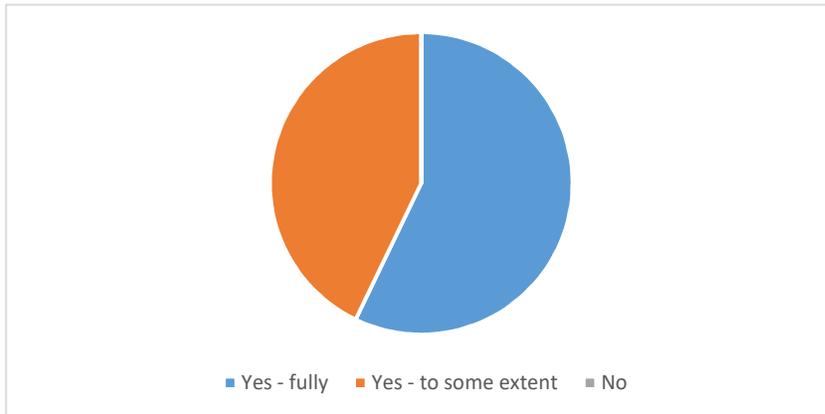
Proposal 5 - A widened AP landscape Do you support the principles of this proposal?



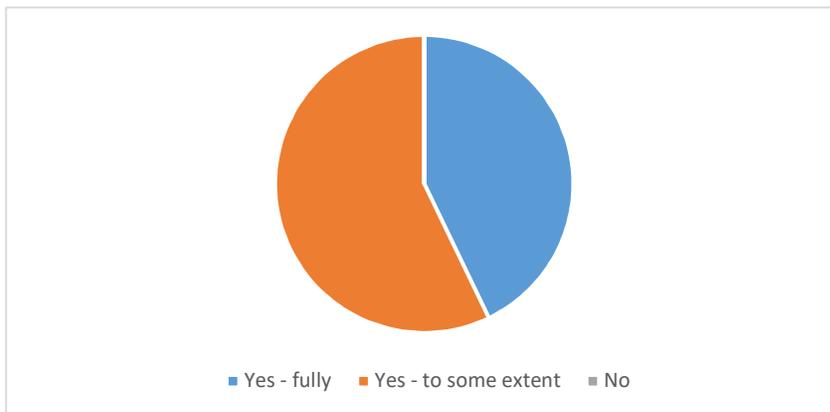
Proposal 6 - Specialist vocational centres in Blackpool for 14-16 learners. Do you support the principles of this proposal?



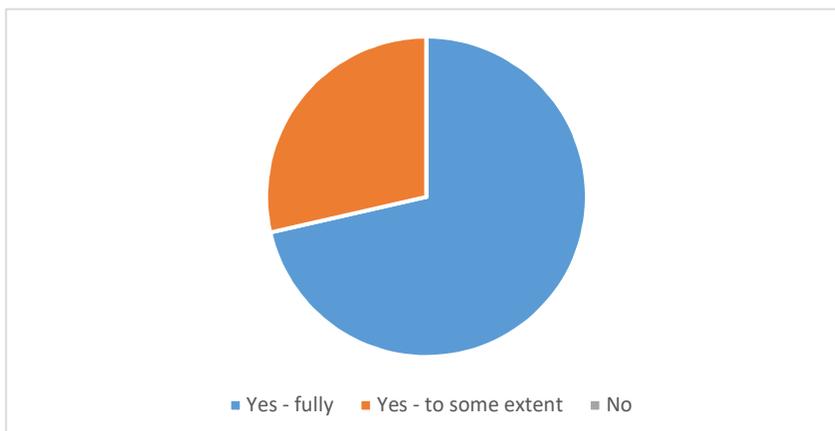
Proposal 7 - Creation of SEND Resource Provision in mainstream schools. Do you support the principles of this proposal?



Proposal 8 - Optimise local specialist provision by occupying the Oracle building. Do you support the principles of this proposal?



Proposal 9 - Reduce the number of other AP places "bought" through the High Needs block. Do you support the principles of this proposal?



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**Report to:** **SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**Relevant Officer:** Kirsty Thompson, School Funding Officer  
**Date of Meeting:** 14 July 2020

## **DIRECTED REVISION OF SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS**

### **1.0 Purpose of the report**

1.1 This report updates on changes to the Department for Education guidance, which are expected to be reflected in Blackpool's Scheme for Financing Schools.

### **2.0 Recommendation**

2.1 To approve the revisions for incorporation in Blackpool's Scheme for Financing Schools (maintained schools representatives) as outlined at point 3.3.

### **3.0 Background Information**

3.1 Local authorities are required to publish schemes for financing schools setting out the financial relationship between them and the schools they maintain. Any amendments to schemes must be consulted on and approved by the members of Schools Forum representing maintained schools.

3.2 On 1 April 2020, the Department for Education issued updated statutory guidance for local authorities on schemes. The guidance sets out changes that are required to local authority schemes.

3.3 A new section 10.2 is proposed as follows:

*A. After 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 maintained schools may wish to join the Secretary of State's Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) for risks that are covered by the RPA (see ANNEX C). Schools may do this individually when any insurance contract of which they are part expires (March 2022).*

*B. All primary and/or secondary maintained schools may join the RPA collectively by agreeing through schools forum to de-delegate funding.*

3.4 Annex C is replicated in the appendix 9a to this report.

- 3.5 Under section 13.10 Banking, the following paragraph has been removed, as it is a repetition of the provisions under section 3.8 Borrowing by Schools.

*Schools must not borrow money without the written consent of the Secretary of State. This requirement does not extend to monies lent to schools by their maintaining authority.*

**List of Appendices:**

Appendix 9a - Annex C – RPA Risk Protection Arrangement Cover

**ANNEX C****RPA Risk Protection Arrangement Cover**

<b>Type of risk</b>	<b>Limit</b>
Material damage	Reinstatement value of the property
Business interruption	£10 million any one loss
Employers' liability	Unlimited
Third party liability	Unlimited
Governors' liability	£10 million any one loss and any one membership year
Professional indemnity	Unlimited
Employee and third party dishonesty	£500,000
Money	Various, including cash on premises or in transit £5,000
Personal accident	Death and capital benefits £100,000
United Kingdom travel	Baggage and money £2,000 per person. Cancellation £1,000 per person
Overseas travel including winter sports	Includes: baggage £2,000 in total per person (inner limits apply), money £750 per person, medical expenses £10,000,000, cancellation £4,000 per person. Check the <a href="#">full details of your cover</a> for more information.
Legal expenses	£100,000 any one loss and any one membership year
Cultural assets	£10,000 on any one cultural asset or £250,000 any one multiple loss

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