

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Schools Forum on 9 December 2020

Schools Forum meeting held remotely on Wednesday 14 October 2020

To view the archived recording of this meeting, please see here:

https://bradford.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/516480

Commenced 0808, Adjourned 0915
Reconvened 0925, Concluded 1003

PRESENT

School Members

Ashley Reed, Brent Fitzpatrick, Carol Dewhirst, Dianne Richardson, Dominic Wall, Graham Swinbourne, Helen Williams, Ian Morrel, Nicki Kilvington, Nigel Cooper, Sir Nick Weller, Sue Haithwaite, Sian Hudson, Tehmina Hashmi, Trevor Loft and Wahid Zaman.

Non School Members

Ian Murch.

DIANNE RICHARDSON IN THE CHAIR

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

Apologies

Alison Kaye, Donna Willoughby, Bryan Harrison.

Observers

Councillor Ward and Michael Thorp

488. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

The following disclosures of interests were received –

Ian Morrel disclosed an interest for agenda item 6 “Consultation on the Primary and Secondary School Formulae & Schools Block Matters 2021/22”. Dominic Wall, Sue

Haithwaite, Ian Morrel disclosed interests for agenda item 8 “Consultation on High Needs Block Funding Matters 2021/22”. Ian Murch disclosed an interest for agenda item 9 “DSG Central Items and De-Delegated Funds 2021/22”.

ACTION: *City Solicitor*

489. MINUTES OF 16 SEPTEMBER 2020 AND MATTERS ARISING

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

- **Item 475 (matters arising from previous meetings)** – The Falling Rolls Fund subgroup met on 8 October and an update is provided verbally under agenda item 6. The updated Scheme for Financing Schools has been published and is now live.
- **Item 479 (COVID-19)** – There is nothing new of significance to report regarding the key issues that have been raised (in particular around on-going cost implications and early years funding and income impact). There have been no major announcements since the last meeting about specific school or early years support funding or a second window opening for claims. There is no new guidance from the DfE about early years funding for the spring term.

The Authority is currently collecting information from maintained schools about COVID-19 impact at quarter 2 and working through the early years funding arrangements for the autumn term. We expect to provide an update again to the Forum in December. This is expected to include discussion about early years funding arrangements for spring term.

There is a specific matter to consider in relation to UIFSM and the October 2020 Census, which the Authority is currently advising primary schools and academies on.

Responding to the specific request raised by a primary phase member around whether there are options for moving AWPU funding between primary schools where schools admit pupils on appeal after the October Census is taken:

- The Authority approached the ESFA to ask what flexibility there is. The ESFA’s response is that this would require a dis-application request and Secretary of State approval and we would need to evidence that all schools and academies have been consulted.
- Given that the impact of this may not be clear for some time (we really would need to compare October Census numbers with e.g. January Census numbers), it will be difficult to put forward a clear case both for consultation and for ESFA approval in time for January. We would wish to look at this situation ‘in the round’ taking account of all movement of pupils in and out after the Census is taken. This would suggest that, if we do act, it would be retrospective with sight of all the data. This feels to be important because we would need to take funding away from some schools in order to give it to others (and this might be contentious).
- With further reflection on this issue, the Regulations already permit the Authority to use a ‘Reception Uplift’ factor, which funds primary phase schools and academies for the increase in reception year numbers recorded between October and January in the previous academic year. So, although this is

retrospective, it is a mechanism whereby primary schools and academies can be funded correctly where they admit a large number of children into reception after the October Census. Our sense is that this would possibly be the solution here. This isn't a factor that we currently use (we stopped using it when we moved to mirror NFF in 2018 because the NFF doesn't use it). But we could look to apply it for 2022/23 on a one off basis as this would retrospectively fund increases in reception numbers between October 2020 and January 2021. It would also have the advantage of not requiring any money to be directly taken away from a school or academy; it would only be a positive adjustment funded by headroom.

- So the Authority will look to do some further work on the differences in total between October and January numbers and to take things forward from there, with a view that, if we wished to do something, we would do it retrospectively, seriously considering whether we adopt the reception uplift in 2022/23.
- **Item 484 (AOB Academies Membership):** Members were reminded that this was triggered by the Chair reporting an expression of interest for membership, using one of the three academies vacancies. This is still a working in progress and need further discussion with respective parties – about how academy membership is managed and refreshed. However, in advance of this, Michael Thorp is attending this meeting as an observer. We hope to clarify membership arrangements as soon as possible. One of the main parts of this is to discuss again with academies themselves how they wish to organise their members (as by the letter of Regulations, the Authority does not have power in this area).
- **Item 478 (Funding Health Services in Schools):** The minutes are recorded confidentially. It is anticipated that an update on certain aspects of the Forum's discussion – the split of contributions between health, education and social care in respect of independent and OLA placements, for example - will be reported to the December meeting as a normal agenda item.
- **Item 478 (SEND and AP Update) –** The minutes record the discussion on the appropriateness of the presentation to the Schools Forum of detailed occupancy data relating to high needs places and of other information relating to high needs strategy and operational delivery. These discussions touched on the remit and role of the Schools Forum in relation to high needs matters. It was recognised that further discussion is needed and would be helpful, including with reference to the DfE's guidance on the remit of the Schools Forum in relation to high needs funding. In response to this:
 - The DfE's 'roles and responsibilities' table is provided for members' reference. This was last presented to the Forum in January 2020.
 - The Authority met with the Chair and Vice Chair on 2 October and agreed a set of principles and an outline information schedule. This is also now presented to the Forum for awareness and comment. This schedule was welcomed. A member asked that the Forum, within the schedule of information, continue to be updated on the extent to which the High Needs Block continues to fund health related activities and therapies (referring to item 478 recorded above).

