

# Minutes of a meeting of the Schools Forum held on Wednesday, 5 July 2017 at 8.00 am in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced	0810
Adjourned	1005
Reconvened	1020
Concluded	1140

## PRESENT

### SCHOOL MEMBERS

Bev George, Brent Fitzpatrick, Chris Quinn, Dianne Richardson, Ian Morrel, Tehmina Hashmi, Trevor Loft, Nicky Kilvington

### NON SCHOOLS MEMBERS & NOMINATED SUB SCHOOL MEMBERS

Alison Kaye and Irene Docherty

### LOCAL AUTHORITY (LA) OFFICERS

Andrew Redding	Business Advisor (Schools)
Angela Spence-Brooke	Strategic Manager, SEND and Behaviour
Asad Shah	Committee Services Officer
Dawn Haigh	Principal Finance Officer (Schools)
Jenny Cryer	Assistant Director, Performance, Commissioning and Partnerships
Judith Kirk	Deputy Director, Education, Employment and Skills
Lynn Donahue	Early Years Strategic Manager
Raj Singh	Business Advisor

### OBSERVERS

Councillor Pollard	
Councillor Ward	
Lynn Murphy	Business Manager, Feversham College

### APOLOGIES

Members – Ian Murch, Lesley Heathcote, Maureen Cairns, Sami Harzallah, Ray Tate, Sue Haithwaite, Helen Williams; Executive Portfolio Holder – Education, Employment And Skills – Councillor Imran Khan; Council Officers - Michael Jameson, Strategic Director, Children’s Services and Stuart McKinnon-Evans Strategic Director, Corporate Services

## DOMINIC WALL IN THE CHAIR

## CHAIR’S OPENING REMARKS



In introducing the meeting, the Chair welcomed Mary Copeland (Academy Member) as a returning member. The Chair also welcomed back Lynn Murphy.

The Chair expressed his thanks, and the thanks of the Schools Forum, to Bev George (Nursery Headteacher) and Chris Quinn (Maintained Secondary Governor), who are retiring members. The Chair thanked them for their commitment and involvement in Forum matters and meetings, and their contributions to its working groups, over many years.

The Chair also expressed his thanks and best wishes to Sarah North (School Funding Team Officer) who is leaving the Authority.

## **251. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Disclosures of interest were received from Chris Quinn (for the matter raised by Bingley Grammar School under item 253) and from Ian Morrell and Dominic Wall (for the update on the strategic review of SEND under item 259).

## **252. MINUTES OF 15 MARCH 2017 & MATTERS ARISING**

The Business Advisor (Schools) reported on progress made on “Action” items as follows:

- **Item 245 page 3: National Funding Formula consultation.** The Business Advisor gave an update verbally on the position of the NFF consultation, stating that we still await the DfE’s announcement following its 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of consultation, but that one of the key Conservative Manifesto promises was that no school or academy would lose as a result of the NFF. Taken at face value, assuming that this would be delivered through the application of a 0% per pupil floor (rather than the proposed 3% per pupil floor), Bradford’s £12.6m loss in the Schools Block as a result of the NFF would be fully negated, which would be £5.8m better than proposed in December. However, the detail is crucial to assessing the true impact. The Schools Minister (Nick Gibb) has also said to Parliament that the implementation of the NFF is not delayed. We expect further announcements over the summer.

A Secondary Phase Member asked what advice he can now give colleagues on the NFF. The Business Advisor explained that what these high level statements mean cannot be fully assessed until the detail is known. As such, the impact is still uncertain and firmer advice cannot be given at this time other than to watch closely for further information expected after the summer. The Business Advisor also highlighted other separate developments that must be brought into the assessment, including the discussions currently on public sector pay review, where under funded pay awards may result in greater financial pressure within school budgets even where the impact of NFF is not so great.

- The response to **item 246 page 4 (SEND review presentation)** is reported back on today’s agenda.



- **Item 247 page 5 Matters Concerning School and Academy Budgets:** A report on balances of maintained schools is presented today. The Council is currently seeking to confirm the WYFP lump sum charge for maintained schools, but has provided guidance for schools to budget for this at £1 per pupil in 2017/18. An analysis of the “40bn” is included with Document HL at today’s meeting.
- **Item 249 AOB Membership Update:** this is reported under agenda item 7 Document HJ.

