

CITY OF YORK SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the Schools Forum held on Monday 25th September 2017 at 9.00am

Attendance list:

Members:

Brian Crosby	Academy Representative and Chair
Adam Booker	Special School Representative
Richard Crane	Maintained Secondary Representative
Andrew Daly	Academy Representative
Debbie Glover	Maintained Primary Headteacher
Andy Herbert	Maintained Primary Headteacher (attending following conversion of school to permit transition)
Tracey Ralph	Maintained Primary Headteacher
Ben Rich	Maintained Primary Governor Representative
Lorna Savage	Maintained Secondary Headteacher
Bill Scriven	Maintained Secondary Headteacher (VA school)
Janie White	Maintained Nursery Representative

Observers / Advisors:

Cllr Stewart Rawlings	Elected Member for Education, Children and Young People
Jon Stonehouse	Director of Children, Education & Communities
Richard Hartle	Head of Finance, City of York Council
Maxine Squire	Assistant Director, Education and Skills
Salli Radford	Coordinator and Clerk

1. Welcome and update on membership

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received with consent, from Trevor Burton – Academy Representative, Tricia Head – Pupil Referral Unit Representative and Vice Chair and Ken McArthur – Early Years Sector Representative. Alison Birkinshaw – FE Representative, was absent from the meeting.

3. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Brian Crosby was unanimously elected Chair of the Forum for a term of one year.

Proposed: Lorna Savage Seconded: Ben Rich

Tricia Head was unanimously elected Vice-Chair of the Forum for a term of one year.

Proposed: Brian Crosby Seconded: Bill Scriven

Andrew Daly joined the meeting at 9.06am.

4. Membership update

Janie White was welcomed to her first Forum meeting. It was noted that Andy Herbert was attending his last meeting following academy conversion of his school, Clifton with Rawcliffe. It was noted that Tracey Ralph had been appointed by the maintained headteacher group to serve a further term on the Forum when her membership lapsed on 31st November 2017 and that membership across the Forum would be reviewed prior to the next meeting.

Jon Stonehouse advised that a question had been received from a member of the public regarding the transparency of Schools Forum business and whether it was clear that Forum meetings were open to the public. Jon advised that he believed that the Forum was compliant with this requirement, further advising that the LA website now stated that meetings are open to members of public. Forum members noted this update.

5. Minutes of the York Schools Forum meeting of 3rd July 2017

Previously distributed.

Item 6, Action Plan and Matters Arising; it was proposed that reference to “employment rights” under point 6 be replaced by “terms and conditions”. This was agreed.

Subject to this amendment, the minutes of the meeting of 3rd July 2017 were agreed to be a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

6. Action Plan and Matters Arising

With reference to the action plan:
Point 1 – To be taken under item 10.

Matters Arising:

In response to a question regarding the late availability of the LA Pay Policy following a consultation process that ended on 18th September, Maxine Squire advised that the policy would be made available during the week commencing 25th September. It was noted that the work was being led by NYCC.

In response to a question regarding the Forum’s earlier decision not to progress a review of the Local Funding Formula in light of the recent government announcement regarding the National Funding Formula, Richard Hartle advised that this had been the right decision as the work would not now be necessary.

7. National Funding Formula Update and School Budgets 2018/19

Previously distributed. Richard Hartle presented the paper distributed in advance of the meeting, advising of a further update distributed shortly before the meeting and tabled for information. Richard provided background to the paper, advising that central government had taken proposals on a National Funding Formula (NFF) to consultation early in 2017. Richard advised that the Secretary of State for Education had made an announcement in early July setting out broad outlines for school funding for 2018/19, with this including proposals for a NFF and outlining initial responses to the consultation. It was noted that the government had decided to change levels of permitted minimum and maximum increases to schools to ensure no loss of income based on per-pupil allocations and that minimum levels of funding had been set for primary and secondary pupils.

