



Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council Children's Services Directorate

A

Draft Minutes BARNLSLEY SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE FORUM HELD ON THURSDAY 27th JANUARY 2022

PRESENT

Headteacher Representatives

Dean Buckley, Paul Crook and Nichola Smith

Governor Representative(s)

Molly Beever, Adrian England, Margaret Gostelow, Sandra James, Jackie Milliner and Michael Sanderson

Special and Alternative Education Provision Representative

Josh Greaves

Barnsley MBC Elected Representative

Councillor Sarah Tattersall

Officers

Josh Amahwe	Strategic Finance Manager (Core Services Directorate) Barnsley MBC
Amber Burton	Head of Service (Special Educational Needs) Barnsley MBC
Anna Turner	Interim Joint Head of Education and Partnerships (Barnsley MBC)
Shafeek Khan	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Formal apologies had been submitted by Ms Hammerton, Mr Potter, Ms Sleight and Mrs Wordsworth

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Representatives from the Forum declared their interest in relation to matters being considered as part of Agenda Items 9-13 of today's meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM

The minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 14th December 2021 were approved as a correct record

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

No matters arose through considering the minutes of the previous meeting.

5. REPORTS

Election of a Vice-Chair of the Barnsley Schools Forum

Mr Sanderson invited nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Schools Forum. However, no member was nominated at today's meeting.

RESOLVED

- 1. That consideration be given to the election of a Vice-Chair following the review of the membership of the Schools Forum and the nomination and appointment of members later this year who will serve on the Forum during 2022-25.**

Provisional Education Outcomes in the Borough (2021)

Mrs Turner presented the latest, annual report on the provisional education outcomes in the Borough. The focus of this report were the outcomes at Key Stages 4 and 5 which as members of the Forum were aware had been the result of teacher-based assessments. The dip in performance, notably among vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of children, was noted and Mrs Turner referred to the section of the report concerning the actions which would be taken to improve progress and attainment. This would form part of the forthcoming review and refresh of the Borough's Education Improvement and Inclusion Strategy.

Mr Buckley referred to the actions to be considered in relation to the Attainment 8 score at Key Stage 4 and Mrs Turner replied that this matter would be considered at next week's meeting of secondary school head teachers. The Chair of the Schools Forum thanked Mrs Turner for presenting her report.

RESOLVED

- 2. That the provisional education outcomes during 2021 be noted by the Forum.**

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Performance and Finance Report (Quarter 2: 2021/22)

Ms Burton presented her report on the progress made against the objectives of the Borough's SEND Improvement Plan during this period. Ms Burton particularly referred to the following:

- The number of children and young people receiving SEN support, together with those with an Education and Health Care Plan.(EHCP)
- The number of children and young people receiving SEN support or with an EHCP placed in special school or mainstream school settings
- Level of compliance with statutory timescales concerning assessments and reviews
- Workforce development and quality assurance of practice and provision
- Quality of engagement of children, young people and families in the co-production of services
- The creation of 56 additional SEND school places
- Level of support in supporting young people with SEND to make the transition to adulthood
- The budgetary position and the actions to be taken to manage variations and ensure expenditure is within the agreed resource envelope by 2025, including via the DSG Management Plan

Mrs James commended the Local Authority on demonstrating its commitment towards expanding the number of SEND school places in the Borough, particularly in mainstream provision. The Chair of the Schools Forum thanked Ms Burton for presenting her report

RESOLVED:

3. That the SEND Performance and Finance Quarter 2 report be noted by the Schools Forum

Outcomes of the Local Area Joint Inspection of Services for Children and Young People with SEND

Ms Burton commented on the outcome of the recent joint inspection by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) . Whilst the inspection letter noted many areas of strength in the quality of practice and provision, it highlighted two significant areas of weakness upon which the local statutory partners, namely Barnsley MBC and Barnsley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) would now submit a Written Statement of Action to instigate progress. These two areas were as follows:

1. The engagement of, and communication with, parents and carers. Local statutory partners need to ensure that the lived experience of families is influencing their strategic plans for services and provision.
2. Improving the identification of, and provision for, children and young people with SEND but without an Education and Health Care Plan.

The Written Statement of Action was currently being developed with a view to its submission to Ofsted and CQC by the deadline date. Members of the Schools Forum commented on the report and Mr Greaves praised the quality of the broad Local SEND "Offer". He hoped that as a local statutory partner, the Barnsley CCG was contributing its share of the financial costs associated with the Local "Offer". Ms Burton replied that the Barnsley CCG did pool financial resources in

the commissioning of children's health services and this included meeting the health and wellbeing needs of children and young people with SEND.

RESOLVED

4. That the outcomes of the joint local area inspection be noted by the Schools Forum, together with the next steps.

Trade Union Time Facilities Agreement in Maintained Schools and Pooled Facilities Time Agreement within Academies and Multi-Academy Trusts: Progress Report

Whilst Mr Potter was unable to attend today's meeting he had provided an update to the Schools Forum concerning the progress made on this issue, to date. This included the following:

- The majority of academies and MATs had now signed up to the Pooled Facilities Time Agreement.
- Among the academies and MATs which had not as yet signed up to the Agreement, were the United Learning Trust, Upperwood Primary, Heather Garth Primary, and the Delta and Pioneer Academies Community Trust (PACT)
- There was still an opportunity for academies which had not yet subscribed to be included in the pooled agreement.
- Schools or academies which ultimately did not sign up to these agreements would not be able to access trade union facility time from our trade union convenors in normal working hours and would have to broker their own agreement(s) with the trade unions.
- Both the trade union facilities agreement with Local Authority maintained schools together with the pooled agreement with academies and MATs would be reviewed by the end of the Summer term

The Chair of the Schools Forum thanked Mr Potter for this update on progress.

RESOLVED:

5 That the current position concerning access to trade unions facility time in maintained schools, academies and MATs be noted by the Schools Forum.

Schools Budget Outturn Report (Quarter 3: 2021/22)

Mr Amahwe presented his report on the latest outturn position and commented on the following:

- The revised, approved schools budget and the total amount of funding delegated to schools
- The reduction in overall surplus schools balances compared to last year when the impact of Covid-19 and lockdown was at its highest. Mrs Turner commented that developments had since taken place concerning governance arrangements at Hoylandswaine Primary Academy which would lead to addressing the financial deficit at the school.

- However, the latest outturn estimates were consistent with the original planning assumptions made by schools
- The latest financial position across all centrally retained DSG budgets, together with key variations in expenditure, notably upon out of authority SEND school placements
- Actions to manage and mitigate financial risks going forward

Discussion arose over SEND budgets including reference to the Department for Education's receptiveness towards further permitting safety valve agreements with local authorities who had long-term deficits in the High Needs Block. Mr Amahwe responded to questions concerning this matter and the potential outlook but emphasised the overriding importance of ensuring action is taken to limit expenditure within budgetary limits each year. The Chair of the Schools Forum thanked Mr Amahwe for his report

RESOLVED:

6. The Schools Forum notes the latest projected outturn position for the schools' delegated budget and the centrally retained DSG budgets, particularly the projected deficit position in the High Needs Block

Schools Funding Settlement (2022/23)

Mr Amahwe confirmed the funding settlement for schools in Barnsley across the four blocks of the DSG during 2022/23 and summarised in the table below:

	2021-22 £M	2022-23 £M	Change £M
Schools Block	173.072	180.249	7.177
High Needs Block	31.252	34.892	3.640
Early Years Block	15.456	15.485	0.029
Central Schools Services	1.757	1.665	-0.092
	221.538	232.292	10.754

Mr Amahwe advised that the main changes in funding during 2022-23 would be as follows:

- Schools Block – An increase of £7.2 million attributable to additional funding for schools and academies through the National Funding Formula (£4.6million) and the impact of increases in pupil numbers (£2.6million).
- High Needs Block – The £3.6million increase reflects the additional SEND funding allocated through the High Needs National Funding Formula.
- Early Years Block – A funding increase of £0.029 million, due to an increase in the hourly funding rate (£0.17) offset by a reduction in hours. The funding rate per hour for Barnsley has increased to £4.61 for 2022/23.

Mr Amahwe also commented on the proposed arrangements for pupil premium grant and supplementary grant funding for schools. In response to Mr Greaves query, Mr Amahwe clarified the basis for calculating the rates per pupil for both

mainstream and special education provision. Mr Sanderson thanked Mr Amahwe for the presentation of this report

RESOLVED:

- 7 That the Schools Forum notes the funding settlement for schools in Barnsley for 2022-23, across all four funding blocks and for these to form the basis of determining the budgets for schools and settings.**
- 8. To note confirmation of other funding available for schools during 2022/23, including the Pupil Premium Grant and Supplementary Funding Grant.**

Schools Block: Funding Budget (2022/23)

Mr Amahwe also presented a report on the proposed budget for the Schools Block. He particularly commented on the following elements:

- The overall envelope for the Schools Block, equating to £180.2 million in Barnsley during 2022/23.
- The proposed changes to the local Schools Funding Formula agreed by the Schools Forum at its previous meeting, following the consultation between the Local Authority and schools last Autumn. This included the proposed transfer of 1% of funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block as part of meeting cost pressures, subject to the Department for Education's agreement and upon which a decision was expected by the end of this month.
- Funding which would be de-delegated back to the Local Authority from schools, including for eligibility for free school meals, contingencies and teaching staff cover.

In addition, Mr Amahwe commented on the outcome of the recent consultation on proposed changes to the funding of local authorities statutory school improvement role. It was recently announced that:-

- The school improvement monitoring and brokering grant will be reduced by 50% in 2022/23.
- The full grant will be removed in 2023/24.
- Provision will be included in the School and Early Years Finance Regulations 2022 (England) to allow local authorities to deduct funding for local authorities' core school improvement activities from maintained school budgets.

Referring to the eligibility of children for receiving free school meals, Councillor Tattersall expressed her concern over food poverty and that families with eligible children were, often, too proud to take up this entitlement. More needed to be done to engage families in helping see the importance of free school meal eligibility in terms of the rising costs of living. Mrs Turner added that initiatives, including the Department for Education's Holiday Activities and Food Programme and school breakfast clubs also aimed to tackle food poverty among children and that access was dependent on being eligible for free school meals.

Under current regulations, local authorities can fund education functions and services relating to maintained schools from maintained school budget shares, with the agreement of the schools' forum. The current value of the local School Improvement Monitoring and Brokerage grant in 2021/22 was £127,637. The grant would reduce by 50% in 2022/23 resulting in a loss of £63,819.

The proposal was to deduct this amount from the current 35 maintained schools' formula allocations for 2022/23. This will be calculated based on a unit cost per pupil of £6.68 multiplied by each individual school's *Numbers on Roll* (based on the October 2021 school census).

The Chair of the Schools Forum thanked Mr Amahwe for presenting the proposals in this report.

RESOLVED:

- 9... The Schools Forum notes the Schools Block DSG allocation for 2022/23 and the implemented changes to the local schools funding formula as outlined in Paragraphs 7 to 17 of Mr Amahwe's report**
- 10. The Forum awaits the outcome of the Local Authority and Schools Forum disapplication proposal concerning the transfer of 1% of Schools Block Funding to the High Needs Block**
- 11. Members of the Forum unanimously agree for funding for maintained primary & secondary schools relating to contingencies, eligibility for free school meals and teaching staff cover to be de-delegated and retained by the Local Authority to fund central schools' expenditure.**
- 12. Members of the Forum unanimously agree for the deduction of Education Function improvement funding for maintained primary & secondary schools outlined in Paragraph 25 of Mr Amahwe's report, to be retained by the Local Authority to fund central school improvement monitoring and brokerage expenditure during 2022/23.**

Early Years Block: Funding Arrangements (2022/23)

Mr Amahwe then presented his report detailing the settlement and proposed allocations for the Early Years Block in Barnsley. The settlement amounted to £15.5 million and would be provisionally allocated as follows:

- Funding for places relating to children aged 3-4 would = £12.8 million
- Funding for places relating to children aged 2 would = £2.3 million
- Funding for the Early Years Pupil Premium would = £211,000
- The Disability Access Fund would = £102,000

These allocations would be subject to confirmation by July this year. Mr Amahwe went on to comment upon various elements of the Barnsley Early Years Single Funding Formula, including the following:

- Pass through funding to providers
- Funding supplements for meeting the needs of vulnerable children and improving access
- Base rates payable to settings, together with the basis for their calculation
- Funding risks and key considerations for the Local Authority

Mr Sanderson again thanked Mr Amahwe for presenting his report.

RESOLVED:

13 The Schools Forum notes the provisional DSG funding settlement for the Early Years block during 2022/23, based on the Early Years National Funding Formula for children aged 3 and 4 years.

14. The Forum also notes the arrangements for allocating early years block funding for the entitlement of children aged 3-4 years, together with funding to early years providers and settings during 2022/23, through the Barnsley Early Years Single Funding Formula

Central Schools Services Block Funding (2022/23)

Mr Amahwe presented his final report for today's meeting, on funding allocations for the Central Schools Services Block and commented on the following:

- Funding for ongoing statutory education responsibilities, including school admissions, education welfare, asset management, teachers' pay and pension costs and historic commitments.
- Historic commitments including funding contributions for the education of looked after children and young people, improving ths skills and employability of young people aged 14- 19 years and employee termination and pension costs.

Discussion arose over why, for example, funding commitments for responsibilities such as asset management and education welfare expenditure should be maintained at the proposed level when the maintained school estate was smaller. Mr Amahwe replied that at present there was little room for manoeuvre on these issues

RESOLVED

15. Members of the Schools Forum unanimously agree to the allocation of DSG funding to support the following statutory and retained functions of the Local Authority, during 2022/.23 at the same levels as in the current year:

- **Admissions = £275k**
- **School Forum admin costs = £7k**

- Termination / Pension costs = £75k
- Asset Management = £251k
- Education Welfare = £208k
- Other statutory & regulatory functions = £41k

16. Members of the Forum also unanimously agree to the allocation of DSG funding to support contributions to the following historic commitments, during 2022/23:

- Looked after children = £200k
- 14 – 19 Project Team = £21k
- Barnsley Alliance funding (for school risk management and sector led improvement = £450k

6. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

No issues were raised at today’s meeting.

7. **SCHOOLS FORUM FORWARD PLAN AND SCHEDULE OF FUTURE MEETINGS (2021/22)**

Mr Amahwe referred to the issue of how best schools could be engaged in the work of the Forum. One of the current means available was to distribute the minutes of the Forum’s meetings to head teachers and governing bodies as was the case with the previous meeting. Mr Sanderson was not sure how effectively this took place and would evaluate this further.

Mrs Turner referred to the forthcoming report concerning the review of the membership of the Schools Forum and the Secretary to the Forum’s intention to seek nominations from schools, settings and the non-schools’ group for members to serve on the Forum during the period 2022-25. Mrs Turner confirmed that this would be the subject of a report to an upcoming meeting of the Barnsley Alliance Local Cluster Leads.

Members of the Forum noted the current version of the Forum’s Forward Plan and were invited to add to the document. The date of the remaining meeting of the Forum during 2021/22 was also noted. The Chair of the Barnsley Schools Forum expressed his gratitude to members of the Forum for their attendance and contributions to today’s meeting.

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 (Signed by the Chair of the Barnsley Schools Forum)