

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Schools Forum on 6 July 2022

Schools Forum meeting held remotely on Wednesday 18 May 2022

To view the archived recording of this meeting, please see here:
<https://bradford.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

Commenced 08:05
Concluded 10:20

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
Brent Fitzpatrick OBE	Academies Member
Melanie Saville	Academies Member
Helen Williams	Academies Member
Mathew Atkinson	Academies Member
Dominic Wall	Academies Member – Special School Academies
Bev George	Maintained Nursery Schools – Governor
Sian Hudson	Maintained Nursery Schools – Headteacher
Kathryn Swales	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher
Graham Swinbourne	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher
Lyndsey Brown	Maintained Special Schools - Headteacher
Kirsty Ratcliffe	Pupil Referral Unit (maintained)

APOLOGIES RECEIVED

Member	Membership Group
Ashley Reed	Academies Member
Michael Thorp	Academies Member
Victoria Birch	Academies Member
Carol Dewhirst OBE	Academies Member
Richard Bottomley	Academies Member – Alternative Provision Academies
Emma Hamer	Maintained Primary Schools – Governor
Nicky Kilvington	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher

NOT IN ATTENDANCE (WITHOUT APOLOGIES RECEIVED)

Member	Membership Group
Andrew Morley	Academies Member

Deborah Howarth	Academies Member
Heather Lacey	Academies Member
Sir Nick Weller	Academies Member
Wahid Zaman	Academies Member

Non-Schools Members

IN ATTENDANCE

Member	Membership Group
David Johnston	Officer Representing Vulnerable Children
Tom Bright	Teaching Unions

APOLOGIES RECEIVED

Member	Membership Group

NOT IN ATTENDANCE (WITHOUT APOLOGIES RECEIVED)

Member	Membership Group
Junaid Karim	Council for Mosques (Bradford)
Gillian Simpson-Morris	Representative of Early Years PVI Members

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

Substitute Member	Membership Group

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

Substitute Member	Membership Group
Alison Kaye	Academies Member
Michelle Farr	Academies Member – Special School Academies

Local Authority Officers present at the meeting

Officer	Position
Niall Devlin	Assistant Director, SEND and Inclusion
Raj Singh	Business Advisor
Andrew Redding	Business Advisor (Schools)
Asad Shah	Committee Secretariat
Marium Haque	Deputy Director, Education and Learning
Dawn Haigh	Principal Finance Officer (Schools)
Jonty Holden	Principal Finance Officer (Schools)

40% of the School Forum's membership (filled membership positions) must be present for a meeting to be quorate. This meeting was quorate, with 45% of members present (13 out of 29 currently filled membership positions).

618. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Ian Morrel declared interests for agenda items 7, 9 and 10.

619. MINUTES OF 9 MARCH 2022 & MATTERS ARISING

The Business Advisor (Schools) reported on progress made on “Action” items from the 12 January meeting. He reported that:

- The minutes do not record any formal resolutions with items “for action”. However, they do record themes for further discussion, which come back to the Forum within reports to this meeting. This includes the High Needs Block working group (discussing the surplus balance).
- Regarding Item 614, and the request for an impact evaluation of the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant (SIMB), the Business Advisor is seeking this from the Assistant Director, School Improvement.
- Regarding Item 613, the Assistant Director, SEND and Inclusion, responded to the questions and comments that the Forum asked at the March meeting relating to the 2020/21 Exclusions Report, as recorded in the minutes. He provided some further information on how formula funding, and Pupil Premium Grant, is adjusted following permanent exclusion. He also advised that both Bradford Alternative Provision Academy and Park Aspire offer a small number of ‘step out’ places, for schools to commission directly with these settings. In response, the Chair advised that a member had asked at the March meeting for clarity on how these places can be accessed. The Chair suggested this matter will be included in discussions under agenda items 8 and 9. The Vice Chair agreed, adding that discussions should focus on a necessary review, which he has previously argued for, looking at how ‘step out’ (prevention places) provision is linked to the availability / sufficiency of funding, in that the net cost of such provision on schools is currently quite prohibitive. Within this review, the strategic impact of weighting such provision and funding for early intervention, in the primary-phase, must also be evaluated.

