

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2015 AT CITY HALL, BRADFORD

Commenced 0805
 Adjourned 0920
 Reconvened 0930
 Concluded 1015

PRESENT

School Members:

Bev George, Brent Fitzpatrick, Dominic Wall, Dwayne Saxton, Emma Ockerby, Gareth Dawkins, Kevin Holland, Trevor Loft, Michele Robinson, Nicky Kilvington, Nigel Cooper, Phil Travis, Sue Haithwaite and Tahir Jamil

Non School Members:

Ian Murch and Michael Walsh

Local Authority Officers:

Andrew Redding	Business Advisor (Schools)
Dawn Haigh	Principal Finance Officer (Schools)
Judith Kirk	Interim Assistant Director, Education and School Improvement
Raj Singh	Business Advisor
Stuart McKinnon-Evans	Director of Finance
Michael Jameson	Strategic Director, Children's Services

Observers:

Councillor Hinchcliffe	Portfolio Holder, Education, Skills and Culture
Councillor Pollard	
Lynn Murphy	Business Manager, Feversham College
Tom Bright	The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) representative
Richard Foster	Deputy Headteacher, Titus Salt School

Apologies:

Chris Quinn, Dianne Rowbottom, Nick Weller, Paul Burluraux, Ray Tate, Sami Harzallah, Wendy Anderson, Ian Morrel and Maureen Cairns

82. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR – SCHOOLS FORUM OF 23 SEPTEMBER 2015

Resolved –

In the absence of the Chair and Deputy, Gareth Dawkins was appointed Chair for this meeting.

ACTION: City Solicitor

GARETH DAWKINS IN THE CHAIR



City of Bradford
 Metropolitan District Council



City of Bradford
 Metropolitan District Council



83. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

During the course of the meeting, Ian Murch disclosed an interest to Minute 91 “Consultation on the Primary and Secondary School Formulae 2016/17” due to his Trade Union interests.

ACTION: *Assistant City Solicitor*

84. MINUTES OF 8 JULY 2015 AND MATTERS ARISING

(a) Report on progress made on “Action” items. The Business Advisor (Schools) reported that:

- **Bradford Education Improvement Commissioning Board (Item 74 page 55):** A report, which responds to the requests for information and questions from members, is tabled at this meeting.
- **Early Years Flexibility and Places Planning (item 75 page 55):** A report will be presented to the Schools Forum on 21 October.

(b) Other matters arising: The Business Advisor (Schools) reported the following:

- **Living Wage:** that letters will be sent shortly to schools on the implementation of the Council’s resolution for the implementation of a living wage.
- **Scheme for Financing Schools:** that the DfE has made a direction for 2 revisions to the Scheme for Financing Schools a) requiring the governing bodies of maintained schools to publically publish (on their websites) a register of business interests and details of any relationships governors have with school staff and b) providing clarification that finance leases are considered to be borrowing and that schools are not permitted to borrow without the permission of the Secretary of State. These revisions have been incorporated into our Scheme and this has been re-published.
- **Ofsted Report:** that a copy of Ofsted’s report on its inspection of the Authority’s school improvement function has been sent to Members within the papers for this meeting. Accepting the challenge that the District faces in accelerating outcomes for children, Members are asked to note the positive comments made by Ofsted about the Schools Forum and its decision making and use of resources. Members are also asked to note the direction of travel, towards a sector-led improvement model, recognising that this will feature strongly in discussions on the 2016/17 DSG allocation, in particular in those relating to centrally managed and de-delegated funds.
- **Presentations to the October meeting:** that presentations will be made to the Forum on 21 October, which provide an overview of the District’s summer 2015 attainment results and the Council’s 2016/17 budget position.

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2015 be signed as a correct record.

ACTION: *City Solicitor*



85. MATTERS RAISED BY SCHOOLS

There were no matters raised by schools to report.

No resolution was passed on this item.

86. STANDING ITEM – DSG GROWTH FUND ALLOCATIONS

No new allocations were presented.

No resolution was passed on this item.

87. SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERS – ELECTION OF A CHAIR

Members were asked to approve the proposed approach for the election of Chair of the Schools Forum for 2015/16.

Resolved –

That the established approach (email) be followed for the collection of nominations for the election of Chair of the Schools Forum for 2015/16.

Action: *Business Advisor (Schools)*

88. UPDATE ON 2015/16 DSG FUNDING MATTERS

Two reports were presented, **Document EX** and **Document EY**, which provided updates, picking up requests by Members for further information, on the establishment of Bradford's Education Improvement Commissioning Board and the development of the District's strategy for supporting New to English learners.

