

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Schools Forum on 15 September 2021

Schools Forum meeting held remotely on Wednesday 7 July 2021

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

https://bradford.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/582799

Commenced 0805, Adjourned 0940
Reconvened 0950, Concluded 1040

RECORD OF MEETING ATTENDEES, APOLOGIES AND ABSENCES

Schools & Academies Members

IN ATTENDANCE

Member	Membership Group
Dianne Richardson (Chair)	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher
Ian Morrel (Vice Chair)	Maintained Secondary Schools – Headteacher
Sian Young	Maintained Nursery Schools – Headteacher
Nicky Kilvington	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher
Graham Swinbourne	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher
Emma Hamer	Maintained Primary Schools - Governor
Trevor Loft	Academies Member – Alternative Provision Academies
Dominic Wall	Academies Member – Special School Academies
Carol Dewhirst OBE	Academies Member
Brent Fitzpatrick OBE	Academies Member
Helen Williams	Academies Member
Wahid Zaman	Academies Member
Kevin Holland	Academies Member

APOLOGIES RECEIVED

Member	Membership Group
Sir Nick Weller	Academies Member
Ashley Reed	Academies Member
Kirsty Ratcliffe	Pupil Referral Units (Maintained)
Lyndsey Brown	Maintained Special Schools – Headteacher
Tehmina Hashmi	Academies Member

NOT IN ATTENDANCE (WITHOUT APOLOGIES RECEIVED)

Member	Membership Group
Bryan Harrison	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher

Deborah Howarth	Academies Member
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Non-Schools Members

IN ATTENDANCE

Member	Membership Group
Tom Bright	Teaching Unions
Irfan Alam	Officer Representing Vulnerable Children

APOLOGIES RECEIVED

Member	Membership Group
Donna Willoughby	Non-Teaching Unions

NOT IN ATTENDANCE (WITHOUT APOLOGIES RECEIVED)

Member	Membership Group

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

Substitute Member	Membership Group

Local Authority Officers present at the meeting

Officer	Position
Andrew Redding	Business Advisor (Schools)
Asad Shah	Committee Secretariat
Marium Haque	Deputy Director, Education and Learning
Raj Singh	Business Advisor (Children's Services)
Jonty Holden	Principal Finance Officer (Schools)
Niall Devlin	Strategic Manager, Integrated Assessment (item 11)
Mary Ryan	Strategic Commissioning Manager (item 11)

Recorded Observers

Name
Bev George (new member for maintained nursery school governors starting Sept 2021)
Michael Thorp (new member for academies starting Sept 2021)
Heather Lacey (new member for academies starting Sept 2021)
Victoria Birch (new member for academies starting Sept 2021)
Alison Kaye (named substitute academies member)
Ian Murch (Teaching Unions)

40% of the School Forum's membership (filled membership positions) must be present for a meeting to be quorate. This meeting was quorate with 65% of members present (15 out of 23 currently filled membership positions).

556. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Emma Hamer and Kevin Holland declared interests for item 11 (Speech and Language

Therapy Review).

Emma Hamer and Graham Swinbourne declared interests for item 12 (matters concerning the Early Years Block).

ACTION: *City Solicitor*

557. MINUTES OF 10 MARCH 2021 AND MATTERS ARISING

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

- **Item 549 (Falling Rolls Fund):** The Authority expects to bring recommendations on the on-going position of the Falling Rolls Fund, and related matters in respect of pupil number reductions, back to the Forum within the 2022/23 formula funding and DSG discussions that will begin in September.
- **Item 551 (Request for Early Years Entitlement Spring Term Protection & Other DSG matters):** The early years entitlement funding protection request comes back to the Forum at this meeting under agenda item 12. The Authority submitted our response to the High Needs Block consultation. The DfE has not yet announced the outcomes of this consultation but we expect these as part of the usual July DSG publications.
- **Maintained Nursery Schools Supplement:** As we reported in the email sent to members, notifying of the cancellation of the May Forum meeting, the DfE has confirmed the continuation, for the period September 2021 to April 2022, of the supplement within the Early Years Block that protects the funding level of maintained nursery schools. This is continued on existing terms and allows us to continue to protect nursery school funding for the full 2021/22 financial year on existing terms as we indicated we would and as agreed with the Schools Forum in January. Unfortunately, we have no further information on the position of this supplement after March 2022 (announcements on this are unlikely to come before the autumn).
- **Scheme for Financing Schools** - The DfE published at the beginning of April its annual update to the model template for Authority Schemes in respect of maintained schools. There were no changes to the provisions in the Scheme that required our response or consultation with the Schools Forum. We await changes and guidance in a couple of areas a) leases (IFRS 2016) and b) Related Party Transactions and the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS). We anticipate further guidance from the DfE over the summer (especially in respect of the SFVS RPTs changes) and we may be required to present proposals for Scheme amendments to the Forum in the autumn. Maintained schools will need to take action to respond to the new requirements in respect of RPTs during this year. The Authority has previously warned schools about this.

