

Attendance

Members of the Schools' Forum

Karen Preston (Chair)	Academies Sector Representative
Daryl Asbury	Academies Sector Representative
Rachael Brown	Pupil Referral Unit Headteacher Representative
Linda Campbell	Nursery Sector Governors Substitute
Louisa Craig	Academies Sector Representative
Susan Lacey	Nursery Sector Head Teacher Representative
Bhaksho Raj	Academies Sector Representative
Andrea Stephens	Secondary Sector Headteacher Substitute
Lisa-Anne Westwood	Academies Sector Representative
Sarah Whittington	Special School Sector Head Teacher Representative
Phil Williams	Academies Sector Representative

Observer Status

Bill Hague	Head of School Business and Support Services
Councillor Dr Michael Hardacre	Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Work

In Attendance

James Barlow	Finance Business Partner
Shelley Humphries	Democratic Services Officer
David Kirby	Service Manager - School Organisation and Support
Terry Shaw	Finance Manager
John Wood	Lead Commissioner for SEND

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

1 Welcome and Introductions

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from members Stephen Smith, Ben Davis, Gary Gentle and Lucia Jayne Turner.

Apologies were also received from Emma Bennett.

3 **Declaration of Interest or Confidentiality**

There were not declarations of interest or confidentiality.

4 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting - 30 September 2021**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of 3 September 2021 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 2021- 2022 Update**

Bill Hague, Head of School Business and Support Services presented the Schools' Forum Membership 2021- 2022 Update and highlighted that the membership had remained stable although a few vacancies remained. It was noted that extra effort was going into filling the special school governor vacancies and a PRU substitute would need to be identified however, work was ongoing to fill these.

Resolved:

That the Schools' Forum Membership 2021- 2022 Update be received.

7 **Schools' Forum Forward Plan 2021 - 2022**

Bill Hague, Head of School Business and Support Services presented the Schools' Forum Forward Plan 2021 – 2022 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 Services or Shelley Humphries, Democratic Services Officer.

Resolved:

That the Schools' Forum Forward Plan 2020 – 2021 be noted.

8 **Growth Fund Update**

Dave Kirby, Service Manager School Organisation and Support presented the Growth Fund Update report and highlighted salient points. The report provided an update on the deployment of the 2020–2021 Financial Year Growth Fund payment and outlines estimated Growth Fund allocations in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Financial Year. It was outlined what the fund could be utilised for and provided example for the deployment process.

Resolved:

1. That the 2020 - 2021 Growth Fund allocations be noted.
2. That the estimated 2021 - 2022 Growth Fund allocations be noted.
3. That the potential 2022 - 2023 Growth Fund allocation be noted.
4. That the anticipated demand for both the Primary and Secondary estates and the need for future Growth Funds to support both phases be noted.

9 **2022-2023 National Funding Formula Provisional Allocations and Authority Proforma Tool**

Terry Shaw, Finance Manager presented the 2022-2023 National Funding Formula Provisional Allocations and Authority Proforma Tool report and highlighted key points. The report outlined the National Funding Formula Provisional Allocations for the Schools Block, the High Needs Block and the Central Schools and Services Block for the 2022-2023 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) which had been published by the Department for Education (DfE) in July 2021.

It was noted that the Early Years Block Provisional Allocation was expected to be published by the Department for Education in early December 2021 and a report would be received by Schools' Forum in February 2022 detailing the proposed budget for approval.

The report provided Schools' Forum with indicative allocations for Schools Block, High Needs Block and Central Schools and Services Block (CSSB) as well as setting out the process for setting budgets funded by the DSG in 2022-2023.

An update on the growth fund outlined that the estimated required budget for 2022 – 2023 was £2.4 million and that the Council would be advised of the actual allocation in December 2021. This would be brought before Schools' Forum for discussion in January 2022.

A query was raised around deprivation rates for maintained nurseries in preparation for budget setting over the Christmas period. It was confirmed that a response would be sent directly to the representative making the enquiry.

Resolved:

1. That the indicative allocations and the process for setting budgets funded by the DSG in 2022-2023.
2. That a report outlining the Early Years Block Provisional Allocation would be included at the February 2022 Schools' Forum meeting.
3. That an update on the Growth Fund allocation would be included at the January 2022 Schools' Forum meeting.

10

Commissioning of High Needs Places for September 2022

John Wood, Lead Commissioner for SEND presented the Commissioning of High Needs Places for September 2022 report and highlighted key points. The report provided an update on the commissioning of high needs places the academic year 2022-2023 and beyond. It also set out the commissioning process and rationale for agreeing high needs places.

It was reported that there had been a consultation on high needs place numbers with settings across the City and that the feedback from this had been used to inform any changes in commissioned places. It was also explained that the meetings with providers were intended to be the start of an ongoing dialogue between Commissioning, providers and SENSTART and to inform the development of the commissioning plan for high needs and special educational needs and / or disabilities (SEND) places. The report also outlined the refreshed approach to place planning.

The changes agreed with providers were explained, in particular, it was confirmed that the 76 places held by Juniper Training were mainly for other local authorities. This was because Wolverhampton was the host provider and needed to report all places held.

In response to a query around when schools would receive the final place allocations in order to plan ahead, it was confirmed that the work to determine future place requirements was substantial and could not be concluded in time to set budgets for 2022-2023 but that the aim was to confirm the number of places in the next 6-8 weeks and where practicable to make changes to funding. John Wood was also extended an invitation to join the High Needs Subgroup meetings.

The Chair extended thanks for the work undertaken and for the informative report.

Resolved:

1. That Schools' Forum note the high needs places already agreed and reported to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).
2. That Schools' Forum note the work underway to complete the consultation on places for September 2022 which is due January 2022.
3. That a further update be provided once the consultation is complete.
4. That John Wood, Lead Commissioner for SEND be invited to attend High Needs Sub-Group meetings.

11 Early Years - Options for Future Use of Underspend

Resolved:

That the item be deferred to 20 January 2022.

12 High Needs Sub-Group Update

It was reported that no meeting of the High Needs Sub-Group had taken place since the last meeting of Schools' Forum due to changes in personnel. The Chair had been in discussion with officers to confirm new roles and membership of the Sub-Group and an update would likely be available in the new year.

Resolved:

That the High Needs Sub-Group Update be noted.

13 Any Other Business

Councillor Dr Michael Hardacre wished to record his thanks to all school colleagues for their hard work and support during another difficult year.

The Chair echoed this sentiment and requested that a formal communication to be forwarded on behalf of Schools' Forum to all school staff for their efforts.

The Chair wished all a Merry Christmas and closed the meeting at 16:42.

Resolved:

That a formal communication to be forwarded on behalf of Schools' Forum to all school staff in thanks for their hard work.

14 Dates for future meetings

- 20 January 2022
- 17 February 2022