

CITY OF YORK SCHOOLS FORUM

Extraordinary Meeting

Minutes of the Schools Forum held on Thursday 3rd May 2018 at 9.00am

Attendance list:

Members:

Brian Crosby	Academy Representative and Chair
Adam Booker	Special School Representative
Trevor Burton	Academy Representative
Richard Crane	Maintained Secondary Representative
Andrew Daly	Academy Representative
Debbie Glover	Maintained Primary Headteacher
Tricia Head	Pupil Referral Unit Representative and Vice Chair
Richard Ludlow	Academy Representative
Tracey Ralph	Maintained Primary Headteacher

Observers / Advisors:

Cllr Keith Myers	Elected Member for Education, Children and Young People
Jon Stonehouse	Director of Children, Education & Communities
Maxine Squire	Assistant Director, Education and Skill
Richard Hartle	Head of Finance, City of York Council
John Thompson	Head of Secondary and Skills
Salli Radford	Coordinator and Clerk

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received with consent, from Alison Birkinshaw – FE Representative, Helen Gration – Early Years Sector Representative, Lorna Savage – Academy Representative and Bill Scriven – Maintained Secondary Headteacher (VA school). Claire Rigden – Maintained Nursery Representative was absent from the meeting.

3. Centrally retained School Improvement funding

Previously distributed. John Thompson presented the paper, advising that the reports covered all aspects of the funding stream other than the £65k allocated to school Wellbeing Workers.

John advised that the £291k returned to schools for school improvement activities had been audited through an internal exercise which had began on 21st March and concluded on 27th April. It was noted that 48 of 63 had responded by the deadline. John would collate the information and report to the July meeting.

John advised that the paper summarised the Forum decision of summer 2017 to adopt a transitional model, with this included in the paper for information. This decision had broken the total allocation of £966k into separate strands for the 2017/18 academic year:

- £400k to be centrally retained to support Schools Causing Concern
- £291k returned to schools for school improvement activity

- £150k for the provision of a core CPD through Pathfinder TSA in line with the tapered model outlined at time
- £60k allocated as £30k cluster funding and £30k specific projects run by schools and allocated via bids

John advised that SCC funding was allocated through the York Schools and Academies Board (YSAB) as a whole as reported to the Forum previously. It was noted that the YSAB was in discussion with a MAT regarding an intervention with this increasing the committed funding to £330k rather than £292k as reported. It was noted that further requests would go to the YSAB in early June.

All allocations highlighted in the paper were noted, with John providing specific context relating to significant projects and longer-term commitments.

The Forum noted the background of performance against key performance measures provided in each case, with schools that have been below coasting and/or floor standards in recent years being the focus. John advised that the Forum should have confidence that intervention funding was being spent appropriately and in line with DfE guidance.

John highlighted one additional allocation under paragraph 33 and an allocation to a school not in the SCC category outlined under paragraph 29. John advised that the YSAB had noted the Forum's concern regarding this latter allocation and that the next meeting would agree a clear set of criteria against which to judge requests for support in order to increase rigour.

The Forum noted the summary of cluster activity outlined in paragraphs 41 and 42, with John advising that cluster chairs had provided the view that geographical clusters generally had less power and impact than previously due to the formation of MATs and the development of mixed clusters or of MATS formed from cluster relationships. John advised that the chairs had provided the view that the current funding mechanism was becoming less relevant but that they wished to retain funding as a resource to address city-wide needs.

The Forum noted the summary of School Improvement projects, with this reported mid-year and at the end of the year, with information to be brought to the July Forum meeting.

John advised that the Pathfinder CPD programme funding agreement outlined in paragraph 50 had been supported with £150k over the last year, with the funding model including the intention to reduce this to £100k in 2018/19.

Richard Hartle advised that funding allocations were a Schools Forum decision as the status of funding had changed under the National Funding Formula (NFF). It was noted that the previous Schools Standards Grant had represented a significant resource in past with c£1M centrally retained funding for School Improvement until this was delegated to the Schools Forum to hold centrally.

Richard advised that the new DSG rules pulled a number of funding streams under a combined budget heading and that the DfE regarded this as funding for historic commitments. Richard advised that continuation of this funding needed to be justified each year with a robust demonstration of how it had been spent as a strategic allocation, otherwise funds would be retained by the DfE. It was noted that the funding under review sat outside the new NFF for both schools and LAs and that the DfE's intention was to recoup the allocations over time.

Richard advised that DfE scrutiny was careful and was increasing in depth each year, with increased rigour anticipated. It was noted that the allocation of funding back to schools on a per-pupil basis was not adequately secure and may put the funding at risk in future as allocations were not sufficiently strategic.