Resolved –

- (1) **That progress made on “Action” items and Matters Arising be noted.**
- (2) **That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2021 be signed as a correct record.**

558. MATTERS RAISED BY SCHOOLS

No matters were raised.

No resolutions were passed on this item.

559. STANDING ITEM – DSG SCHOOLS BLOCK GROWTH FUND ALLOCATIONS

No allocations were presented.

No resolutions were passed on this item.

560. SCHOOLS FORUM MEETINGS FROM SEPTEMBER 2021

The Business Advisor (Schools) asked members for their views about how the Schools Forum should meet from the start of the new academic year – whether to continue to meet remotely or whether to return to meetings ‘in attendance’ if circumstances permitted this. He reminded members that the Regulations have been amended to permit the Forum to meet remotely on an on-going basis. He stressed that it would not be possible to take a decision at this meeting (as how meetings can take place from September will be depending on developing circumstances, restrictions, social distancing requirements and the suitability of a venue).

Members responded to recognise the pros and cons both options. Whilst the ‘ease’ of remote meetings is recognised, it is also recognised that in attendance meetings will typically better support effective discussion and interaction as well as the presentation of information. Some members suggested that a form of ‘blended’ approach might be considered, where some meetings in the annual programme are held in attendance and others held remotely. Members asked for the views both of the Chair and of the Business Advisor (Schools). The Business Advisor explained that he would be concerned to ensure that we found the right balance between meeting effectively whilst avoiding any ‘barrier’ to members’ attendance or any knock-on consequences for the management of schools e.g. where schools-based members may be reluctant to attend meetings for risk of requiring to isolate due to contact exposure or where attendance at a Schools Forum meeting results in a number of school leaders being required to isolate to the detriment of their school’s management. He emphasised that returning to in attendance in any form in September would require a suitable venue to be identified and that this would be influenced by social distancing requirements.

Resolved – That the Local Authority takes into account the feedback provided by Forum Members on how meetings should take place from September.

ACTION: BUSINESS ADVISOR (SCHOOLS)

561. SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP – CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

The Business Advisor (Schools) reported that, as per the Forum's agreed management procedures, the terms of office of the Chair and Vice Chair are for 1 year and both positions are now up for renewal. Members were asked to approve the standard proposed approach (by email) for the collection of nominations and for the election of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Schools Forum for the 2021/22 academic year.

Responding to a question asked by a member, the Chair stated that she would be willing to be re-elected as Chair for a further year, but also that, as she will be retiring from the Schools Forum at July 2022, she would be happy if another member wished to put themselves forward at this time or if the Forum wished to look more closely in the autumn at handover arrangements prior to July 2022. The Vice Chair stated that he will not be putting himself forward for Chair. He is willing to continue as Vice Chair for 2021/22 but would also be happy if another member wished to put themselves forward at this time.

Resolved – That the established approach (by email) be followed for the collection of nominations and for the election of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Schools Forum for 2021/22.

ACTION: BUSINESS ADVISOR (SCHOOLS)

562. SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented the report, **Document MZ**, which provided an update on the Forum's membership and composition. This report also presented the annual update of the Forum's Conduct of Meeting and Procedures document (Appendix 2). Forum Members were asked to consider and to approve Appendix 2.

The Business Advisor explained that an updated membership list (Appendix 1), including the names of new members, will be presented to the September meeting. All new members will be formally introduced to the Forum at this meeting.

Following a question from a member, the Business Advisor clarified that the word "no" is missing from the provision at 3.7, meaning that the correct provision is that there is "no specific term of office" in reference to non-schools membership for the trades unions.

Members did not have any other comments and did not ask any further questions.

Resolved –

(1) That the information provided in the report be noted.

(2) That Appendix 2 (Forum Conduct of Meetings and Procedures) for the 2021/22 academic year be approved (with the clarification of "no" specific term of office provided within provision 3.7).

