

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Schools Forum on 8 December 2021

Schools Forum meeting held on Wednesday 13 October 2021

Commenced 0805, Adjourned 0925
Reconvened 0935, Concluded 1020

RECORD OF MEETING ATTENDEES, APOLOGIES AND ABSENCES

Schools & Academies Members

IN ATTENDANCE

Member	Membership Group
Dianne Richardson (Chair)	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher
Ashley Reed	Academies Member
Brent Fitzpatrick OBE	Academies Member
Bryan Harrison	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher
Heather Lacey	Academies Member
Kathryn Swales	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher
Michael Thorp	Academies Member
Nicky Kilvington	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher
Sara Rawnsley	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher
Tehmina Hashmi	Academies Member
Victoria Birch	Academies Member
Wahid Zaman	Academies Member

APOLOGIES RECEIVED

Member	Membership Group
Bev George	Maintained Nursery Schools – Governor
Carol Dewhirst OBE	Academies Member
Dominic Wall	Academies Member – Special School Academies
Emma Hamer	Maintained Primary Schools – Governor
Helen Williams	Academies Member
Ian Morrel (Vice Chair)	Maintained Secondary Schools – Headteacher
Lyndsey Brown	Maintained Special Schools - Headteacher
Mathew Atkinson	Academies Member
Sian Hudson	Maintained Nursery Schools – Headteacher
Sir Nick Weller	Academies Member

NOT IN ATTENDANCE (WITHOUT APOLOGIES RECEIVED)

Member	Membership Group
Andrew Morley	Academies Member
Deborah Howarth	Academies Member

Graham Swinbourne	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher
Richard Bottomley	Academies Member – Alternative Provision Academies
Kirsty Ratcliffe	Pupil Referral Unit (maintained)

Non-Schools Members

IN ATTENDANCE

Member	Membership Group
Tom Bright	Teaching Unions

APOLOGIES RECEIVED

Member	Membership Group
Irfan Alam	Officer Representing Vulnerable Children
Gillian Simpson-Morris	Representative of Early Years PVI Members

NOT IN ATTENDANCE (WITHOUT APOLOGIES RECEIVED)

Member	Membership Group
Donna Willoughby	Non-Teaching Unions
Junaid Karim	Council for Mosques (Bradford)

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

Substitute Member	Membership Group
Alison Kaye	Academies Member

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

Substitute Member	Membership Group

Local Authority Officers present at the meeting

Officer	Position
Andrew Redding	Business Advisor (Schools)
Asad Shah	Committee Secretariat
Dawn Haigh	Principal Finance Officer (Schools)
Jonty Holden	Principal Finance Officer (Schools)
Marium Haque	Deputy Director, Education and Learning
Niall Devlin	Strategic Manager, Integrated Assessment

40% of the School Forum's membership (filled membership positions) must be present for a meeting to be quorate. This meeting was quorate, with 44% of members present (14 out of 32 currently filled membership positions).

585. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

586. MINUTES OF 15 SEPTEMBER 2021 & MATTERS ARISING

The Business Advisor (Schools) reported on progress made on “Action” items from the 15 September meeting:

- **Item 577 Response to the DfE’s Consultation on the Hard National Funding Formula:** As agreed, we published our proposed response on Bradford Schools Online shortly after the Forum meeting. We did not receive any comments, additions or queries. Therefore, our response, which has now been submitted, was as we presented in Document NG Appendix 2.
- **Item 578 DSG & Formula Funding Announcements:** Places planning, places sufficiency and PAN adjustment activity will continue to be discussed as part of the 2021/22 academic year programme. The Authority will present the annual SEND places sufficiency report to the next Forum meeting on 8 December.
- **Item 579 Outline Formula Funding Arrangements & Consultations:** We ran 3 Formula Funding Working Group sessions, which were attended by 9 Forum members in total. We have now convened the Early Years Working Group to meet on 18 October.

The Business Advisor (Schools) reported on 2 additional matters arising:

- **Scheme for Financing Schools** – We reminded the Forum at the last meeting in September that we expect changes and guidance in a couple of areas a) leases (IFRS 2016) and b) Related Party Transactions (RPTs) and the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS). The new 2021/22 SFVS template for maintained schools, with the addition of the new requirement for reporting RPTs, has now been published and we have signalled this for schools on Bradford Schools Online. This change does not require Scheme amendment at this time.
- **The 1.25% NI Levy:** We presented to the September meeting how there is uncertainty around funding in support of the 1.25% National Insurance Levy. We approached the ESFA for some clarity on how schools and academies (as public sector employers) will be compensated for the cost of this levy, as the Government’s ‘Build Back Better’ document states. We have received a holding response from the ESFA, stating the mechanisms for this will be set out in the Spending Review (on 27 October).

