

Bristol Schools Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 29th March, 2022
at 5.00 pm at Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present:

Melanie Bunce	Maintained Primary Headteacher Rep, St Barnabas
Simon Eakins	Academy Primary Head Rep, Cathedral Primary
Simon Holmes	Nursery Head Rep, St Phillips Marsh Nursery
Jeff Sutton	Trade Union non-teaching Rep, GMB
Sarah Lovell (Chair)	Academy Secondary Headteacher Rep, Bristol Brunel Academy
Kate Matheson	Maintained Primary Governor Rep, St Barnabas
Richard Penska	PRU Governor Rep, Northstar
Chris Pring	Maintained Primary Headteacher Rep, Cabot Primary
Emma Richards	Maintained Special School Headteacher Rep, Claremont
Cedric Sanguignol	Maintained Primary Governor Rep, Bishop Road Primary
Cameron Shaw	Academy Secondary Head Rep, Bristol Metropolitan
Rebecca Watkin	Academy Special School Headteacher Rep, LearnMAT
Stephanie Williams	Academy Primary Head Rep, Bannerman Road Community Academy

In attendance from Bristol City Council:

Councillor Asher Craig	Cabinet Member for Children Services, Education and Equalities
Ian Bell (IB)	Place Planning Manager
Paul Dury (PD)	Risk and Insurance Officer
Corrina Haskins (CH)	Clerk to Schools Forum
Alison Hurley (AH)	Director of Education and Skills
Angel Lai (AL)	Finance Manager (Children's and Education)
Travis Young (TY)	Principal Accountant

	Action
1. Welcome	
SL welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2. Election of Vice-Chair	
The Clerk confirmed that one nomination for the role of Vice Chair had been received, Simon Eakins. As there were no other nominations, this was put to the vote and it was; AGREED that Simon Eakins be elected Vice Chair of Bristol Schools Forum for a 2 year period.	
3. Forum Standing Business	
a. Apologies for absence Apologies for absence were received from: Trish Dodds - Academy Primary Governor Rep, Fishponds Academy Tracy Jones - Academy Primary Headteacher Rep, Merchants Academy Aileen Morrison - Pupil Referral Unit Rep, St Matthias Park	

Mick O’Neill Duff - Primary Academy Governor Rep
 David Otlet - Recognised Teaching Professional Association (NEU)
 Liz Townend - Diocese of Bristol Board of Education

b. Quorate

The Clerk confirmed the meeting was quorate.

c. Resignations

The Clerk reported that Rob Davies, Nursery Governor Representative had resigned and the role had been advertised resulting in 2 expressions of interest and as a result, an election would be held within the nursery sector.

d. Appointment of New Members

Forum noted the appointment of the following new members:

Mick O’Neill Duff, Primary Academy Governor Rep
 Richard Penska, PRU Governor Rep, Northstar

e. Notification of Vacancies

The following vacancies were noted:

2 Secondary Academy Governor Representatives
 1 Clifton Diocese Representative

f. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

It was noted that this would be the last meeting of the Clerk, Corrina Haskins and that Sam Wilcock would be taking on the role of clerk to Bristol Schools Forum for future meetings.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED - that the minutes be confirmed as a correct record

Matters Arising

Free School Meals Eligibility Checks

AH confirmed Trading with Schools had responded to the query raised at the last meeting. In relation to the central system, it wasn’t possible to run regular checks due to data protection safeguarding issues, but schools have the functionality to run checks on a regular basis.

Written Statement of Action RAG Rating

Schools Forum members noted that this had been circulated after the previous meeting.

Education Transformation Programme

AH updated that in relation to phase 3 of programme it hadn’t been possible to circulate the information as intended at the last meeting as more due diligence work was being carried out in relation to procurement regulations and responding to the new publications released this week, but that information would be available to schools after Easter with a view to a start in September.

TU Facility time

AH responded that she had advised CP on the process for making a claim he had provided useful feedback on the process and the need for an information sheet. She undertook to feed this back at the next meeting of Trade Unions.

Insurance

The Council's Risk and Insurance Officer reported back on the issue of de-delegated insurance:

1. Following a tender exercise, it was found that the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) was the best value and so the Council would be arranging insurance for maintained schools via this scheme.
2. As the scheme did not cover all aspects, separate arrangements would be made for statutory inspections for lifts and motor insurance.

In response to questioning about the savings from using the RPA scheme, Forum Members were informed that there were other expenses such as the aspects that were not covered by the RPA scheme and the cost of processing legacy claims, but that a breakdown of costs would be provided for a future meeting.

AL/IB

5. Presentation by Director of Education and Skills

As requested at previous meetings and the High Needs Task and Finish Group, AH gave a presentation which gave an overview of the number of different projects and programmes with timelines for implementation:

1. Delivering SEND Improvement / Financial Sustainability - outlining the business as usual and statutory work as well as the temporary projects.
2. High Needs Block Recovery Plan – listing the identified actions against current and proposed mitigations. Proposed mitigations included review of all live non-statutory top up plans; targeted SEND reviews for individual schools; contracting for Social, Emotional and Mental Health; special school and post-16 funding reviews.
3. Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND Support Programme – outlining the arrangements for BCC to be part of a DfE programme providing dedicated support and funding to help a further 55 local authorities (LAs) with substantial, but less severe, deficit issues than those LAs identified for Safety Valve intervention.
4. Education Transformation Programme - including a breakdown of the different elements of the programme and a timeline for implementation.

AH undertook to circulate a copy of the slide presentation to members of Schools Forum.