ACTION: BUSINESS ADVISOR (SCHOOLS)

563. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT OUTTURN BALANCES (2020/21)

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented the report, **Document NA**, which provided the initial confirmation of carry forward balances held within the Dedicated Schools Grant at the close of the 2020/21 financial year.

Within his presentation, the Business Advisor explained why the Forum is being asked to agree the transfer of £0.078m of balance on a one off basis from the Schools Block to the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB). He reminded the Forum that the pressure in Pupil Admissions, which has caused the CSSB deficit, was highlighted in the January 2021 meeting and that the 2021/22 CSSB planned budget has been increased in response to this pressure. An Academies Member enquired whether the Forum will be asked again to write off a deficit from the CSSB for this reason. The Business Advisor explained that the Authority will be looking to ensure that sufficient budget is provided for within the DSG CSSB planned budget allocation going forward, so that the pressure in Pupil Admissions is managed positively within the available CSSB budget, rather than having to be managed retrospectively.

Members did not have any other comments and did not ask any further questions.

Resolved –

(1) That the information provided in the report be noted.

(2) The Schools Forum approves the transfer of £0.078m to the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) of surplus balance held within the Schools Block in order to write off the deficit balance held within the CSSB at 31 March 2021.

ACTION: BUSINESS ADVISOR (SCHOOLS)

564. MAINTAINED SCHOOLS' OUTTURN (REVENUE BALANCES) 2020/21

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented the report, **Document NB**, which provided an overview of the position of revenue balances held by maintained schools at 31 March 2021.

Following the presentation of the report, Members asked a number of questions regarding the deficit held by a maintained secondary school. The Business Advisor explained that work to control and manage this deficit is on-going. He clarified, emphasised by the Deputy Director, Education and Learning, that the Schools Forum (the Dedicated Schools Grant) will not be asked by the Authority to contribute any funding to this situation other than the sums already agreed and provided for. Members engaged in a discussion about whether or not a confidential item should be included on the agenda of the September Schools Forum meeting, so that members can discuss the school's position in more detail. After some discussion, it was agreed that, as the Authority has given the assurance that no further requests will be made for DSG funding, that such an agenda item is not necessary (nor appropriate to role of the Schools Forum).

Resolved – That the information provided in the report be noted.

565. REVIEW OF SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY FUNDED BY THE HNB

The Strategic Commissioning Manager, supported by the Strategic Manager, Integrated Assessment, presented the report, **Document NC**, which asked the School Forum for its feedback on the review of, and proposed changes to, the Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) provisions for resourced provisions funded through the High Needs Block from September 2021.

It was clarified that, as a result of the proposal, the High Needs Block's contribution to SLT services would increase to £271,660 (annual from September 2021) and that this increase is affordable within our 2021/22 High Needs Block planned budget.

Members responded positively to this report and asked the following main questions and made the following main comments:

- As the funding of therapies can sit between the High Needs Block and health, and as SLT supports both educational and continuing care needs, the clarity of respective responsibilities, especially with reference to support for dysphasia, must be improved within EHCPs. Has the Authority had any conversations with health services about this? The Strategic Manager, Integrated Assessment, responded to agree that dysphasia is a crucial aspect of review in this area and he will support the member in future discussions on this issue in respect of special schools. He added that the CCGs have provided funding for 2 additional officers and, in the new academic year, there will be a programme of review to improve the specificity of section G within EHCPs.
- There have been issues with the delivery of SLT services in schools due to maternity leave and holiday absences not being covered. There needs to be a clearer mechanism for complaints about service delivery to be raised and resolved. The Deputy Director, Education and Learning, agreed that contractually agreed services must be delivered and that the Authority is working to tighten contracts to support this. The Strategic Commissioning Manager offered that schools be given a point of contact in the commissioning team to raise service issues for resolution.
- What is the status of the resolution of the wider issues (that have been discussed with the Schools Forum in recent meetings) regarding health's contribution to its statutory continuing care responsibilities; it seems as if these discussions have gone silent? The Deputy Director responded to explain that these discussions are continuing and the SLT report demonstrates this. She added that the CCGs are currently going through change and that this re-structure is presenting the opportunity for the Authority to clarify responsibilities and resolve issues.

Resolved –

(1) That the information provided in the report be noted.

