

Minutes of a meeting of the Schools Forum held on Wednesday, 13 March 2019 in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 0800
Concluded 1020

PRESENT

School Members:

Ashley Reed, Brent Fitzpatrick, Carol Dewhirst, Deborah Howarth, Dianne Richardson, Dominic Wall, Emma Hamer, Gill Holland, Graham Swinbourne, Kevin Holland, Nicky Kilvington, Trevor Loft, Wahid Zaman

Non School Members:

Ian Murch and Vivienne Robinson

Nominated Subs:

Alison Kaye and Irene Docherty

Local Authority Officers:

Andrew Redding	Business Advisor (Schools)
Asad Shah	Committee Services Officer
Dawn Haigh	Principal Finance Officer (Schools)
Marium Haque	Deputy Director, Education and Learning
Raj Singh	Business Advisor
Susan Krupinski	Principal Finance Officer (Schools)

Apologies:

Bryan Harrison, Helen Williams, Ian Morrel, Sian Young, Sue Haithwaite, Tahir Jamil, Tehmina Hashmi, Donna Willoughby and Councillor I Khan

DIANNE RICHARDSON IN THE CHAIR

387. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Declarations were received from the following members for agenda item 6 "SEMH and SEND Reviews – Progress Report" (minute 391): Brent Fitzpatrick, Dominic Wall, Emma Hamer and Trevor Loft

ACTION: *City Solicitor*

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ACTION: *City Solicitor*

388. MINUTES OF 9 JANUARY 2018 & MATTERS ARISING

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

- **Page 3 Virtual School for LAC:** As requested, the annual report, written by the Headteacher of the Virtual School (VSH) and presented to the Corporate Parenting Board, relating to 2017-18, is copied as part of the agenda pack. Members were reminded that a question was asked at the last meeting whether schools are permitted to use their Pupil Premium Plus Grant (PPG) to employ additional staffing. A response to this question is as follows:
 - The Conditions of Grant do not discount types of spending. Instead the focus is on “using the funding to meet the child’s needs (which will be described in their PEP)”.
 - The Ofsted inspection framework is also impact focused (can the school demonstrate that how it is using its funding is having sufficient impact).
 - The Conditions state that one of the responsibilities of the VSH is to make sure that schools spend their PPG to help meet the identified needs in their PEPs. So we would advise that it will be for the VSH and the school to discuss how to meet needs in the best way. This should be a dynamic discussion.
 - The Conditions also do permit the pooling of PPG with the main PPG to provide “more complete support”. But demonstration of maximum impact will be critical.
- **Page 3 DfE Letter of 17 December:** Members were reminded of the December letter from the DfE, which set out the additional revenue funding for High Needs and which also stated that an additional sum of £100m of high needs capital will be made available with the details of the allocation of this across local authorities to be confirmed early in the new year. When we presented this letter on 9 January we suggested that typically Bradford receives 1.1% of blanket national allocations so we would expect to receive £1.1m of this £100m. Our confirmed allocation from the £100m however, is only £306k, so in total we have been allocated only £1.117m from a national pot of £365m for high needs capital across 2018-2021.

Members discussed the insufficiency of this capital allocation and this is recorded under agenda item 6 (minute 391).

- **Page 5 DSG recommendations:** The recommendations on the allocation of the 2019/20 DSG were approved un-amended by Council on 21 February and are now being rolled out. On update on DSG matters is provided under agenda item 7.

Other Matters Arising

- **Request made by Members for assessment of the financial support model for Beckfoot Upper Heaton Academy:** Members were referred to the matters arising document presented on page 23. Members welcomed and accepted this report.
- **Stronger Communities Partnership Board** – It was reported that the clerk of the Schools Forum has been approached with a request for the Schools Forum to put forward a nomination for a Member to sit on the newly establishing Stronger Communities Partnership Board. It is advised and agreed that we progress this request using the established process for the collection of nominations for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Forum; namely, we send out the nominations information and request for Members to put themselves forward.

389. MATTERS RAISED BY SCHOOLS

No resolution was passed on this item.

390. STANDING ITEM - DSG GROWTH FUND ALLOCATIONS (i)

No resolution was passed on this item.

391. SEMH AND SEND REVIEWS - PROGRESS UPDATE (i)

A progress report on the SEND and SEHM reviews was presented, Document KE, by the Intelligence and Sufficiency Manager and the Deputy Director, Education and Learning. This report responded to the requests made by Members at the last meeting for clarification on alternative provision review and on the SEMH continuum. An update was also provided on work taking place to address the sufficiency of SEND places.