Richard highlighted the key decision outlined in the original paper from paragraph 20 onwards;

- Option 1 – to move to fund all York mainstream schools at the new NFF values and methodology from 2018/19 or
- Option 2 – to transition to the new NFF values over a period of three years.

It was noted that LAs would initially have discretion on allocations in consultation with their Schools Forums, though by 2020/21 all schools would be funded nationally on NFF rates. Richard highlighted the advantages and disadvantages included in the paper, asking Forum members to give their view on whether to adopt the new funding rates in full or provide a transitional period to allow the movement of local factors over a two or three year period.

It was noted that the paper outlined the LA officer preference to move to NFF rates for reasons of transparency and clarity, and to establish new arrangements more quickly. It was noted that no schools would lose funding under the new NFF, providing reduced rational to support a transitional arrangement.

The Chair noted that the LA was seeking the view of the Forum on options and would then consult with all schools to set out the preferred position. It was noted that the final decision would be made by Elected Members, probably as part of the budget-setting process.

Richard advised that a clear consensus within the Forum to move to the NFF would allow the LA to choose to consult with schools on this single option. It was noted that a less-clear decision would probably require the LA to consult with all schools on both options, with this requiring significant financial modelling which would need to be factored into the process required to support this more extensive consultation.

Richard presented the tabled update following the 14th September government announcement on the NFF. It was noted that full detail and technical guidance notes were still awaited from the DfE and that figures were based on DfE data. It was noted that full data sets and technical information expected later in the week would be used for consultation with schools.

Richard advised that the tabled paper also provided a general overview, with the three blocks currently in the DSG being adjusted by splitting the Schools Block into two; Schools and Central Schools Services.

Richard outlined the main points of the new NFF, advising that the proposals were in-line with the consultation undertaken earlier in the year, with the addition of a minimum per-pupil level. It was noted that this change would deliver some significant increases in funding to some York schools. Richard advised that secondary school funding would be adjusted, with a 1:1.29 primary to secondary ratio to be introduced over a three year period.

Richard presented Annex 1, advising that this set out all factors of the NFF. It was noted that Richard had illustrated the differences between values for the NFF and the current York model.

Richard drew the attention of the Forum to paragraph 29 onwards which detailed the anticipated impact of the NFF on York schools. Richard advised that overall funding would be increased by c4.2% per pupil across the city. It was noted that York would receive one of the highest increases in funding on a percentage basis, with Annex 4e

illustrating this expected outcome. It was further noted that despite these increases York would remain the lowest funded LA in 2018/19 for the schools block.

In response to a question regarding the actions that Elected Members could take to lobby for increases in the short term, Richard advised that the LA would continue to make the logical and rational case for York. Richard further advised that York was a member of the F40 group of the lowest funded 40 LAs which worked together on responses to NFF consultation processes. However his initial view was that it was probably a combination of three main factors. York has relatively low levels of deprivation (although not the lowest) and relatively high levels of achievement (but not the highest), which both feature significantly in the NFF. And for those LAs that receive less funding than York through these factors, nearly all will be in areas that benefit from the area cost adjustment, whereas York does not.

The Chair advised that pupil outcomes at primary phase could be improved and that additional funding would enable improved outcomes. The Forum discussed overall funding issues.

Maxine advised that the challenges faced by York had been recognised in consultation documents, with the city being praised for producing strong outcomes against a background of low funding. Maxine further advised that other LAs within Yorkshire and Humber attracted more funding due to deprivation factors and that this had brought improved outcomes.

Jon advised that York remained very low down the funding table as it did not trigger key factors, though it was possible to look at historical reasons for the current situation. Jon advised that a CIPFA benchmarking exercise had been considered and that this had supported the view that York was underfunded and that this removed flexibility from the local system. It was noted that York's funding for LAC was lowest nationally but that outcomes were good.

Further discussion followed, with it being noted that there was not enough money in the system overall. It was noted that the public sector pay cap may be lifted on teachers pay following a period during which other costs had been passed on to schools resulting in a general need for increased funding.

