

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 23 MAY 2018 AT CITY HALL, BRADFORD

Commenced 0810
Concluded 1015

PRESENT

SCHOOL MEMBERS

Anthony Smith, Dianne Richardson, Dominic Wall, Emma Hamer, Ian Morrel, Mary Copeland, Ray Tate, Sally Stoker, Tehmina Hashmi

NOMINATED SUB SCHOOL MEMBER

Alison Kaye and Irene Docherty

NON SCHOOL MEMBERS

Donna Willoughby, Ian Murch and Vivienne Robinson

LOCAL AUTHORITY (LA) OFFICERS

Andrew Redding - Business Advisor (Schools)
Asad Shah - Committee Services Officer
Dawn Haigh - Principal Finance Officer (Schools)
Jenny Cryer - Assistant Director Performance, Commissioning and Partnerships
Raj Singh - Business Advisor

OBSERVERS

Lynn Murphy - Business Manager, Feversham College

APOLOGIES

Ashley Reid, Brent Fitzpatrick, Deborah Haworth, Gill Holland, Helen Williams, Kevin Holland, Sir Nick Weller, Nicky Kilvington, Nigel Cooper, Sue Haithwaite and Tahir Jamil

DIANNE RICHARDSON IN THE CHAIR

318. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

A declaration was received from Ian Morrel, Dominic Wall and Trevor Loft for agenda item 6 "SEMH and SEND Reviews - Progress Update", (minute 322).

ACTION: *City Solicitor*

319. MINUTES OF 16 MARCH 2016 & MATTERS ARISING

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



- **NJC Pay Award:** The Business Advisor reported that the NJC 2 year pay award offered in December 2017 has been accepted and is being actioned in Bradford Council in June. The Authority stills await further information on the recommended teacher's pay award from September and confirmation of any change in the employer's contribution to teacher pensions expected from April 2019.
- **Looked after Children:** The request for an annual report on LAC outcomes will be taken forward as part of the Forum's agenda planning. In response to the requests for further information on the report presented to the last meeting, the Business Advisor reported that:
 - Of the 29 associates stated in the report, 24 posts are currently filled. 10 of these are cross-phase; 8 are primary; 5 are secondary. These are headcount (not FTE). These associates are employed on flexible contracts and their hours expand and contract according to need.
 - Monies received from OLAs can be used to purchase support from Bradford's Virtual School if the School have the capacity to do so. Certainly, the VSH can advise on support options and can broker this. The financial framework is complicated and we would advise that schools wishing to explore further the options around the use of monies for OLA LAC discuss this directly with the VSH who will work this through.
- **SEND / SEMH reviews:** The High Needs Block 'Steering Group' has been established and met for the first time on Monday 21 May. An update will be provided within agenda item 6.
- **Scheme for Financing Schools / Financial Regulations:** The revision and consultation on these documents is still a work in progress. It is expected that a presentation will be made to the next Schools Forum meeting in July. The Business Advisor reported that the DfE has directed some revisions to authority Schemes, as indicated previously (on the purposes of loans), and these revisions have been incorporated into the current version of our Scheme, which can be accessed on Bradford Schools Online.
- **Warning about Budget Cost Pressures:** A number of actions have been taken since the last Forum meeting, as requested, to circulate key messages. The Vice Chair circulated an email to secondary phase principals and this was an agenda item at a recent CEOs meeting. Presentations have been made to BPIP and the business manager forums. Schools Funding Team is now engaging directly with quite a number of maintained schools individually on a priority-led basis about their 2018-2021 budget projections. School funding continues to be a national Political issue. However, there does not yet appear to be any suggestion that additional monies will be allocated into core formula funding in 2019/20 other than what has already been announced. The DfE continues to publish information aimed at supporting schools and academies to manage their budgets and achieve value for money, including access to national procurement deals e.g. supply. This information is available directly on the DfE's website but we signal it in BSO on our latest news and updates page. The DfE, as another example, has recently re-published its



Metric Scorecard, which gives primary and secondary schools and academies a value for money score of between 1 and 10, rating its spend vs. outcomes for children.

- **Schools Forum Membership:** the Chair reported that the maintained primary Headteacher vacancies have now been filled, with Bryan Harrison (headteacher of Miriam Lord Primary School) and Graham Swinbourne (Headteacher of Stanbury Primary School) taking these memberships.

Resolved –

- (1) That progress made on “Action Items” be noted.
- (2) That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2018 be signed as a correct record with the agreed amendments to the meeting attendance.

ACTION: *City Solicitor*

320. **MATTERS RAISED BY SCHOOLS**

There were no matters raised by schools to report.

No resolution was passed on this item.