The Bradford Education Improvement Commissioning Board (BEICB)

The Interim Assistant Director, Education and School Improvement, presented Document EX. Members asked the following questions and made the following comments:

- Whether the Education Improvement Strategic Board (EISB) will continue, as the letter that has been sent by the Leader of the Council to EISB members is unclear. The Interim Assistant Director clarified that the EISB will continue, and that there is work taking place currently on the constitution of this Board and an interim external Chair is in place. The Chair requested that a copy of the Leader's letter be provided for the School Forum's record.
- Where will financial decisions that are taken by the BEICB be recorded and how will these be communicated to the Schools Forum? In response, it was agreed that a report from the BEICB, which includes the minutes of BEICB meetings, be added to the Schools Forum agenda as a standing item.

Supporting New to English Learners

The Interim Assistant Director, Education and School Improvement, introduced Document EY, which provided an update on the development of the District's strategy for supporting new to English learners. The Lead Area Achievement Officer, Co-ordinator New Communities / Travellers



and Headteacher of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School (Bradford) attended the meeting to provide more information and to support the Forum's discussion.

The Lead Area Achievement Officer gave a summary of the work that has taken place so far, and the immediate next steps, in the establishment of centres of excellence (hubs), emphasising that these are aimed at delivering sustainable support for new to English learners, building on the range of expertise and good practice that has already been established in schools. It was explained that the BEICB has allocated £80,000 in support of the establishment of the hubs.

The Headteacher of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School presented her school as an example of how existing practice can be used in the development of the hubs. This included sharing experience and systems, such as pupil attainment and mobility tracking systems, teaching strategies and parental engagement. To date, much of the development of additional infrastructures has come from the 'good will' of schools; the District's response now needs to be more formalised and sustainable, and funded accordingly.

Members asked the following questions and made the following comments:

- A Member asked for clarification on what resource is being allocated for the development of the hubs. It was explained that £80,000 is being allocated on a one off basis for establishment costs from the BEICB, with £120,000 allocated from the New Communities Team and further income being generated through the school to school trading of services.
- A Member stated that the Authority currently has an EMA team, which is DSG funded. Referring to the current consultation, which proposes to cease this team, a concern was raised about what strategic capacity would continue to be available within the Authority and what would happen to the DSG funding that would be released. A question was asked about whether an impact evaluation has been carried out on the EMA team and the impact of decreasing the Authority's capacity in this area. The Interim Assistant Director responded by clarifying that capacity was being increased, not reduced, and that resources are being re-aligned with the sector-led improvement model. Where the de-delegated fund for the EMA team ceases, the DSG funding released will go back into school delegated budgets. The Authority will continue to operate its New to English Strategy Group, which has been established for some time, and will evaluate the effectiveness and impact of arrangements through the BEICB back to the Schools Forum.
- A Member commented that it was a little unclear from the detail in the report what schools or groups of schools that bid to establish hubs will get back (in terms of resources) and what they will be expected to put in themselves. It was asked that the detail of this be made clearer.
- Referring to the Press reports about the placement of Syrian refugees in the Bradford District, a member asked what strategic planning is taking place to manage this, especially in the placement of children in schools. The Co-ordinator, New Communities / Travellers, explained that Horton Housing is taking a lead with Bradford Council and that Horton Housing liaises with pupil admissions to place families in areas where there is school places capacity. A discussion followed from this, and Members asked for further information on the Council's strategic plan, especially regarding admissions, expressing the desire to ensure that the Council is pro-actively managing this situation and is engaging with schools that may be asked to admit children at an early stage. In particular, Members asked for information on:
 - A step by step view on how refugees are being / are to be managed, including how decisions are taken on the housing of families, the decision processes for the admission of children in schools and what the influencing factors are, a view on where these children are likely to go, and how the Council pro-actively communicates with admitting schools and schools (or areas of schools) that are likely to be asked to admit children.
 - What support (including funding) is available from the Council for schools to support refugee children.



- What other sources of funding and support are available e.g. Home Office funding.
- How the Council will monitor the impact of its placement strategy.
- Responding to the reminder the offer that has been given previously, Members asked for further information specifically on how Bradford College's offer of support in the District's response to supporting new to English learners e.g. working with parents on language and meeting the needs of new arrivals in year 11, has been / will be further explored and utilised.

In summing up the discussion, the Chair commented that the language that is used in the report does not seem to correctly correlate with the graphical information in the appendices. The Lead Area Officer agreed to look at this and to clarify. The Chair also observed that schools that may bid to become hubs, because they have existing infrastructures, may also have issues of pupil turbulence to manage, which may affect the quality of support services offered for other schools. This needs to be managed carefully. The Chair also asked for further information, relating to the discussions on the possible impact of a national funding formula, on how Bradford's formulae funds pupils with multiple needs e.g. deprivation and language and how our approach compares against the national position. There is a crucial question about whether we are targeting our funding in the right way. The Business Advisor (Schools) stated that this was something that the Formula Funding Working Group would look at and would respond to the Forum at the next meeting. He also explained that a report is being presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee on 22 October, which provides an analysis of the relationships between funding levels and attainment. This report will be shared with the Forum.