The Business Advisor reported on other matters arising:

- Scheme for Financing Schools April 2022: There were no directed revisions to the Scheme for April 2022 and therefore, our Scheme for maintained schools remains unchanged, except for a minor adjustment to the remove reference to the Salix Loan scheme (which has ceased). The formal adoption of the IRFS 16 reporting standard for leases by maintained schools has now been postponed until April 2024. Guidance is to be provided however, on how authorities can adopt the standard earlier than this.

Resolved –

- (1) That progress made on “Action” items and Matters Arising be noted.**
- (2) That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2022 be signed as a correct record.**

620. MATTERS RAISED BY SCHOOLS

No matters were raised and no resolutions were passed on this item.

621. STANDING ITEM - DSG GROWTH FUND ALLOCATIONS

No allocations for 2022/23 were presented and no resolutions were passed on this item.

622. SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented, **Document OI**, which provided an update on the Forum's membership and composition and how the Local Authority will seek to refresh the Forum's membership for the 2022/23 academic year. Members were asked to approve the proposed approach to the election of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Schools Forum. Members were also asked to comment on, and approve, the Forum's Conduct of Meeting and Procedures document for 2022/23 (Appendix 2).

The Academies member, representing Special School Academies, confirmed that Michelle Farr has been elected to replace him as representative.

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

Resolved –

(1) That the information presented in Document OI be noted.

(2) That the proposed approach to the election of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Schools Forum for the 2022/23 academic year be approved.

(3) That Appendix 2 (Forum Conduct of Meetings and Procedures) for the 2022/23 academic year be approved.

LEAD: Business Advisor, Schools

623. UPDATE ON THE SCHOOLS BLOCK 'HARD' NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA

The Principal Officer (Schools) presented the report, **Document OJ**, which provided an update on the DfE's published response to the consultation on the completion of the 'hard' National Funding Formula reforms, with changes to be implemented for the 2023/24 financial year.

Forum members did not have any comments on this report and did not ask any questions.

Resolved – That the information presented in Document OJ be noted.

LEAD: *Principal Finance Officer, Schools*

624. MAINTAINED SCHOOLS' OUTTURN (REVENUE BALANCES) 2021/22

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, **Document OK**, which provided an overview of the position of revenue balances held by maintained schools at 31 March 2022.

Forum members did not have any comments on this report and did not ask any questions.

Resolved – That the information presented in Document OK be noted.

LEAD: *Business Advisor, Schools*

625. NATIONAL SEND AND ALTERNATIVE PROVISION REVIEW & CAPITAL SETTLEMENTS

The Business Advisor (Schools), together with the Assistant Director, SEND and Inclusion, presented **Document OL**, which provided an overview of the DfE's SEND and Alternative Provision Review, which was published on 29 March, as well as the Basic Needs and SEND capital settlements for 2022-2024.

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

- The member representing Academy Special Schools expressed his concern that Bradford may be excluded from the next wave of SEND free school applications, because we are not currently in deficit. He stated that new school provision is the essential way that high quality holistic learning environments are created. We therefore, need to push back to Government very strongly on this. This was echoed by the Chair, who asked whether the Forum can do anything to raise this issue with the DfE. The Assistant Director, SEND and Inclusion, stated that the Authority is committed to all options for the development of specialist places, including free schools, and that the Authority has already raised our concern with the DfE and ESFA regarding our possible exclusion from the free school wave.
- The member representing Academy Special Schools stated that the SEND Review is incredibly ambitious and, if successful, could change the SEND and AP landscape. There is strong theme in the Review of ensuring, without legislation, that health agencies pay for the health and therapy support services they are responsible for, irrespective of where these services are needed / delivered. If this theme is delivered in full, this will end how schools are currently subsidising the cost of health and therapy services. Locally, we need to start this transition now. The Strategic Director, Children's Services, responded that the Authority is in discussion with health colleagues (ICS systems lead), especially in the context of the creation of specialist places.
- The Assistant Director explained that the DfE's 'solutions', that are expressed within the SEND Review document are: increased standardisation (vs. local

discretion); the re-invention of 'early intervention'; increased partnership; workforce development; increased parental confidence; greater collaboration / co-ordination between SEND and Alternative Provision; return to mainstream inclusion. He emphasised that change in cost is a clear implication of these solutions, especially in the short term, where authorities will be required to invest in early intervention strategies at the same time as meeting the cost of the needs of existing children and young people. These solutions could also mean significant change in costs for schools and for other providers.

