

Attendance

Members of the Schools' Forum

Karen Preston (Chair)	Academies Sector Representative
Susan Lacey (Vice Chair)	Nursery Sector Head Teacher Representative
Darryl Asbury	Academies Sector Representative
Rachael Brown (v)	Pupil Referral Unit Headteacher Representative
Louisa Craig (v)	Academies Sector Representative
Samantha Kemp-Marshall	PVI Early Years Representative
Zoe Rollinson (v)	Primary Sector Headteacher Representative
Graham Tate (v)	Academies Sector Representative
Lucia Jayne Turner (v)	Nursery Sector Governor Representative
Samantha Walker	Primary Sector Headteacher Representative
Lisa-Anne Westwood (v)	Academies Sector Representative
Sarah Whittington	Special School Sector Head Teacher Representative
Phil Williams (v)	Academies Sector Representative

Observer Status

Bill Hague	Head of School Business and Support Services
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In Attendance

James Barlow	Finance Business Partner
Shelley Humphries	Democratic Services Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

1 **Welcome and Introductions**

2 **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

Members of Schools' Forum were invited to elect a new Chair and Vice Chair of Schools' Forum for academic year 2022 - 2023.

Following nominations and elections, it was agreed that Karen Preston and Susan Lacey be elected as Chair and Vice Chair respectively.

All members of Schools' Forum present agreed to these elections and thanks were recorded for Stephen Smith's support as the previous Vice Chair over the years.

Resolved:

1. That Karen Preston be appointed as Chair of Schools' Forum for academic year 2022 - 2023.
2. That Susan Lacey be appointed as Vice-Chair of Schools' Forum for academic year 2022 - 2023.

3 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Schools' Forum members Vivienne Bunce, Ben Davis, Gary Gentle, Lisa Thompson and Stephen Smith.

4 **Declaration of Interest or Confidentiality**

There were no declarations of interest or confidentiality.

5 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting - 7 July 2022**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of 7 July 2022 be approved as a correct record.

6 **Matters Arising**

In respect of maintained nursery supplement funding carry forward described at minute 5, it was acknowledged that these had been received with thanks. It was requested that, in the spirit of transparency, further detail be communicated around whether all allocations had now been paid, how much had been identified and how decisions around allocations had been reached. It was agreed that finance colleagues would explore this then release a communication; a report would then be provided at the next meeting to be formally noted.

In respect of the resolution of minute 7, for clarity, it was noted that the report on Future Resourcing for Wolverhampton Exploitation and Missing Hub was relevant to knife crime as this was included in the scope of the Exploitation Hub.

Resolved:

That a communication be released detailing the allocations of the carry forward pertaining to maintained nursery supplement funding and methodology used followed by a report at the next meeting of Schools' Forum.

7 **Schools' Forum Membership 2022 - 2023 Update**

Bill Hague, Head of School Business and Support Services presented the Schools' Forum Membership 2022 - 2023 Update.

It was acknowledged that members whose terms were coming to an end had been contacted and that steps were being taken to fill all other remaining vacancies.

Vivienne Bunce was named as the new Special School Governor Representative and was welcomed to the membership.

Resolved:

That the Schools' Forum Membership 2022 - 2023 Update be received.

8 **Schools' Forum Forward Plan 2022 - 2023**

Bill Hague, Head of School Business and Support Services presented the Schools' Forum Forward Plan 2022 – 2023 and highlighted future agenda items.

It was noted that the Update on the Impact of the Education MASH Officer report had been deferred to the December meeting pending further detail around funding.

Schools' Forum members were invited to suggest any items they wished to receive at future meetings by contacting either Bill Hague, Head of School Business and Support Services or Shelley Humphries, Democratic Services Officer.

Resolved:

That the Schools' Forum Forward Plan 2022 – 2023 be noted.

9 **Draft Schools' Forum Constitution 2022**

Bill Hague, Head of School Business and Support Services presented the Draft Schools' Forum Constitution 2022 for approval and it was reported that the document had undergone its annual review.

It was noted that there were no changes to the makeup of Schools' Forum since last year, although in anticipation of some academisations, it was thought this would change by next year.

A query was raised around Schools' Forum meeting attendance monitoring and it was agreed that a record would be kept of member attendance going forward. No further amendments were requested to the Constitution. A request was made to consider including some Governor members within the academy sector.

Resolved:

1. That Members of Schools' Forum note that there are no changes required to the makeup of Schools' Forum.
2. That Members of Schools' Forum agree to adopt Schools' Forum Constitution 2022.
3. That a record of Schools' Forum members' attendance be kept and reviewed.

10 **Devolved Formula Capital and School Budget Update**

James Barlow, Finance Business Partner presented the Devolved Formula Capital and School Budget Update report and highlighted salient points. The report detailed Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) balances held at 31 August 2022 within the Local Authority's maintained schools as well as the monitoring processes followed in reporting balances.

It was highlighted that the number of schools showing surplus balances for longer than three years was lower than a few years ago, which was positive.

