

# LIVERPOOL GOVERNANCE FORUM

Minutes of Committee Meeting held at 10:00 on:  
Tuesday 7 December 2021 at The Stanley Room, St Mary's Millennium Centre,  
West Derby Village, Meadow Lane, Liverpool L12 5EA.

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## 1.0 STANDARD ITEMS:

### 1.1 Welcome and Apologies

**Present:** Frank McFarlane (Vice Chair), David Blythe (Treasurer), Kathy Desmond,  
Dave Cadwallader, Cliff Barton, David Owens, Richard Lovegrove.

**Apologies:** Michael Morris, Andy Chadwick, Avril O'Brien, Mary Donohue, Maureen McDaid,  
Danielle Azanuwha

**Guest speaker:** John Byrne – School Finance

### 1.2 Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

Noted – DB is Chair of Trustees for St Mary's Millennium Centre, the venue for today's meeting.

### 1.3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting had already been agreed by email and posted on the LGF website.

### 1.4 Matters Arising

Summary of Actions	
Feedback from Liverpool School Forum meeting held on 16.11.21 <b>Covered by JB's presentation</b>	DB/MMc

## 2.0 LGF Matters and Events

### 2.1 Finance

The current balance on the LGF account is £2,655.62. Bank charges amounting to £6.20 are to be deducted from the account on 22.12.21.

### 2.2 Feedback from Events

Not applicable.

### 2.3 Future Events

There are no events planned for the near future however it is hoped to hold a LGF conference later this year, Covid restrictions permitting.

DB suggested using St Mary's Millennium Centre venue for the next two LGF meetings. FM is to

contact Archbishop Blanch School regarding holding a future LGF meeting.

Topics for future LGF meetings were discussed. DC suggested 'Sustainability' as a topic for future discussion. DC is to contact Brendan Purcell, LA Energy Manager regarding addressing a future LGF meeting. FM suggested 'Attendance' as a topic for a future meeting.

#### **2.4 Website**

DB reported that the LGF website is up to date. He confirmed the minutes of the November AGM/Committee meetings and J Meyer's presentation have all been uploaded to the site.

#### **2.5 Twitter Account**

Not applicable

#### **2.6 Others**

Not applicable

### **3.0 Feedback from Representatives**

#### **3.1 Liverpool Schools Forum**

A meeting is planned for tomorrow, 8.12.21. The topics to be discussed at the meeting include School Budget update, School Improvement update and Early Years Consultation update. KD asked if there is a possibility that Sure Start Children Centre's may be reintroduced. DC replied that he was unaware of any reintroduction in the near future. CB will provide feedback at the next LGF meeting

#### **3.2 LLP Executive Board**

Not applicable

#### **3.3 LLP All Learners**

Not applicable

#### **3.4 LLP Learners Who Need More**

The next meeting is to be held on 26.1.22.

#### **3.5 LLP Maths Group**

Not applicable – DB to provide DO with the date of the next LLP Maths Group meeting

#### **3.6 Liverpool Safeguarding Forum**

FM reported that the planned LSF meeting scheduled for the end of November was cancelled. FM said he felt that the pressures of work meant many members were unable to attend meetings. It is hoped that a meeting will be held in January 2022.

#### **3.7 Others**

##### **Priority 4 – Feedback from MM**

MM provided feedback in his absence stating that he had attended the Liverpool Priority 4 meeting via Zoom on 1.12.21. He said that good progress has been made by the working group as the first year drew to a close. Plans are in hand to drive up standards of leadership at all levels in schools (including governance) by putting structures in place to support career progression in order to recruit and retain staff, and to support governance with an alternative to the new look NLG programme. Details of the latter will become clearer in the new year and will be shared with LGF.

MM gave his apologies for his absence from the AGM through illness, and the 7 December meeting because of a prior commitment. He assured the meeting that he will be available to chair future LGF meetings.

MM sent thanks to both Kathy Desmond and Frank MacFarlane for taking on the role of chairing the meetings he had missed.

#### 4.0 Other Items

##### 4.1 NGA

DB confirmed that the NGA subscription had been paid at a cost of £585.00 which covers subscription for 14 LGF members. FM asked if this was considered good value. A discussion took place regarding the benefits of The Key versus the NGA. It was noted that both organisations have excellent resources but NGA is accepted to be the national voice for governors. It was agreed to review how often the NGA resources had been accessed by members at the end of the subscription period.

Noted RL is to be added to the NGA subscription list.

The NLG tab is to be removed from website replaced by a National Associations tab.

4.2 Parachute Man - KD brought a publication called The Parachute Man to the meetings attention.

4.3 Change of Date - The LGF meeting originally planned for 8.3.22 will now take place on 15.3.22.

4.4 Received after the meeting – Howard Harris contacted DB to ask him to pass on his thanks for the card and gift card sent to him on his retirement from LGF. HH said he had fond memories of his time serving on the LGF and send his best wishes to LGF members.

