

Bristol Schools Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 11th July, 2022
at 5.00 pm at Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present:

Karen Brown	Private Voluntary Independent (PVI) Early Years
Melanie Bunce	Maintained Primary Headteacher Rep, St Barnabas
Councillor Asher Craig	Cabinet Member for Children Services, Education and Equalities
Trish Dodds	Primary Governor Rep, Fishponds Academy
Simon Eakins (Vice Chair)	Academy Primary Head Rep, Cathedral Primary
Simon Holmes	Nursery Head Rep, St Phillips Marsh Nursery
Sarah Lovell (Chair)	Academy Secondary Headteacher Rep, Bristol Brunel Academy
Kate Matheson	Maintained Primary Governor Rep, St Barnabas
Aileen Morrison	PRU Head, St Matthias Park
Samantha Packer	Secondary Governor Rep, St Mary Redcliffe & Temple
Richard Penska	PRU Governor Rep, Northstar
Chris Pring	Maintained Primary Headteacher Rep, Cabot Primary
Cedric Sanguignol	Maintained Primary Governor Rep, Bishop Road Primary
Cameron Shaw	Secondary Head, Bristol Metropolitan Academy
Stephanie Williams	Academy Primary Head Rep, Bannerman Road Community Academy
Aderyn Zajicova	Nursery Governor, The Limes Nursery School

In attendance from Bristol City Council:

Denise Murray	Director: Finance
Alison Hurley (AH)	Director of Education and Skills
Angel Lai (AL)	Finance Manager (Children's and Education)
Richard Hanks	Head of Service - Learning City for All
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 Apologies for absence were received from: Mick O'Neill-Duff – Primary Governor, Wansdyke Primary Emma Richards – Head Special Maintained, Claremont School Rebecca Watkin – Head Special Academy, LearnMAT Denise Murray - Head of Finance (S151 Officer)</p> <p>b. Quorate The Clerk confirmed the meeting was quorate.</p> <p>c. Resignations There were no new resignations since the previous meeting.</p> <p>d. Appointment of New Members One new member had been appointed since the previous meeting. Aderyn Zajicova</p>	

<p>joined the Bristol Schools Forum as a Nursery Governor and was welcomed to the meeting.</p> <p>e. Notification of Vacancies The following vacancies were noted: 2 Secondary Academy Governor Representatives 1 Clifton Diocese Representative</p> <p>f. Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting	
<p>RESOLVED – that the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.</p> <p>Matters Arising (within the minutes)</p> <p>Insurance A breakdown of costs within the Risk Protections Arrangement (RPA) had been provided and circulated as requested. AL outlined the information provided and confirmed that the package chosen had saved schools £176,000 in total for the year. Officers would confirm the mechanism for any refunds due, prior to the next meeting. Action carried forward.</p> <p>Task and Finish Groups The Early Years Task and Finish Group had met on 6 July and the High Needs Task and Finish Group would meet on 15 July. Anyone interested in becoming involved with those groups should contact the Clerk. ALL</p> <p>School Places Update AH reported that IB had sought meetings with Heads to discuss future projections of pupil numbers and temporary expansions of secondary schools. AH was asked for an update on when those meetings were planned for. IB was invited to present the latest position to the Forum in September. Action carried forward.</p> <p>Family Hubs A draft programme had been released by the DfE last week which would assist in the preparation for the grant application. The programme was listed on the Cabinet Forward Plan for September 2022 where officers would seek permission to apply for the grant and outline the delivery expectations. The item would be on the agenda of the September meeting of the BSF. Action carried forward.</p> <p>Nursery Deficit Information detailing how the level of deficit compared to the total income of nurseries had been circulated. It was reported as 62% of total income.</p>	<p>PD, AL</p> <p>AH, IB, SW</p> <p>SW</p>
4. Update from Director of Education and Skills	
<p>AH gave a verbal presentation which outlined the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The High Needs Block Recovery Plan would be reviewed by the High Needs Task and Finish Group and would then be presented to the Forum in September. The elements 	

and detail would sit below the DSG Management Plan.

2. The Department for Education (DfE) 'Delivering Better Value in SEND' scheme operated below 'Safety Valve' arrangements. All eligible Councils had met with delivery partners to hear the approach and further detail. The next step was for the DfE to meet with senior officers to consider the readiness to commence the programme; informationally, financially and operationally. The key output would be to develop the Action Plan.
3. Interim arrangements for the Director of Education and Skills post would be released soon.

