

Lancashire County Council

Cabinet

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 18th January, 2024 at 2.00 pm in
Committee Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston**

Present:

County Councillor Phillippa Williamson Leader of the Council
(in the Chair)

Cabinet Members

County Councillor Alan Vincent
County Councillor Peter Buckley
County Councillor Graham Gooch
County Councillor Michael Green
County Councillor Jayne Rear
County Councillor Aidy Riggott
County Councillor Rupert Swarbrick
County Councillor Cosima Towneley
County Councillor Shaun Turner

County Councillors Azhar Ali OBE and Lorraine Beavers were also in attendance under the provisions of Standing Order No. C14(2).

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies received.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 December 2023

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. Questions for Cabinet

There were no questions received.

5. Medium Term Financial Strategy Update 2024/25 - 2026/27

Cabinet considered a report on the medium term financial strategy update 2024/25 - 2026/27. The medium term financial strategy provided a forecast of the financial position for the county council for the next 3 financial years, and provided an update of the position and highlighted any changes since the last report to Cabinet in November 2023.

It was noted that the overall position reported was a forecasted financial deficit of £2.908m in 2024/25 with a projected surplus of £4.892m by 2026/27, compared to the position that was reported to Cabinet in November 2023 of a forecast deficit of £14.505m in 2024/25 increasing to £18.294m by 2026/27.

The county council's transitional reserve (currently standing at £165m at the end of 2023/24) would be utilised to bridge the 2024/25 funding gap and remained sufficient to allow plans to be developed over the coming years to continue to aim for a balanced long term sustainable budget. The transitional reserve also served a purpose going forward to allow modernisation and transformation of council services. All reserves were to be reviewed as part of the county council's forthcoming budget report including the General Reserve which currently stood at £23m representing 2.25% of net expenditure.

In relation to proposal GET007 on the introduction of on street pay and display parking across the county, it was confirmed that, following representations from district councils and the Scrutiny Management Board, consultation would take place with the district council Leaders, and that their views would be fully considered by Cabinet before any proposals were developed further or implemented.

Resolved: That

- i. The updated budget assumptions and changes to budget requirements for 2024/25, and following years' changes, included in the revised medium term financial strategy, be agreed;
- ii. A consultation be carried out with key stakeholders on the savings proposals in Section 3.6 of the report; and
- iii. The contents of the county council's reserves position be agreed.

6. Proposed Bus Stop Clearways in Longridge

Cabinet considered a report that proposed the provision of bus stops which are compliant with the Equality Act 2010 in Longridge. It was noted that the proposed bus stop improvements would provide a raised boarding area and accompanying clearway restrictions to allow buses to stop parallel to the kerb, providing inclusive accessibility to public transport in the area.

Resolved: That the proposed creation of 16 bus stops with clearway restrictions which are compliant with the Equality Act 2010, as set out in the report and in Appendices 'A' – 'E' of the report, be approved.



7. Schools Budget 2024/25

Cabinet considered a report seeking the approval of Cabinet to submit the Schools Block budget pro-forma and approval for the Early Years, High Needs and Central Schools Services Block budgets for 2024/25, in accordance with the Government's school funding Regulations and Guidance.

It was noted that Appendix 'B' of the report was circulated to Cabinet after the agenda publication and is attached to the minutes.

It was also noted that on page 78 of the agenda, under the Disability Access Fund heading, it should read 2024/25, instead of 2022/23.

Resolved: That, following consideration of the comments made by the Lancashire Schools Forum:

- i. The 2024/25 budgets for the Early Years, High Needs and Central Schools Services Blocks and local proposals for the High Needs Supplementary Grant allocation for 2024/25, be approved;
- ii. The Principal Accountant – Schools Finance be authorised to submit the final Schools Block budget pro-forma for 2024/25 to the Education and Skills Funding Agency by 22 January 2024, on the basis set out in the report;
- iii. Approval be given to the Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve underwriting the uncertainties around the 2024/25 Schools Budget; and
- iv. The decision be implemented immediately for the purposes of Standing Order C28(3) as any delay could adversely affect the execution of the county council's responsibilities. The reason for this is to ensure that the necessary pro-forma can be submitted to the Education and Skills Funding Agency by the required deadline of 22 January 2024.