Following from matters arising, Members agreed that the methodology that the DfE has used to distribute high needs capital funding should be challenged in the strongest terms possible. The Deputy Director responded that elected members would support the Forum's concerns that the methodology has resulted in a disproportionate and insufficient capital allocation for Bradford. The Deputy Director advised that she will speak further with the Deputy Leader on this and that the Schools Forum could write directly to the Minister on this matter. The Chair agreed that the Forum should do this.

In responding to the update in Document KE, Members made the following main comments and asked the following main questions:

- What is the status of the new SEMH Free School? The Intelligence and Sufficiency Manager responded that no decision has yet been received from the DfE in response to the options document we have submitted. It was reported additionally that we have just been notified that our bid for an

ASD Free School has been unsuccessful due to a lack of identified site. A Member expressed his significant disappointment at this news, offering his view that the DfE appears simply not to be providing the level of support around places creation that we could reasonably expect.

- Will the intended move to require schools to pay for alternative provision in the PRUs (top up and place funding changes) lead to a tendency towards permanent exclusion to avoid the cost? How will this change affect the process for managed moves? The Deputy Director responded that the Authority is currently working with the BACs on a transition and new whole system approach, including a clarification of financial responsibilities and processes that will prevent 'off rolling' practices ('illegal' permanent exclusion). This is a matter that is coming under increasing scrutiny nationally. The Authority is seeking to develop a more integrated system where schools continue to control their alternative provision decisions and have a clear understanding that PRU provision is short term provision.
- The Primary Behaviour Centres currently support some pupils that are not on a roll of any school. This issue needs to be resolved as a priority. The Deputy Director responded that conversations are already being had to resolve this; the intention is that the pupils at the Behaviour Centres will come onto the roll of Primary PRU going forward. The Member who asked the question requested that the Behaviour Centres are given more information on this and the Deputy Director agreed to speak to them.
- The volume of review of alternative provision currently taking place provides a good opportunity to look at the whole system including issues related to 'off-rolling' and 'informal' pupil selection. The Deputy Director responded that the Admissions Manager is currently reviewing our Fair Access Policy (FAP) and is working with other local authorities to capture strong practice, including that which supports the fair distribution of in year admissions. It is anticipated that there will be changes to our FAP as a result of this work.
- What is the status of Ellar Carr? The Deputy Director responded that there are a number of incorrect rumours. The Authority will be meeting with the Management Committee to correct these rumours and to confirm the number of places we wish to commission.
- The Member representing the PRUs stated that the new intended model for alternative provision is very positive. However, critical to the successful establishment of this model is the 'unblocking' of PRU provision through the creation of a sufficient number of SEND places. The blocking of the PRUs with long-term EHCP placements is an acute problem, which is affecting young people currently in the system and decisions now about placements. The Deputy Director responded to agree with the Member's comments about the importance of the development of SEND provision. She reminded Members that 'sufficient' places creation is an iterative process, which will require regular review. The movement to the new alternative provision model will take time to achieve and will need transition. One of the complicated issues that needs to be unpicked is that Bradford has incorrectly 'blended together' its SEND / SEMH provision with

its PRU provision.

- It will be helpful for the Forum to be presented with a diagrammatical representation (a map) of what the Authority is aiming for in respect of the future shape of the District's alternative provision.
- It was identified that the Forum, through its sub-groups, has the option to discuss, in more detail, and with wider representation, the strategic developments set out in this report. This option will be considered as further information is presented to the Forum in future meetings.

Resolved –

- (1) That the information contained in Document KE be noted.**
- (2) That the report to the next Schools Forum meeting on 22 May incorporates the information requested by Members, as recorded in the minutes, including diagrammatical presentation of the current SEMH continuum of provision, and the current structure of alternative provisions, and of what the Authority is working to establish.**
- (3) That the Schools Forum, via an initial letter from the Chair to the DfE, requests further explanation, and challenges the appropriateness and fairness, of the methodology used by the DfE to allocate high needs capital funding, where Bradford has received only £1.1m of a £365m national pot.**

392. MATTERS CONCERNING THE DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (i)

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, Document KF, which provided an update on a number of matters relating to the 2019/20 Dedicated Schools Grant. This report provided an update on some smaller matters and then listed, albeit at a reasonably high level, the main areas of formula review that are identified, setting out expected national formula funding changes and responses as well as areas of review that have been identified locally.