**Resolved –**

- (1) **That progress made on “Action” items be noted.**
- (2) **That the minutes of 15 March 2017 be signed as a correct record.**

**ACTION: City Solicitor**

### **253. MATTERS RAISED BY SCHOOLS**

The Business Adviser (Schools) present 2 matters that have been raised by schools through communication with the Chair:

- (a) The cost of de-delegation for maternity in the secondary phase

The Business Advisor reported that a letter has been received from the Headteacher at Bingley Grammar School asking the Schools Forum to review the charge to maintained secondary schools in 2017/18 for access to the maternity / paternity insurance fund, identifying the significant / disproportionate growth in the cost and lack of value for money that this provides. The Business Advisor reminded members of the rationale for the Forum’s decision back in January 2017 for the cessation of the fund at 1 July 2017 for new claims and the exit strategy. He also explained that it was difficult at this stage to present information to enable an assessment of the options that are available to the Forum for review as the cost of the scheme was still uncertain (there are a number of moving parts). Costs would be clearer in September. The representative of Maintained Secondary Headteachers stated that he would wish to consult further with colleagues on this issue. The representative of Maintained Secondary Governors, having declared an interest, expressed the view that the cost should be supported by the use of DSG reserve. The Forum agreed for this matter to be considered more closely, with the necessary detail, in September.

- (b) Trade Union Facilities Time

The Business Advisor reported that the CEO of BDAT has been in communication with the Chair seeking review of Trade Union Facilities Time; for consideration of the cost of arrangements going forward (identifying that the costs in Bradford are higher than national averages) and how these arrangement are engaged in the academy sector. Members agreed that the annual review of de-delegated funds,



which takes place in the autumn term for recommendations to be presented to the Forum, should incorporate and respond to these matters.

**Resolved –**

- (1) **Re. the letter to the Chair from Bingley Grammar School regarding de-delegation for maternity costs in the secondary phase in 2017/18, that a report is presented to the next meeting, which enables the Schools Forum to make a recommendation on the matter.**
- (2) **Re. the communication to the Chair from the CEO of BDAT regarding Trade Union Facilities Time, that this be considered within the established review process, that will beginning in September, which informs the Schools Forum’s annual decisions on de-delegation matters.**

**Action: Business Advisor (Schools)**

**254. STANDING ITEM – DSG GROWTH FUND ALLOCATIONS**

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented the report, **Document HI**, which asks the Forum to agree two allocations from the Primary Growth Fund related to September 2017 expansions. Members did not ask any questions on the information presented and accepted the proposed allocations.

**Resolved –**

**That the Growth Fund allocations set out in Document HI be agreed.**

**Action: Business Advisor (Schools)**

**255. SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP - CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

Members were asked to approve the proposed approach for the elections of both the Chair and Vice Chair of the Schools Forum for 2017/18.

The Chair explained, due to his position as a CEO of an academy trust that is actively involved in the development of SEND provision in Bradford, there will regularly be matters discussed and decided by the Schools Forum for which he will need to declare interests. Following some thought on this matter, the Chair explained that he has decided to not put himself forward for the Chair of the Schools Forum for the next term, but still wishes to be an active academy member.

The Chair also reported to the Forum that, following discussions with Dianne Richardson (the current Vice Chair), Dianne would like to stand for nomination / election for Chair for 2017/18.

The Business Advisor, on behalf of the Schools Forum, thanked the Chair for his leadership of the Forum and for the gravitas and insight he has brought to difficult



and complicated discussions. Forum Members expressed their thanks through a round of applause.

**Resolved –**

**That the established approach (email) be followed for the collection of nominations and for the election of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Schools Forum for 2017/18.**

**Action:** *Business Adviser (Schools)*

## 256 **SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP**

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, **Document HJ**, which provides an update on membership arrangements and asks Members to review the Authority's proposal for the Forum's membership composition. It was explained that it is particularly important that the Forum's membership remains proportionate with the number of pupils in maintained schools and academies, whilst also allowing for continuity and effective decision making. If the proposed composition was agreed, the Authority would work towards this.

Forum members asked the following questions and made the following comments:

- The Vice Chair offered to speak to BPIP about the maintained primary school Headteacher vacancy.
- The Authority's post of representative for vulnerable children is currently vacant and should be filled as a priority.
- What will happen where the current incumbent of the secondary maintained school membership may no longer eligible due to conversion to academy status? The Business Advisor explained that the requirement is that, in such circumstances, the incumbent's membership will cease. The Authority would need to approach the remaining secondary schools for representation or review the position of that membership should the post not be filled.
- How will National Funding Formula affect the future role of the Schools Forum? The Business Advisor explained that this is currently uncertain, but the suggestion in the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of the DfE's consultation was that the Forum may move its focus towards SEND / partnership work, picking up the patterns of allocation of the High Needs and Early Years Blocks.

