# **Birmingham Schools Forum**

# Thursday 9th December 2021

# 2pm – 4pm

# Remote meeting via MS Teams

| **Present:** | James Hill Mainstream Academy Representative **Chair**  Claire Williams Maintained Primary HT representative  Mike White Academies Representative  Nicola Redhead Academies Representative (Alternative Provision)  Sara Reece PVI representative  Catriona Savage PVI representative  Denise Fountain Maintained Special HT  Chris Wilson Special Academies representative  Mike Dunn Maintained Secondary HT  David Room Teacher Associations  Janet Dugmore Support Staff Union representative  Claire Henebury Maintained Nursery HT.  Karen Mackenzie Maintained Primary governor  Pam Garrington Maintained Primary Governor  Makeda Jeffers Maintained Primary Governor  Mashuq Ally Maintained Secondary Governor  Les Lawrence Maintained Secondary Governor,  Gillian Gregory Maintained Special School Governor  Steve Howell PRU Representative City of Birmingham School  Lisa Fraser BCC Assistant Director for Education and Early Years  Sue Harrison Director Education and Skills BCC  Pauline Maddison Assistant Director, Inclusion and SEND  Julie Beattie Finance Manager Education and Skills – Fair Funding BCC.  Lindsey Trivett Head of Early Years and Childcare Service (left the meeting at 3.15pm)  Xiao-Ming Hu BCC Jaswinder Didially Education Infrastructure Head of Service BCC Lucy Dumbleton BCC  Debbie James BEP  Observer: Pauline McKenna Director of Support Services Federation of Cherry Oak School, Victoria School & Victoria College.  In attendance: Janice Moorhouse (clerk) |
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| 1. | **Welcome and apologies for absence.** |  |
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| 1.1 | The Chair welcomed members, officers, Xiao-Ming Hu and Debbie James (BEP representative) to the meeting.  Apologies: apologies for absence received from Maxine Charles Maintained Primary HT representative, Clare Sandland Finance Business Partner BCC and Tim Boyes CEO BEP.  Absent: David McCallin Maintained Nursery School governor |  |
| 2. | **Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 18th November 2021** |  |
| 2.1  2.2  2.3 | Gillian Gregory stated Tim Boyes was at the meeting but not included in the list of those present.  List of those present to be amended to included Tim Boyes.  Item 2.2: ‘Denise Fountain stated she could not agree with the minutes as she could not follow the changes to the minutes as reported’ to be amended to read:  ‘Denise Fountain stated she could not agree with the suggested changes as she could not fully track the changes as they were suggested.’  With the amendment as above, the minutes of 18 November wee agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.  The Chair reported that the audit by CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) was not yet completed/ready to share with Schools Forum. | clerk |
| 3. | **Matters arising from the minutes.** |  |
| 3.1  3.2  3.3 | Minutes of the meeting held on 16th September 2021  The Chair proposed the minutes be agreed as circulated.  **ACTION**: the Chair to work with Clare Sandland in relation to identified actions regarding DLP and High Needs funding.  Academy representation  Mike White queried the situation regarding the election of academy representatives to School Forum and when a letter inviting nominations for election would be received by academies.  **ACTION**: Lisa Fraser to follow up.  A response to the school improvement consultation.  The Chair reported he had responded on behalf of Schools Forum with wording supported by the LA. | Chair  LA/LF |
| 4. | **LA update** |  |
| 4.1  4.2  4.3 | Lisa Fraser reported an additional £12.79m of funding received under the Household Support Grant fund.  Supermarket vouchers to be available for the Christmas school holiday period.  £3.62m to BC trust for hardship payments, families with no recourse to public funds, children in need and adult social care.  A report to be made to Cabinet on the remaining funds.  Pam Garrington stated it was unacceptable that meeting papers were not circulated until 10.30am on the day of the meeting. It was unreasonable to expect members to read and consider the papers in so short a time scale.  On behalf of the LA, Sue Harrison apologised. There were capacity issues which would be resolved.  Sue Harrison stated that, moving forward, she did not want to see that standard of work. She appreciated members patience.  The Chair asked if there was anything that could be done to prevent this situation happening again.  Sue Harrison stated she would be working with Clare Sandland to ensure members would not be in the same position again.  Julie Beattie apologised for the late circulation of papers which had been completed earlier in the week. The papers not being sent to the clerk for circulation was an oversight.  Julie Beattie reported three grade 6 staff to be released to ensure January deadlines were met.  A permanent manger had been appointed.  David Room stated the apologies made were appreciated. |  |