It was confirmed that an email had been sent to all schools with surplus balances exceeding three years requesting plans for the use of the money by return. Taking

into account the current cost of living crisis, there had already been a number of discussions with schools around utility costs absorbing much of the surplus, which would work to the advantage of many schools. It was acknowledged, however that rising energy costs left schools with no surplus in a vulnerable position therefore the Council were engaged in conversation with energy providers around the impact for those schools using Council tariffs. Drop-in sessions had also been planned to offer advice and guidance to schools.

Resolved:

1. That the DFC balances held in schools at 31 August 2022 be noted.
2. That the update on school budget balances be noted.

11

Early Years Underspend Update

Bill Hague, Head of School Business and Support Services provided a verbal update on the allocation of Early Years Underspend.

It was noted that consultation with schools would be key to informing how to put the funds to the best use therefore it was proposed that a task and finish sub-group be established, comprising of both Council officers and school representatives, to explore options and finalise a set of proposals to report back to Schools' Forum.

This suggestion was met with approval and several members expressed a wish to contribute. It was acknowledged that, due to the impact of COVID, a cohort of young children had been left behind in some areas due to spending crucial early years isolated in lockdown without the benefit of classroom learning and peer group interaction. A means could be devised of using the funds to support this cohort.

It was agreed that a Terms of Reference for the sub-group would be drafted and submitted to Schools' Forum for approval.

Resolved:

1. That an Early Years Underspend Sub-group reporting to Schools' Forum be established to explore options and finalise a set of proposals for the use of the Early Years Underspend.
2. That a Terms of Reference document for an Early Years Underspend Sub-group would be drafted and submitted to Schools' Forum for approval.

12

Future Resourcing for Wolverhampton Exploitation and Missing Hub

Rachel King, Head of Specialist Support presented the Future Resourcing for Wolverhampton Exploitation and Missing Hub report and highlighted salient points. The report proposed a dedicated education post within the Partnership Exploitation and Missing Hub to be established and initially funded for 12 months out of the centrally retained Dedicated Schools' Grant. A report would then be presented to Schools' Forum in June 2023 to evidence the impact of the post and agree longer term funding.

It was acknowledged that this resource would establish a strong communication link between schools and the Exploitation Hub to help identify and support vulnerable children, such as those at risk of exclusion.

It was confirmed that, to ensure support was in place as soon as possible, the service would seek to appoint someone in the very near future meaning the funding would cross two financial years although it would be explored how to sustainably provide continuity.

Resolved:

1. That members of Schools' Forum agree for a dedicated education post to be established within the Partnership Exploitation and Missing Hub and for this to be funded for 12 months from the centrally retained Dedicated Schools' Grant at a cost of £45,500.
2. That members of Schools' Forum agree to receive an update report detailing the impact of the dedicated post in June 2023 in order to inform longer term funding for the post.

13 **Update on High Needs Block**

James Barlow, Finance Business Partner presented the High Needs Block Update September 2022 report and highlighted salient points. It was reported that in early 2022, the Government had announced £1.8 million of funding in addition to the previously announced budget allocations of December 2021.

It was also noted that the forecast overspend of the High Needs Block in Wolverhampton had been £1.7 million, however the actual overspend figure recorded was £380,000. Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) guidance suggested that, where appropriate, this additional funding could be used to uplift matrix values to meet increased costs.

At the previous meeting of Schools Forum (7 July 2022) it had been proposed by the High Needs Sub-Group to approve the option to uplift the matrix banding on an individual level in schools by 3.5 %. This had been agreed, subject to the Update on High Needs Block report being formally submitted in September 2022.

It was noted that the uplift was most welcome due to the financial pressures faced to ensure that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) received the most appropriate support and attended the setting that was right for their needs. It was acknowledged as an opportunity to make a difference.

Resolved:

That Schools' Forum members note that the High Needs Block matrix values will increase by from those previously published.

14 **High Needs Sub-Group Update**

In the capacity of Chair of the High Needs Sub-Group, Sarah Whittington, provided a verbal update on work undertaken by the Sub-Group.

It was reported that Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) records would be transferring over to the Capita system. It was noted that the annual review process was creating time pressures due to increased paperwork, however individual schools were utilising their own methods and working through as best they could.

It was noted that a High Needs Place Commissioning Capacity Group had been established, although there was nothing further to report from this group as yet.

Thanks and appreciation were recorded on behalf of Schools' Forum to the members of the High Needs Subgroup for their valuable work.

Resolved:

That the High Needs Sub-Group Update be received.

15 **Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

16 **Date and format of the next meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of Schools' Forum would take place on 1 December 2022 from 4.00 pm and that it would be held in hybrid format.

Members were however encouraged to attend in person and only attend virtually if this was not possible, as it was felt face to face engagement afforded more open discussion.

Resolved:

That the next meeting of Schools' Forum take place on 1 December 2022 from 4.00 pm and would be held in a hybrid format with the request that members attend in person where possible.

The Chair thanked all for attending and closed the meeting at 5:14 pm.