

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Schools Forum on 7 December 2022

Schools Forum meeting held at City Hall on Wednesday 12 October 2022

Commenced 08:05
Concluded 10:20

RECORD OF MEETING ATTENDEES, APOLOGIES AND ABSENCES

Schools & Academies Members

IN ATTENDANCE

Member	Membership Group
Ian Morrel (Chair)	Maintained Secondary Schools – Headteacher
Ashley Reed (Vice Chair)	Academies Member
Heather Lacey	Academies Member
Wahid Zaman	Academies Member
Amanda Sloney	Academies Member
Mathew Atkinson	Academies Member
Richard Bottomley	Academies Member – Alternative Provision Academies
Sian Hudson	Maintained Nursery Schools – Headteacher
Emma Hamer	Maintained Primary Schools – Governor
Kathryn Swales	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher
Jonathan Nixon	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher
Graham Swinbourne	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher

APOLOGIES RECEIVED

Member	Membership Group
Helen Williams	Academies Member
Brent Fitzpatrick OBE	Academies Member
Victoria Birch	Academies Member
Michelle Farr	Academies Member – Special School Academies
Bev George	Maintained Nursery Schools – Governor
Nicky Kilvington	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher
Lyndsey Brown	Maintained Special Schools - Headteacher

NOT IN ATTENDANCE (WITHOUT APOLOGIES RECEIVED)

Member	Membership Group
Andrew Morley	Academies Member
Michael Thorp	Academies Member
Melanie Saville	Academies Member
Kirsty Ratcliffe	Pupil Referral Unit (maintained)

Non-Schools Members

IN ATTENDANCE

Member	Membership Group
Tom Bright	Teaching Unions

APOLOGIES RECEIVED

Member	Membership Group

NOT IN ATTENDANCE (WITHOUT APOLOGIES RECEIVED)

Member	Membership Group
Junaid Karim	Council for Mosques (Bradford)
David Johnston	Officer Representing Vulnerable Children

Substitute Members present at the meeting as a Member (not as an Observer)

Substitute Member	Membership Group
Alison Kaye	Academies Member

Substitute Members present at the meeting as an Observer (not as a Member)

Substitute Member	Membership Group

Local Authority Officers present at the meeting

Officer	Position
Niall Devlin	Assistant Director, SEND and Inclusion
Asad Shah	Committee Secretariat
Marium Haque	Deputy Director, Education and Learning
Dawn Haigh	Principal Finance Officer (Schools)
Jonty Holden	Principal Finance Officer (Schools)

40% of the School Forum's membership (filled membership positions) must be present for a meeting to be quorate. This meeting was quorate, with 52% of members present (14 out of 27 currently filled membership positions).

630. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Emma Hamer and Ian Morrel declared interests for agenda items 6, 7 and 8.

Action: Director of Legal and Governance

631. MINUTES OF 18 MAY 2022 & MATTERS ARISING

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2022 be signed as a correct

record.

632. MATTERS RAISED BY SCHOOLS

No resolutions were passed on this item.

633. STANDING ITEM - DSG GROWTH FUND ALLOCATIONS

No allocations for 2022/23 were presented and no resolutions were passed on this item.

634. CONSULTATION - PRIMARY AND SECONDARY MAINSTREAM FORMULAE & SCHOOLS BLOCK MATTERS 2023/24

The Principal Finance Officer (Schools) presented a report, **Document OX**, which asked the Schools Forum to consider the consultation document, which outlines the Authority's proposals for the Schools Block, the funding formula to be used to calculate allocations for mainstream Primary and Secondary schools and academies for the 2023/24 financial year, and the criteria that will form the basis of the allocation of additional funding to maintained schools (and to academies where appropriate) from Schools Block centrally managed funds.

The Principal Officer explained that the Authority would like now to consult on these proposals, with the feedback to be presented to the Schools Forum on 7 December. The Forum will then be asked to give it final formal views (its recommendations) on 11 January 2023.

Following the presentation of the report:

- A member representing maintained primary school headteachers asked whether the Authority has information that can be reported on the number of schools that will fall into deficit as a result of increasing costs. The member explained that they are interested in trends in the growth of the number of schools with deficit budgets. The Principal Officer responded that the Authority (School Funding Team) has very recently published some information (key messages) and modelling for schools, which will support the immediate review of their current year and 3-year budget projections. The Authority does not yet have sight of the updated budget positions of schools following this review and therefore, does not yet have sight of the number of maintained schools that are newly forecasting that they will fall into deficit if no mitigation action is taken. This picture will emerge as maintained schools submit their updated budget positions. The Principal Officer stated that it is anticipated that schools will face financial challenges and will have difficult decisions to take. The Authority will keep the Forum informed.
- A member representing academies asked whether the Schools Supplementary Grant could now be clawed back (as a result of the cessation of the National Insurance Levy). The Principal Officer responded that the position here was not currently clear and that the Authority is specifically

concerned that the 2023/24 settlement, which was announced in July and on which the consultation modelling and proposals that are presented today have been calculated, could be changed (could be reduced to remove the proportion of the Supplementary Grant that related to supporting the National Insurance Levy). There is some information that indicates that the Treasury is planning to remove from April 2023 from the DfE's departmental budget the £300m that was allocated nationally for the Levy. For school funding, the critical consideration here is whether the DfE amends the 2023/24 settlement to compensate for this.