The lack of certainty about the Government's timetable for announcements was emphasised; a lot of work may need to be completed in the autumn term to set up our DSG arrangements for 2020/21. The critical DSG announcements from Government will cover:

- Early Years Block overall settlement.
- Early Years Block nursery school protection.
- Schools Block overall settlement.
- Schools Block development of National Funding Formula at factor level including mobility, growth and PFI.
- Schools Block Minimum Funding Guarantee.
- Schools Block permitted framework for de-delegated funds.
- Schools Block flexibility for the movement of funds to the High Needs Block.
- High Needs Block overall settlement and release of damping.

- High Needs Block uplift of the Place-Plus thresholds.
- High Needs Block funding of education in hospital and medical home tuition.
- High Needs Block national re-definition of notional SEND.
- High Needs Block outcomes of the national alternative provision review.
- Central Schools Services Block historic commitments funding.
- The possible merger ('mainstreaming') of grant streams e.g. teacher pay grant into the DSG and the impact on baselines and protections.

Resolved –

That the information contained in Document KF be noted.

393. MATTERS CONCERNING SCHOOL AND ACADEMY BUDGETS (i)

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, Document KG, which provided an update on matters concerning school and academy budgets. This included an update on the position of the conversion of maintained schools to academy status and on anticipated cost pressures within school and academy budgets over 2019-2022. This report also highlighted the current level of uncertainty within the national funding and grants system and how this uncertainty will have implications for the way the schools and academies budget.

Members made a number of observations in response to this report, in particular about the increase in the national DSG budget to the "highest levels ever" being reflective of the significant growth in pupil numbers rather than a real terms growth in per capita funding. The Business Advisor added that Bradford's per capita funding growth in the Schools Block in 2018/19 was only 0.5% and in 2019/20 is only c. 0.3%. Bradford's per capita funding for early years is actually reducing as a result of the Government's national early years funding reform.

Members recognised the significant level of challenge to schools and academies in their budget management, and agreed that costs – especially salaries costs - in schools are also at the highest level they have ever been and are likely set to continue to rise. The member representing the teaching trades unions added that a couple of recent developments - the size of the pay award for teachers in Scotland (13.5% over 3 years), as well as the current court case around the fire-fighters final salary pension scheme - could also have further significant implications for costs to schools going forward.

Members discussed how key messages are budget challenge are communicated. The Business Advisor reported that, in addition to published guidance and messages on Bradford Schools Online, he regularly attends BPIP and business manager and headteacher forums, where school budget matters are presented and considered. He also stated that a specific conversation was currently taking place with nursery school headteachers. An academies member requested that the Business Advisor attends the next Secondary CEOs meeting to give an overview of the financial landscape.

Resolved –

That the information contained in Document KG be noted.

394. CONSULTATION - SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS (a)

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, Document KH, which asked Schools Forum Members representing maintained schools to agree to conduct a consultation with maintained schools on proposed amendments to the Scheme for Financing Schools. These amendments had been triggered by the DfE's refreshed guidance for local authorities, which was published on 5 February 2019.

Members did not have any comments on this report and did not ask any questions.

Resolved –

That consultation takes place with maintained schools on amendments to the Scheme for Financing Schools as proposed in Document KH and that the outcomes of this consultation be presented to the Schools Forum on 22 May for final decision.

395. SCHOOLS FORUM STANDING ITEMS (i)

No resolution was passed on this item.

396. AOB / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Resolved –

That the Schools Forum requests a report, which examines the affordability of PFI costs in schools across the medium and longer terms.

397. DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND PLANNED 2019/20 ACADEMIC YEAR MEETING SCHEDULE

Please see the published schedule of meetings – the next Forum meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 22 May 2019. There is a further scheduled then in this academic year for 10 July 2019.

That the schedule of planned meetings for the 2019/20 academic year be approved, as follows:

- **Wednesday 18 September 2019, 8am**
- **Wednesday 16 October 2019, 8am**
- **Wednesday 4 December 2019, 8am**
- **Wednesday 8 January 2020, 8am**
- *Wednesday 15 January 2020, 8am PROVISIONAL MEETING*
- **Wednesday 11 March 2020, 8am**
- **Wednesday 20 May 2020, 8am**
- **Wednesday 8 July 2020, 8am**

FROM: *Parveen Akhtar*
City Solicitor
City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

Contact Asad Shah: 01274 432280
Committee Secretariat
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Chair

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

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