

Attendance

Members of the Schools' Forum

Karen Preston (Chair)	Academies Sector Representative
Daryl Asbury	Academies Sector Representative
Kirsty Banks	Academies Sector Representative
Rachael Brown	Pupil Referral Unit Headteacher Representative
Ian Browne	16 - 19 Education Representative
Ben Davis	Academies Sector Representative
Claire Foster	Nursery Sector Substitute
Gary Gentle	Diocesan Representative Substitute
Zoe Rollinson	Primary Sector Headteacher Representative
Lucia Jayne Turner	Nursery Sector Governor Representative
Samantha Walker	Primary Sector Headteacher Representative
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
Brenda Wile	Deputy Director of Education

In Attendance

James Barlow	Business Finance Partner
Shelley Humphries	Democratic Services Officer
Terry Shaw	Finance Manager

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 then invited to elect a new Chair and Vice Chair of Schools' Forum for academic year 2021 - 2022.

Following nominations and elections, it was agreed that Karen Preston and Stephen Smith be elected as Chair and Vice Chair respectively. All members of Schools' Forum present agreed to these elections.

Resolved:

1. That Karen Preston be appointed as Chair of Schools' Forum for academic year 2021 - 2022.
2. That Stephen Smith be appointed as Vice-Chair of Schools' Forum for academic year 2021 - 2022.

3 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Schools' Forum members Stephen Smith, Susan Lacey, Graham Tate, Lisa Thompson, Louisa Craig.

Claire Foster attended for Susan Lacey and Gary Gentle attended for Lisa Thompson.

Apologies were also received from Emma Bennett and Councillor Dr Michael Hardacre. Brenda Wile attended for Emma Bennett.

4 **Declaration of Interest or Confidentiality**

There were no declarations of interest or confidentiality.

5 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting - 1 July 2021**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of 1 July 2021 be approved as a correct record.

6 **Matters Arising**

It was noted that a misprint had been noted in the report accompanying agenda item 10 in the papers for the 25 February 2021 meeting. The table at paragraph 2.3 of the Early Years Block Funding report showing the hourly rate for Early years pupil premium (first 570 or Universal hours only) was corrected to £0.53 from £0.61.

The error had been communicated as soon as it had been identified and apologies extended. Assurances were offered that rigorous figure checking would be employed moving forward to ensure accurate budget setting for the coming academic year.

Resolved:

That information contained within reports undergo a rigorous figure checking procedure.

7 **Schools' Forum Membership 2021- 2022 Update**

Bill Hague, Head of School Business and Support Services presented the Schools' Forum Membership 2021- 2022 Update. The vacancy within the Academies Sector would need to be offered out to a representative of alternative provision therefore steps were being taken to fill this appropriately. Some governor vacancies still remained therefore efforts would be increased to fill these within the coming months.

Resolved:

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

8 **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.

9 **Draft Schools' Forum Constitution 2021**

Bill Hague, Head of School Business and Support Services presented the Draft Schools' Forum Constitution 2021 for approval.

It was highlighted that the document had undergone its annual review for the 2021 – 2022 academic year and there had been no changes made to the makeup of Schools' Forum. No further amendments were requested.

Resolved:

1. That Schools' Forum note there are no changes required to the makeup of Schools' Forum.
2. That Schools' Forum agree to adopt the constitution document.

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

Terry Shaw, Finance Manager presented the Devolved Formula Capital and School Budget Update and highlighted key points. It was outlined that Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) grant was introduced in 2000-2001 with the aim of allowing schools to target capital funding at their own capital priorities and could be used for purposes such as structural improvements to building, fixtures and fitting and purchasing ICT equipment.

The report detailed the Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) balances held by Wolverhampton schools as at 31 August 2021, balances held within the Local Authority's maintained schools and the work being undertaken on the Scheme for Financing Schools.

It was noted that the Local Authority would continue to scrutinise schools holding surplus capital balances and request plans on how they intended to utilise the grant. In September 2021, letters were sent by the Authority to each maintained school carrying an excess surplus to enquire about how they intended to utilise their surplus balances going forward with a deadline of 24 September 2021 for schools to return the form. Any revised budget plans would be required by 31 October 2021 at the latest.

It was reported that the City of Wolverhampton Scheme for Financing Schools document was last updated in January 2019 and was currently being refreshed in alignment with the new Department for Education recommended model.

The revised Scheme for Financing Schools will be consulted upon and will be presented at a later Schools' Forum meeting for approval.

Resolved:

1. That Schools' Forum note the DFC balances held in schools as at 31 August 2021.
2. That Schools' Forum note the update on school budget balances.
3. That Schools' Forum note work being undertaken on the revision of the Scheme for Financing Schools.

11 **High Needs Sub-Group Update**

In her capacity as Chair of the High Needs Sub-Group, Sarah Whittington provided a verbal update on work undertaken by the group since the last meeting.

It was reported that work was ongoing around the high needs budget and a joint commissioning and sufficiency strategy was being developed to ensure there was enough provision to cover the next three to five years.

It was noted that commissioning meetings for special schools and those with resource based to enable budgeting and planning for next year's recruitment would be undertaken during October 2021.

It was reported that the Matrix Review had been placed on hold due to the sufficiency review taking up much of the team capacity however the Matrix Review was due to be considered at the next High Needs Sub-Committee meeting, let by Steven Larking and Short Breaks Provision. Assurances were offered that local authority officers had met with Brenda Wile and would be a push on the review in the coming months to get this resolved.

In terms of the Penn Hall residential offer, it was reported that a conditions survey was being undertaken to ascertain viability for buildings for residential use was planned and outcomes would be fed back to Schools' Forum through the High Needs Sub-Group in December 2021.

Thanks were offered to the High Needs Sub-Group for the update.

Resolved:

That the High Needs Sub-Group Update be received.

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Any Other Business

It was reported that schools were aware that there had been a new framework and proforma for schools to complete for additionality funding therefore it was requested that information be provided to schools as soon as possible. It was agreed that any information on the new framework would be cascaded by the local authority before April 2022 when schools began to set budgets and recruit any staff.

It was acknowledged that there was an underspend on the Early Years Budget and officers had met over summer to pull together draft proposals for the effective use of this underspend. It was highlighted that the authority sought to establish a small working group to include some Schools' Forum members in order to co-produce and firm up the proposals for submission to full Schools' Forum in December 2021. An email would go out following the meeting to invite members to volunteer.

The Chair closed the meeting at 16:37 pm.

Resolved:

1. That Bill Hague, Head of School Business and Support Services provide details of the new process prior to budget setting in April 2022.
2. That Schools' Forum members be invited to join a working group to reallocate underspend funds.

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Dates for future meetings

- 2 December 2021
- 20 January 2022
- 17 February 2022