8. Update on the School Place Planning Delivery Programme 2023-25

Cabinet considered a report that provided an update on the School Place Planning Delivery Programme 2023-25. It was noted that in October 2022, Cabinet approved the School Place Planning Delivery Programme 2023-25, which set out a series of projects to provide additional primary and secondary school places, where projected shortfalls had been identified. The proposal sought to provide these places through expansion of existing schools and the establishment of new schools. However, it was noted that since the inception of the 2023-25 School Planning Delivery Plan there had been a decline in birth rates nationally which was showing in the county council's primary school places forecasts. The report therefore provided an update on the current position of primary and secondary provision in Preston, and the new school at Whittingham Hospital.

It was also noted that Appendices 'A' and 'B' to this report were in Part II and were set out at Item No. 15 on the Agenda.

In presenting the report, the Cabinet thanked the schools and their governing bodies for working collaboratively with the county council.



Resolved: That

- i. The additional capital allocation for Lea Community Primary School, Preston, as set out at Appendix 'A' of the report, be approved;
- ii. The capital allocation for phase 2 of the Capital project to permanently expand Cottam Primary School, Preston by 1 form of entry for September 2024, as set out at Appendix 'A' of the report, be approved;
- iii. The capital allocation for phase 2 of the Capital project to permanently expand Broughton-In-Amounderness Church of England Primary School, by 25 places per year from September 2024, as set out at Appendix 'A' of the report, be approved;
- iv. Approval be given for a consultation to be undertaken on the permanent expansion of Archbishop Temple Church of England High School, Preston, to increase the Published Admission Number from 155 to 210 from September 2025;
- v. The capital allocation for the temporary expansion of Archbishop Temple Church of England High School, Preston by 55 places for September 2024, as set out in Appendix 'A' of the report, be approved;
- vi. The proposal to permanently expand Christ the King Catholic High School, Preston by 20 places per year from September 2025, be approved;
- vii. The Capital allocation for Christ the King Catholic High School, Preston to permanently expand the school by 20 places per year from September 2025, as set out in Appendix 'A' of the report be approved;
- viii. Approval be given for further consideration to the proposals set out in the 2023-25 School Planning Delivery Programme for the primary and secondary projects in Preston North, in response to the change in forecast data which had been impacted by the national downward trajectory of births impacting on reception numbers and the future trajectory of pupils, with revised proposals being brought to Cabinet as required; and
- ix. Following the outcome of the Whittingham Hospital consultation which provided a further option as set out in Appendix 'B' of the report, it was agreed that the Whittingham Hospital site remained the preferred option for delivering a two-form entry (420 place) primary provision in Preston, and approval was given for the acquisition of a further 1.33 hectares (3.29 acres) of land for the delivery of the preferred option.

9. Anaerobic Digestion at the Farington Waste Recovery Park

Cabinet considered a report that outlined details of the obligation to process separately collected food waste from April 2026, the options considered, the financial implications and a proposal to provide an in-house solution through Lancashire Renewables Limited.

Resolved: That the following be approved:

- i. The proposal to provide an in-house solution to process separately collected food waste; and
- ii. The provision of capital to fund the proposal as set out in the report.



10. Urgent Decisions taken by the Leader of the County Council and the relevant Cabinet Member(s)

Resolved: That the urgent decision taken by the Leader of the County Council, and the relevant Cabinet Member, since the last meeting of Cabinet, be noted.

11. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

12. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of Cabinet would be held at 2pm on Thursday, 8 February 2024 at County Hall, Preston.

13. Notice of Intention to Conduct Business in Private

Cabinet noted the Notice of Intention to Conduct Business in Private and that no representations had been received.

14. Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that there would be a likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the appropriate paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

15. Appendices 'A' and 'B' of Item 8 - Update on the School Place Planning Delivery Programme 2023-25

Exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The appendices contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It was considered that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

Resolved: That Appendices 'A' and 'B' of Item 8 - Update on the School Place Planning Delivery Programme 2023-25, be noted.

Angie Ridgwell
Chief Executive

County Hall
Preston



Lancashire Schools Forum

CC Phillippa Williamson, Leader, Lancashire County Council and CC Jayne Rear, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Tel. 01772 336650
Email head@smsb.lancs.sch.uk
Date 11 January 2024

C. CC Jayne Rear, Lead Member for Education and Skills

Dear Phillippa and Jayne,

Schools Budget 2024/25

As you will be aware, at a meeting on 11 January 2024, the Schools Forum was presented with information about the latest proposals for setting the Schools Budget from April 2024.

