

Bristol Schools Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 29th November, 2022
at 5.00 pm at A Committee Room - City Hall, College Green, Bristol, BS1 5TR

Present:

Mary Cox	Diocese of Clifton Dept for Schools & Colleges
Cllr Asher Craig	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Equalities
Simon Eakins	Cathedral Primary
Simon Holmes	St Phillips Marsh Nursery
Sarah Lovell	Bristol Brunel Academy
Chris Pring	Whitehall Primary School
Emma Richards (Head)	Claremont School
Cedric Sanguignol	Bishop Road Primary
Cameron Shaw	Bristol Metropolitan Academy
Jo Willis	Bristol Diocese Board of Education
Aderyn Zajicova	The Limes Nursery School

In attendance from Bristol City Council:

Denise Murray	Director: Finance
Richard Hanks (RH)	Interim Director of Education and Skills
Ian Bell (IB)	Place Planning Manager
Angel Lai (AL)	Finance Manager (Children's and Education)
Samantha Wilcock (SW)	Clerk to Schools Forum

	Action
1. Welcome	
SL welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2. Forum Standing Business	
<p>a. Apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Melanie Bunce – Primary Head, St Barnabas Stephanie Williams – Bannerman Road Community Academy Mick O'Neill-Duff – Primary Governor, Wansdyke Primary Simon Shaw – St Mary Redcliffe & Temple Mandy Cheshire – St Bede's Catholic College Tracy Jones – Merchant's Academy Kate Matheson - St Barnabas Primary Trish Dodds – Fishponds Academy Richard Penska – NorthStar Academy Jeff Sutton - GMB Steve Mills - UNISON Marian Curran - - Post 16 Provider Rebecca Watkin - LearnMAT <p>b. Quorate</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed the meeting was quorate.</p>	

<p>c. Resignations Liz Townsend resigned as representative of Bristol Diocese Board of Education.</p> <p>d. Appointment of New Members Jo Willis has been appointed as representative of Bristol Diocese Board of Education. Mandy Cheshire has been appointed as representative Secondary Governor member (St Bede's Catholic College). Mary Cox has been appointed as representative of Diocese of Clifton Department for Schools and Colleges.</p> <p>e. Notification of Vacancies The following vacancies were noted: 1 Secondary Academy Governor Representatives.</p> <p>f. Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
<p>3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting</p>	
<p>RESOLVED – that the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.</p> <p>There were no matters arising that were not covered within the agenda.</p>	
<p>4. Update from Director of Education and Skills</p>	
<p>RH gave a verbal presentation which outlined the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The report of the October SEND inspection had been published and was available online via the BCC and OFSTED websites. Of the five areas of weakness identified in 2019, sufficient progress had been made regarding four of them. There was still work to be done regarding relationships with parents and carers. Within the foundations of processes established since 2019 officers would now work with a DfE advisor to establish a 12 month rapid action plan. This work would link to the SEND partnership plan and be governed by the SEND Partnership Board. A draft was planned for the middle of January. <p>RH confirmed that officers would be working with schools, and early year settings across the sector as they were the points of contact and support for parents.</p> <p>With reference to long waits for appointments, it was suggested that the benefit of integrated working between paediatricians, speech and language therapists and other services be raised within the Integrated Care Board (ICB). The solution may be a different way of working together to ease obstacles and improve the speed of resolution.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. With reference to the DSG mitigation plan, officers had met with different groups to discuss the themes and gather feedback. An online survey had been established and publicised and the responses were being collated with, so far, general agreement that the identified themes were appropriate. Officers would return to report to the BSF with 	

more detail at a future meeting.

3. There would be a full update on the 'Delivering Better Value' process at the January meeting. The process was currently within the second module of three, considering equality and consistent practice within maintained schools. The team were looking at case studies, finance, SEND data and surveys. Module three would focus on shaping an application for a grant that would help develop the mitigation plan. The process was on track with plans to submit the application in January.