(2) That the Forum supports the increase in the High Needs Block budget for Speech and Language Therapy, from £181,882 to £271,660 in 2021/22.

566. MATTERS CONCERNING THE EARLY YEARS BLOCK

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented the report, **Document ND**, which provided an update on matters relating to the Early Years Block. This report, in particular, also included

a response to the action recorded from the 10 March Forum meeting, that a report be presented to enable the Schools Forum to analyse the impact of the COVID-19 situation on early years entitlement funding in schools in the spring term 2021, from which the Forum will be asked to further consider the request submitted by a Forum Member for the Local Authority to protect the early years entitlement funding in schools that closed or that restricted attendance.

The Forum was asked to support the Authority's response to this request, that no further protection for schools / academies that chose to close or to restrict attendance in the spring term 2021 be provided.

Following the Business Advisor's initial presentation of the report, the member who requested that this matter be considered stated that this recommendation should not be supported. He emphasised that: whilst schools may have closed, they still delivered education and had salaries expenditure to meet: schools have lost a sizeable amount of funding in total (£1m) that they need in their budgets to support their children now: it was not safe in all schools for early years provision to remain open over the spring term: the Authority and the Schools Forum have provided financial support for other schools and for other circumstances and protection should be provided here.

Following lengthy discussion of the report, which included points of clarification, and also some discussion about how to record the Forum's formal view, the Schools Forum decided by vote (with Schools & Academies Members voting) to support the Authority's recommendation to not provide protection, with 10 members voting for the recommendation and 1 member voting against.

Resolved –

(1) That the information provided in the report be noted.

(2) That the Forum supports the conclusion and recommendation of the Local Authority, that no further protection for schools / academies that chose to close or to restrict attendance in the spring term 2021 be provided. Confirmed by the vote of Schools & Academies Members (voting 10 for: 1 against the recommendation).

567. DFE ANNOUNCEMENTS, CONSULTATION & IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DSG

The Business Advisor (Schools) updated the Schools Forum verbally on the key announcements that are currently outstanding concerning the Dedicated Schools Grant and wider formula funding arrangements. He explained that the Authority had anticipated that these key announcements (especially on the outcomes of the national SEND and Alternative Provision reviews) would have been made prior to the Forum's July meeting. Subject to these announcement being made, and their timing, it is now anticipated that a report will be presented to the Forum in September.

Members did not have any comments and did not ask any questions.

Resolved – That the information provided be noted.

568. FORMULA FUNDING DEVELOPMENT 2022/23

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, **Document NE**, which provided an overview / introduction to local formula funding review priorities for 2022/23.

Responding to a question from the Chair, the Business Advisor explained that the Early Years Working Group (EYWG) is being re-convened before the summer with the specific limited purpose of deciding PVI Representation on the Schools Forum. The EYWG will be convened again in September to begin discussions about the funding of the early years entitlements for the 2022/23 financial year. Interested Forum members will be invited to join the EYWG in September.

Members did not have any other comments and did not ask any further questions.

Resolved –

(1) That the information provided in the report be noted.

(2) That Forum Members be invited to (remotely) attend a ‘Formula Funding Working Group’ session, on Tuesday 28 September (8am) or Wednesday 29 September (8am) or Tuesday 5 October (8am).

569. SCHOOLS FORUM STANDING ITEMS

No further updates were provided.

No resolutions were passed on this item.

570. AOB / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The Chair explained that 3 long-standing members are retiring from the Schools Forum at the end of this meeting: Kevin Holland, Trevor Loft and Ian Murch.

On behalf of the Forum, she expressed her thanks to them, highlighting their commitment to the Bradford District, over a long period, and their contributions to work of the Schools Forum over many years, including review, discussion and development that has taken place within meetings, sub-groups and behind the scenes.

Resolved – That the Schools Forum records its thanks to the members retiring from the Forum after the July meeting (Kevin Holland, Trevor Loft and Ian Murch).

571. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next Forum meeting is planned for Wednesday 15 September 2021. The planned dates of meetings for the 2021/22 academic year in full are as follows:

- Wednesday 15 September 2021, 8am
- Wednesday 13 October 2021, 8am
- Wednesday 8 December 2021, 8am
- Wednesday 12 January 2022, 8am
- Wednesday 19 January 2022, 8am PROVISIONAL MEETING
- Wednesday 9 March 2022, 8am
- Wednesday 18 May 2022, 8am
- Wednesday 6 July 2022, 8am

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