Resolved –

- (1) That progress made on “Action” items and Matters Arising be noted.
- (2) That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2021 be signed as a correct record.

587. MATTERS RAISED BY SCHOOLS

No resolutions were passed on this item.

588. STANDING ITEM - DSG GROWTH FUND ALLOCATIONS

No allocations were presented.

No resolution was passed on this item.

589. CONSULTATION - PRIMARY AND SECONDARY MAINSTREAM FORMULAE & SCHOOLS BLOCK MATTERS 2022/23

The Principal Finance Officer (Schools) presented a report, **Document NK**, which asked the Schools Forum to consider the consultation document, which outlines the Authority's proposals for the Schools Block, the funding formula to be used to calculate allocations for mainstream Primary and Secondary schools and academies for the 2022/23 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.

The Principal Officer explained that the Authority would like now to consult on these proposals, with feedback being presented to the Schools Forum on 8 December. The Forum will then be asked to give it final views (its recommendations) on 12 January 2022.

The Principal Officer introduced the context in which the proposals are now presented and provided a summary of the 7 decisions that are required for 2022/23. In particular, the Principal Officer presented the 2 new decisions, relating to the use of the Reception Uplift factor (decision 3) and the approach to ensuring affordability (decision 6).

In the discussion that followed the presentation of the report, Forum members asked the following questions and made the following comments:

- A member representing maintained primary school headteachers asked whether there are any negative financial consequences for the primary-phase from the proposal to use a proportion of the £0.917m earmarked balance for the Reception Uplift factor. The Business Advisor (Schools) responded to explain that this is a factor that would allocate additional funding to the primary phase, without 'top-slicing' from elsewhere. As such, there aren't any direct 'negative' consequences. However, primary-phase members should consider closely whether the Reception Uplift factor is the right mechanism to use to allocate the earmarked balance. We also warn at this time that, subject to further consideration of the issues explained under decision 6, the Forum may feel that the £0.917m could be used in a different way in 2022/23 in support of the primary phase.
- Following a query from the Chair, the Business Advisor (Schools) explained how the £0.917m balance has accrued over the last 2 financial years (relating to the change in cost of formula funding from changes in data recorded in the October censuses).
- The member representing the Teaching Trades Unions stated that it will be helpful for the Forum to see the numbers of pupils that would be funded by the Reception Uplift factor in 2022/23 compared against the numbers in previous years. The Business Advisor responded that this comparison can be provided.

He added that the total number (102) is not significantly different from the numbers in previous years, but we may see changes in the distribution of these numbers across primary schools and academies, as the distribution appears to be related to under-subscription.

- Following a query from an Academies Member, the Business Advisor clarified that the Low Prior Attainment factor looks backwards, meaning that schools and academies are funded on attainment results that have already been recorded and that they are not funded on projections of what attainment might be in future years.
- A member representing maintained primary school headteachers asked whether the eligibility position of primary schools and academies for the Falling Rolls Fund has changed (i.e. due to the tight criteria that the DfE applies there are few, in any, schools and academies that are eligible). The Business Advisor responded that the general position has not changed. The primary reason for lack of eligibility is that the reduction in pupil numbers in primary schools and academies is the result of longer-term demographic trends, rather than short term 'blips'. The Business Advisor added that, whilst we propose to continue to include our FRF in our Schools Block approach in 2022/23, we do not expect to have any significant calls on this and, as such, we will wish to discuss with the Forum what to do with the £0.50m ring-fenced balance that is currently held within the Schools Block.
- An Academies Member asked whether a short summary of the consultation proposals could be provided for school and academy colleagues. The Chair responded, whilst accepting that formula funding is complicated, that colleagues really do need to read the document in full in order to form their own views about the proposals.

