

Attendance

Members of the Schools' Forum

Barry Bond (Chair)	Special School Sector Governor Representative
Raymond Green	Primary Sector Governor Representative
Susan Lacey	Nursery Sector Head Teacher Representative
Carol McNally	Diocesan Schools Representative
Zoe Rollinson	Primary Sector Representative
Stephen Smith	Primary Sector Governor Representative
Graham Tate	Academies Sector Representative
Arthur Thompson	PRU Sector Head Teacher Representative
Lisa Thompson	Headteacher - St. Andrew's CE Primary School
Matthew Welton	Primary Sector Head Teacher Representative
Sarah Whittington	Special School Sector Head Teacher Representative
Trisha James	Primary Sector Substitute Representative

In Attendance

Councillor Lynne Moran	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
James Barlow	Finance Business Partner
Debra Boniface	Finance Manager
Bill Hague	Head of School Organisation
Steven Hurdley	Finance Officer
Adrian Leach	Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability
Amanda Newbold	Head of School Improvement
Claire Nye	Director of Finance
Rebecca Pearch	Graduate Management Trainee
Meredith Teasdale	Director of Education
Shelley Humphries	Democratic Services Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1** **Welcome and Introductions**
The Democratic Services Officer opened the meeting and there were round table introductions.
- 2** **Apologies**
Apologies were received from Jeremy Parkes, Jon Dovey and Amarjit Cheema.

3 **Declaration of Interest or Confidentiality**

There were no declarations of interest or confidentiality.

9 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting - to be approved**

Before the meeting proceeded, the Forum were advised of member resignation confirmations and invited to elect a new Chair and Vice Chair of Schools' Forum.

Following nominations and elections, it was agreed that Mr Barry Bond and Mr Stephen Smith be elected as Chair and Vice Chair respectively. All Forum members agreed to these elections.

Following the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair, the minutes were agreed as a correct record, subject to an amendment to the wording of Minute 11 in relation to Northern House.

It was agreed that Adrian Leach, Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) present the briefing note on the Update on Clawed Back Balances at this point. The briefing note informed Schools' Forum on the allocation of Arbitration Panel underspends and asked the Forum to support the use of the funding to ensure pupils with special educational needs remained within local provision. He advised the Forum that this money offered the opportunity to complete work this year rather than having to wait for next year.

Resolved:

1. That Barry Bond and Stephen Smith continue as Chair and Vice Chair respectively.
2. That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 5 July 2018, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the amendment of the closing line in Minute 11 to read as '...it was considered an Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) issue rather than a Schools' Forum issue.'
3. That the Forum support the use of the Arbitration Panel underspend monies to ensure pupils with special educational needs remained within local provision.

6 **Forum Constitution and Membership Update**

The Chair presented the revised Schools' Forum Constitution and highlighted the updated membership breakdown figures. He advised that the changes made were based on pupil numbers.

When compared with guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), it was noted that the content of the Constitution showed good practice was already being followed, therefore no further alterations had been made.

There had been an increase in Academy membership and there was a call for nominations being co-ordinated by ConnectEd. It was clarified that academies were able to appoint anyone as a representative as long as they had been nominated by the Academy Sector.

The revised Membership of the Forum was discussed and copies of the current appointments and remaining vacancies were circulated. It was noted that Alberto Otero wished to continue as a member for another term. It was requested that the

revised membership list be emailed to Forum members.

Resolved:

1. That the refreshed Schools' Forum Constitution be noted and endorsed.
2. That a copy of the Schools' Forum Membership be forwarded to Forum members.

7 **Devolved Formula Capital Balances**

Debra Boniface, Finance Manager presented the report on Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) Balances and highlighted key points. The report informed the Forum that each school received an allocation of funding driven by a formula. Information on the balances still held by schools as at August 2018 was contained within the report and the new requirement that schools report on their underspends was explained.

In addition to the information contained within the report, the following points were raised:

- It was highlighted that the DFC monies needed to be spent within a three-year time frame.
- It was noted that secondary schools found it easier to spend the money, spending on ICT programmes and equipment for example, which masked the unspent balances for other schools.
- Any schools with unspent balances of greater than £1,000 due to expire had been contacted to identify what plans were in place to spend this money.
- It was noted that responses showed that there were sufficient plans in place to satisfy the ESFA.
- It was noted that if there was evidence of plans to spend the money, it did not need to be recorded as an underspend.
- It was highlighted for the Forum that only the ESFA were able to claw back any unspent money, not the Local Authority.
- It was noted that this information would be included in Headteacher Induction and Governor Training Packages and the Forum requested that these points be highlighted in a letter to headteachers to ensure greater understanding and clarity.