| 5. | **Central schools services block** (verbal update) |  |
| 5.1  5.2  5.3  5.4  5.5  5.6  5.7 | Power point presentation on the following areas shown in screen at the meeting.   * Recent School Funding Announcement 2022-23 * Provisional DSG Funding Announcement 2022-23 * Key Funding changes for Primary & Secondary Schools * Central Service Block * High Needs Funding * Early Years Funding   Provisional DSG Funding Announcement 2022-23  Members noted the content of the table of provisional allocations as published in July ’21.  Julie Beattie reported the final DSG block allocations would be published in December 2021  An increase of 3% to basic entitlement, free school meals at any time in the last 6 years (FSM6), income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI), lower prior attainment (LPA), English as an additional language (EAL) and the lump sum.  Dedicated Schools Grant Update – 2020/21 and 2021/22. Report for Information  Julie Beattie reported that, as at 31st March 2021, the cumulative net DSG Non-schools outturn position was a surplus of £2.484m.  The net DSG Deficit comprised of a gross surplus of £11.6m and a gross deficit of £9m related to the High Needs Block. The total net DSG had improved by almost £11m from 2019/20.  The LA accrued £3.532m for a potential Early Years Block clawback by the ESFA. This was an over  estimation of £0.869m. Outstanding payments for 2020/21 were being investigated and, until  this work was completed, it was not possible to confirm if this money would be available to  spend in 2021/22.  An update to be provided for Schools Forum at the January meeting.  Denise Fountain commented that, while understanding the general detail, gross surplus etc, more information/clarity on the High Needs spend, where the money was going and the impact it was having would be useful.  Julie Beattie reported   * Central schools services funding in 2022-23 would increase by 4% for the ongoing   responsibilities that local authorities continued to have for all schools   * In line with the process introduced for 2020-21 to withdraw funding over time based on   the commitments local authorities entered into before 2013-14, funding for historic commitments would decrease by 20%.  The DFE had announced a provisional 2022-23 CSSB budget of £16,280,521 a decrease of £2,002,983 on the 2021-22 budget of £18,283,504.  Julie Beattie reported the historic commitment related to equal pay was being investigated.  The Chair, referring to the 2020/21 reductions on the CSSB, reported representations were made to the DfE not to include the equal pay claim in the decrease.  Debbie James reported the application to not include the equal pay claim in the decrease was successful and queried the date on which the 10 year commitment started.  Mike White reported School Forum minutes 8th March 2012 recorded an agreement of £10m for 10 years.  **ACTION:** Julie Beattie to confirm the details with the DfE and equal pay colleagues. | LA/JB |
| 6. | **Growth fund and falling pupil proposals** |  |
| 6.1  6.2  6.3  6.4  6.5  6.6  6.7  6.8  6.9  6.10  6.11 | Briefing Note Growth Fund and Falling Pupil fund  Growth Fund: Jaswinder Didially reported Local Authorities were permitted to retain funding to support Primary and Secondary schools (including Academies and Free Schools) with significant in-year growth in pupil numbers from Reception to year 11. Pupil number growth arises from two key sources: increased birth rates and in-year net migration into the City’s schools. None of the Growth Fund was retained or used by the LA for any other purposes  Falling Pupil Fund:  LAs were also able to top slice the DSG to create a small fund to support good schools with falling rolls where local planning data showed that surplus places would be required within the next three financial years.  Jaswinder Didially reported the funding amount and criteria for both Growth and Falling Pupil funds must be agreed by Schools Forum in accordance with criteria set by the Department for Education.  Whilst Schools Forum can alter the criteria to accommodate local needs, changes to any mandatory criterion requires DfE consent.  Update  Jaswinder Didially reported a change in the last two years requirements for additional primary school places due to falling birth rates and significant change in migration trends with fewer pupils arriving in the city and more pupils leaving.  This fall in primary numbers had impacted significantly on the level of Growth funding received from the DfE. Growth was now in the secondary sector where pupil rates are higher. This made it increasingly challenging to meet the year on year commitment to fund additional places.  