

## **Report of the Director of Children's Services to the meeting of the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 22 November 2017.**

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**Subject:**

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**Schools Forum Update**

### **Summary statement:**

**Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee has asked for regular updates on the work of Bradford's Schools Forum.**

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**Portfolio:**

**Education Employment and Skills**

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**Overview & Scrutiny Area:**

**Children's Services**

## **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Committee has asked for regular updates to be provided on the work of the Schools Forum.
- 1.2 The last update was presented to the Committee on 27 September 2017. The Schools Forum has met once since on 18 October 2017. The decisions list from this meeting is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.3 The Schools Forum has one further meeting scheduled for the autumn term on 6 December. The key meeting at which the Schools Forum will make final recommendations on the allocation of the 2018/19 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) will take place on 10 January 2018.
- 1.4 The principal items that have been considered by the Schools Forum so far this term, and those that will feature prominently in forthcoming meetings, are:
  - National Funding Formula
  - Early Years National Funding Formula continued implementation and impact
  - Formula funding arrangements in Bradford for the 2018/19 financial year
  - SEND review, places sufficiency and Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block financial pressures
  - The future position of DSG centrally managed and de-delegated funds

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Under national Regulations, every local authority is required to operate a Schools Forum. The primary function of a Schools Forum is to recommend to the Council's Executive Committee how the funding, which the Government provides for schools and individual pupils (known as the Dedicated Schools Grant), is managed. The Forum also has some specific technical decision making powers. The DfE has stressed that it is essential that Forum membership arrangements keep pace with the changing landscape, in particular the conversion of maintained schools to academy status. The Forum must consider annually how best to provide for responsive arrangements, to ensure the Forum remains representative and to avoid any unintended bias towards any one phase.
- 2.2 33 maintained schools converted to academy status between 1 September 2016 and 1 September 2017. A further 2 schools converted on 1 October 2017. We now have 80 primary / secondary academies and 109 primary / secondary maintained schools. The composition of the Schools Forum has been reviewed in the light of the number of pupils in maintained and academy settings. There are currently 13 academy members on Bradford's Schools Forum, alongside 14 representatives of maintained schools.
- 2.3 The Schools Forum meets every half term with an additional meeting in the autumn.

### 3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

#### 3.1 National Funding Formula

Appendix 2 attached to this report provides a more detailed briefing on our assessment of the impact of National Funding Formula on Bradford's Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This briefing follows from the information presented to the Committee on 27 September.

We wish to draw to the attention of the Committee the following areas of challenge presented by the NFF:

Schools Block:

- a) The size of the un-dampened loss that would result from the implementation of the NFF without Minimum Funding Guarantee protection (£7.37m). This is especially concerning for the primary sector.
- b) The lack of full response to the growth in costs in real terms (this is the major financial problem in all schools across 2016-2020). For clarity, this is not a formula issue. It is an issue that is arising as a result of the quantum of education funding falling behind as costs (of salaries and services) increase.

High Needs Block (HNB):

- c) That damping halves our gain under NFF from £15m to £7.5m and that there is no view about whether / when this damping will be lifted.
- d) Our HNB spending levels are forecasted to exceed our dampened NFF HNB allocations. It does not appear that the DSG HNB will be sufficient to cover forecasted spending.

#### 3.2 Bradford's Formula Funding Arrangements 2018/19 - Consultations

The Schools Forum agreed on 18 October for the publication of 3 separate consultation documents that cover proposals for formula funding arrangements for the Schools Block (primary & secondary), Early Years Block and High Needs Block.

These consultation documents can be found online [here](#)

The outcomes of these consultations will be considered by the Schools Forum on 6 December.

In very short summary, these consultations propose:

- a) To move to replicate National Funding Formula, as closely as possible within the constraints of the Regulations and affordability, for the calculation of individual

primary and secondary school budget shares at 1 April 2018. NFF will replace our current local funding formula.

- b) To continue to implement the changes required as a result of national early years funding reform, as we set out in autumn 2016, seeking to protect providers from the full impact of the reduction in funding rates through the use of reserve (one off monies) within the Early Years Block in 2018/19. To move to a 'starters and leavers' based counting arrangement for early years funding.
- c) To continue to use our existing framework for the calculation of delegated formula allocations for high needs providers with some targeted adjustments, including the proposal to cease the 'double funding' of top up for alternative provision placements. The Schools Forum will continue to discuss actions to address the forecasted HNB overspending position in 2018/19, which may include reduction to the value of top up funding allocated by our Place-Plus model.

#### **4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL**

Not applicable – this is an update for information.

#### **5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

Not applicable – this is an update for information.

#### **6. LEGAL APPRAISAL**

Not applicable – this is an update for information.

#### **7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

##### **7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

Not applicable – this is an update for information.

##### **7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable – this is an update for information.

##### **7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS**

Not applicable – this is an update for information.

##### **7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable – this is an update for information.

## **7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

Not applicable – this is an update for information.

## **7.6 TRADE UNION**

Not applicable – this is an update for information.

## **7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable – this is an update for information.

## **7.8 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS (for reports to Area Committees only)**

Not applicable – this is an update for information.

## **8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

None

## **9. OPTIONS**

Not applicable – this is an update for information.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**10.1 Committee Members are asked to consider and to note the information provided in this update.**

## **11. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Schools Forum meeting 18 October 2017 Decisions List  
Appendix 2 – National Funding Formula briefing note

## **12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None