

**BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL**  
**SCHOOLS FORUM**

Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 December 2022 at 10.00 am

Present:-

Geoff Cherrill – Chairman

– Vice-Chairman

Present: Mark Avoth, Kate Carter, Mr A Connell, Linda Duly, Phillip Gavin, Brigid Hincks, Sue Johnson, Dorian Lewis, Sean Preston and Cllr N Greene

14. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Jon Chapple, Esther Curry, Ben Doyle, Patrick Earnshaw, Jacqueline Page, Councillor Mike White.

15. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received on this occasion.

16. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

With the provision of the addition of Sean Preston's apologies, the minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2022 were agreed as a true and correct record.

Voting: unanimous

17. DSG Budget Monitoring 2022-23

The Assistant Chief Finance Officer presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The report considered the projected year end position for the DSG budget 2022-23 of a £1 million reduction in the £16.7 million budgeted funding gap for the year.

The cumulative deficit at 31 March 2023 was forecast to be £36 million.

It was confirmed that there was an expected £36m deficit in the DSG budget. There would be an update at the January 2023 meeting.

It was discussed that the High Needs block budget, was a cumulative deficit, which would need years of underspending to overcome. It was confirmed that from early indications received, nothing had really changed from the predictions that the Council had put forward. This was a nationally shared problem. The issues were being fed back to Government. Councils could not solve the deficit by taking mitigating options, whilst the curve could be flattened, Councils could not remove the financial gap.

It was advised that the delivering better value pack of diagnostics would be circulated to the Forum membership when finalised. The Council was looking at ways to reduce the deficit but it would be a small reduction only and was working towards 2028.

**RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.**

Voting: Nem.Con

18. School Funding Consultation 2023-24

The Assistant Chief Finance Officer presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

This report included the school funding consultation document for 2023-24. Responses were in the process of being collated for reporting at the January 2023 Schools Forum meeting at which final decisions would be made regarding allocations of the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2023-24.

**RESOLVED that the Schools Forum noted the issues raised and options included in the consultation with schools for 2023-24.**

Voting: Unanimous

19. Feedback from High Needs Subgroup

The Chairman of the Schools Forum gave verbal feedback from the High Needs Subgroup.

It was advised that the Group had pulled together a substantial list of questions and that the Chairman would be meeting with Rina Mistry in the new year, to pull together the consultation document, which would be shared with the Forum at the 16 January meeting.

The Chairman advised that they had received an urgent request, which they would deal with now, as it was linked to this item.

It was advised that some school meal providers had significantly raised their prices and some exceeded the funding rate provided, producing an added pressure. The Forum agreed that they were not sure that this was an issue for them, but felt it was worth monitoring. It was felt that some schools may be pressured into subsidising free school meals from other dedicated funds, which is not what they were intended for. The DofE had not announced next year's funding as yet.

The Forum acknowledged that there were other financial increases which were increasing pressures, including the living wage increase, business rates and rent charges. Due to these increases, it was advised that some in Early Years Services felt they were almost at a crisis point.

20. Schools Forum Forward Plan

The Head of Performance presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

**RESOLVED that the Forward Plan was noted and the additional items noted above be added.**

Voting: Nem.Con

21. Dates of Future Meetings

The Schools Forum was scheduled to meet on the following dates:

- Monday 16 January 2023, 10:00am
- Monday 26 June 2023, 10:00am
- Monday 25 September 2023, 10:00am

The forum noted the dates of the future meetings.

22. Any Other Business

There were no further items of business.

The meeting ended at 10.35 am

CHAIRMAN