AH

In response to questioning, AH confirmed:

1. It was not known how much funding the Delivering Better Value in SEND Support programme would generate, a costed action plan would be worked up and submitted to the DfE.
2. There was still a chance that BCC could be identified for Safety Valve intervention if the deficit continued to increase, and this would be compulsory whereas the Support Programme was optional.
3. DfE had confirmed that there was a number of different criteria which made a LA a target for Safety Valve intervention including size of deficit and ability to manage it.
4. It was noted that South Gloucestershire Council had been identified for the Safety

<p>Valve intervention and it would be useful to monitor their position going forward.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. It was hoped that BCC would be 1 of the 20 LAs in the first tranche of the programme, but would carry on with the DSG Management Plan mitigations. 6. In relation to the SEND Green Paper published on 29 March 2022 and the impact of that on the various programmes, there was a need to understand the timeframes involved and cross reference the contents of the paper against current programmes. If there was a delay in the Green Paper becoming a White Paper, it was likely that the current programmes would continue in the interim. 	
<p>6. DSG Management Plan Update</p>	
<p>AL introduced the report and drew attention to 2 major changes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ESFA 2022/23 budget allocation in December and an extra £2.69m had been allocated to LAs for the High Needs block. 2. Previously a £89.1m deficit was forecast for 2025/26 and this was now £85.5m which was a 3.6m deficit reduction. 3. There was an in-year deficit of £12.3m. 4. The mitigation targets had been removed to allow more time for these to be worked through. <p>SH gave the following feedback on behalf of the Early Years Task and Finish Group:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nurseries were continuing to face financial pressures and current issues included the rise in energy costs and the number of staff absences due to Covid. 2. There was ongoing work on the sustainability of maintained nurseries which had resulted in closer collaboration between different schools. 3. More work was required in terms of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. funding for 2-year-olds b. the role of nurseries in SEND c. aligning with other services such as Health and Social Care d. use of school sites for family hubs. 4. The Early Years Task and Finish Group had welcomed the opportunity to meet as a sub-group and would like to continue to do so beyond the terms of reference of the group to focus on the Early Years sector. <p>AH confirmed that the High Needs Task and Finish Group had also met in advance of Schools forum and its feedback had informed her presentation in terms of setting out the various projects and aligning the mitigations.</p>	
<p>7. Place Planning</p>	
<p>IB, Place Planning Manager, gave a presentation on the latest place planning information and drew attention to the following points:</p> <p>September 2022 Y7</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5,008 on-time applications had been received (4,961 in 2021) 2. There was a similar pattern of applications to previous years, but less popular schools had an increase in applications and there was a slight decrease in applications to the most popular schools. 3. There continued to be a lack of secondary provision in Bristol, and this had been managed by temporary solutions such as planned additional places and over- 	

allocation as well as capital investment to enable schools to continue to take over Published Admission Number (PAN).

4. 4,549 offers were made for Bristol schools, 77% first preference and 93% any preference, which was similar to the previous year.
5. The vast majority of those who were not offered a preference were offered another school in the same area.
6. No places were left empty, and places were over-allocated as some offered places would drop out.
7. There would also be some movement as a result of successful school appeals.
8. The lack of available places was a problem in terms of late applications; in-year movers; pressure on Fair Access and no places for emergency situations such as Afghanistan and Ukraine refugees.

Secondary beyond 2022

1. There continued to be uncertainty on the opening of Temple Quarter Free School and the outcome of the planning inquiry was due in early May. It may be possible to open on a temporary site in 2023 but this was challenging, and further delays would mean 2024 at earliest.
2. South Free School was due to open in September 2023 on a temporary site.
3. Year 7 intake was due to peak in 2024/25, and then there would be a slow reduction.

Primary

1. There continued to be a fall in demand for the foreseeable future.
2. There had been a closure of St Pius X and reorganisation of C of E Provision in city centre (closure of St George and St Michael's and opening Willow Park).
3. There was a gradual reduction of places by lowering the PAN in other schools.
4. There were fewer oversubscribed schools each year.
5. BCC was working with schools to manage numbers but could not refuse preference applications if under PAN.
6. Primary offers were due to be made on 19 April.

Specialist Provision

1. As part of phase 1 projects, 142 specialist provision places had been made available between now and September 2023.
2. In terms of phase 2, 20 places had been identified.
3. A further 83 places had been made available through capital projects and 37 as a result of increased capacity.
4. The total number of places was 282.

IB undertook to circulate a copy of the slide presentation to members of Schools Forum.

IB

AH thanked schools for working with BCC to increase specialist provision.

In response to questions raised by Forum Members, AH/IB confirmed:

1. As a city of sanctuary, it was important for Bristol to be able to offer school places for refugee families and BCC was working with schools to try and identify temporary solutions.
2. In terms of support for the school appeals process, if schools bought into the LA service, they would get support from officers in presenting their case and stressing to panels the pressure put on schools by admitting additional students. Panels

<p>usually accepted the case of the schools but some of the individual cases for families wanting a particular school were so strong that their appeals were upheld.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. BCC was supporting primary schools by talking to schools about officially reducing PANs; looking at alternative uses within the community to avoid school closures and protect and stabilise provision. 4. Whether the new Temple Quarter schools should remain as an 8-form entry in view of the other places that had opened up was a question for the DfE to determine. 	
<p>8. DSG Budget Monitor P10</p>	
<p>AL gave an update on the DSG Budget Monitor as at the end of January as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This took into account the ESFA 2021/22 allocation updates and so Early Years funding was reduced due to lower participation, mainly for 3-4 year olds, but this had nil effect in terms of the deficit position and this had been the only change since P8 position. 2. The in-year deficit was £16.8m and added to the previous year this meant an overall deficit of £26.8. <p>In response to questioning, AL confirmed that it was hoped that the end of year position would be as forecast but this information would not be available until May.</p>	
<p>9. Any Other Business</p>	
<p>There were no other items of business.</p>	

The meeting closed at 6.30 pm.