

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Schools Forum on 13 September 2023

Schools Forum meeting held remotely on Wednesday 12 July 2023

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

Commenced 08:00
Concluded 09:05

RECORD OF MEETING ATTENDEES, APOLOGIES AND ABSENCES

Schools & Academies Members

IN ATTENDANCE

Member	Membership Group
Ian Morrel (Chair)	Maintained Secondary Schools – Headteacher
Ashley Reed (Vice Chair)	Academies Member
Wahid Zaman	Academies Member
Helen Williams	Academies Member
Brent Fitzpatrick OBE	Academies Member
Victoria Birch	Academies Member
Sarah Murray	Academies Member
Michael Thorp	Academies Member
Richard Bottomley	Academies Member – Alternative Provision Academies
Bev George	Maintained Nursery Schools – Governor
Sian Hudson	Maintained Nursery Schools - Headteacher
Emma Hamer	Maintained Primary Schools – Governor

APOLOGIES RECEIVED

Member	Membership Group
Amanda Slaney	Academies Member
Heather Lacey	Academies Member
Michelle Farr	Academies Member – Special School Academies
Graham Swinbourne	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher
Kathryn Swales	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher
Lyndsey Brown	Maintained Special Schools - Headteacher

NOT IN ATTENDANCE (WITHOUT APOLOGIES RECEIVED)

Member	Membership Group
Andrew Morley	Academies Member
Mathew Atkinson	Academies Member
Melanie Saville	Academies Member
Nicky Kilvington	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher

Jonathan Nixon	Maintained Primary Schools - Headteacher
Kirsty Ratcliffe	Pupil Referral Unit (maintained)

Non-Schools Members

IN ATTENDANCE

Member	Membership Group
David Johnston	Officer Representing Vulnerable Children

APOLOGIES RECEIVED

Member	Membership Group
Tom Bright	Teaching Unions

NOT IN ATTENDANCE (WITHOUT APOLOGIES RECEIVED)

Member	Membership Group
Junaid Karim	Council for Mosques (Bradford)

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 Kay	Academies Member
Katherine Somers	Academies Member

Local Authority Officers present at the meeting

Officer	Position
Asad Shah	Committee Secretariat
Niall Devlin	Assistant Director, SEND and Inclusion
Marium Haque	Strategic Director
Jonty Holden	Principal Finance Officer (Schools)
Emma Hamer	Strategic Manager, Intelligence and Sufficiency
Andrew Redding	Business Advisor (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 48% of members present (13 out of 27 currently filled membership positions).

692. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Emma Hamer declared an interest in all agenda items.

693. MINUTES OF 17 MAY 2023 & MATTERS ARISING

In introducing the meeting, the Chair:

- Thanked all members for their work and involvement in the Forum's business over the 2022/23 academic year.
- Thanked Nicky Kilvington, Heather Lacey, Mathew Atkinson and David Johnston, who are retiring from the Forum at the end of this academic year.
- Thanked Emma Hamer, who, following this meeting, will no longer be the maintained primary governor representative, following the conversion of her school to academy status. Emma will continue to support the Forum as a senior officer.
- Thanked Jonathan Nixon and noted that his current membership (a maintained primary school representative) has expired as a result of the conversion of his school to academy status. Jonathan has expressed his wish to continue on the Forum as an academies member and this will be decided through the membership refresh process, which is currently on-going.
- Thanked Jonty Holden for his support of the Schools Forum (as Jonty moves to another non-schools finance role within Bradford Council).

The Business Advisor (Schools) then reported on progress made on "Action" items from the 17 May meeting. He reported that:

- **Item 684 (Schools Forum Membership):** An update is provided under agenda item 6. Ian Morrel is confirmed as Chair, and Ashley Reed as Vice Chair, for the 2023/24 academic year. There were no other nominations received for these positions and so an election was not required.
- **Item 685 (Early Years Block and Early Years Entitlements):** This will be picked up under agenda item 8. We published the link to the sufficiency documents within the minutes of the meeting.
- **Item 688 (High Needs Block financial forecast and mitigation):** At the last meeting the Forum resolved that a working subgroup of Forum members be convened at the point the Authority has developed a draft (or outline) of a strategic mitigation plan. As we outlined on 17 May, work will take place over the summer, in the light of most recent growth data and following confirmation of the 2024/25 DSG High Needs Block settlement. We expect to look to convene a subgroup from the beginning of the autumn term and will discuss this further with the Forum from the 13 September meeting.
- **AOB – Children's Trust presentation:** Members have accepted David Johnston's invitation to present to the Forum the work of the new Children's Trust. This will be scheduled for the autumn term.

Resolved –

- (1) That progress made on "Action" items and Matters Arising be noted.
- (2) That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2023 be signed as a correct record.

694. MATTERS RAISED BY SCHOOLS

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

695. STANDING ITEM - DSG GROWTH FUND ALLOCATIONS

No allocations were presented and no resolutions were passed on this item.

696. SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP - UPDATE

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented Document QA, which provided an update on the Forum's membership, continuing from the report (Document PV) that was presented on 17 May 2023. He explained that this is a holding report, with work continuing behind the scenes to refresh the Forum's membership from September. He added to the report to confirm that Bev George has now been elected to continue in the role of maintained nursery school governor representative. The Chair thanked the Business Advisor for the report and responded to emphasise the importance of having effective membership in place for the important 2024/25 decision making cycle.

Members made no other comments and did not ask any questions.

Resolved – That the information provided in Document QA be noted.

697. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT OUTTURN (BALANCES) 2022/23

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented Document QB, which provided the initial confirmation of carry forward balances held within the Dedicated Schools Grant account at the close of the 2022/23 financial year. The Chair responded to thank the Business Advisor for the effective monitoring and forecasting of DSG spending. He reminded members of how we forecast that DSG and formula funding decision making is expected to become more challenging and that surplus balances currently held will be needed to support our responses. Referring to the surplus balance held within the High Needs Block, the Chair reported that the Business Advisor has pulled together some benchmarking statistics on growth of SEND and EHCPs, which will be very useful for the Forum to consider as part of the agreed High Needs Block deficit mitigation sub-group work to begin in the autumn.

Members made no other comments and did not ask any questions.

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

698. EARLY YEARS BLOCK FUNDING & ENTITLEMENT EXTENSION - UPDATE

The Business Advisor (Schools) presented Document QC, which provided an update on the report that was presented to the last meeting (Document PW) on the extension of the early years entitlements and on the allocation of additional Early Years Block monies for the delivery of the current entitlements from September 2023.

The Business Advisor added to the report to advise that the DfE announced on 7 July the rates of funding that local authorities will receive from September via the Early Years Supplementary Grant. He reported as follows:

- 2-year-old entitlement: an additional £1.79 per hour (our total DSG-equivalent rate of funding for 2023/24 increases from £5.63 to £7.42 per hour for the period September 2023 to March 2024). This is a 31.8% increase on our original rate of £5.63. The national median increase is 32.5% (£1.88), so our allocation of additional grant is below the national median.
- 3&4-year-old entitlement: an additional £0.27 per hour (our total DSG-equivalent rate of funding for 2023/24 increases from £5.05 to £5.32 per hour for the period September 2023 to March 2024). This is a 5.4% increase on our original rate of £5.05. The national median increase is 6.6% (£0.33), so our allocation of additional grant is below the national median.
- Maintained Nursery School Supplement: an additional £0.21 per hour (our total DSG-equivalent rate of funding for 2023/24 increases from £3.80 to £4.01 per hour for the period September 2023 to March 2024; an increase of 5.5%).
- Early Years Pupil Premium: the hourly rate for all local authorities is increased by £0.04 per hour for the period September 2023 to March 2024.
- Disability Access Fund: the annual rate per child is increased by £53 for all local authorities for the period September 2023 to March 2024.

The Business Advisor also explained that, whilst the conditions of grant will not be published until September, the DfE has stated clearly that it expects the Early Years Supplementary Grant (EYSG) to be full passed out to providers and that authorities should act 'promptly' to engage with, and to inform, early years providers about their uplifted rates of funding for the autumn and spring terms. To this end, the DfE has stated that authorities are not required to consult with their Schools Forums. On this basis, although the report presented to the Forum today says that a proposed approach to the allocation of our funding will be presented to the Forum on 13 September for recommendation, this report was written before the 7 July announcement and it is now the case that the Authority will need to decide on the allocation of funding more quickly, having spoken with the Early Years Working Group (EYWG) on 25 July, with a report coming to the Forum on 13 September for information only (rather than for recommendation). Highlighting this, the Business Advisor asked again whether Forum members have any comments on the principles of the approach to the allocation of the additional funding that were presented on 17 May and that are also summarised in today's report e.g. the allocation of the monies via the Universal Base Rates, rather than

via supplements. Forum members did not offer any additional comments.

The Strategic Manager, Intelligence and Sufficiency, reported to the Forum that the Authority has now responded to the DfE's request for 'readiness' information and sufficiency planning, in advance of the extension of the entitlements from April 2024. The Authority has also drafted an implementation plan, which the Forum will be kept informed of as this develops. The Manager advised that 14 local authorities have now been chosen to be pathfinders for the development of wrap-around childcare, with Sheffield and Barnsley being chosen from the Yorkshire and Humberside region. The Manager offered the view that the DfE has chosen authorities that currently have low take up of provision.

The Chair thanked the Strategic Manager for her update. Members did not ask any questions and did not have any further comments.

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

699. FORMULA FUNDING DEVELOPMENT 2024/25

The Principal Finance Officer (Schools) and the Business Advisor (Schools) presented Document QD, which provided an overview of local formula funding review priorities for the 2024/25 financial year. In thanking the officers for their presentation, the Chair commented that there are clear challenges ahead for the 2024/25 cycle and beyond.

Members made no other comments and did not ask any questions.

Resolved - That the information presented in Document QD be noted.

700. SCHOOLS FORUM STANDING ITEMS

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

701. AOB / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

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

702. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled is Wednesday 13 September. This meeting will be held remotely.

For planning purposes, the provisional schedule for Schools Forum meetings for the 2023/24 academic year has now been set, as follows:

- Wednesday 13 September 2023, 8am
- Wednesday 11 October 2023, 8am
- Wednesday 6 December 2023, 8am
- Wednesday 10 January 2024, 8am
- Wednesday 17 January 2024, 8am PROVISIONAL MEETING
- Wednesday 6 March 2024, 8am
- Wednesday 22 May 2024, 8am
- Wednesday 10 July 2024, 8am

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

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