

Bristol Schools Forum

**Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 28th November, 2023
at 5.15 pm at The Bordeaux Room - City Hall, College Green, Bristol, BS1 5TR**

	Action
1. Welcome	
In attendance:	
Present:	
Del Planter	St Mary Redcliffe & Temple Secondary
Thomas Bolton	Union
Alastair Brown	Redcliffe Nursery
Melanie Bunce	Willow Primary
Mandy Cheshire	St Bedes Catholic College
Steve Davies	Union
Simon Eakins (Vice Chair)	Cathedral Primary
Lee Hannan	Brentry Primary
Tonya Hill	New Fosseyway School
Simon Holmes	St Philips Marsh Nursery
Steve Hornsby (Chair)	NorthStar Academy
Jo Kingston	Diocese of Clifton Dept for Schools & Colleges
Sarah Lovell	Bristol Brunel Academy
Aileen Morrison	St Matthias Park
David Otlet	Union
Chris Pring	Whitehall Primary School
Cedric Sanguinol	Bishop Road Primary
Cameron Shaw	Bristol Metropolitan Academy
Bristol City Council Officers:	
Reena Bhogal-Welsh	Director, Education & Skills
Denise Murray	Director, Finance & Section 151 Officer
Travis Young	Finance Manager
Claudette Campbell	Clerk, Democratic Services Officer
<p>The Clerk welcomed those present and gave the safety instructions as the meeting was held in person in City Hall.</p> <p>The Clerk moved for the appointment of a Chair.</p> <p>Steve Hornsby was proposed and seconded by Simon Eakins.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <p>i. That Steve Hornsby be appointed Chair of the Schools Forum</p> <p>Steve Hornsby took the Chair and acknowledged the contribution and leading of his predecessor Sarah Lovell.</p>	

2. Forum Standing Business

The Clerk updated on the following:

Apologies for Absence were received from:

- Cllr Asher Craig
- Trisha Dodds
- Jo Grayson
- Sam Packer
- Jo Willis

Quorum

- Confirmation was given that Over 40% of members was present, the meeting was quorate.

Resignation

- Cedric Sanguinol advised that this would be his last meeting as the representative as the Primary Governor Maintained setting

Appointments

Following further advertising of the vacant post a number of persons came forward. An election was held for the appointment of the representative for Primary Governor Maintained setting. There were 2 candidates on the ballot. The ballots were circulated to the maintained governor primary settings via the Governor Hub communication.

- The two candidates were Lee Hannan and Merche Clark
- The responses were low with only 8 responses from the sector
- Lee Hannan received 6 votes and Merche Clark 2 votes

Lee Hannan was duly elected and will sit as one of the 3 maintained governor reps.

The following vacant seats received one applicant and the Schools Forum was asked to agree and affirm their appointment:

- Maintained Head Primary Setting – Melanie Bunce
- Nursery Governor - Alastair Brown

Schools Forum were asked to agree the appointment of Merche Clark into the seat vacated by Cedric Sanguinol, Maintained Governor Primary representative.

Vacancies

- Secondary Governor Academy
- Secondary Governor Maintained
- Primary Head Academy x 2

Membership continuation

- Confirmed that Chris Pring Maintained Primary Head moves into a third term on the

<p>forum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - David Otlet (NEU Union) to continue as Non School Member rep 	
3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting	
<p>The minutes of the meeting held on the 26th Sept 2023 was resolved as a correct record.</p> <p>Matters Arising/Actions</p> <p>Noted that a number of actions from the minutes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Item 4 – action relating to the support to schools in deficit and the ask for update on those who had met the criteria for support <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Update to given 2. Item 5c – the balances on the de-delegation service areas to be updated. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To be provided in January 2024 (Action: TY) 3. Item 7 – a report on the outcome of the original schemes established with regards the High Needs Recovery Plan (Action: RBW) 	<p>TY (1)</p> <p>RBW(1)</p>
4. Director of Education & Skills Update	
<p>The Director of Education and Skills, Reena Bhogal-Welsh, shared a presentation on the 'EHCP Process Improvement – Overview and Update'.</p> <p>The presentation was to be shared after the meeting to enable Forum Members to comment. (Action: Clerk)</p> <p>The following was noted from the presentation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) That Bristol is following the national trend with an increase in the numbers of application for Education Health Care Plans. b) The EHCP process is under review, to bring it into line with the government statutory processing target of 20 weeks c) The presentation outlined the activities being considered by the EHCP Process Improvement Project. d) Ways are being sought to automate the process. The presentation explained the potential benefits of Automation. It would impact staff capacity with an anticipated 80% efficiency gain. <p>The Following was noted from the discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> e) The scope of the process improvement project; it covers the whole application process, from the initial application, assessment, to the production of the EHCP. f) The process will not be implemented until it has been thoroughly tested and this is to be projected to happen in 2024. g) Clarification was sought on the staff saving of '15.47 fte' quoted in the presentation. How would automation impact overall team numbers and what percentage of staff would be lost with the introduction of Automation. This question to be address in the next update report. (Action: RBW) h) The report will update Forum on the outcome of testing, the process and the timeline for implementation. (Action: RBW) 	<p>CC (1)</p> <p>RBW (2)</p> <p>RBW (3)</p>

