

**BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE**

**SCHOOLS FORUM**

**25 June 2021**

Present:

**Maintained – Secondary**

None in attendance

**Maintained Primary**

Brigid Hincks – Chair of Governors, St Joseph's Primary School

**Mainstream Academies - Primary**

Kate Carter – CEO, TEACH

Jon Chapple – Head of Twynham Primary School

**Mainstream Academies - Secondary**

Dr Dorian Lewis – Head of Bournemouth School

Nadine Lapskas – Head of LeAF Studio School

Catherine Turner – Bourne Academy

**All-Through Academies**

None in attendance

**AP Academy**

None in attendance

**Maintained – Special**

Geoff Cherrill – Head of Winchelsea School (**Chairman**)

**Maintained – PRU**

Philip Gavin – Head of Christchurch Learning Centre

**Academies – Special**

Andy Connell – Finance Director, AAT

**Early Years Representative**

Sue Johnson – Jack in the Box, Bournemouth

Kelly Yates – Dean Park Day Nursery

**14-19 Representative**

Jacqui Page

## **Invited Elected Members**

Councillor Nicola Greene – Cabinet Member for Covid Resilience and Schools

Councillor Mike White – Cabinet Member for Children’s Services

## **Invited Attendees**

Jo Collis-Heavens, Finance Manager for Children’s Services, BCP Council

Andrew Hind, Interim Pupil Place Planning Admissions and School Finance Manager, BCP Council

Steve Ellis – Management Accountant, BCP Council

Geraint Griffiths – Operational Manager, Inclusion and Family Services, BCP Council

Nicola Webb – Assistant Chief Financial Officer, BCP Council

Terry Reynolds – Education Consultant, BCP Council

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Dave Simpson (The Epiphany School) and Russell Arnold (The Quay School)

### **2. Declarations of interest**

None were declared

### **3. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on Thursday 14 January 2021, were approved as a correct record.

### **4. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Outturn 2020-21**

Nicola Webb introduced a written report on the DSG and highlighted the following points:

- The budgeted deficit for this financial year was £4.9 m, the actual deficit was £3.2m.
- The High Needs Budget had been met for the year as there were savings from prior years, funding adjustments, and savings from other blocks.
- The accumulated deficit had increased from £4.6m to £7.8m. This was expected to rise and had been budgeted for.
- The EHCP growth was less than the budget had planned for, although this could have been an unexpected effect of the pandemic.
- The average cost per plan was higher than budgeted for. The EHCP was slightly higher than budget overall, but there were savings from other areas, particularly around medicals.

### **5. EHCP Funding in Schools**

The Chairman invited Forum Members to discuss the methodology behind how additional funding was triggered for schools with higher percentages of pupils with EHCPs and at which point relevant data was collected and subsequently shared and acted upon to allow for the funding to be made available.

Kate Carter explained that an academy could exceed the relevant percentage *after* the October census and not be able to access the funding. This particularly affects infant and primary schools, where pupils typically arrive without an EHCP, and the time it takes to get an EHCP means that they will not be in place on October census day. A school may have more than 3% of children on EHCPs for most of the year, but not on census day, and thus miss out on funding. This could have the effect of discouraging schools to accept children with SEND arriving after census day. Is there a way to work around this?

Steve Ellis explained that the decision to set a 3% threshold was a local one agreed in the shadow forum. It was intended to be for one year, but no alternative has been agreed since. It would be open to forum to agree something different. Regarding the timing of data collection. He added that he thought it was open to base it on termly censuses and was already in the hands of forum. It was asked whether the allocation had to be applied for, or was it automatically allocated. It was confirmed that it was automatic. It was asked if allocations could go up and down termly. It was answered that this was potentially possible.

**It was RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that BCP moves from an annual collection of data on EHCPs, to a termly collection of data.**

It was asked if back payments were available. The chair answered that the decision applied from the time of the decision.

Sian Thomas asked when it was planned to align the system for all schools in BCP. Geoff Cherrill briefed the Forum on the establishment of the High Needs Board including the Leader, the Chief Executive, and the Director of Children's Services. The monitoring of the HNB was thus being monitored strategically by the most senior members and officers of the council. Discussions have commenced about bringing into alignment banding across mainstream and special schools. Terry Reynolds replied that the question was getting very high level attention, and addressing the fairness of the banding system and the implications of inherited systems from the predecessor authorities. He highlighted that there was substantial work required to get agreement on a new system before it could be implemented. Sian Thomas asked if there would be changes introduced for September 2021. Terry Reynolds confirmed that there would not.

## **6. Date of next meeting**

14<sup>th</sup> September 2021