

**Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Schools Forum on 8 July 2020**

## **Schools Forum meeting held on Wednesday 11 March 2020 in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford**

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Commenced 0810, Adjourned 0945  
Reconvened 0955, Concluded 1040

### **PRESENT**

#### **School Members**

Ashley Reed, Bryan Harrison, Carol Dewhurst, Dianne Richardson, Dominic Wall, Emma Hamer, Sir Nick Weller and Trevor Loft

#### **DIANNE RICHARDSON IN THE CHAIR**

**THE MEETING WAS NOT QUORATE. NO DECISIONS WERE TAKEN. RESOLUTIONS ARE INFORMALLY RECORDED**

#### **Local Authority Officers**

Andrew Redding	Business Advisor (Schools)
Asad Shah	Governance Officer
Dawn Haigh	Principal Finance Officer – Schools
Marium Haque	Deputy Director, Education and Learning
Niall Devlin	Strategic Manager, Integrated Assessment
Rachel Phillips	Strategic Manager, Admissions and Exclusions
Raj Singh	Business Advisor (Financial)

#### **Observer**

Councillor Winnard

#### **Apologies**

*Members* – Alyson Kaye, Brent Fitzpatrick, Deborah Haworth, Tehmina Hashmi, Helen Williams, Ian Morrel, Nicky Kilvington, Sian Hudson, Tahir Jamil and Gill Holland. *Officer* – Strategic Director, Children’s Services

### **DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Bryan Harrison disclosed an interest for agenda item 6 “Schools Block Falling Rolls Fund Allocations 2019/20”.

### **MINUTES OF 8 JANUARY 2020 AND MATTERS ARISING**

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

- **Page 68 (item 449) Alternative Provision:** An update will be provided under agenda item 7.
- **Page 69 (item 451) Growth Fund:** The agreed values of Growth Fund have been allocated.
- **Page 69 (item 452) Funding High Needs:** The consultation has been concluded and Council has agreed the implementation of the new EHCP Banded Model, and the other high needs funding changes including the PRU day rate, at its meeting held on 20 February 2020. Feedback from the consultation is summarised and presented under agenda item 8.
- **Page 71 onwards (item 458) DSG recommendations:** The recommendations on the allocation of the 2020/21 DSG were approved without amendment by Council on 20 February 2020 and are now being implemented. A further update on DSG matters is provided under agenda item 8.

## **MATTERS RAISED BY SCHOOLS**

The Chair reported that she has received a request from Carol Dewhirst (academies member) for an update to be provided to the Schools Forum on District PRU. The Chair suggested this request be further considered as part of the discussion on agenda item 7 (SEND & Alternative Provision update).

## **STANDING ITEM – DSG GROWTH FUND ALLOCATIONS 2019/20**

No new allocations were presented.

## **SCHOOLS BLOCK FALLING ROLLS FUND ALLOCATIONS 2019/20**

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, **Document LL**, which provided an update for the Schools Forum on the application in the 2019/20 financial year of the Schools Block Falling Rolls Fund for mainstream primary phase maintained schools and mainstream primary phase academies.

Members were reminded that we identified, whilst establishing this, that a Falling Rolls Fund is likely to have only very limited value because of the two main restrictions placed on its use by the DfE a) Ofsted category (must be good or outstanding) and b) it can't be used to support longer term under subscription against PAN (surplus places must be needed within 3 years).

The Business Advisor reported that 27 of the 29 schools and academies that were lower than 90% of PAN at October 2018 (this is the initial trigger for eligibility for Falling Rolls Funding in 2019/20) are low not as a result of a 'blip' in pupil numbers but because of longer term changes. The remaining 2 out of the 29 are not good or outstanding. Therefore, we cannot allocate Falling Rolls Funding to support any of the 29 primary schools or primary academies in 2019/20. The Business Advisor confirmed that the £250,000 Fund would carry forward as a ring-fenced sum within the Schools Block.