Resolved:

- To note the report
- That the report will be shared to School Forum members to share with settings and respond with comments
- That a further update will be provided early 2024

5. Delivering Better Value in SEND

The Director of Education and Skills, Reena Bhogal-Welsh, spoke to the report shared with forum members. Forum was asked:

- a) To note the update on the progress of the programme
- b) To consider allocation of an underspend in the programme to Schools Block
- c) Section 4.2 of the report sets out details of the schools given financial support to deliver creative ideas for innovative inclusion practices
- d) To consider the assignment of funds to support 'Component 3' activities; for individual, or groups of schools looking to develop initiatives using a test and learn approach.
- e) Those already funded were listed in 4.2.8 of the report and the activities to be funded in 4.2.9
- f) The sum of £51k is required to support the programmes from April to July 2024.
- g) The sum of £440k is unallocated; the proposal is to use this sum to support the establishment of 'Inclusion Hubs'; to support early intervention; to enable that early intervention to take place in the existing setting. The report at 4.2.15 details how the proposal is to be delivered and by whom.
- h) The programme costs update was provided at 4.6 in the report. The ask was the remaining funds to be carried forward to support the continued costs associated with programme delivery and management, estimated to be £400k.

The following was noted from the discussion.

- i) There was a general appreciation of the funding to support initiatives but there was also anxiety about sustainability of the projects.
- j) Officers explained that the projects, identified and underway, are one off projects with a start and completion date; the intention is to enable settings to promote and explore innovative activities; the sum requested is to sustain the projects to the given end date, set out in the report.
- k) Officers confirmed that the unspent funds of £440K, to be carried forward equates to the unspent balance set aside for the appointment of the delivery company.
- l) Forum discussed the need to see evidence of the milestones and/or success achieved by each project; to be better determine value and to enable a decision on the further funding allocation. **(Action: RBW)**
- m) The Inclusion Hub discussion centred around the creation and implementation of the hubs.
- n) Officers shared that extensive liaison that had taken place with settings and the Alternative Learning Provision (ALP) team; assurances were given that the hub had been codesigned with input from school settings; the intervention would be broken into Tiers 1 – 4; see section 4.2.15 of the report.
- o) Members were interested in knowing more particularly about actions post set-up; possible provision of staff training; the sustainability of the hub; a detailed understanding on how the principles of the hub would

RBW (4)

<p>operate.</p> <p>When put to the vote the following was resolved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. That the sum of £51k requested at 4.2.12 to support delivery of projects in component 3 be deferred to; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Enable a further report to be provided to Forum to evidence the milestones and/or success achieved of each project. (Action: RBW) II. The sum of £440k requested at 4.2.13 to support the establishment of Inclusion Hubs be deferred; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A further report to be provided that expands on section 4.2.15 and addresses the operation of the inclusion hub (Action: RBW) III. The sum of £400k requested at 4.6 Programme Costs to be carried forward <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Agreed without any objection 	<p>RBW (5)</p> <p>RBW (6)</p>
6. Dedicated Schools Grant Budget Monitor Period 6	
<p>Travis Young, Finance Business Partner, Children & Education, presented a report updating Schools Forum on the 2023/24 DSG position as at Period 06 (PO6) to end of September 2023.</p> <p>The following was to be noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Note the PO6 forecast position as at end of September 2023 for DSG b) Note the Q2 Forecast position for maintained schools c) Note the increase funding available for schools in financial difficulties <p>Schools in Financial Difficulty</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> d) An update was provided on the assistance that would be offered to schools forecasting a budget deficit, with a robust recovery plan to secure their long-term financial sustainability. e) Progress on the use of the sums designated by the schools forum to support the recovery programme will be provided on a quarterly basis. <p>The following was noted from the discussion.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> f) Three schools have had their licence deficit plans approved because they were able to demonstrate that the plans were robust and would enable them to recovery their financial position. g) The additional sum of £675K awarded from the ESFA was a welcome allocation; work is to be done on a process on the best way to use this fund. h) Members acknowledged the positive input from LA Officers to nursery and primary maintained settings that enabled settings to set in-year budget balances. i) There were concerns that the falling numbers on roll may impact the financial recovery of settings with a licence deficit. Assurance was given that financial sustainability is a part of the methodology of the transformation programme and that this had been factored into the recovery plan. j) Noted the contribution from Trade Unions in lobbying government and that with the continued liaison, that LA Officers had had with the ESFA, had resulted in the allocation of additional funding. k) There is an opportunity to properly document the use of the fund, to use it to evidence remaining and continued challenges to the ESFA. l) There was an ask for joint messaging, on the actual impact to service provision, to parents and families because of the current economic climate; that explains the 	

