

Bristol Schools Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 20th May, 2020

at 3.30 pm at Virtual Meeting - Zoom Committee Meeting with Public Access via YouTube

Present:

Karen Brown	Maintained Secondary Governor Rep, St Mary Redcliffe & Temple
William Brown	Non School Member, NASUWT and NEU
Rob Davies	Nursery Governor Rep, Speedwell and Little Hayes Nursery Federation
Trish Dodds	Academy Primary Governor Rep, Fishponds Academy
Simon Eakins	Academy Primary Head Rep, Cathedral Primary
Simon Holmes	Nursery Head Rep, St Phillips Marsh Nursery
Sarah Lovell	Academy Secondary Headteacher Rep, Bristol Metropolitan Academy
Kate Matheson	Maintained Primary Governor Rep, St Barnabas Primary
Garry Maher	Non School Member, Diocese of Clifton Rep
Aileen Morrison	Pupil Referral Unit Rep, St Matthias Park
Ruth Pickersgill	Academy Secondary Governor Rep, City Academy
Chris Pring	Maintained Primary Headteacher Rep, Cabot Primary
Carew Reynell	Academy Secondary Governor Rep, Blaise High School
Emma Richards	Special School Head Rep, Claremont School
Cedric Sanguignol	Maintained Primary Governor Rep, Bishop Road Primary
Simon Shaw	Maintained Secondary Head Rep, St Mary Redcliffe & Temple
Christine Townsend	Maintained Primary Governor Rep, Whitehall Primary
Wendy Weston	Non School Member, GMB
Stephanie Williams	Academy Primary Head Rep, Bannerman Road Community Academy
David Yorath	Academy Secondary Governor Rep, Cotham School

In attendance from Bristol City Council:

Graham Booth	Finance Manager
Cllr Anna Keen	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Corrina Haskins	Clerk to Schools Forum
Alison Hurley	Director of Education & Skills
Denise Murray	Director of Finance
Travis Young	Corporate Finance

	Action
10. Welcome	
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
11. Forum Standing Business	
a. Apologies for absence Apologies for absence were received from: Kris Hristakev (Special Schools Governor);	
b. Quorate The Chair confirmed the meeting was quorate.	

c. Resignations

There were no resignations to report.

d. Appointment of New Members

The Clerk reported that Simon Holmes had been reappointed as the Nursery Heads representative.

e. Notification of Vacancies

The Clerk advised of the following Schools Forum Vacancies which would be advertised through the Heads/Governors Bulletins:

- Two Primary Academy Heads
- Two Primary Maintained Heads
- Two Primary Academy Governors
- Two Secondary Academy Heads

f. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

12. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED - that the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

Matters Arising**Minimum Funding Guarantee**

The Chair confirmed that this would be discussed at the next meeting of the Finance Sub Group which was due to take place later in the year.

HR Systems ITrent

CP confirmed that he had received the guidance and that his school had now moved to the new system.

Composition of the Schools Forum

The Chair confirmed that this would be on the agenda for the September meeting.

Trading with Schools TwS

CP asked that, in future, the TwS expenditure breakdown be presented with the annual report as the information raised questions about why certain areas made a profit and others were in deficit. He undertook to raise this with outside of the meeting with the Chair and Vice Chairs.

13. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and the High Needs Block Written Statement of Action

In introducing the report, AH reported that she had hoped to produce a written report with an update from Ofsted/Care Quality Commission (CQC), but this information was not yet available and therefore she gave a verbal update as follows:

- Confirmation had been received that the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) was fit for purpose as an action plan;
- Despite the Covid 19 crisis, the WSoA remained a key priority for the Council and resources had not been redeployed elsewhere, however, some of the actions timed for July would be a challenge to deliver in the context of the pandemic;
- In terms of analysis, 50% had been achieved and those actions RAG rated “red”

or “amber” could not be delivered in the current climate;

- The closure of schools had meant that the attendance milestone was not deliverable;
- The Local Offer had been refreshed and there had been a lot of collaborative work with Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) to ensure that schools had a voice in the process.

14. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and the High Needs Block - Milestones and Impact of Covid 19

AH introduced the report which gave details of the milestones and a breakdown of finances requested by Schools Forum to enable members to understand the impact of transferring money to the High Needs block and the difference it would make to the service.

Improvement Priority 2: Children and young people with SEND receive the best possible, appropriate and effective support and provision at the right time

She confirmed that the additional funding would enable:

- The local offer to be brought to life by having a team in place to support parents and carers. This would shape the longer term offer for Bristol;
- Training and skills to be provided for all schools and settings across Bristol so that every provider understood the fundamentals and the competency level was raised. This was not just about investing in the SENCO but ensuring there were equitable skills across schools and that the core offer was of a higher standard across the city;

Forum Members raised the following questions:

Welcome the range of developments, especially in relation to communication with parents to help change the perceptions of the services, but how was the Council ensuring that the specialist sector was involved and also ensuring quality of provision and value for money in terms of commissioning training services?

AH responded that, in terms of quality, Bristol City Council (BCC) was looking at training that had the right impact and there had been a lot of discussions with specialist teams to identify these areas as well as feedback from the survey of young people and parents/carers. BCC was looking to move to a model where it was the facilitator using the skills that were already in available in the city.

How will Schools Forum measure how successful this particular area has been, e.g. will we consider key performance indicators KPIs at future meetings? It would be useful to monitor how the additional money transferred to the High Needs Block has been attributed to this project so that Schools Forum can see that the funding is making a difference to the service.

AH confirmed that BCC had to provide detailed monitoring information for Department for Education (DfE) and CQC but this could be summarised into a manageable reporting format for future meetings of Schools Forum.