A number of schools that do not currently qualify for Falling Pupil fund had approached the LA and the DfE to reconsider the eligibility criteria to include schools who are judged less than Good. In previous years the LA was able to estimate the requirements for Growth and Falling Pupil funds using the pupil forecast with a degree of accuracy. The number of current variables has led to the need for a more robust review of the current criterion and funding request.  Proposal: to use October 2021 census data to model requirements for Growth and Falling Pupil fund for the financial year 2022/23.  The modelling would take into consideration the impact of introducing changes to the eligibility criteria for Falling Pupil fund  **Next Steps**  The Schools Forum Technical Funding Group to be reinstated.  To model financial requirements for 2022/23 Growth and Falling Pupil funds in consultation with  the Technical Funding Group.  To present requirements and any proposed changes to the criteria at the next meeting of Schools  Forum in lieu of the APT return and setting out clearly the process to be followed to implement  changes to the criteria.  Pam Garrington queried the situation in respect of schools less than good being able to access the falling pupil fund and asked if this would this be on a year by year basis or would a school be eligible for as long as the school was less than good.  Jaswinder Didially stated on a year by year business case basis reviewed by the LA to ensure all criteria applied.  **ACTION**: a report on the 2020/21 spend to be presented at the next meeting.  David Room thanked Jaswinder Didially for the briefing note and asked for an estimated figure of the funding to support schools.  Jaswinder Didially reported anything up to £100k. This year approximately £½ m. An estimated range of £1-1.7m.  Debbie James, referring to falling roles, queried the rigor of application on criteria of places being required.  Jaswinder Didially stated rigor was applied. The criteria were important regarding places needed in the next three years related to housing growth and panned developments. The process had slowed due to Covid, now two years behind and recalibrating the situation. DfE advice was for the criteria to continue to include the speed/extent of the falling birth rate and net migration.  Mike Dunn commented (in MS Teams chat function) on having seen city-wide locality numbers for primary roll surpluses but not rolled forward into secondary phase when those year groups move to secondary and asked if that data/ analysis been produced and shared?  Lucy Dumbleton confirmed that data had been shared as part of the overall sufficiency strategy. Secondary places were being expanded on a temporary basis. A paper to be released.  Mike Dunn queried the indicative timeline for the release of the paper.  Lucy Dumbleton reported spring term but, as the biggest focus for the new year, as soon as possible.  The Chair, referring to the change of criteria, queried to which round of applications the changes would apply.  Jaswinder Didially stated the LA worked to the October census.  Debbie James emphasised the importance of completing the modelling in order that the Technical Funding Group had the opportunity to work in detail on the numbers.  **ACTION:** Lisa Fraser to work with the finance team to agree a date for a Technical Funding Group meeting. | LA/JD  LA/LF/JB |
| 7. | **Early years rates and budgets** (verbal update) |  |
| 7.1  7.2  7.3  7.4 | Julie Beattie reported the Chancellor’s recent Spending Review 2021 announced increases in funding for the government’s early years entitlements totalling £160 million in 2022 to 2023 for local authorities to increase the hourly rates paid to childcare providers for the government’s early years entitlements and reflects cost pressures, as well as anticipated changes in the number of eligible children   * The National formula for 2 year olds will increase by 21p per hour; * The national formula for 3 and 4 year olds will increase by 17p per hour; * Maintained Nursery School Supplementary funding will increase by 3.5%; * Early Years Pupil Premium will increase by 7p per hour; and * Disability Access Funding (DAF) will increase by £185 per child per year   This is the increase that the Local Authority will receive into the Early Years DSG and is **NOT** the confirmed funding increase that providers/schools will receive  Provisional Early Years block allocations are expected to be issued by the ESFA in December 2021.  Julie Beattie reported there was a requirement to review the annual rates, consult with the sector and report to Schools Forum prior to the new rates being confirmed. This process had commenced with the first Task and Finish group meeting being held on 6th December 2021.  Debbie James asked if a school forum member was involved in the task and finish group.  Lindsey Trivett reported there was an open invitation to all in the sector to join the group. There were 17 representatives on the group, two of which were school forum members.  Lindsey Trivett reported work had started on the rates review group. The principles of maintaining 100% for the 2 year old pass through were discussed. Overall, there was no change to the deprivation rates. The aim was towards the full 5% being retained by the LA.  The group to meet again either before Christmas or in the first week of the new year.  The Chair asked if the deprivation funding was for general use for all pupils.  Lindsey Trivett reported the funding was allocated to support EY pupil premium children and not part of the rate. |  |
| 8. | **High Needs block** update |  |
| 8.1  8.2  8.3 | Julie Beattie reported   * DFE have announced a provisional 2022-23 HNB budget of £234,144,097, an increase of £21,826,286 on the latest 2021-22 budget of £212,317,811 * The local authority will be discussing options for allocating the additional resources with stakeholders shortly   Denise Fountain, referring to the discussions with stakeholders, queried who were the stakeholders and what the process would look like.  Denise Fountain commented that £22m was coming into the High Needs budget and £50m came in in the two previous years with no accountability on spending and/or the impact of spending.  Denise Fountain asked if the 20 speech and language therapists that were promised were in place and, if so, what impact had been made.  The Chair, commenting that this spending had been queried on a number of occasions by Schools Forum asked Julie Beattie to identify where this additional spending was going. Schools Forum members were aware this was not their decision. However, spending did impact on high needs block funding.  Julie Beattie stated the questions had been noted and a reply would be made. | LA/JB |
| 9. | **NFF for schools and high needs** |  |
| 9.1  9.2 | Power point presentation circulated before and shown on screen at the meeting  Julie Beattie reported the government had announced that schools would receive an additional £4.7 billion in core funding in 2024-25, including £1.6 billion in 2022-23 on top of already planned increases from the 2019 Spending Review.  The £1.6 billion included £300m for increases to National Insurance rates  Further details and guidance were expected to be announced in December  Members noted the headline figures of the table detailing the national funding formulae (NFF) provisional allocations for schools, high needs and central school services blocks for 2022-23 as published on 19 July 2021.  Provisional Funding Announcement 2022-23  Julie Beattie reported the provisional allocations were based on October 2020 census data and pupil data sets. Final allocations in December would be based on October 2021 census pupil numbers and data sets and, as such, subject to change  Provisional Early Years block allocations were expected to be issued by the ESFA in December 2021. |  |
| 10. | **Any Other Business** |  |
| 10.1  10.2  10.3  10.4 | The Chair commented on the tight turnaround for Schools Forum business as, historically, a number of statutory decisions were usually made at the December meeting. Receiving papers in December enabled members to report back to the forums they represented.  Mike White reported the decisions made in December were on growth fund, falling role fund, de-delegated budgets (primary and secondary phases) and the central services block and asked when papers would be available for the decisions to be made.  Debbie James stated papers and parts of modelling were normally looked at in November before a technical funding meeting to look at the proposed modelling.  Steve Howells agreed with Debbie James and stated that papers must be got out before the meeting. The statutory role of Forum was negated if papers were not distributed.  Lisa Fraser reported the deadline for the Authority Proforma Tool was 27th January 2022.  Members noted the APT was designed to support local authorities in modelling different options for their funding formulae.  Julie Beattie reiterated her previous statement that the LA was committed to releasing three grade 6 staff to undertake the necessary work to ensure the January deadline was met.  The Chair stated there was a risk that Schools Forum would not be able to meet its statutory duties for reasons beyond its control  Sue Harrison stated that she acknowledged that risk and that, as due diligence, any action for SF related to not meeting statutory duties were to be logged as a risk. |  |
|  | The meeting closed at 3.30pm |  |