<p>consequence of the financial constraints and the steps that settings had to employ to achieve a balance budget. There was an opportunity to use existing mechanism for a consistent and collective messaging via the Cabinet Member, Parent Carer Forums and other groups. (Action: TY & RBW)</p> <p>Resolved to Note the Report</p>	<p>TY (2) RBW (7)</p>
<p>7. Schools Block School Funding Formula 2024 to 2025</p>	
<p>Travis Young, Finance Business Partner, Children & Education, presented the report to inform and seek agreement of the Schools Forum on the principles of the funding formula for mainstream schools and academies for 2024/25, prior to final allocations being made available by the ESFA in December, for final formula agreement in January 2024.</p> <p>The recommendations were discussed, the following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) There were concerns expressed about the movement of sums to the High Needs Block (2.2 a) the first request to support this block was put in 2015; at that time the deficit was said to stand at £2.9m; it now is 20 times greater; the sums reassigned did not appear to have a lasting an impact or resolved the deficit position. b) The ask was for the actual deficit figure to be clearly shown in a report together with clear details on the impact that each sum allocated is making on the deficit. (Action: TY) c) Officers shared the huge scale of the issue arising from the change in need over the years; the ongoing collaboration; the positive message the assignment of this sum would give; the advocacy being done to highlight the issue; the work being done to establish a mechanism to remedy this issue. <p>The Chair moved for the principles set out in paragraph 2.2 a – e to be supported, calling for a vote on each item.</p> <p>When put to the vote:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. 2.2a – On the transfer of 0.5% to High Needs Block. In line with consultation response - the LA is seeking this transfer. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Agreed with one objection noted from Chris Pring ii. 2.2b – set MFG at 0.0%. In line with the consultation response the LA is proposing to set the MFG at 0.0%. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. (Unanimous) Agreed iii. 2.2c – set the value of the lump sum. The LA is seeking to set the lump sum to the maximum allowed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. (Unanimous) Agreed iv. 2.2d – how to allocate remaining funding (after mandated items). The LA is seeking to maximise the AEN factors, and then direct the remainder to the AWPU with no bias towards any phase. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. (Unanimous) Agreed v. 2.2e – the value to allocate for the Growth Fund. The LA is seeking to set at £2m for 2024/25. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. (Unanimous) Agreed 	<p>TY (3)</p>
<p>8. De-delegation for 2024 to 2025</p>	

Travis Young, Finance Business Partner, Children & Education, presented the report on the outcome of the de-delegation consultation, which ran from 3rd October to 14th November 2023.

To seek agreement from the maintained primary school members and secondary maintained school members on the de-delegation services for 2024/25.

The following was noted from the discussion:

- a) There was concern expressed about the consultation process and whether the notification of the consultation was properly shared.
- b) A discussion followed on access to certain aspects of the funds in particular the Trade Union time reclaim process.
- c) The maintain settings representatives expressed concern about the numbers of responses received; said that 6 out of 41 primary maintained schools responded and neither of the two secondary settings. Assurances was given that the notices and reminders were sent via the Heads Newsletter and the primary documents to the Heads and/or Business Managers at each setting.
- d) When asked whether the representatives were happy to vote on the delegation there was a request for further details about each line listed in section 2.2 and 2.3. In addition, further expansion on the details set out in Table 3 'Areas of De-delegation' section 5.3.
- e) There was a question on whether individual settings could opt out of a specific delegated service? The representatives were reminded that they represent the whole setting and not an individual setting; that the decision was on behalf of all maintain setting.
- f) When the Chair moved for a vote on the Officers recommendation as set out in the report.

The following was resolved:

- i. Maintained Primary Representatives asked to agree the de-delegation set out in the report at 2.2, when put to a vote the 4 representatives abstained from voting and moved that the matter be deferred for a decision in January 2024 that:
 - a) Officers provide a further fuller explanation on the areas of de-delegation.
 - b) to provide assurances that the consultation was widely shared to all maintained primary settings. **(Action: TY)**
- ii. Secondary Primary Representative asked to agree the de-delegation set out in the report at 2.3; when put to the vote the representative present abstained from voting moved that the matter to be deferred for a decision in January 2024 that:
 - a) Officers provide a further fuller explanation on the areas of de-delegation.
 - b) confirmation when the consultation was shared with the two settings. **(Action: TY)**

TY (4)

TY (5)

9. Early Years Supplementary Grant 2023 to 2024

Travis Young, Finance Business Partner, Children & Education, presented the information report on the recently announced Early Years Supplementary Grant (EYSG)

School Forum members were invited to note the nature of the grant funding:

- a) The funding initiative is to provide additional financial support for existing early years entitlements during the current financial year (23/24) starting from September 2023.
- b) The grant sum is £843,216 for September 2023 to March 2024
- c) The grant is to increase hourly rates paid to childcare providers for the government's existing entitlement offers.
- d) LA's must pass on the EYSG in full to early years providers for each funding stream and

are able to determine how best to do so.

- e) The report provided full details of the funding streams available with the current rates and increase rate to the 4 areas.
- f) Officers will present to the School Forum in January 2024 details on the Autumn announces from the DfE. **(Action: TY)**

TY (6)

School Forum Resolved:

- i. To note the report

The meeting closed at 7.10 pm.