321. **STANDING ITEM – DSG SCHOOLS BLOCK GROWTH FUND ALLOCATIONS**

Members were asked to consider, in **Document IQ**, newly proposed allocations to schools and academies from the established DSG Schools Block Growth Fund in 2018/19. These allocations were agreed without comment or query.

Resolved –

That the 2 proposed Growth Fund allocations shown in Document IQ be agreed.

Action: *Business Advisor (Schools)*

322. **SEMH AND SEND REVIEWS – PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Chair introduced this agenda item by explaining that Document IR is not available and that an update is being provided verbally.

The Assistant Director, Performance, Commissioning and Partnership, reported on the developments that have taken place since the last Schools Forum meeting on the trading of SEND services, the development of a local agreement in the primary sector for the financing of alternative provision and the development of the secondary alternative provision continuum. She reported that the Authority meets with the Regional Schools Commissioner’s office on a fortnightly basis and that discussions on free schools and the sufficiency of SEND and AP places are continuing. She also confirmed the interim



leadership arrangements within the Authority. The SEND Planning and Project Manager provided an update on the agreement for the development of interim SEND places. She also reported that further clarification on the timeline and scope of wave 13 is still being sought (expected summer 2018).

Members added to this update. The Chair explained that the establishment of a local agreement in the primary sector, for the management and financing of children permanently excluded, was being discussed at the BPIP meeting this week. The Chair asked the Forum for a clear statement of their support for this. Members gave their endorsement. The Vice Chair reported that strategic development work to strengthen the BACS in the secondary sector is continuing with the vast majority of schools and academies committing to these arrangements.

In the discussion that followed the updates, Members expressed a number of concerns and from these made a number of requests:

- The latest announcement from the DfE states that there will be 30 new school schemes nationwide from wave 13. As such, it is probably not realistic for us to expect that we would achieve 3 schools (10% of this programme). Even if we do, it is likely that these schools will not be realised until 2022. Other local authorities have concluded / are beginning to conclude that they must look to their own capital resources to provide sufficient places. The Authority must seriously look now at “plan B” options to ensure the sufficiency of places in Bradford in the short and longer terms.
- It is important to have input into these discussions from the Assistant Director, Finance and Procurement.
- The Authority, with the Forum (HNB Steering Group), needs to begin to model different scenarios going forward and to assess the impact of different developments, and different timings of implementation, on the affordability position of the High Needs Block.
- Not all of the concerns expressed by Members in previous meetings (recorded in the minutes of the 14 March meeting) appear to be being addressed (updates have not been provided on all items), including home to school transport and the role of health services.
- The Forum has not been presented with a coherent written outcome (strategy) from the Authority’s SEND and SEMH reviews.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Schools Forum, with reference to the discussion on the development of a local agreement for alternative provision in the primary phase, continues to endorse the long-standing principle adopted by the Forum that “funding should follow the pupil”.**
- (2) That a written report be presented to the next Schools Forum meeting, which now sets out the Authority’s SEND and SEMH strategic plan i.e. the product of the recent reviews. That this report incorporates the Authority’s response to all the areas of development, concern and discussion that are listed in the minutes of the Forum meeting held 14 March 2018 as having been raised by Schools Forum members in recent meetings.**



Action: *Interim Strategic Lead, Access and Inclusion*

(3) That the Assistant Director, Finance and Procurement, the Strategic Director, Children's Services and the Interim Strategic Lead, Access and Inclusion, attend the next Schools Forum meeting to facilitate the presentation of this report and to support further discussion.

(4) That the High Needs Block Steering Group be asked to 'scenario model' the impact of different developments e.g. free school creation and the timing of these on the High Needs Block going forward for report back to the Schools Forum.

Action: *Business Advisor (Schools)*

323. UPDATE ON MATTERS CONCERNING THE 2018/19 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, **Document IS**, which provided an update on a number of matters relating to the 2018/19 Dedicated Schools Grant, including progress on current reviews and 2019/20 arrangements. This report follows from the update presented in March.

The Business Advisor highlighted in particular the reconciliation of the balance of DSG reserves available at the end of the 2017/18 financial year. The Business Advisor reported that we have an additional £2.6m of reserve across the DSG Blocks, of which £1.3m is within the High Needs Block. This means that, everything else remaining the same (as the 2018/19 planned budget set out in January), the High Needs Block would not be cumulatively in deficit at the end of 2018/19. It was explained however, there are a lot of moving parts within the HNB during 2018/19 and the deployment of this reserve is a matter for the newly established HNB Steering Group to consider. The Business Advisor also highlighted the £0.7m surplus balance within de-delegated funds and explained that decisions about the use of this balance will need to be taken by the Forum in the round as part of the 2019/20 DSG allocation process. The Schools Forum will be presented with a detail 2018/19 spending forecast in the autumn term.