The Forum discussed the history and intention of the transitional model, including the nature and context of this discussion over time and of members' desire to review allocations rather than see them automatically roll forward. Maxine Squire advised that the LA understood that the Forum was seeking to review options each year to ensure that impact was clear and evidenced. The Forum noted that Officers were unable to guarantee the availability of funding in future years and the agreed need to ensure sustainability of arrangements. The Forum noted the contribution of this context to the development of a transitional model which funded programmes on an academic-year basis and the need for clarity when reviewing these commitments.

Andrew Daly provided further context to the transition from LA delivery to other delivery models, reflecting that this had not progressed as rapidly as anticipated at the same point in the previous year. It was noted that the transitional period was valuable given this context and that the tapering of funding for TSA programmes was valid though funding would need to be retained at the centre.

Andrew advised that Pathfinder TSA delivered a variety of CPD strands, with secondary leader meetings being very successful, recommending that this be retained as a resource. Andrew asked the Forum to reflect on the need to ensure that small funding allocations made on a per-school basis could deliver outcomes as part of a strategic plan.

The Forum discussed the information provided, with a member expressing concern that the YSAB included no maintained headteacher representation. It was noted that maintained schools were represented by Jon Stonehouse and Maxine Squire.

Further discussion followed, with the Forum noting that it was unable to make decisions for longer than a year at a time as funding was dependent on external allocations. Jon Stonehouse advised that the Forum could take a longer-term view with the LA able to consider a response if funding was subsequently removed.

The Forum discussed a strategic approach to CPD and the role of the TSAs, including the development of a joined-up approach which maximised benefit by drawing on the range of expertise across the city and the wider group of TSAs across the region. Richard Ludlow outlined the work being done collaboratively to develop leaders as an example of strategic planning as a wider group.

The Forum discussed the allocation of £291k returned to schools in 2017/18 and whether this should be brought back under strategic oversight of the Forum. It was noted that schools would expect to receive this funding in 2018/19 though it had not been included in start budget information.

It was noted that the YSAB would consider strategic direction at its June meeting. Jon acknowledged that the Forum had taken a rigorous, democratic approach to management of the total budget of £966k. It was noted that the proportion of the £291k allocated back to the MATs could be managed as a strategic central resource whilst the LA would need to consult with maintained schools regarding this element if allocation were to be repeated.

Jon recommended continuation of the funding of Wellbeing Worker posts, with this project pending evaluation with two years left to run. It was noted that the majority of funding was provided by the CCG and that it was anticipated that funding would be available to continue in the future.

Richard Crane left the meeting at 10.00am.

The Forum considered the recommendations included in the paper for 2018/19:

- **£100k Pathfinder TSA CPD programme funding – agreed unanimously**
- **£65k Wellbeing Worker funding – agreed with one abstention**
- **£400k Schools Causing Concern intervention and support funding – agreed unanimously**

Jon advised that membership of the YSAB would be reviewed to ensure that it included a maintained school voice and that a mechanism would be arranged to involve maintained school headteachers in YSAB work.

It was noted that the evaluation report relating to the £291k returned to schools would not be available until July, with **John to clarify the status of the audit and the pending Schools Forum decision regarding the 2018/19 allocation at the Headteachers' Briefing on 8th May.**

Maxine advised that Early Years was an area identified for focus by cluster chairs who were keen to see city-wide investment in the phase. The Forum discussed cluster funding further, asking that more information on evaluations be shared across the headteacher community.

The Forum agreed to retain the £401k funding resources not yet allocated and to establish a task and finish group to consider allocations in order to address priorities across the city.

This decision would be communicated to headteachers at the May briefing to ensure it was understood that funding would not be returned during 2018/19. The sub-group would consider options and report to the July Forum meeting with an aim to ensure best value from a centrally-retained resource. It was agreed that this process would include some informal consultation with schools and academies.

Sub group membership was agreed:

- Richard Crane (to be asked to chair)
- Brian Crosby
- Debbie Glover
- Andrew Daly
- Tricia Head or Adam Booker as Special Schools representative

4. Any other urgent business

Jon Stonehouse advised that HR colleagues had undertaken modelling of the impact of new support staff pay arrangements on school budgets. It was noted that a national agreement had been negotiated which would increase lower grades significantly. It was noted that these costs had not yet been built into start budgets above a 2% increase and provision for the Living Wage. The LA would issue guidance to schools in the next few days, with a revised budget planning spreadsheet to be released in due course. The Forum noted that teachers' pension contributions were also due to be reviewed from April 2019, although no increase had been confirmed as yet.

12. Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting would take place on 2nd July 2018 at 9.00am.

The meeting closed at 10.20pm.

Chair

Date