5. DSG Budget Monitor P7

AL presented to the Forum and outlined emerging DSG funding levels for 2023-2024 as provided within the report.

Following questions in response to the presentation, the forum was advised:

1. Work continued through the transformation process to establish improved procedures for top up funding which were currently within the 'testing' phase
2. The budget process for the Council as a whole was at out for consultation. Difficult conversations were taking place regarding non statutory services in order to balance the budget of the Council.
3. The transfer across the block supported the wider transformation programme. The resource was important as it added capacity for projects which evaluated the data to understand spend and outcomes. The project was an investment in improvements and would result in developed processes. The funds would not be used to offset the overarching deficit.
4. The transfer contribution demonstrated the Schools Forum involvement in improving performance and reducing the deficit and was an example of the Local Authority and Schools Forum working together to own the solution.
5. With regards to the statutory override which enables councils to carry forward the deficit (which is due to cease on 31 March 2023), officers were waiting to receive written confirmation from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Department of Education of an extension.

It was AGREED that the in-year 2022/23 position for the overall DSG was noted.

6. School Places Update

IB introduced the report and highlighted the following:

1. With reference to Secondary school places, initial indications were that the demand for places would be broadly in line with forecasts. Precise numbers would be known within the first few months of 2023. The planned two new free schools would operate outside of the school admissions coordination but would work with the admissions authority and DfE in terms of offers to the pupils that apply to attend. Any delay to the delivery of the schools would mean further temporary places may be required for September 2022.
2. In terms of admissions to Primary Schools, the local authority continued to look at the supply of places due to the trend of gradual decline. As most primary schools were academies there was less scope for the local authority to dictate what could happen however, officers continued to work with Academy trusts to plan staffing and class

numbers.

3. There was an future trend of rising numbers Post 16 over time (following the bulge through secondary schools). Current numbers on roll close to the city centre were high. The new school planned for Temple Quarter would have some places for post 16 but would not satisfy the full demand.

Following questions in response to the presentation, the forum was advised:

1. The Local Authority continued to work with secondary schools about places required in September 2023. There were some places at some sites but they were not necessarily in the areas of the city the demand was forecast.
2. Demand had increased for post 16 SEN places. Some had been provided via Project Rainbow pathways to independence and KnowleDGE Learning Centre. There was a proposal for a new school was at 'expressions of interest' stage. Further conversations were taking place with providers to identify places and offer specialist provision within placement plans.
3. For primary schools in 2025-2026 there were 1000 places more than those required. It was important to plan ahead and provide strategic oversight. Schools within the same area were having collective conversations specifically where the impact is shown as it was important that schools did not feel the need to compete. It was important to ensure that primary schools were supported and that they contact the local authority if they have any issues.

It was AGREED that the Schools Forum noted the contents of the report.

7. Schools Block School Funding Formula 2023/24

AL introduced the report which requested a decision in principle regarding the school funding formula in order to inform budget proposals. Schools had been consulted on various aspects of the funding formula for 2023/24 and the results were presented on p.47 the report. Following the consultation outcome and also discussions with the Finance Sub Group, the Local Authority proposed that the Forum:

- a. Note the changes made to the formula by the ESFA
- b. That the MFG be set at +0.0%
- c. The transfer of 0.5% of the Schools Block to High Needs, to continue support Education Transformation Programmes such as Delivering Better Value (DBV) for SEND.
- d. The lump sum be set at minimum allowed, £126,627 for both Primary and Secondary
- e. That fund remaining after meeting mandated requirements be distributed to the AEN factors in line with consultation outcome
- f. No bias of this distribution to either primary or secondary
- g. Premises factors (NNDR, PFI, Split Sites) are appropriately funded, consistent with previous years
- h. £2.0m be allocated to the Growth Fund
- i. No re-establishment of a Falling Rolls fund

DM confirmed that the autumn statement had referenced further funding with initial calculations based on the current funding formula suggesting a further £15m however, confirmation had not been received to date.