Resolved –

- (1) **That the consultation, as presented in Document NK (Appendix 1), be published.**
- (2) **To aid the Forum's understanding of Decision 3, that further information be presented, which compares the number of additional pupils that will be funded via the Reception Uplift factor (for autumn 2020 to spring 2021), and the distribution of these numbers across schools and academies, with the numbers that would be funded in previous years had the Reception Uplift factor been applied.**

ACTION: PRINCIPAL FINANCE OFFICER (SCHOOLS)

590. CONSULTATION - HIGH NEEDS BLOCK FORMULAE FUNDING 2022/23

The Principal Finance Officer (Schools) presented a report, **Document NL**, which asked the Schools Forum to consider the consultation document, which outlines 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 in the 2022/23 financial year April 2022 to March 2023.

The Principal Officer provided an overview of the proposals and emphasised the continuity that these deliver in 2022/23. The Officer explained that the Authority

would like now to consult, with feedback being presented to the Schools Forum on 8 December. The Forum will then be asked to give its final views (its recommendations) on 12 January 2022.

Referring to Appendix 4 (places list), the Chair asked whether the 105 additional places to be allocated are recorded as such because the Authority does not yet know where these places will be. The Business Advisor responded to explain that the 105 are currently under discussion with identified settings but that it is not yet appropriate to announce these publically.

Forum members did not have any further comments and did not ask any more questions on the consultation document.

Resolved –

That the consultation, as presented in Document NL (Appendix 1), be published.

LEAD: PRINCIPAL FINANCE OFFICER (SCHOOLS)

591. EARLY YEARS BLOCK FUNDING MATTERS 2022/23

The Business Advisor (Schools) provided an update verbally on Early Years Block funding matters. He explained that no further announcements have been made by the DfE since the 15 September Forum meeting, regarding the 2022/23 Early Years Block settlement or Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) arrangements.

It is anticipated that the Budget and Spending Review publications on 27 October will release further information on these matters. The Early Years Working Group will begin to meet on 18 October to consider the development of our proposals for 2022/23 EYSFF arrangements.

Forum members did not have any comments and did not ask any questions.

Resolved –

That the information provided be noted.

LEAD: BUSINESS ADVISOR (SCHOOLS)

592. DSG CENTRAL ITEMS AND DE-DELEGATED FUNDS 2022/23

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, **Document NM**, which asked the Schools Forum to review the position of Central Schools Services Block, Schools Block and Early Years Block central funds and de-delegated items for the 2022/23 financial year.

Following the presentation of the report, and the updated benchmarking in Appendix 1, an Academies Member asked why central retention in the Early

Years Block was much lower in Bradford than in other authorities. The Business Advisor explained that this has been the position in Bradford for some time. This is a consequence in particular of our strategy to maximise the value of funding that is delegated to early years providers, especially since the 2016 national review, which quite considerably reduced our Early Years Block funding.

Forum members did not have any further comments and did not ask any more questions on the report.

Members representing maintained primary schools were then asked to decide on whether to continue de-delegation for the 2022/23 financial year for the purpose of subscribing maintained primary schools to Fischer Family Trust (FFT). Members agreed to continue de-delegation. The member representing the Teaching Trades Unions stated that he has recently come across a maintained primary school that was not aware that they had access to FFT. The Business Advisor stated that he would take this message back to the ICT Team.

Resolved –

- (1) That the information presented in Document NM be noted.**
- (2) Schools Forum Members did not request at this time the review of any of the centrally managed funds presented in Document NM.**
- (3) Members representing Maintained Primary Schools decided to de-delegate in 2022/23 for the purposes of purchasing subscriptions to Fischer Family Trust.**

LEAD: BUSINESS ADVISOR (SCHOOLS)

593. SCHOOLS FORUM STANDING ITEMS

No further updates were provided.

No resolutions were passed on this item.

594. AOB / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Commenting on the low attendance of members at this Forum meeting, the Chair asked whether members had any comments on how attendance could be improved, and whether a return to meeting in attendance has been a factor in today's low attendance.

A member representing maintained primary school headteachers asked whether the Forum has a policy on the cessation of membership where there is persistent non-attendance. The Business Advisor responded that the Forum operates a policy of the cessation of membership where a member does not attend 4 consecutive meetings and where the member either does not give apologies or gives apologies that are not accepted by the Forum.

No resolutions were passed on this item.

595. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Forum meeting is planned for Wednesday 8 December 2021.

The scheduled of meetings for the 2021/22 academic year is as follows:

- 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

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