Following consideration of the proposals, the Forum agreed a number of recommendations for your consideration in finalising the Schools Budget for 2024/25. Where applicable these recommendations follow the outcomes of consultations with schools and early years providers.

The Forum:

Supported the Schools Block proposals, as follows:

- The DfE's National Funding Formula (NFF) methodology should continue to be used as the Lancashire formula for 2024/25.
- The Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) be set at +0.5% for 2024/25, mirroring the National Funding Formula.
- Confirm the use of the Minimum Pupil Funding (MPF) rates contained in the NFF for any new Growth Fund allocations from April 2024
 - Primary £4,610 per pupil
 - Secondary £5,995 per pupil
- The use of the £1.154m from the Dedicated Schools Grant Reserves.
- National Funding Formula (NFF) methodology applied in full in 2024/25.

Supported the High Needs Block proposals, as follows:

- The increased HNB allocation being utilised to cover the forecast growth in High Needs expenditure from April 2024.
- The increase in HNB allocation to broadly match uplifts in the mainstream sector, including:
 - Increasing the Weighted Pupil Numbers (WPN) rate by 2% to £5,440;
 - Special School and PRU School Specific factors uplifted by 2% to match Schools Block MFG;

Chair Daniel Ballard

C/O The Clerk to the Schools Forum, • Financial Management (Development and Schools)
PO Box 100, County Hall, Preston, PR1 0LD

Supported the Early Years Block proposals, as follows:

3 and 4-year-old entitlements

Due the increased funding Lancashire has received, the Lancashire base rate for 3 and 4-year-old entitlements is £5.41 per hour in 2024/25, an increase of £0.33 per hour from 2023/24.

The 2024/25 funding rates:

2023/24 Base rate	£5.08 per hour
2024/25 DfE uplift	£0.27 per hour
2024/25 Additional funding from within the Early Years Block	£0.06 per hour
2024/25 Base rate	£5.41 per hour

3- and 4-year-old Supplementary funding hourly rate for maintained nursery schools

Lancashire will receive a £0.63 increase in the supplementary funding hourly rate for maintained nursery schools in 2024/25, which will be passed to the maintained nursery schools, providing a revised hourly supplement rate of £5.18 per hour.

2-year-old entitlement

Following the Early Years 2024 25 funding announcements, the Early Years Working Group recommended that Lancashire adopts one single funding rate for 2-year-old entitlements, plus a deprivation supplement based on a similar mechanism that currently exists within the 3- and 4-year-old formula. Lancashire is to receive an additional £0.24 per hour for the 2-year-old entitlement for 2024/25.

This would give a Lancashire base rate for 2-year-olds of £7.10 per hour from April 2024, plus a deprivation supplement where necessary.

Under 2-year-old entitlement

From September 2024, the base rate will be set at £9.51, plus a deprivation supplement based on a similar mechanism that currently exists within the 3- and 4-year-old formula.

Early Years Pupil Premium

Lancashire will increase our early years pupil premium rate by 2p to 68p per hour, equivalent to up to £387 per eligible child per year, for 2024/25, in line with national announcements.

Disability Access Fund

Lancashire will increase the disability access fund by £29 to £910 per eligible child per year for 2022/23, in line with national announcements.

Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund

Local authorities are now required to have a Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund for all eligible 3 and 4-year-olds, 2-year-olds and under 2's (from September 2024) who are taking up the free entitlements, regardless of the number of hours taken. For 2024/25 the Lancashire fund will total £2.65m due to the increased demands and extended entitlements.

Supported the Central School Services Block proposals, as follows:

- The proposals for the Central School Services Block in 2024/25, including uplifts for cost and demand led pressures.

The Schools Forum supported the Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve underwriting the uncertainties around the 2024/25 DSG Schools Budget within the Schools Block. These Schools Budget proposals forecast a balanced Dedicated Schools Grant funding position in 2024/25, subject to the planned use of £1.154m in Schools Budget reserves to mitigate pressures in the Schools Block budget.

The Forum also approved a number of budget lines and arrangements using our decision making powers, these are set out at Annex 1.

I hope that you will be able to accommodate our recommendations and decisions when you set the Schools Budget for 2024/25.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Ballard'.