Resolved –

- (1) That progress made on “Action” items and Matters Arising be noted.**
- (2) That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2020 be signed as a correct record.**

490. MATTERS RAISED BY SCHOOLS

No information was presented.

No resolutions were passed on this item.

491. STANDING ITEM – DSG GROWTH FUND ALLOCATIONS 2020/21

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented **Document MA**, which asked the Forum to agree a new allocation to a primary academy from the 2020/21 Schools Block Growth Fund.

Forum members approved this allocation without comment or question.

Resolved –

The Schools Forum agrees the Schools Block Growth Fund allocations presented in Document MA.

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Business Advisor, Schools

492. CONSULTATION ON THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL FORMULAE & SCHOOLS BLOCK MATTERS 2021/22

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented **Document MB**.

This report asked the Forum to consider the consultation document, which outlines the proposals for the Schools Block, the formulae to be used to calculate allocations for primary and secondary schools and academies for the 2021/22 financial year and the criteria that will form the basis of the allocation of additional funding to maintained schools (and academies where appropriate) from Schools Block centrally managed funds.

In his presentation, the Business Advisor focused on the overall National Funding Formula settlement for 2021/22 and the technical changes around the update of IDACI and the transfer of the Teacher Pay and Teacher Pension Grants into formula funding. He explained that the five decisions that need to be taken to set our arrangement for next year are very similar to those that have been required in recent years.

He also explained that, as in 2020/21, schools and academies typically can be grouped

into three categories in terms of how the settlement affects them:

- Those funded on the National Funding Formula, without 'override', that will see between 2.5% and 4.5% increases in funding per pupil, depending on how the changes in IDACI and other October 2020 Census data affects them.
- Those funded on the increased Minimum Levels of Per Pupil Funding, where primary schools and academies will see a 6.4% increase in funding per pupil and secondary schools and academies will see a 3% increase in funding per pupil.
- Those funded on the Minimum Funding Guarantee that will see a maximum 2% increase in funding per pupil. The numbers of schools and academies funded on the MFG are modelled on current data to reduce in 2021/22, but still more than half of the primary phase remains protected by the MFG factor.

The Business Advisor reported that the Falling Rolls Fund (FRF) Group met on 8 October. The main conclusion from the Group's discussion was that the responsiveness of the Authority's pupil numbers forecasts is a crucial element in determining whether a school or academy receives Falling Rolls Funding - scenario modelling the impact on potential FRF schools and academies of the reduction in PANs in other schools (which may mean that a currently under subscribed school or academy may see substantial growth in numbers within 3 years) is crucial. We expect to reconvene the Group to consider this scenario modelling in advance of presenting recommended allocations from the 2020/21 FRF to the Forum in March 2021.

Members asked the following questions:

- The Vice Chair asked for confirmation of his understanding that the Year 7 Catch Up Premium has now been ceased and subsumed into the COVID-19 Catch Up Grant. He explained that this represents a significant loss of funding for the secondary sector. The Business Advisor responded that the Year 7 Catch Up Grant certainly has ceased but that he will confirm what the DfE has said about what arrangements replace this.
- The Chair asked how many authorities are now replicating the National Funding Formula (NFF). The Business Advisor responded that 99 (out of 151) authorities in the last three years have moved closer to NFF and / or are now within 1% of NFF variable values. 64 authorities are directly mirroring the NFF within the Schools Block. We are one of these.
- A member representing maintained primary schools asked whether the unallocated Schools Block money that was held in respect of the primary phase within the 2020/21 settlement and carried forward into 2021/22 has been allocated already within the figures presented in the consultation. The Business Advisor responded that the £0.5m sum carried forward has not been allocated within the figures and the Forum will be asked to consider this sum at the next meeting.

Resolved –

That the consultation document (Document MB Appendix 1) be published.

LEAD: *Business Advisor, Schools*

493. CONSULTATION ON EARLY YEARS BLOCK FUNDING MATTERS 2021/22

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented **Document MC**.