5. Proposal for Schools Forum to fund additional capacity to support the sustainability review of maintained nursery schools from the Early Years Block Underspend

The Forum received a report which progressed discussions from the last meeting to propose a stream of work with the maintained Nursery schools to establish a sustainable model for the future to tackle the large and growing funding deficit. Officers had worked alongside Headteachers, Governors and key stakeholders to understand the pressures involved, initiate financial modelling and contextual planning and establish a Terms of Reference for a transformation model.

The report proposed to use £90k of the Early Years underspend to work directly with nursery schools to find and identify savings as well as sustainable models for the future. The funding would be allocated to:

- support leaders to develop models working with professionals to consider staffing and structures
- provide dedicated finance support for modelling and forecasting to develop sustainable models
- provide support to set and monitor budgets
- commission research to study operational models across the country
- provide release time for headteachers to allow them to support the programme.

With reference to SEND pressures and work to help manage and build capacity around SEND as part of transformation plans, the report also proposed to invest up to £250k in the Early Years sector focussing on early intervention and support, workforce development and capability, funding models, building sustainability and capacity for the future. A panel would look at the programmes and projects and feedback on the impact of the work.

SH reported the position of the Early Years Task and Finish Group in support of the report and proposals. He highlighted the early family help and support role (such as early SEND intervention) that nurseries carried out which benefitted the rest of the sector. SH also highlighted the potential positive impact of proposed additional DfE funding for the maintained nurseries grant.

Following a vote it was AGREED (with one voting against) that the Schools Forum:

- . **Noted the key pressures facing Bristol's maintained nursery schools.**
- . **Noted the work delivered to date**
- . **Approved the request for £90k funding to be allocated from 2022/23 Early Years underspend to provide key financial, leadership and operational support through the next academic year to support the review of maintained nursery schools.**
- . **Approved the request for £250k funding to develop a settings-based sustainable approaches to supporting pupils with SEND in the Early Years.**

<p>6. DSG Budget Monitor Update</p>	
<p>AL introduced the report, the first financial monitoring report of the financial year, and outlined the information contained therein.</p> <p>Table One summarised the position at the end of the previous financial year including the transfer of the balance from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block.</p> <p>AL reported the overall position and the current 2022-23 allocation from the DfE of £421m. The first forecast was based on end May 2022 to March 2023 with a £15.6m overspend in DSG mainly attributable to the High Needs and Early Years Blocks. The forecast showed a carry forward cumulative overspend at the end of the financial year of £40.2m. The service was engaging with the DfE with mitigation plans detailed earlier in the meeting.</p> <p>Officers reminded that statutory instrument arrangements would end on 31 March 2023.</p> <p>In response to the report the following points were raised:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The report and projections were in line with predicted levels. Favourable movement may therefore be seen following the interventions and agreed mitigations and plans from the DSG management plan through Delivering Best Value for SEND. Detail of mitigations would be brought back to the Forum in September. 2. Improvements were required throughout the sector to decrease the deficit and the BSF would be key in identifying and driving changes. 3. The trend of growing numbers of requests for Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) included increased new requests on top of the backlog. Some demand could be due to the impact of COVID and officers assessed applications to consider whether alternative funding and grants were more appropriate than the draw on Special Educational Needs funds. 4. It was important to understand why there was such a high drive for EHCPs as well as reassessing allocation based on the current needs of a child rather than the historical allocation. <p>The Schools Forum noted the in-year 2022/23 position for the overall DSG</p>	
<p>7. Any Other Business</p>	
<p><u>Future Meeting Dates</u></p> <p>The proposed future meeting dates were 27 September 2022, 29 November 2022 then 12 January, 28 March, 23 May and 12 July 2023 as detailed on the agenda. The Chair proposed that meetings be a mixture of in person and remote. The clerk would communicate plans for each meeting. (SW)</p> <p><u>Thanks to Alison Hurley</u></p> <p>The Chair led a round of applause and appreciation for Alison Hurley who was leaving Bristol City Council at the end of July. Councillor Craig also thanked Alison for her hard work as a highly respected leader and a pleasure to work with.</p>	

The meeting closed at 6pm