Daniel Ballard
Chair, Lancashire Schools Forum

SPECIFIC APPROVALS NEEDED FROM THE SCHOOLS FORUM

The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations require certain proposals by the Local Authority relating to the Schools Budget to be approved by the Schools Forum.

An indication of the specific proposals that have previously been considered and approved by the Forum is included together with proposals now put forward that require approval.

Function	LA proposals 2024/25	Proposed Expenditure: 2024/25 £m
Consultation on Formula Changes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No local formula factor changes are proposed for 2024/25 in any funding block, beyond incorporating the DfE National Funding Formula (NFF) alterations into the local Schools Block formula 	The Forum have previously agreed to use the DfE's NFF as the Lancashire funding formula for the Schools Block budget, and NFF updates for 2024/25 introduced by the DfE are incorporated in the Schools Budget proposals for 2024/25, including revised split site funding.	
De-delegation for mainstream schools	LA proposals for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools Requiring additional Support Museum service (primary only); Staff Costs Public duties/Suspensions; Primary Inclusion Hubs (primary only); Childrens Champions Approved by the Schools Forum on 17 October 2023	2.764
Contracts (where the LA is entering a contract to be funded from the schools budget)	No Proposals at this time	

Financial issues relating to:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> arrangements for pupils with special educational needs, in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding 	Proposals contained in the High Needs Block Working Group recommendations report to the Forum and the Forum budget papers	136.418
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> arrangements for use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school, in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding 	Proposals contained in the High Needs Block Working Group recommendations report to the Forum and the Forum budget papers	14.129
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> arrangements for early years provision 	Proposals contained in the Early Years Block Working Group report to the Forum and the Forum budget papers	143.989
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> administration arrangements for the allocation of central government grants 	No Proposals at this time beyond passporting DfE allocations to schools	
Minimum funding guarantee (MFG)	Consultation responses on MFG reported to Forum on 17 October 2023 and recommended that the level of MFG to be used in the Lancashire funding formula for 2024/25 be set at +0.5%. This is incorporated into the Forum budget papers	
General Duties for maintained schools Contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for maintained schools	No Proposals at this time	
Central spend on and the criteria for allocating funding from:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> funding for significant pre-16 pupil growth, including new schools set up to 	Policy previously agreed by the Schools Forum. Proposal to increase the growth fund unit values in line	1.5000

meet basic need, whether maintained or academy	with increased NFF Minimum Pupil Funding levels each year Final budget proposals are contained in the Schools Budget 2024/25 report	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> funding for good or outstanding schools with falling rolls where growth in pupil numbers is expected within three years 	No Proposals at this time	
Central spend on:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> early years block provision 	Final budget proposals are contained in the Schools Budget 2024/25 report	2.65
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> funding to enable all schools to meet the infant class size requirement 	No Proposals at this time	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> back-pay for equal pay claims 	No Proposals at this time	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> remission of boarding fees at maintained schools and academies 	No Proposals at this time	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils 	No Proposals at this time	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> admissions 	Final budget proposals are contained in the Schools Budget 2024/25 report	1.400
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> servicing of schools forum 	Final budget proposals are contained in the Schools Budget 2024/25 report	0.188
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for all schools 	No Proposals at this time	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for maintained schools 	No Proposals at this time	

Central spend on:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> capital expenditure funded from revenue: projects must have been planned and decided on prior to April 2013 so no new projects can be charged 	No Proposals at this time	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contribution to combined budgets: this is where the schools forum agreed prior to April 2013 a contribution from the schools budget to services which would otherwise be funded from other sources 	No Proposals at this time	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> existing termination of employment costs (costs for specific individuals must have been approved prior to April 2013 so no new redundancy costs can be charged) 	No Proposals at this time	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> prudential borrowing costs – the commitment must have been approved prior to April 2013 	No Proposals at this time	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEN transport where the schools forum agreed prior to April 2013 a contribution from the schools budget (this is now treated as part of the high needs block but still requires schools forum approval as a historic commitment) 	No Proposals at this time	
Central spend on:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> high needs block provision 	2024/25 funding level presented as part of the Schools Budget setting proposals	41.312
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> central licences negotiated by the Secretary of State 	2024/25 funding level presented as part of the Schools Budget setting proposals	1.203

Funding of brought forward deficits	No Proposals at this time	
--	---------------------------	--