**Resolved –**

**The Schools Forum supports the membership composition for 2017/18 as proposed in Document HJ and agrees for this to be worked towards.**

**Action:** *Business Adviser (Schools)*

## 257 **SCHOOLS FORUM PANEL RECOMMENDATION - OASTLER SCHOOL**

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, **Document HK**, which asks



the Schools Forum to consider the recommendation from the Forum's Panel on the letter received from Oastler School on supporting the school's deficit balance. Document HK sets out this recommendation. The Business Advisor presented the Panel's conclusions and the Authority's initial response to these. He explained that the Forum's confirmed recommendation, with the Authority's initial response, will next be presented to the Council's Executive for decision.

**Resolved –**

**That the Schools Forum supports the recommendation of the Panel. The Forum also recognises the initial response from the Authority to this recommendation. This recommendation be presented to the Executive for decision.**

**Action: Business Adviser (Schools)**

## 258 UPDATE ON MATTERS CONCERNING THE 2017/18 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, **Document HL**, which provided an update on a number of matters related to the 2017/18 Dedicated Schools Grant. The presentation focused on:

- The confirmation of the DSG reserve position, with a further £0.698m of general and £1.35m of early years monies from the confirmed 2016/17 outturn.
- The simple analysis of the “£40bn”, where is more interesting to identify what is not included in the “protected budget”.
- The changes that will need to take place in Early Years Single Funding Formula administration resulting from the 30 hours (Appendix 1) and the proposal for the collection of feedback ‘informally’ at an early stage about the Authority's proposed direction of travel towards a ‘starters and leavers’ based counting methodology. It was explained that the EYWG meets again on 20 July to further discuss. Forum members supported the proposal to beginning to discuss these changes with colleagues as soon as possible.

In responding to the information presented on the national “£40bn” school's core budget, a Member requested further information on grants of a significant value that are being allocated directly into schools and MATs in the District, including to Teaching School Alliances, so that this can facilitate further consideration and the monitoring of how these grants are being effectively deployed. The Member explained that, although these grants are outside the direct remit of the Schools Forum, it is important for the Forum to have full sight of the large sums of monies that are being allocated into the District, especially to the Teaching Schools Alliances, and for the Forum to understand the distribution of these funds and the impact that these have.

**Resolved –**

**(1) That the information contained in Document HL be noted.**



- (2) That further information is provided on grants of a significant value that are being allocated directly into schools and MATs in the District, including to Teaching School Alliances, to facilitate further consideration and the monitoring of how these grants are being effectively deployed.**

259 **UPDATE: STRATEGIC REVIEW OF SEND & HIGH NEEDS BLOCK MATTERS**

A comprehensive briefing (on PowerPoint) was presented by the Strategic Manager – SEND and the Strategic Manager – Early Years on the SEND Strategic Review for the Forum's information. The presentation outlined the history, the purposes and rationale of the review, the work taking place for the delivery of sufficient high needs places and the proposals, currently out to formal consultation, for the establishment of Early Years Enhanced Special Provisions and Centres of Excellence and the creation of a traded Integrated Specialist Teaching Support Service (ISTSS) through reshaping High Needs Block funded services. It was explained that the formal consultation period is planned to run to the 31 August. The presentation also explained the development of 'my support plan', which is expected to be increasingly rolled out from the autumn term.

Forum Members asked a number of questions for clarification on the presentation. Members also asked the following questions and made the following comments:

- Whether the Authority had trading models showing what the costs to schools would be of accessing the ISTSS? The Strategic Manager responded that the Authority is working on developing flexible packages and these would be available to consider in the autumn incorporating the feedback from the consultation.
- That the cost pressures being faced by school must be considered within this review; schools may only be able to purchase what they can afford rather than what they need.
- That the progress of the consultation and the review should continue to be an agenda item at Headteacher meetings.
- Will we only be looking to establish about an extra 100 places after September 2018? The Strategic Manager confirmed that this will be the position (following the earlier creation of places on an interim basis between January 2017 and September 2018).
- What is the position of SEND free school applications? The Chair responded that Bradford Authority has commissioned 2 new SEND free schools, which will create 360 places when opened. These are in addition to the Authority's commissioning of a new SEMH school. It was clarified that these free schools will be funded for the places commissioned by the Authority (the Authority defines its commitment to the DfE in terms of number of places that will be funded rather than a guaranteed value of income).
- Will the Schools Block be required to make further contributions to the High Needs Block in the future? The Business Advisor (Schools) stated that the purpose of the transfer of funds in this current financial year was to support the position of the High Needs Block across the medium term so that it 'lives