Resolved –

- (1) **That the contents of Document EX be noted.**
- (2) **That the proposed programme, outlined in Document EY, to establish six Centre of Good Practice (hubs) be noted. That a report be presented to the next meeting, which responds to the questions asked, and requests for further information made, by Forum Members on this matter and recorded in the minutes of the meeting.**
- (3) **That the letter from the Leader of the Council to Education Improvement Strategy Board Members be provided for the Schools Forum's record.**
- (4) **That a report from the Bradford Education Improvement Commissioning Board (BEICB) be included as a standing agenda item of Schools Forum meetings. That the minutes of BEICB meetings be provided within these reports.**

Action: *Interim Assistant Director, Education and School Improvement
Business Advisor (Schools)*

89. EARLY PROJECTION OF THE 2016/17 DSG POSITION AND COST PRESSURES

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, **Document EZ**, which provided an early indicative view of the 2016/17 Dedicated Schools Grant position and identified the cost pressures, which the Forum will need to consider in making final recommendations in January 2016.

The focus of the Forum's consideration from the presentation of the report was the possible implications of a national funding formula. The Business Advisor (Schools) explained that no specific information has been yet presented by the DfE on what this formula may look like, or from when this will be implemented, but that there have been a number of articles in the Press and also information available on the F40 Group's website (about this Group's conversations with the DfE on national formula issues), which give some informal insight. It is envisaged that change to a national formula will begin at April 2017, with detailed consultation during 2016. The Business Advisor (Schools) explained that the gist of the informal information is that the national formula may (significantly) reduce the proportion of the national DSG pot that is allocated towards



additional educational needs, in favour of establishing a higher level of core funding for all authorities / schools. As Bradford receives a high level of additional needs funding, including Pupil Premium, this may mean that Bradford could see its funding level reduce. It was explained that the impact on individual schools within Bradford actually may be different, depending on the characteristics of their pupil populations and also other factors, such as size.

In the discussion about the potential for lobbying Government on this issue, the Chair provided a little further information on the composition of the DfE's national funding steering group. The Chair did not disclose detail about what is being discussed by this group, but did offer his observation that the DfE's terminology has shifted to talk about "fairer" funding, and did suggest that the likelihood is that further announcements from the DfE will not take place before the November Spending Review. Referring to the Forum's previous discussions on budget pressures, the Chair reinforced the message that schools and academies must look closely at their business models and must use the resources that are available to them e.g. the efficiency tools that are available through the DfE's website.

A Member asked whether a national funding formula is likely to have a detrimental impact on smaller schools. The Business Advisor (Schools) suggested that this is very possible, given that the DfE's previous consultations have stated preference for a more pupil-led funding model and that our values of lump sums for both primary and secondary are higher than the national average. The Chair added that the DfE's Post 16 Area Reviews, which are being established now, are focused on re-aligning provision in recognition of the reducing viability of smaller Post 16 settings. Regarding Post 16 provision, the Strategic Director, Children's Services, explained that the Authority has established a review process to look at provision in Bradford going forward, with an event initiating this in October.

A Member asked about the pressure in the DSG from the inflationary (RPIX) increases in the cost of the Building Schools for the Future contract. The Business Advisor (Schools) stated that this is an annual compounded cost; the increase in 2016/17 is estimated to be £125,000.

Resolved –

- (1) That the contents of Document EZ be noted.**
- (2) That information be provided for the Schools Forum to consider on the how Bradford's formulae allocates funding for types of pupil needs and multiple needs, how our approach compares with the position nationally, and on the possible areas of risk was a National Funding Formula to be established around current national averages.**

Action: *Business Advisor (Schools)*

90. CONSULTATION ON THE EARLY YEARS SINGLE FUNDING FORMULA 2016/17

The Principal Finance Officer presented a report, **Document FA**, which asked the Forum to agree the publication of the consultation document, which outlines the proposals for the formulae to be used to calculate budgets for Early Years providers in 2016/17. It was explained that this consultation document has been agreed by the Early Years Working Group. No changes to the methodology for the calculation of funding are proposed, but it is proposed to move to a system of monthly payments for private, voluntary and independent providers.