- A member representing maintained primary headteachers asked whether most schools gain from the proposed change to Notional SEND. The Principal Officer clarified that there is no material loss or gain in funding as a result of the proposed change, as this is a 'notional' figure within formula funding allocations that are governed by the National Funding Formula. The Chair, as well as an academies member, emphasised this - that a change in the definition of Notional SEND does not change the formula funding that a school or academy materially receives. They added that schools / academies will need to renew their analysis of their uses of their Notional SEND budgets should the changes be implemented.
- The member representing the teacher trades unions asked whether we expect a response from every school and whether the number of responses per school to the consultation is limited. The Principal Officer responded to explain that, although responses are voluntary, we would wish to encourage all schools and academies to respond. The introduction of an electronic responses platform will help to maximise the number of responses we receive. Schools are typically only expected to submit a single response, but could submit further responses should these include additional information or feedback that was not included in the original response.

Resolved –

That the Consultation - Primary and Secondary Mainstream Formulae & Schools Block Matters 2023/24 (Document OX Appendix 1) be published.

ACTION: Principal Finance Officer (Schools)

635. CONSULTATION - HIGH NEEDS BLOCK FORMULAE FUNDING 2023/24

The Principal Finance Officer (Schools) presented a report, **Document OY**, which asked the Schools Forum to consider the consultation document, which outlines the formula approach that the Authority proposes to use to delegate High Needs Block funding to high needs providers, mainstream schools and academies and other settings in the 2023/24 financial year April 2023 to March 2024.

The Principal Officer explained that the Authority would like now to consult on these proposals, with the feedback to be presented to the Schools Forum on 7 December. The Forum will then be asked to give its final formal views (its recommendations) on 11 January 2023.

Following the presentation of the report:

- A member representing maintained primary school headteachers expressed concern that not uplifting EHCP top-up funding for the full impact of pay award will increase the budgetary pressure that schools face. The member asked whether the High Needs Block surplus should be used to address this. The Chair responded that the Authority has presented plans for the use and retention of the surplus balance, and emphasised that spending within the High Needs Block must be sustainable.
- A member asked whether there are any plans in place, in case the government claws back the High Needs Block surplus. The Assistant Director, SEND and Inclusion, responded that there is no expectation that the surplus balance will be clawed back.
- In responding to the proposals regarding the SEND Funding Floor, an academies member asked what is meant by a “minority” of schools. The Assistant Director responded to explain, in essence, this would be fewer than 50% of schools. Members discussed the implications of this definition, and the relationship between the SEND Funding Floor and Notional SEND, and the impact of parental preference of the distribution of EHCPs between schools / academies. Members requested some further modelling, which illustrates the impact of the proposed amendment to the SEND Funding Floor % thresholds on the numbers and types of schools / academies that qualify and how this would change.
- A member asked about the processes for assessing children and young people for EHCPs, commenting that the administrative process is costly and time intensive. Could the monies used for this instead be given to schools (without EHCP assessment). The Assessment Director responded to explain that EHCP assessment is the primary route for defining the needs of pupils and the funding that supports these needs. The EHCP assessment team in Bradford is relatively small and is funded from Council base budget, not from the DSG. The member responded to comment that the size of assessment team in Bradford needs to be increased.

Resolved –

That the Consultation - High Needs Block Formulae Funding 2023/24 (Document OY Appendix 1) be published.

LEAD: *Principal Finance Officer (Schools)*

636. EARLY YEARS BLOCK FUNDING MATTERS 2023/24

The Principal Finance Officer provided an update verbally on Early Years Block funding matters. They explained that no further announcements, since the 14 September Forum meeting, have been made by the DfE regarding the 2023/24 Early Years Block settlement or Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) arrangements, and that the Early Years Working Group will meet shortly to

consider the development of our proposals.

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

Resolved –

That the information provided be noted.

LEAD: *Business Advisor (Schools)*

637. DSG CENTRAL ITEMS AND DE-DELEGATED FUNDS 2023/24

The Principal Finance Officers (Schools) together presented a report, **Document OZ**, which asked the Schools Forum to review the position of Central Schools Services Block, Schools Block and Early Years Block central funds and de-delegated items for the 2023/24 financial year.

The Principal Officers explained that the report is presented to initiate the Forum's consideration of centrally managed funds for the next financial year. Feedback on Schools Block funds, including de-delegation, will be collected within the consultation and will be presented back to the Forum in December. Further information, which has been previously requested by the Forum, on the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant (SIMB) and the Authority's school improvement programme, will also be presented in December. However, due to timescales for subscription, Members representing Maintained Primary Schools are asked to decide at this meeting on de-delegation in 2023/24 for the purposes of purchasing Fischer Family Trust software.

Following the presentation of the report:

- The 4 voting Members that were present at the meeting (with 1 voting member absent), representing maintained primary school headteachers, voted to de-delegate from the primary phase for the purpose of subscribing to Fischer Family Trust for the 2023/24 financial year.
- In doing so, the Members requested that the Authority communicates again with maintained primary schools, to ensure that all schools are aware that the FFT software has been purchased and is available. Members also requested that the Authority approaches FFT with the aim of providing more training for schools (rather than just a roadshow).

Resolved –

(1) That the information presented in Document OZ be noted

(2) That Schools Forum Members did not request at this time the review of any of the centrally managed funds presented in Document OZ.

(3) That Members representing Maintained Primary Schools decided to de-delegate in 2023/24 for the purposes of purchasing subscriptions

to Fischer Family Trust.

LEAD: *Business Advisor (Schools)*

638. SCHOOLS FORUM STANDING ITEMS

No resolutions were passed on this item.

639. AOB / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No items were raised and no resolutions were passed on this item.

640. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled is Wednesday 7 December. This meeting will be held remotely.

Chair

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