Was there a risk of sustainable funding not being secured and what would happen to the project if it was not?

AH confirmed that there was a risk as a lot of the project was based on one off funding, however the money was being used to frontload investment in the service and there would be a reassessment of the impact of this funding and how the project could be sustained in the future.

Of the total investment of £3m, £1.3m is from the transfer to the High Needs block agreed by Schools Forum, however, even though a major commissioner of the work, Schools Forum is not mentioned in the Governance Structure? Are Health and Social Care contributing to the work as they are included on the Governance Structure?

AH undertook to look into the governance arrangements and report back to a future meeting, but confirmed that Health and Social Care were involved, but for the purposes of the report to Schools Forum, only the information relating to education had been included. In terms of the funding, GB/DM confirmed that there was £1.3 from the Schools Block; £1.5m from additional funding that the Council had and has set aside to support the initiative and the balance was from unused reserves.

Priority 2 How does the SEND “first call” differ from the service provided by Supportive Parents and, in view of the Ofsted report, can the Local Authority be confident that families will use this service rather than Supportive Parents? Would it have been better to enhance the funding to Supportive Parents instead?

AH undertook to look into the comment about enhancing Supportive Parents, but confirmed that the SEND first call was offering something different in that it was a first point of contact for parents/carers to access services.

Will the funding from mainstream schools be used to train SENCOs and enable schools to understand the basic information around SEND support?

AH confirmed the £3m funding would be used to support the wider education transformation programme and not just the WSoA, but that that there would be a focus on basic SEND training for education providers to ensure a consistent level of knowledge and expertise across all education settings in the city.

Concern that training programmes can sometimes be a “one size fits all” toolkit and a better approach would be a co-constructed programme using the expertise of people on the ground, e.g. early years providers.

AH confirmed that, in terms of training, the provision would be a mix of different provision but the first priority was to ensure that the offer had a certain standard across the city, and building on from that would be the sharing of good practice and targeting particular training and coaching to create a sustainable system in schools.

Concern that, due to the nature of funding, the staff working with SEND children were often the lowest paid on fixed term contracts, it would be better to have proper contracts that allow staff and expertise to be retained.

There needs to be flexibility and creativity in terms of both training and provision?

AH concurred that there would need to be a flexible approach to increasing specialist provision.

Improvement Priority 4:

- **Leaders across the local area will work together to ensure that the children and young people with SEND will experience inclusive cultures, enabling them to achieve their full potential.**
- **Develop our systems and resources to enable young people with SEND/EHCP to be better supported to achieve a successful transition into education, training and employment between ages 14 -25 and beyond.**

AH gave further details on improvement 4 priority as follows:

- A focus on the inclusion of children and young people with SEND across all schools and settings with resources and structure in place and to improve attendance. There were a number of milestones and measures against the target, although it would be challenging to meet these in current circumstances;
- A focus on 14-25 year olds in terms of positive destinations and ensuring that destinations were recorded so that support could be targeted effectively;
- There was a current cohort of 633 and a target of March 21 for a supportive worker to look at career paths in partnership with schools and education settings;
- 14-16 year olds as it was important to start early to raise aspirations;
- There had been a challenge in delivering the milestones due to Covid, but a lot of the work had been done online;
- There was not enough specialist provision and there was a short term issue about children who need a place in September as well as the longer term issue of being enough provision to allow children to be educated in their local area;
- There would be a short term strategy co-produced with education providers to identify how special school places could be increased.

If there was only one person working with 633 young people, was this enough resource and would anyone else contribute to this such as post 16 providers?

AH confirmed that some of the work would be done through existing teams with engagement from providers but the long term aim would be to increase capacity.

There was an increase in anxiety felt by young people in relation to post 16 transition and this would be heightened this year as a result of the pandemic. Would welcome investment in schools, as many staff will continue to work with young people after 16 to ensure a successful transition and a small amount of funding would help support this to provide continuity for young people.

AH reported that the whole issue of transition was raised at Standards Board and did need further work, especially in light of the pandemic.

Would there be a target to measure Bristol's performance against its previous performance as well as comparing with statistical neighbours?

AH acknowledged that this was a good point and it was important to see if Bristol was on track as it could take longer to be comparable with neighbours.

Improvement Priority 5: Parents and carers have a positive experience of the SEND system in Bristol and their confidence in the system improves

AH reported that this priority was focused on the Local Offer and the co-production of the Local Offer website to ensure information was timely and added value.

As this is one off funding, how can we be confident that once this work on the Local Offer has started it will be embedded in the work of the Council?

AH confirmed that this was a frontloaded project piece which would allow those in post to manage the system after the initial project had been completed.

Concern that the priorities for improvement will take longer than the one off funding?

DM confirmed that this was the case and there would need to be a full scale review driven by the evidence base to identify funding going forward.

Does the authority currently measure findings from quality assurance activity?

AH confirmed that this was a new measure and there were some areas where BCC would not have previous data to measure against.

Support the package, but recognise that there is an element of risk involved due to the lack of sustainable funding.

AH confirmed that the risk had been mitigated by the rigorous governance from DfE QCC and BCC.

In summing up, the Chair referred to the recurring themes raised by Forum Members of co-production and who was involved, effectiveness and sustainability and asked AH to address these in the update reports to future Forum meetings.

In considering the recommendations as set out in the report it was:

RESOLVED that Bristol Schools Forum fulfil the transfer of funds based on the additional detail provided within the report.

15. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Outturn for 19/20

The Chair asked that any questions on the report be forwarded to the Clerk and a written response would be provided.

16. Place Planning and the Growth Fund

The Chair asked that any questions on the report be forwarded to the Clerk and a written response would be provided.

The meeting closed at 4.50pm.