Resolved:

1. That the DFC balances held in schools at 31 August 2018 be noted.
2. That the new reporting procedures be supported.
3. That information explaining the DFC changes be cascaded to schools in the form of a letter.

8 **Scheme for Financing Schools**

Steven Hurdley, Finance Officer presented the Scheme for Financing Schools report and highlighted key points. It was clarified that any proposed changes to the local scheme for financing schools were subject to a consultation and approval by members of the Forum representing maintained schools and the report summarised the planned consultation and proposed revisions to the scheme.

In addition to the information contained within the report, the following points were highlighted:

- The end date for the consultation referred to in the report was highlighted as 9 November 2018, therefore any comments must reach the Authority by this deadline date.
- A concern was expressed with regard to the early retirement costs and its potential to be a long-term financial commitment. It was noted that this already formed part of the current scheme, however it had been brought to forefront more recently. It was added that there was a central ringfenced amount set aside for this.
- It was noted that the authority bears some cost for pensions top-ups and that the new agreement took effect from 2018 onwards.
- It was suggested that a paper be brought to a future Forum meeting on the implications of pensions for Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

Resolved:

1. That the consultation period be noted.
2. That a follow-up report be delivered to a future Forum meeting following the consultation to consider the publication and implementation of the revised Scheme.
3. That a paper be received at a future Forum meeting on the implications of pensions for Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

9 **National Funding Formula Update**

Debra Boniface, Finance Manager delivered a presentation on the National Funding Formula Update and highlighted the following points:

- The Forum were updated on the changes made since last year and it was noted that the main focus was growth.
- The gains cap had increased by 6.09% per pupil.
- Impact on schools and potential figures formed part of the presentation, however it was stressed that the figures represented were an illustration only and not final figures.
- The central services budgets will impact on pressures faced within the high needs block and work was being carried out with colleagues to deliver an update for a future Schools' Forum meeting.
- Conversations were being entered into with HM Treasury and DfE on schools' costs rather than prevention and lobbying of the Government to keep money in education for the future was taking place.
- The formula was described as transitional and it was stated that there was currently no commitment beyond 2021.
- The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) bands had changed, meaning a block of schools should have gained but didn't.
- It was stated that local authorities applied Section 106 and clawed back from developers to pay for growth and development. It was clarified that Section 106 goes towards capital cost and not revenue monies.

Following the presentation, the recommendations made were for the Schools' Forum to:

- Agree to consult with all schools.
- Agree to introduce National Funding Formula Rates from 2019-2020.
- Agree to move 0.5% from Schools Block to High Needs Block.

Resolved:

1. That the Forum agree to consult with all schools on the use of the Funding Formula.
2. That results of the consultation be brought to the Forum at the December meeting.
3. That the National Funding Formula Rates be introduced from 2019-2020 following the consultation.
4. That the 0.5% be moved from the schools' block to the high needs block.
5. That an update on pressures faced within the high needs block be added as a future agenda item.
6. That an impact on growth in Schools' Fund be added as a future agenda item.

10 **Update on School Improvement Projects**

Amanda Newbold, Head of School Improvement presented the briefing note and highlighted key points. In addition to information contained in the briefing note, it was added that:

- Positive outcomes had resulted from all projects.
- Outreach Engagement profiling was currently under pilot. Employees were being trained to roll this out to mainstream schools.

Resolved:

That the briefing note be received.

11 **Update on Clawed Back Finances**

It was agreed that this item had been had already been covered during agenda item 4.

12 **High Needs Funding Sub-Group Update**

Adrian Leach, Head of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provided the Forum with a verbal update on High Needs Funding and highlighting key areas:

- There had been a meeting of the High Needs Sub-group on 13 September 2018.
- It was noted that a better understanding was being developed of how high need were funded.
- Work on budget codes was being carried out for Schools' Forum and a review of the funding matrix for Educational Health Care Plans and Outreach was underway. Top-up funding was currently sitting in the same budget code for autistic children in mainstream schools. Outreach provision was being taken into mainstream schools to prevent exclusion.
- Robert Hart, Principal Educational Psychologist had been working with special schools to gain a better understanding of what the funding was spent on.
- Tom Knott, SEND Commissioning Officer was responsible for working on commissioning 2019 - 2020 places and would be outlining information in a report for a future meeting.

- Work had been carried out on updating and reviewing models used in other local authorities.
- It was reported that a Matrix review was being pulled together and anticipated to be complete by the end of November 2018.

Resolved:

That the update be noted.

13

Any Other Business

It was requested that the meeting be returned to a Committee Room on the third floor and that microphones be used.

Resolved:

That Democratic Services return the meeting to a Committee Room on the third floor and supply microphones at the next available opportunity.

The Chair thanked all for coming and closed the meeting at 17:20.