Forum Members discussed what this means for the actions / options that are available for supporting primary schools and academies that are low and / or are reducing in pupil numbers. Members emphasised the need for the Local Authority to manage PANs and to propose PAN reductions, directly in the case of maintained schools and with the Regional Schools Commissioner in the case of academies. It was confirmed that the Authority is actively progressing discussions on PAN amendments with individual schools.

A member representing maintained primary schools requested that the Forum's sub-group, which has previously met to consider place-planning and the financial issues associated with under-subscription, is re-convened to consider the Falling Rolls Fund outcome and calculations in more detail but also to further consider, with the aim of making recommendations back to the Forum, the use of the exceptional circumstances route for providing financial support to maintained primary schools (only) that are under-subscribed and that are not eligible for Falling Rolls Funding. Forum Members agreed this resolution.

## **SEND & ALTERNATIVE PROVISION – UPDATE**

Updates were provided on the Authority's strategic reviews of SEND and Alternative Provision. These updates included follow up to the matters discussed by the Forum and recorded in the minutes of the 8 January meeting. These also included an initial response to the 'matter raised by schools' (District PRU).

### SEND Places Creation

The Strategic Manager, Intelligence and Sufficiency, tabled a summary of the position of the creation of SEND places in specialist provisions; schemes that are completed and are in development. Members welcomed this summary.

The discussion that followed the presentation focused on exploring and requesting further information about how / the extent to which these places are now being filled.

The Strategic Manager, Integrated Assessment, explained the process for annual review and placement and that consultations against newly created places are taking place. The admission of children and young people into the newly created provisions does need to be carefully managed and to move forward in a planned and staggered way. He confirmed, following a Member's question, that the SEND Panel is able to complete in region of 70 to 80 EHCP reviews a week, so time pressure on the Panel is not a factor that is expected to delay the placement of children. He stated that parental preference is a factor in the filling of newly created places. The Panel seeks to make the most appropriate placement to meet the needs of a child. A member representing maintained primary schools added that, in looking at occupancy, it is also important for the Forum to have sight of the number of consultations that have taken place in support of filling new places.

The Forum requested, for the next meeting, that the creation of places summary is re-presented, including information on the number of places that are occupied as well as the number of consultations that have taken place for each new provision.

An academies member made two further comments. Firstly, that there a very significant staffing CPD requirement that has come from substantially expanding SEND provisions. The Strategic Manager, Integrated Assessment, responded that a survey is taking place with SENCOs about CPD to support the

Authority's development of additional training. The Chair added that whole school SEND training was also taking place through BPIP. Secondly, that where the Authority is forecasting to continue in future years to need to increase the number of specialist places, it is crucial for a strategic plan to be developed to secure the capital investment that will be required to deliver these; and that the Authority needs to make a 'determined effort to get the front of the queue' in the application for new free school provision. The Deputy Director, Education and Learning, responded that the Authority is seeking to continue to develop a diverse SEND offer, combining specialist schools with resourced provisions.

### Alternative Provision

The Strategic Manager, Admissions and Exclusions presented feedback from the working group, which met on 9 February and which is scheduled to meet again on 17 March. It was reported that the working group has formed some initial resolutions and has identified points for investigation that require more discussion before being considered by the Schools Forum. One of these is that the Schools Forum should be asked to vote for funding from the Schools Block to be identified in order to provide non-statutory behaviour support.

The group's discussions focus on the respective roles of schools (from their delegated budgets), the Authority, and the DSG in the financing and management of non-statutory AP, and on how and whether the DSG and the Authority can facilitate non-statutory AP. The position of the primary behaviour centres, and the implications for the cessation of the DSG's funding of these (already agreed for September 2020) is contained within these discussions. How non-statutory AP support continues to develop in the secondary phase is also an important part of these discussions. It is expected that a further update from the working group will be presented to the Forum at the next meeting.