- The Vice Chair expressed his view that there is contradiction within the DfE's Schools White Paper, between encouraging innovation and independence, and increasing centralisation and standardisation. He asked whether and how the Authority could be impeded by this. He also asked whether developments in Bradford, including the establishment of the Children's Services Company, provide the opportunity to look at support service delivery innovatively, for example, via the pooling of budgets and staffing resources, the location of health services hubs, the distribution of children's social workers. The Assistant Director responding that the Authority is required to work within a regulatory framework, but he agreed that we need to seek to exhaust the creatively in the system and to work in partnership. This includes the re-design of services. Regarding the movement towards greater standardisation, we need to voice clearly in our response to the DfE's consultation that no child or young person should be 'worse off' as a result of changes, including possible changes in funding levels that may come from the development of a national top-up banding system.
- The member representing the teaching trades unions asked for some further statistics on our numbers of placements in independent provisions. The Chair advised that this information is included in the SEND statements that were been presented to the Forum in December and in March. The Strategic Director added that, although the number of placements has increased in recent years (and therefore, cost has increased), these placements as a % of our schools' population has remain static.

Resolved –

(1) That the information presented in Document OL be noted.

(2) That a letter is sent from the Chair to the Secretary of State to express the Forum's concern regarding the potential exclusion of Bradford from the new SEND free schools wave (on the grounds that our DSG account is not currently in deficit).

LEAD: *Business Advisor, Schools*

626 HIGH NEEDS BLOCK SURPLUS BALANCE DISCUSSION UPDATE

Linking with the previous agenda item on the SEND and Alternative Provision Review, the Business Advisor (Schools) presented a report, **Document OM**, which provided an update on the consideration of the surplus balance that is held within the High Needs Block at the end of the 2021/22 financial year. The report explained the discussions that have taken place with the Forum's Working Group, as well as with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), since the last

Schools Forum meeting.

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

- A member representing Maintained Primary School Headteachers expressed his disappointment that monies from the surplus balance have not been / are not being injected into schools quickly. He stated that there should be a 4th strand of allocation, with funds being quickly allocated to support children with needs in schools now. The Business Advisor responded that the rationale for the approach that is set out in the report, in the Authority's view, is very clear. This rationale covers the retention of the majority of funds, the targeting of funds to 3 main priority areas, and the Authority's view about not progressing the allocation of funds into schools now in order to further enhance top-up and element 2 funding. The member responded that a 4th strand of allocation would be targeted to support children with needs in schools now.
- The Chair responded to express her frustration, regarding the sufficiency of SEND places, and that a strategic plan for the use of a proportion of the balance towards the 3 identified areas is not yet in place. The Vice Chair added that the Forum members that have attended the working group share a frustration, but there needs to be a clear strategic plan, which is going to take a little more time to develop as it is important to get this right.

Following some discussion on next steps, the timing of the plan, and whether the Forum's working group will meet again, the Forum requested that the Authority presents a plan for the use of the balance (towards the 3 identified areas) to the 6 July meeting, with the working group given the opportunity to meet to contribute to / discuss the plan (including in draft) before this meeting.

The Assistant Director explained that the Authority will seek to respond to this request, but that timescales are short. He emphasised that some of this work is also conditional on receiving advice from the ESFA on the use of High Needs Block funds.

Resolved –

(1) That the information presented in Document OM be noted.

(2) That the Authority presents a plan for the HNB surplus balance to the Forum at the 6 July meeting, with the Forum's sub group to meet in advance of this.

LEAD: Assistant Director, SEND and Inclusion

SCHOOLS FORUM STANDING ITEMS

627.

No further information was presented and no resolutions were passed on this item.

628. AOB / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

A member asked whether anything has been announced regarding additional funding to support schools with rising energy costs. The Business Advisor (Schools) responded to advise that, although the DfE has indicated that it is looking at this issue, no announcements have yet been made.

629. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled is Wednesday 6 July. This will be an 'in-person' meeting held at City Hall.

The provisional dates of meetings for the 2022/23 academic year are as follows:

- Wednesday 14 September 2022, 8am
- Wednesday 12 October 2022, 8am
- Wednesday 7 December 2022, 8am
- Wednesday 11 January 2023, 8am
- *Wednesday 18 January 2023, 8am PROVISIONAL MEETING*
- Wednesday 8 March 2023, 8am
- Wednesday 17 May 2023, 8am
- Wednesday 5 July 2023, 8am

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