In response to the proposals SE reported that the Finance Sub Group had met to look at the issues and modelling in detail and the conclusions of the Sub Group were:

1. The Sub Group had discussed the levels of the MFG and supported a level of 0.0%.
2. The Sub Group highlighted that primary schools were struggling with budgets being faced with falling rolls and rising costs as well as national support staff pay increases. The Sub Group proposed and supported a weighting to primary schools..
3. SE suggested that context be provided within the consultation in future re the £1.5m transfer.
4. CP highlighted that within the information provided to the sub group meeting, 35 of 126 schools were shown as nil contribution.

DM confirmed in response that all schools contributed to the transfer and the figures indicated those schools compensated through the MFL.

SL reminded the Forum that the £1.5m schools block transfer was not offset against the deficit but helped provide funding and capacity within the transformation programme.

Schools Forum members supported the proposals and it was AGREED that the Schools Forum:

- a. **The changes made to the formula by the ESFA be noted.**
- b. **That the MFG be set at +0.0%**
- c. **The transfer of 0.5% of the Schools Block to High Needs, to continue support Education Transformation Programmes such as Delivering Better Value (DBV) for SEND.**
- d. **The lump sum be set at minimum allowed, £126,627 for both Primary and Secondary**
- e. **That fund remaining after meeting mandated requirements be distributed to the AEN factors in line with consultation outcome**
- f. **No bias of this distribution to either primary or secondary**
- g. **Premises factors (NNDR, PFI, Split Sites) are appropriately funded, consistent with previous years**
- h. **£2.0m be allocated to the Growth Fund**
- i. **No re-establishment of a Falling Rolls fund**

8. Bristol Schools Forum De-delegation 2023/24

AL introduced the report and confirmed that the Maintained Schools had been consulted with the outcome included within the report.

SL confirmed that the Schools Forum representative for maintained secondary schools had sent apologies but had indicated via email to the Chair his full support for de-delegation.

Representatives for maintained primary schools, supported the proposals on the proviso that further information was provided about the following elements:

1. Trade Union Facility Time – detail was requested regarding the period of time allowed for the submission of invoices and how much of the funds remained unclaimed. Officers were asked to provide further information about the £293k carry forward including an updated net position as of a specific timepoint.
2. Schools and Financial difficulties Fund – detail was requested regarding who owned, controlled and accessed the fund which stood at £335k. Information about the trends of applications were requested as contributions had not been required for 2-3 years.

3. Educational Psychology – Feedback was requested regarding the value of the service and how had the money been spent over the last few years.
4. School Improvement Service –Feedback was requested regarding the value of the service and the requirement of the contribution from the Schools Forum.

It was AGREED that Schools Forum Members:

1. **Noted the outcomes of the consultation on school funding arrangements.**
2. **Maintained primary school representatives of Schools Forum supported the de-delegation of the following services at the amounts per pupil indicated in Table 1 for 2023-24:**
 - a) **Employee and Premises Insurance**
 - b) **Assessment of eligibility for free school meals**
 - c) **Maternity supply cover**
 - d) **Schools in financial difficulty**
 - e) **Trades Union facility time**
 - f) **Education psychology**
 - g) **School Improvement Services**
3. **Maintained secondary school representatives of Schools Forum supported the de-delegation of the following services at the amounts per pupil indicated in Table 1 for 2023-24:**
 - a) **Employee and Premises Insurance**
 - b) **Assessment of eligibility for free school meals**
 - c) **Maternity supply cover**
 - d) **Trades Union facility time**
 - e) **Health and safety roving reps**
 - f) **Education psychology**
 - g) **School Improvement Services**

9. Any Other Business

The Chair indicated that the next meeting in January 2023 would be a remote meeting, webcast on YouTube.

The meeting closed at 6.50pm.