within its own means'. Further contributions are not assumed and there would need to be good reason for consideration of these. However, we 'can never say never', at least until we have more confirmed information about the National Funding Formula. The NFF may prevent further contributions from the Schools Block in any event. The pressures within the High Needs Block cannot be under estimated.

The Chair concluded the discussion by thanking the Strategic Managers for the comprehensiveness of their presentation and of the solution presented. He asked that the minutes of the meeting record that the Forum endorses the review work. He also reminded Members of their duty to communicate with colleagues on these matters.

#### **Resolved –**

**That the update provided on the Strategic Review of SEND and High Needs Block Matters be noted.**

### 260 **SCHOOLS' OUTTURN (REVENUE BALANCES) 2016/17**

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, **Document HN**, which shows the position of revenue balances held by maintained schools at 31 March 2017. The report also provides information on schools' reporting of surplus balances and a further update on the anticipated volume of conversions of maintained schools to academy status in Bradford and the likelihood of liabilities resulting from the conversion of schools holding deficit budgets.

In his presentation of the report, the Business Advisor (Schools) highlighted that there is a greater number of schools in Category C (showing risk of financial difficulties in future years) than there has been in previous years and fewer schools with surplus balances in excess of the defined thresholds. 61% of maintained schools had 'in year 'deficits in 2016/17. He also stated that the majority of schools are continuing to progress timely action to address tighter financial times and budget deficits where these occur. He highlighted that there has been no cost to the Authority as a result of the conversion of 37 maintained schools to academy status since February 2016. However, the position for schools is increasingly challenging.

Following his presentation, the Chair invited the Deputy Director, Education, Employment and Skills, to provide more information on the position of the deficit budget of Hanson School. The Deputy Director explained that it is the Authority's view that a large element of the school's overspending could have been avoided had timely conversion to academy status been actioned and that the RSC's rejection of the Authority's plan, presented 20 months ago, for a federation option for the school, is very important in this. The Authority would emphasise that our proposed federation option is similar to the arrangement now in place following the failure to academise the school. The Deputy Director explained that discussions are currently taking place outside of the Schools Forum on these matters.





Forum Members asked a number of questions on the current position of the school, the previous sponsors, governance arrangements, transparency on this issue and also on the role of the DSG in any possible solution. The Chair summarised the Forum's great concern, recognising the value of the current deficit and that this exceeds the resources previously set aside in the DSG to support the school. Forum Members indicated their support for the statement that the DSG cannot be responsible for a financial solution and that the value of financial support from the DSG will not exceed the value previously set aside.

**Resolved –**

**That information contained in Document HN be noted. That the minutes of the meeting record the Forum's significant concerns regarding the deficit position of Hanson School.**

261 **SCHOOLS' FINANCIAL VALUE STANDARD**

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, **Document HO**, which provided for members the annual update on the compliance of maintained schools with the Schools' Financial Value Standard (the SFVS) at 31 March 2017. A Member asked whether individual schools could be given feedback on their returns. The Business Advisor stated that he would discuss this with Internal Audit who has carried out the SFVS assurance exercise.

**Resolved –**

**That information contained in Document HO be noted.**

262 **FINANCIAL CLASSIFICATION OF MAINTAINED SCHOOLS 2017/18**

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, **Document HP**, which provided for the information of Members, a summary of the categorisation of maintained schools within the Local Authority's Financial Classification of Schools for the 2017/18 academic year.

Members did not ask any questions on the information presented.

**Resolved –**

**That information contained in Document HP be noted.**

263 **OTHER SCHOOLS FORUM STANDING ITEMS**

**No resolution was passed on this item.**

264 **AOB / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

**No resolution was passed on this item.**

265 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**



**The next meeting of the Schools Forum is Wednesday 20 September 2017.**

The clerk to the Forum was asked to look at the possibility of re-scheduling the July 2018 meeting so that this will not class with primary to secondary transition day.

Chair

**Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Schools Forum.**

THIS AGENDA AND ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN PRODUCED,  
WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER

