

Attendance

Members of the Schools' Forum

Karen Preston (Chair)	Academies Sector Representative
Susan Lacey (Vice Chair)	Nursery Sector Headteacher Representative
Kirsty Banks	Academies Sector Representative
Vivienne Bunce	Special School Sector Governor Representative
Louisa Craig	Academies Sector Representative
Ben Davis	Academies Sector Representative
Carroll McNally	Non-School Member Diocesan Schools Representative
Stephen Smith	Primary Sector Governor Representative
Graham Tate	Academies Sector Representative
Lisa Thompson	Non-School Member Diocesan Schools Representative
Samantha Walker	Primary Sector Headteacher 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
Councillor Christopher Burden	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

In Attendance

James Barlow	Finance Business Partner
Lee Barnes	Finance Officer
Mai Gibbons	Senior Commissioning Officer SEND
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 Lucia Jayne Turner, Lisa Anne Westwood, Gary Gentle and Daryl Asbury.

Apologies were also received from Emma Bennett.

3 **Declaration of Interest or Confidentiality**

There were no declarations of interest or confidentiality.

4 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting - 1 December 2022**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of 1 December 2022 be approved as a correct record.

5 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

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

Bill Hague, Head of School Business and Support provided a verbal update on Schools' Forum Membership and Attendance.

There were no new members to report however it was noted that the Secondary Headteacher position was being formally reviewed and it was hoped to have a permanent member confirmed by the next meeting. Vacancies still existed however work was ongoing to fill these.

Resolved:

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 presented the Schools' Forum Forward Plan 2022 – 2023 and highlighted future agenda items.

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 or Shelley Humphries, Democratic Services Officer.

Resolved:

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

8 **Dedicated Schools Grant and School Funding 2023-2024**

James Barlow, Finance Business Partner presented the Dedicated Schools Grant and School Funding 2023-2024 and summarised key points within the report. The report considered the indicative Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlement for 2023-2024 and the proposed local funding formula for the Schools Block in

Wolverhampton. Attention was drawn to the changes to National Non-Domestic Rates charges to schools for 2023 -2024 outlined at 4.0 of the report.

In response to the information in section 7.0, a request for information was made in terms of how the impact made by the School Improvement Team was monitored to ensure value for money on services received. Bill Hague, Head of School Business and Support Services offered to liaise with Phil Leivers, Head of Service for Educational Excellence and provide an update for the next meeting.

Thanks were extended to James Barlow's team for timely responses to schools in relation to queries on allocation breakdowns.

Resolved:

That members of Schools' Forum:

1. Note the indicative DSG settlement for 2023-2024.
2. Endorse and recommend to Cabinet the proposed local funding formula (which uses the same factors as the National Funding formula).
3. Note the resulting growth fund and budget allocations to schools in Wolverhampton.
4. Agree the proposed rates for de-delegation from maintained schools for 2023-2024.
5. Agree the proposed rates for maintained schools' contribution to Education Functions and School improvement for 2023-2024.
6. Note that Schools' Forum will receive further reports in February 2022 detailing the breakdown of High Needs, Early Years and Central Services Blocks budgets along with a Schools Block report detailing final school budget shares.
7. Note that there will be a change to the way National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) are treated for schools in 2023-2024. The funding for this will no longer be allocated to schools and schools will no longer be required to pay invoices for NNDR. This has a net nil effect on School budgets.
8. Note the results of the consultation on the future of the per pupil charge for School improvement in 2023-2024.
9. That a response be provided to the request for information on School Improvement Team outcomes and how they were monitored.

9

Commissioning of High Needs Places for September 2023

Mai Gibbons, Senior Commissioning Officer for Special Educational Need and / or Disabilities (SEND) presented the Commissioning of High Needs Places for September 2023 report and highlighted key points. The report provided outlined the process and rationale for agreeing the high needs places which are to be commissioned for September 2023.

A concern was raised around the backlog that had been experienced in bringing education, health and care plans (EHCPs) up to date as the requirements outlined within the plans would determine funding. Assurances were offered that the SENSTART team had been fully staffed since September 2022 and the officers were working hard to resolve the issue.

It was also noted that challenges were being experienced across the region in terms of SEND place capacity, therefore regional work was being undertaken to take a proactive approach towards planning. This included exploring the possibility of joint

commissioning between neighbouring authorities and increasing resource bases in mainstream provision across the City. It was acknowledged that ensuring the right provision in the right settings was priority.

Resolved:

That members of Schools' Forum note:

1. The high needs places already agreed and reported to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on the 18 November 2022.
2. The timetable of work underway to complete the consultation on places for September 2023 which is due January 2023.
3. That a further update on established pupil data and progress with the Transformation project will be provided after Easter 2023.

10 **High Needs Sub-Group Update**

In the capacity of Chair of the High Needs Sub-Group, Sarah Whittington reported that no meeting had taken place since the last meeting of Schools' Forum. It was reported that the next meeting would be held on 30 January 2023.

11 **Any Other Business**

Bill Hague, Head of School Business and Support reported that a Terms of Reference had been drafted for the Early Years Sub-group and would be circulated via the Clerk. It was noted that membership was being sought and input would be welcomed from Schools' Forum members, nurseries or schools with nursery provision and wider to help shape and monitor plans for the underspend. Invites for the first meetings would be sent in due course and an update would be provided at the next meeting.

Resolved:

That an update on the Early Years Underspend Sub-group be provided at the next meeting of Schools' Forum.

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

Resolved:

That the next meeting of Schools' Forum take place on 16 February 2023. The format would be hybrid however the Chair encouraged members to attend in person if possible.

The Chair closed the meeting at 4:46 pm.