FM thanked all for attending today's meeting.

The meeting concluded at 11:20

<b>Summary of Actions</b>	
Archbishop Blanch to be approached re hosting future LGF meetings.	FM
Brendan Purcell, LA Energy Manager to be approached re addressing a future LGF meeting.	DC
Feedback from Liverpool Schools Forum meeting 8.12.21.	CB
RL to be added to the NGA subscription list.	DB
The NLG tab is to be removed from website and replaced with a National Associations tab.	DB

#### **Next meeting:**

The next committee meeting will be at 10am on Tuesday 25 January 2022 St Mary's Millennium Centre, Meadow Lane, Liverpool L12 5EA. Please note the subsequent LGF meeting has been changed from 8.3.21 to 15.3.21 but will still be held at St Mary's Millennium Centre.

## Appendix 1

John Byrne, Strategic Finance Manager for Liverpool City Council introduced himself and explained that he was responsible for delivering funding to LA schools and he also worked with some academies.

JB delivered an update on the current funding situation for Liverpool schools highlighting the following:

The Chancellor's statement, delivered recently, was positive from a school's point of view with more funding than anticipated promised although it is still not clear how the funding will be distributed. It is believed that the additional funding will be delivered as a grant rather than being included in the school's budget for next financial year and then absorbed into school's budgets the following year.

JB highlighted significant cost pressures expected in the coming year e.g., teacher's salaries, energy costs and an expected 5% inflation rate. He noted that the city council's fixed price energy contract expires at the end of March 2022 after which time a significant increase is expected. JB highlighted that schools are able to negotiate their own energy contracts and acknowledged that there are pros and cons to joining the city council's energy contract as prices can fluctuate over the contract period.

Additional funding was announced for nursery placements. The LA's expected funding will increase to 21p for 2 year old and 17p for 3-4 year old per hour, a 4% increase. The actual amount individual establishments will receive has not been calculated yet.

There is currently a consultation taking place with all schools and nursery providers relating to how the deprivation factor of the early years funding is calculated to improve distribution. The consultation closes on 17.12.21.

It was noted that an increase in the minimum wage has had a detrimental effect on many nursery providers which is expected to be exacerbated when the support staff pay award is agreed.

JB referred to possible changes that will mean there will be less bureaucracy involved in applying for High Needs funding. In future funding may be linked to a pupil's education health care plan which will make it easier to apply. It was noted that this is a work in progress. JB referred to the difference in placing a pupil in a LA special school at a cost of £15,000 - £20,00 in contrast to an independent or out of area special school which can cost more than £50,000. KD expressed concern that a few pupils in independent/out of area special schools command a disproportionate amount of the budget at the detriment of the remaining special needs pupils. DC commented that this concern had been noted by the LA, but it was a slow process to reverse the current system. It was also noted that it is disruptive to individual pupils who may have been in their educational provision for some time to change to a LA school. It is far better to offer them suitable provision in a LA school initially.

JB confirmed that there has been an increase in Capital funding for SEN, expected to be in the region of 15 million pounds, which will allow schools accommodate more pupils.

RL commented that often financing SEN provision can be a resourcing issue rather than a capital funding issue where pupil's education is concerned e.g., providing a new teacher rather than instigating a building programme. JB agreed but noted that additional capacity needed to be built in in the SEN sector.

JB referred to the Covid Recovery Grant which is set continue and should increase in value over the next 3 years. No figures have been published yet. It was noted that this makes forward planning difficult.

JB said the LA was working with schools who are in deficit position and asked governors to give advanced warning if they believe their school may be going in a deficit situation to allow the authority to work with

them. FM asked how the numbers of primary school in deficit compared to secondary schools in deficit. JB said percentage per sector was approximately equal but obviously the value of the deficit in secondary schools is higher.

JB highlighted that the LA is speaking with schools with significant excess balance noting the schools often had plans that could not be implemented due to Covid. The schools continue to be monitored.

In response to a question from KD JD confirmed that, when a school that is in a deficit situation, becomes a Trust because of 'standards' then the LA has to absorb the deficit. It was felt this was unfair as ultimately the rest of the LA schools are detrimentally affected.

KD raised the question of the possibility of the LA regarding providing advice or support re: solar power as the installation would allow schools to reduce the amount of carbon tax they pay. JB replied that he was not aware of any plans to provide advice or support currently but undertook to raise this with Brendan Purcell and the LA's Energy Team. It was noted one of the city councils' commitments is to address climate change. JB highlighted a DFE scheme where a company exists that provides schools with loans, which can be repaid over several years, to allow them to replace equipment/fixtures with more energy efficient replacements. JB said some schools have taken advantage of this to replace their lighting systems for example.

CB asked if JB was aware of any DFE plans to allow LAs to build new schools. JB replied that there is a white paper due out in the spring which will address issues relating to this question. CB expressed concern that no one seemed to have the authority to make plans to build schools where they are actually needed.

FM thanked JB for his informative presentation.