

Attendance

Members of the Schools' Forum

Karen Preston (Chair)	Academies Sector Representative
Susan Lacey (Vice Chair)	Nursery Sector Headteacher Representative
Darryl Asbury	Academies Sector Representative
Kirsty Banks	Academies Sector Representative
Stephen Blower	Secondary Sector Representative
Ben Davis	Academies Sector Representative
Samantha Kemp-Marshall	Non-School Member PVI Early Years Representative
Carroll McNally	Non-School Member Diocesan Schools Representative
Lisa Thompson	Non-School Member Diocesan Schools Representative
Lindsay Watson	Pupil Referral Unit Sector Substitute
Sarah Whittington	Special School Sector Head Teacher Representative
Phil Williams	Academies Sector Representative

Observer Status

Bill Hague	Head of School Business and Support
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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 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Schools' Forum members Zoe Rollinson, Louisa Craig, Bhaksho Raj, Graham Tate and Stephen Smith.

Apologies were also received from Emma Bennett and Helen Bakewell.

3 **Declaration of Interest or Confidentiality**

There were no declarations of interest or confidentiality.

4 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting - 19 January 2023**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of 19 January 2023 be approved as a correct record.

5 **Matters Arising**

In terms of the Early Years Sub-Group, it was noted that there had not been any update since last month's meeting however this was in progress and communications would go out to the membership shortly.

Resolved:

That the Early Years Sub-Group Update be noted.

6 **Schools' Forum Membership and Attendance Update**

Bill Hague, Head of School Business and Support Services provided a verbal update on Schools' Forum membership and attendance.

It was noted that Lisa Anne Westwood would be stepping down from Schools' Forum and the Chair took the opportunity to express thanks for Lisa's contributions to Forum.

It was reported that processes for filling vacancies for each of the different sectors were currently being reviewed. Suggestions included vacancy announcements in headteacher and governor bulletins, revising mailing lists and reviewing the current arrangements with ConnectEd to reach a wider audience across the City.

It was confirmed that non-attendance to Schools' Forum meetings without apologies or a substitute for three consecutive meetings would result in a review of membership.

Resolved:

1. That methods for filling vacancies for Schools' Forum membership be reviewed.
2. That the Schools' Forum Membership and Attendance Update be received.

7 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 agreed that an item around the Local Authority approach to forecasting special educational needs and disability (SEND) provision would be added to the forward plan for the next meeting.

Schools' Forum members were invited to suggest any other 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:

1. That the Schools' Forum Forward Plan 2022 – 2023 be noted.
2. That an item around the Local Authority approach to forecasting special educational needs and disability provision would be added to the forward plan for the next meeting.

8 Dedicated Schools Grant - High Needs Block 2023-2024

James Barlow, Finance Business Partner presented the Dedicated Schools Grant - High Needs Block 2023-2024 report and highlighted key changes from last year's report. Particular attention was drawn to the update on the paused Matrix Review at paragraph 4.2 and changes outlined in paragraph 5.1.

The report provided an update on the High Needs block (HNB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2023-2024 and sought approval to allocate the funding in accordance with the guidance issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Resolved:

1. That members of Schools' Forum note the anticipated settlement for 2023-2024.
2. That the allocation of High Needs expenditure for 2023-2024 (Appendix 1) be approved.
3. That the matrix bands for 2023-2024 (Appendix 2) be noted.
4. That members of Schools' Forum approve a total per place contribution for maintained Pupil Referral Units and Special Schools to support the delivery of Local Authority retained education functions previously funded by Education Services Grant and the school improvement contribution.

9 Dedicated Schools Grant - Schools Block Funding 2023- 2024

James Barlow, Finance Business Partner presented the Dedicated Schools Grant - Schools Block Funding 2023- 2024 report and highlighted salient points.

The report provided an update on the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2023-2024, following Forum agreement to apply the national funding formula, in accordance with the guidance issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Resolved:

That the individual schools' budget settlement for 2023-2024 be noted.

- 10 **Dedicated Schools Grant - Central School Services Block 2023-2024**
James Barlow, Finance Business Partner presented the Dedicated Schools Grant - Central School Services Block 2023-2024 and highlighted salient points.
- The report provided an update on the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and seeks approval for a list of items that the Local Authority manages centrally on the behalf of schools and academies.
- Resolved:
That the individual lines of the proposed budget allocation of the Central Schools Services Block for 2023-2024, as shown in the table in 2.0 be agreed.
- 11 **Dedicated Schools Grant - Early Years Block 2023-2024**
James Barlow, Finance Business Partner presented the Dedicated Schools Grant - Early Years Block 2023-2024 report and highlighted salient points. The report provided details of the proposed use of the Early Years funding block of the Dedicated Schools Grant in 2023-2024.
- In response to a query around the 0.15p per hour for the Separate Teachers Pay and Pension Element for School Nurseries in paragraph 2.4, it was clarified that this information was drawn from the Early Years funding rates and step-by-step calculations 2023 to 2024 (link provided within report). It was reported that proposals for distribution methods were being explored internally although not yet finalised; an update would be provided as part of Matters Arising at the summer Schools' Forum meeting.
- A query was raised in respect of the pass-through rate for two-year-old funding as there were concerns around top slicing from the 3–4-year-old funding to subsidise staffing costs. Concerns were acknowledged and although local authorities could not influence this it was noted that, should there be a consultation, this would be raised with government at the first opportunity.
- Due to patterns highlighted in previous years in which the centrally retained service allocations had increased despite a balance in the out-turn, it was queried whether there may be the possibility of some carry-forward. It was also noted that the £118,000 did not agree with the forecast cost to deliver the Early Years' service for 2023 – 2024. It was clarified that the funding had been spent in full in previous years and that the £449,000 referred to the total costs to the Authority and the £118,000 was topped up by the local authority.
- A query was raised around whether the inclusion funding allocations would be sufficient as there had been an overspend in this area last financial year and similar concerns were expressed for the next. It was acknowledged that larger numbers of children with SEND were being identified than previously, therefore the work being undertaken around forecasting numbers of pupils with SEND would be invaluable in anticipating and meeting future demand. It was also requested that Finance officers meet with relevant Forum members outside of Forum prior to producing the out-turn report to discuss.
- Concerns were expressed that the 1% uplift protection applied to the hourly rates may be insufficient and it was debated whether this could be challenged. It was noted that the National Funding Formula allowed local authorities little control over

funding provided by government and how it was distributed, however making representation in response to any future DfE consultations or lobbying MPs were potential options. It was agreed to raise the concern internally with Emma Bennett, Executive Director of Families to establish a course of action and provide an update on the outcome to the Forum.

Resolved:

1. That the proposed use of the Early Years Block grant for 2023-2024 be agreed.
2. That an update on distribution of the Separate Teachers Pay and Pension Element for School Nurseries be provided at the next meeting.
3. That representations be made to government around two-year-old funding at the first opportunity.
4. That Finance officers meet with relevant Schools' Forum members separately prior to producing the out-turn report to discuss.
5. That concerns around Early Years 1% uplift be raised with Emma Bennett, Executive Director of Families to establish a potential course of action with an update provided on the outcome.

12 **Early Years Sub-group Update**

It was noted that this had been covered during Matters Arising.

13 **High Needs Sub-Group Update**

It was noted that this had been covered during Matters Arising.

14 **Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

15 **Date of the next meeting**

Proposed dates were provided for 2023 – 2024:

- 29 June 2023
- 5 October 2023
- 7 December 2023
- 25 January 2024
- 29 February 2024

It was agreed to continue with the hybrid format, however members were encouraged to attend in person.

The Chair closed the meeting at 17:02 pm