Forum Members did not ask any questions on the report. The Member representing maintained nursery schools raised the matter of the uncertainty on the future funding of nursery schools. The Business Advisor explained that the EFSA / DfE have been asked in recent regional meetings for a statement on the latest position, and to also confirm when the promised consultation will be published, but so far nothing further has been provided. As such, we all continue to be unclear about the position of the funding of nursery schools after 2019/20 and this is a growing concern.

Resolved –

That the information provided in Document IS be noted.

Lead: *Business Advisor (Schools)*



324. BRADFORD LEARNING NETWORK

The BLN Project Co-ordinator attended the meeting to present a report, **Document IT**, which asked the Schools Forum to endorse the collaborative approach to re-procuring the next iteration of the Bradford Learning Network (BLN) internet and learning provision.

The co-ordinator explained that 83% of Bradford maintained schools, and 92% of academies, use the current BLN framework. The Vice Chair asked for clarification on what 'endorsement' from the Schools Forum means. The Co-ordinator explained that this meant that the Authority, in its re-procuring of services and presentation to schools and academies, can state that the Schools Forum supports this collaborative and cost effective approach.

The Chair stated that she is encouraged by the large number of schools and academies that use BLN and, summarising the views of Forum Members, confirmed that the Forum is happy to endorse the procurement of BLN4.

Resolved – That the collaborative approach to the procurement of fast, filtered and safe internet provision for schools enabling equity of access for all students across the District regardless of location, type or size of school be endorsed.

Action: *BLN Project Co-ordinator*

325. SCHOOLS' OUTTURN (REVENUE BALANCES) 2017/18

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, **Document IU**, which showed the position of revenue balances held by maintained schools at 31 March 2018 and an analysis of changes in the position against March 2017. The report also provided 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.

The Business Advisor reported that the vast majority of maintained schools have so far taken positive action in the management of their budgets. However, he explained that the impact of this action on school standards and on outcomes for children will not immediately obvious when looking at balances and may take some time to be seen. The financial position of school going forward also looks increasingly challenging. These statements were supported by Members, including the Vice Chair, who reinforced that the cut in the value of formula funding in real terms that has taken place, and will continue, will have an impact, and by the Member representing the Teacher Trades Unions, who stated that Unions are meeting with schools weekly to discuss consultations on staffing restructures.

An Academies Member requested that the HNB Steering Group more closely considers the position of balances held in the PRU sector against outcomes. Members discussed the position of balances held by maintained nursery schools. The Business Advisor explained that nursery schools hold monies on behalf of others and for wider purposes (one is a



teaching school) and also that, given the current uncertainties on future funding, it may be prudent for these schools to hold a higher level of reserves.

Much of the discussion on balances centred on the position presented for Hanson School. Members expressed their concern, and asked for greater transparency from the Local Authority, in particular, on the action that is being taken to resolve the deficit. An Academies Member, understanding that the position of this school is complicated, expressed a view that there have been other schools in similar challenging circumstances that have managed their budgets.

The Chair summarised the discussion and the expressions of concern by requesting that written statements be provided by the Strategic Director, Children's Services to the next Schools Forum meeting on Hanson School and the position of the BSF and also that a confidential briefing takes place with the Chair and Vice Chair in advance of this meeting so that there is better understanding of issues that may not be appropriate to discuss in a public meeting.

Resolved –

- (1) That the information provided in Document IU be noted.**
- (2) That a statement is provided to the next Schools Forum meeting on the status of the resolution of the BSF contractual issue that is referred to in Document IU.**
- (3) That the High Needs Block Steering Group is asked to consider in more detail the position of (and factors behind the change in) surplus balances held in the maintained PRU sector for report back to the Schools Forum.**
- (4) That the Strategic Director, Children's Services, presents a statement to the next Schools Forum meeting, which sets out the Authority's plan for the resolution of the deficit position at Hanson School. That a briefing on this matter takes place with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Schools Forum in advance of the meeting.**

Lead: *Business Advisor (Schools)*

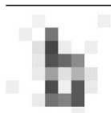
326. SCHOOLS FORUM STANDING ITEMS

Resolved –

The Forum is asked to note the information provided.

327. AOB / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The Vice Chair asked for clarification on the financing of Bradford New College specifically with reference to the source of funding of the College's recent promotional event.



328. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved –

- (1) That the meeting of the next Schools Forum meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 11 July 2018.
- (2) That the meetings of the Schools Forum for 2018/2019 academic year be confirmed as follows:
 - Wednesday 19 September 2018, 8am
 - Wednesday 17 October 2018, 8am
 - Wednesday 5 December 2018, 8am
 - Wednesday 9 January 2019, 8am
 - *Wednesday 16 January 2019, 8am (provisional meeting)*
 - Wednesday 13 March 2019, 8am
 - Wednesday 22 May 2019, 8am
 - Wednesday 10 July 2019, 8am

Action: *City Solicitor*

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