He explained that the Authority had hoped to present to this meeting the consultation document, which would set out proposals for the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) for the 2021/22 financial year. However, the Early Years Block settlement and operational guidance have not yet been published by the DfE, meaning the Authority is unable at this time to put forward proposals.

In anticipation that this crucial information will shortly be published, the Business Advisor asked the Forum to support an approach that would enable the publication of a consultation document before the next meeting on 9 December - that the Authority will discuss proposals with the Early Years Working Group and then will publish a consultation document shortly after. A report, including consultation feedback, will then be presented to the Schools Forum at the next meeting in December. The Forum will be asked to give its final views (its recommendations) on the Early Years Single Funding Formula for 2021/22 on 13 January. Forum members gave their support to this proposed approach.

The Business Advisor also reported that the reconvened EWYG met remotely on 1 October and engaged in a positive discussion on a number of crucial matters relating to the funding of the delivery of the early years entitlements.

Resolved –

That the Forum supports the Authority's approach to finalising proposals and to publishing the consultation document.

LEAD: Business Advisor, Schools

494. CONSULTATION ON HIGH NEEDS BLOCK FUNDING MATTERS 2021/22

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented **Document MD**.

This report outlined 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 covered by the national place-plus system in the 2021/22 financial year April 2021 to March 2022. The Business Advisor explained that the Authority would like now to consult on these proposals. The feedback from this consultation will then be presented to the Schools Forum on 9 December and the Forum will be asked to give its final views (its recommendations) on 13 January.

In his presentation, the Business Advisor focused on the methodology proposed for uplifting the values of top up allocated by the EHCP Banded Model in 2021/22 and on the proposal to adopt a new SEND Funding Floor for mainstream primary and secondary schools and academies in trial for one year.

An academies member explained that the Business Advisor has recently presented the Banded Model proposals to the District Achievement Partnership (DAP), with the DAP recognising that these proposals have been very carefully considered by the Authority.

The member also stated that the DAP welcomed the Authority's agreement for the extension of the transitional arrangements for the funding of new placements in special schools this term (where new placements that have an existing band lower than 4L, but have not been reviewed due to COVID-19, are funded at assessment level Band 4L until review takes place). This approach will enable special schools to prioritise assessments to be completed before April 2021.

In response to a question on the SEND Funding Floor, the Business Advisor confirmed that the proposed protection of existing allocations for named identified schools and academies will be shown clearly in the monthly funding statements as SEND Funding Floor allocations currently are.

Referring to the posting of EHCP data to schools and academies through Bradford Schools Online (on the last Friday of each month, which has begun in September) the Chair asked for confirmation that the Authority has the capacity to continue to operate this and to respond quickly to correct any data inaccuracies. The Strategic Manager, Integrated Assessment, responded to confirm this.

Resolved –

That the consultation document (Document MD Appendix 1) be published.

LEAD: Business Advisor, Schools

495. DSG CENTRAL ITEMS AND DE-DELEGATED FUNDS 2021/22

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented **Document ME**.

This report asked the Forum to beginning to review the position of Central Schools Services Block, Schools Block and Early Years Block central funds and de-delegated items for the 2021/22 financial year. The Business Advisor asked the Forum to identify whether any of the outline proposals and expectations set out in the report should be more closely considered and whether the Forum wishes for further information to be provided or for further review work to take place in advance of requiring final recommendations and decisions at the 13 January 2021 meeting. Forum Members did not ask for further information and did not identify any areas for further review.

The Business Advisor (Schools) then asked members representing primary maintained schools whether they wish to de-delegate for the purposes of subscribing to Fischer Family Trust (FFT) for the period April 2021 to March 2022. He explained that, although decisions on the other de-delegated funds are taken in January, the decision on FFT needs to be made in October to fit in with the subscription timetable. Some information had been emailed to the relevant members following the September meeting to help with this. There were three eligible members present at the meeting with one member expressing the view that de-delegation should not take place and one expressing the view that it should. Two of the three members explained that the current COVID-19 situation has made it difficult to canvass the views of maintained primary schools more widely as they normally would. The Business Advisor (Schools) offered the advice that, in such circumstances, the Forum might be expected to maintained the status quo, which would be to continue de-delegation as has been the case since de-delegation began, rather than

to cease it. The members supported this position.

Resolved –

- (1) **Schools Forum Members did not request the review of any of the centrally managed funds presented in Document ME.**
- (2) **Members representing Maintained Primary Schools decided to de-delegate in 2021/22 for the purposes of purchasing subscriptions to Fischer Family Trust.**

LEAD: *Business Advisor, Schools*

496. SCHOOLS FORUM STANDING ITEMS

No further information was presented.

No resolutions were passed on this item.

497. AOB / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No AOB items were raised.

No resolutions were passed on this item.

498. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Please see the published schedule of meetings. The next scheduled meeting is 9 December 2020.

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

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