Regarding District PRU, the Deputy Director, Education and Learning, reported that there hasn't been significant uptake of places from schools. This is an important consideration as the DSG's funding of this PRU is to cease at September, when the PRU's offer will be fully traded. An academies member asked whether District PRU will be available from September. The Deputy Director responded that a decision on District PRU is needed. In response to a question on when a decision will be taken and can be reported, the Deputy Director stated that this should be available for the next Forum meeting.

Members engaged in discussion about the development of the District's AP strategy and provision. Members expressed concern about the current oversubscription of PRU provision and whether we are developing sufficient capacity. The Deputy Director responded that work is current on the development of the AP strategy and further capacity for p-x provision. She reminded Members of her previous message, that we are in a period of transition and that this transition will feel 'uncomfortable' as we are going through it. The Authority expects to review the number of PRU places that we are commissioning and for this to come into High Needs Block discussions going forward. Acknowledging this, Members suggested that what is missing in respect of the development of AP provision, compared with SEND provision, is a written strategic plan. Members requested that such a plan be available for consideration at the next Forum meeting.

## **MATTERS CONCERNING THE DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT**

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, **Document LM**, which provided an update on a number matters relating to the

2020/21 Dedicated Schools Grant, including a summary of the responses and feedback received to the consultation on the high needs funding changes (the new EHCP Banded Model).

The Business Advisor also highlighted for Members the adjustments to the national DSG conditions of grant relating to the management of deficit DSG accounts. He confirmed however, that these changes are not directly relevant to Bradford currently as Bradford's DSG account is cumulatively in surplus.

Members did not ask any questions and did not comment on this item.

## **MATTERS CONCERNING SCHOOL AND ACADEMY BUDGETS**

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, **Document LN**, which provided an update on matters concerning school and academy budgets.

The Business Advisor explained that this is an annual report, which a) updates Members on the position of academy conversions and risks of deficits that come from the financial close of these and b) sets out the nature of the 'financial climate' in which schools and academies are forecasted to operate over the next 3 years. This information is presented, in particular, to aid Members in their conversations with colleagues. The Business Advisor explained that the themes of "budget challenge" and "uncertainty" are still present at school level across the 2020-2023 period, albeit that we are seeing and expect to continue to see growth in funding per capita.

Following the presentation of this report, there was some discussion about the position of the officer / support staff (NJC scale) pay award for 2020/21 and about how information on financial climate is given to school business managers. The Business Advisor confirmed that Schools Funding Team regularly attends the business manager forums.

## **SCHOOLS FORUM STANDING ITEMS**

No further information was presented under this agenda item.

## **AOB / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

No AOB items were put forward.

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND PLANNED 2020/21 ACADEMIC YEAR MEETING SCHEDULE**

Please see the published schedule of meetings. The meeting scheduled for 20 May 2020 was cancelled (due to COVID-19). The next scheduled meeting is 8 July 2020.

Please also note that the provisional dates of meetings for the 2020/21 academic year are as follows:

- Wednesday 16 September 2020, 8am
- Wednesday 14 October 2020, 8am

- Wednesday 9 December 2020, 8am
- Wednesday 13 January 2021, 8am
- Wednesday 20 January 2021, 8am *PROVISIONAL MEETING*
- Wednesday 10 March 2021, 8am
- Wednesday 19 May 2021, 8am
- Wednesday 7 July 2021, 8am

## **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

The Schools Forum was asked to consider if the agenda item relating to the funding of health services in schools should be considered in the absence of the public and, if so, to approve the following recommendation:

**Resolved – That the public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the following item (item \*14) on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if they were present exempt information within Paragraph 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) would be disclosed and it is considered that, in all the circumstances, the public interest in allowing the public to remain is outweighed by the public interest in excluding public access to the relevant part of the proceedings for the following reason: legal privilege."**

## **FUNDING HEALTH SERVICES IN SCHOOLS**

The Schools Forum was asked to consider further the matters raised at the Forum's meetings held on 10 July 2019 and 18 September 2019 related to the funding of health services in schools.

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

*minutes\SF11Mar20*

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