The updated position of our free entitlement funding rates against other authorities was presented. This analysis confirms, as already understood by the Schools Forum, the continuation of higher rates of funding in the Bradford District. It was also confirmed that the proposals within the latest consultation from the DfE on the 2016/17 Financial Regulations will not materially affect 2 year old



funding in Bradford insofar as we already fund all 2 year old provision on a participation-led, rather than a place-led, basis.

A Member asked for further information on how the Authority audits the eligibility of children that are taking 2 year old places, explaining that, unlike with the Early Years Pupil Premium (where eligibility assessment is carried out by the Authority), eligibility assessment for the 2 year old offer is carried out by settings themselves. A concern was expressed that this may lead to ineligible children being funded for 2 year old places. It was agreed that further information on audit processes will be provided.

Resolved –

- (1) That the publication of the consultation, Document FA, Appendix 1, be agreed.**
- (2) That further information is provided to the Schools Forum on the processes in place for auditing the eligibility of children for the 2 year old free entitlement.**

Action: *Principal Finance Officer (Schools)*

91. **CONSULTATION ON THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL FORMULAE 2016/17**

The report of the Schools Formula Funding Officer was presented, **Document FB**, which asked the Forum to agree to the publication of the consultation document, which outlines the proposals for the formulae to be used to calculate budgets for Primary and Secondary schools (and academies) in 2016/17 and the criteria that will form the basis of the allocation of additional funding to schools (and academies where appropriate) from DSG contingency funds.

It was explained that the Formula Funding Working Group (the FFWG) will be meeting shortly to consider matters relating to the values of funding factors and the national funding formula. On the Chair's request, the names of the members of the FFWG were given and it was explained that the Authority is currently seeking a replacement academy / business manager representative.

Referring to one secondary school with a very substantial value of funding per pupil, a Member asked that the budget modelling be adjusted to include the number of pupils in each school / academy for reference. This was agreed.

A Member asked that the wording in Appendix 4 on the Trade Union Health and Safety Facilities de-delegated fund be checked and amended to recognise that this has now been redistributed to include non-teaching unions. This was agreed.

In summarising the discussion, and in pulling together the content of discussion under previous agenda items, the Chair asked that the Formula Funding Working Group analyses the potential areas of risk from the national funding formula, looking at where our approach to formulae funding is significantly different from the national position (the most common position in other authorities), for this to be considered by the full Forum at the next meeting.

Resolved –

That the publication of the consultation, Document FB, Appendix 1, be agreed, subject to minor amendments of the wording in Appendix 4 and the inclusion of a total pupil numbers column in the budget modelling spreadsheets, as suggested by Members.

Action: *School Formula Funding Officer*

92. **PUPIL PREMIUM SPENDING ANALYSIS**



The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, **Document FC**, which provided an analysis of the spending of the Pupil Premium in schools and academies across the District from the survey of Pupil Premium Statements that was conducted during summer 2015. Members were reminded that an initial survey took place in summer 2014 and the results of this were reported to the Schools Forum in September 2014. Document FC focused on how reporting has changed over the last year, using the same set of questions, but this time including the statements published by academies.

In considering this report, Members agreed that an assessment of the impact that the Pupil Premium has had on outcomes for children and narrowing the attainment gap of children from more deprived backgrounds must be a crucial part of our analysis. The Director of Children's Services supported this and stated that the Authority would be taking this forward.

A Member asked that, in using the results of the survey (and in drawing potential conclusions about effectiveness from this), it be understood that schools use and publish information in different ways as appropriate e.g. under the Data Protection Act. The Member explained that his school closely tracks the progress of individual children in receipt of Pupil Premium, but that the detail of this would not be recorded in the school's Pupil Premium Statement published on the school's website. This was acknowledged.

In summing up the discussion, the Chair recommended that the results of the survey be discussed with the Partnerships and also that the Authority talks further with the District's Pupil Premium award winners to encourage of the spread of good practice.

Resolved –

- (1) That the contents of Document FC be noted.**
- (2) That this information, and use of Pupil Premium and impact evaluation, is discussed with the Partnerships.**

Action: *Business Advisor (Schools)*

93. WORK PROGRAMME AND SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2015/16 ACADEMIC YEAR

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, **Document FD**, which outlined the School Forum's 2015/16 Academic Year work programme.

Resolved –

That the Schools Forum meetings schedule and work programme for the 2015/16 Academic Year be approved, with the addition of the consideration of the DfE's Post 16 area review and Post 16 costs, funding and provision as an emerging priority theme.

Action: *Business Advisor (Schools)*

94. SCHOOLS FORUM STANDING ITEMS

There were no further updates presented on the Forum's standing items:

No resolution was passed on this item.



95. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AOB) / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

No additional items of business for consideration were tabled.

No resolution was passed on this item.

96. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Schools Forum is Wednesday 21 October 2015.

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THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER

