

# Schools Forum Meeting

Held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018  
Bedford High School

## Minutes

### **Members Present:**

L. Loftus, E. Ellis, V. Birchall, G. Hayes, T. Cunningham, H. Phillips, A. McGlown, A. Birchall, A. Isherwood, A. Pollard

**Observers:** M. Wilkinson, A. Grice,

**In Attendance:** A. Lindsay (Assistant Director) C. Pealing (Service Manager) J. McDonald (Strategic Finance Manager) C. Myers (Finance Group Manager), M. Larkin (Clerk)

In the absence of the Chair Mr Birchall had agreed to Chair the meeting and welcomed all members and invited introductions around the table.

### **1. Appointment of Chair for 2018-19**

**It was agreed:** That Mr A. Hardy is appointed Chair of the Forum for 2018-19

### **2. Appointment of Vice Chair for 2018-19**

**It was agreed:** That Mr A. Birchall is appointed Vice-Chair of the Forum for 2018-19

### **3. Welcome to New Members and Thank You to Former Members**

It was noted Mrs JA Hewitt had been appointed as the Academy Representative for 2018-19, Mr A Pollard had been had been appointed as the deputy Academy Representative for 2018-19 and would attend meetings if Mrs Hewitt was unable to attend.

### **4. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from:

A. Hardy (Chair)	R. Lewis
F. Quinlivan	T. Warren
J-A. Hewitt	M. Atkins
N. Amber	K. Winnard
J.Bullen	

### **5. Items for inclusion under AOB**

The following items were accepted for inclusion under any other business:

- Parent Letter – John McDonald
- Charging policy following permanent exclusion – Andy McGlown

### **6. Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

**It was agreed:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2018 be approved as a true and correct record.

## Matters Arising

None.

### 7 High Needs Financial Position Update 2018/19

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting and Mr McDonald highlighted:

- The latest position showed an increase in spending with support needed for an additional 40+ special school places
- A deficit in the 2019/20 budget was shown after accounting for the 0.5% movement from the Schools Block and further discussion was needed
- Information had been provided showing other NW LA's transfer percentages from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for 2018/19 and the transfers being consulted for 2019/20
- If no agreement was made by the Forum with regard to top slicing for 2019/20 a disapplication request would be made to the Secretary of State by 30<sup>th</sup> November
- Evidence that would be presented to the Secretary of State was included in the report

Questions were raised and discussed regarding this possible course of action.

A representative asked if the strategic financial plan mentioned in the report would demonstrate how the levels would be balanced.

Ms Pealing stated the strategic plan would be circulated to Forum members prior to the next meeting and will show changes in services currently provided by the LA.

Ms Pealing reported there had been an unprecedented increase in the number of pupils being excluded and requiring alternative provision. Some out of borough provision had been accessed resulting in additional transport costs and it was noted the transport costs could not be funded from the High Needs Block.

Ms Pealing explained nursery age referrals for special schools had become an issue and consideration was being given to providing additional funding to mainstream provision to provide resources to support children. Meetings were taking place to discuss this with nurseries, special schools and the Early Years team. It was acknowledged there was a need to build a sustainable system which was part of the SEND transformation programme.

Representatives highlighted the number of EHCP refusals was 8.2% in Wigan compared with 21.1% in the North West. Mr Lindsay stated it had been identified through the SEND Ofsted inspection that there was a need to review the specific criteria for EHCP's.

Questions were raised with regard to resourced provision, if all of this provision was being used sufficiently and if there was any evidence this provision was effective.

Ms Pealing acknowledged concerns had been raised by Governors and Head teachers in Primary Schools. Some places had been reduced over time and further places were being reviewed. Some resourced provision was at either end of the borough and again would incur transport costs.

Representatives expressed the need for transparency in regard to where resourced provision was located. Ms Pealing agreed this information could be shared.

A question was raised with regard to the possibility of receiving any contribution from the Health and Social Care Sector. Ms Pealing reported an audit had been completed at Hope School to consider what the contribution from Health should be, Mr Lindsay added the same pressures existed within the health element of social care and discussion were being held.

**It was agreed:** the strategic financial plan would be circulated to members in early November ahead of the next Forum meeting to allow time for members to consult with colleagues.

## **8 Schools Formula 2019/20**

The Schools Formula report had been circulated prior to the meeting and Mr Myers highlighted:

- Final figures would be based on the recent census to estimate the final position, it was anticipated the total would be around £2m
- The DfE was measuring growth and Wigan was classed as a 'Medium Super Output Area'
- The MFG will continue to provide protection and stability; LA's would have the flexibility to set a local MFG rate of between 0.5% and minus 1.5% per pupil.
- The funding floor factor would ensure the amount a school is allocated through the local formula is at least 1% greater than the 2017-18 funding floor baseline
- The formula factors were included in the report
- A sub-group of the Forum had met and discussed different options for matching funding, the group had considered changing the basic entitlement and modelling through MFG, 3 scenarios for each route had been presented. It had been agreed at the sub-group that the MFG route would allow for all schools to gain and a better spread of funds whereas changes to the basic entitlement would only allow individual schools to gain.
- Appendix 1 had shown the impact at school level using the base, a 0.25% top slice and 0.5% top slice based on pupil numbers from the October 17 census. Appendices 2-4 had shown the pro forma with rates of each scenario

**It was agreed:** for the next Forum meeting refreshed models would be presented based on the current years census results, there would be a clearer picture of growth and it was anticipated there would be enough to fund growth within the system.

De-Delegated Services had been outlined in the report and it was noted no changes had been made, Ms Pealing stated some of these services would be looked at as part of the review.

**It was agreed:** the presented De-Delegated services are built into the budgets for maintained schools.

## **9 Briefing Note**

The briefing note had been circulated prior to the meeting and Mr McDonald highlighted further details of Teacher's Pay Grant and Pensions was being awaited.

There had been a significant increase in teachers' pension employer contributions, the DfE had stated some funding would be available to support these increases, it was hopeful this will be fully funded.

## **10. AOB**

### **10.1 Parents Letter**

A suggested letter to be shared with parents from the F40 Forum had been circulated prior to the meeting. Members discussed the sharing of this letter and suggestions were made for schools to include a covering letter. Comments were made that the letter did not clearly state that there needed to be a minimum level of funding for all children across the country. These comments would be fed back to the F40 Forum.

**It was agreed:** the letter to parents would be shared and schools would provide a covering letter.  
**Alan to check**

## **10.2 Charging policy following permanent exclusion – Andy McGlown**

Mr McGlown had been asked to raise queries with regard to charging made to schools following permanent exclusions.

Ms Pealing stated the Schools Forum had previously agreed to this charge to support the costs for alternative provision. It was explained the AWPU and £4000 would be withdrawn from schools following permanent exclusions, if pupils were reintegrated into mainstream school after a time in alternative provision the receiving school would receive some funding.

It had been agreed this was a fairer way of ensuring there was money available to support a child following exclusion as there was no funding available within the High Needs Block. Previously all schools had been top sliced to support alternative provision places. The decision to introduce the charge had been agreed in January 2018 and backdated to September 2017, it was noted no school had refused to pay the charge.

The amount of £4000 had been based on guidance from the Government.

Discussion took place

**It was agreed:** a review of the Charging Policy would take place prior to September 2019.

## **11. Future Meetings:** (all meetings to commence at 1.30 p.m.)

29<sup>th</sup> November 2018 – at Bedford High School  
17<sup>th</sup> January 2019 - at Hawkley Hall High School  
7<sup>th</sup> March 2019 - at Bedford High School  
16<sup>th</sup> May 2019 – at Bedford High School  
13<sup>th</sup> June 2019 - at Hawkley Hall High School

**There being no further business to discuss the meeting closed at 2.55pm**