Richard drew the attention of Forum members to paragraphs 30-31 of the update, which detailed changes to funding for York schools, inviting comments. The information was noted.

High needs National Funding Formula – Richard advised that previously central government had advised that no LA would lose funding and the new baselines had provided more protection. The Forum noted the information included in paragraph 33 which outlined an anticipated cash increase of 1% in 2018/19, with further increases to follow. It was noted that York would remain around the middle of the funding table, with Richard outlining the technical reasons for this position which was heavily protected by minimum guarantees.

Central School Services National Funding Formula – Richard advised that this block included funding for statutory services provided by LAs to maintained and academy schools. Richard advised that a reduction of c£13k to funding for York was proposed into 2018/19.

The Chair asked the Forum to consider their view on the two options outlined by Richard.

Views were expressed in favour of moving to the NFF at the earliest stage, with the Chair inviting any views against to be expressed. A member advised that this option would require decisions to be made regarding High Needs funding as this would impact significantly on overall budgets. Jon advised that this was a very important point but did not require the Forum to steer away from implementing the NFF. Jon further advised that the inclusion review was in progress and would inform use of the High Needs Block to ensure best possible value. It was noted that the LA would review capital funding as well as the High Needs Block and that this would need to be reviewed if it were not already in progress. Jon advised that the LA would not advise against the proposal to implement the NFF at this stage.

The Forum further discussed the options, with Richard advising that a paper on High Needs funding could be provided to inform schools of the context, though it was not possible to model likely impact at this stage.

The Forum unanimously agreed to move to consult on Option 1 – to introduce the NFF in full from 2018/19. It was noted that the issue would be taken to elected members for formal decision, taking consultation responses into account.

Jon thanked Richard for the work undertaken on the NFF papers at very short notice.

Bill Scriven and Richard Crane left the meeting at 10.25am.

The meeting adjourned for a five-minute break at 10.25am.

8. 2017/18 Start Budgets

Previously distributed. Richard Hartle advised that budgets were submitted to the LA annually by schools and that the Forum was asked to note decisions regarding deficit budgets. The report provided an analysis of budget positions, with:

Annex 1 including information on revenue and capital income.

Annex 2 showing projections for the next two years based on the current funding formula.

Annex 3 showing deficit budget requests, with the formal decision to approve being held by the LA. It was noted that the LA reported on these decisions, including requests regarding the provision of recovery plans.

The Forum noted paragraph 21 which outlined the positions of four schools requesting a deficit budget and the LA decision in each case.

The Forum noted the forward projections included in Annex 1, with the majority of schools showing an in-year revenue deficit but only four requesting approval to set a deficit budget due to the cushioning effect of carry-forward balances. It was noted that Annex 2 illustrated an increase in forecast in-year deficits going forward, though this information had been compiled prior to the NFF announcement.

The Chair sought clarification of one decision, with Maxine providing additional information regarding academy conversion timelines. It was noted that budget deficits held by schools undergoing a sponsored academy conversion would be funded from LA central reserves rather than the schools budget.

The Forum discussed the report, noting that schools converting to academy status as a converter rather than a sponsored school would take any budget deficits into their

destination MAT. Jon Stonehouse provided background to the considerations given to financial aspects of the academy conversion process.

The report was noted.

9. Schools Capital Maintenance Programme

Previously distributed. Richard Hartle advised that information on the capital maintenance programme had been provided following a request from the Forum. It was noted that a paper provided to Cllr Rawlings was included as Annex 1, with annexes to this paper showing the allocation of funding. It was noted that information on other elements of the capital programme would be brought to a future meeting.

Jon Stonehouse advised that grant funding was allocated by central government, with the LA having increased this budget using prudential borrowing in order to extend the number of schemes to be funded. It was noted that the LA is in a position to consider other outstanding capital maintenance projects in the future, with this to be brought back to the Forum for information.

In response to a question regarding the impact of academy conversions, Jon advised that the LA took a view based on need and would fund projects up to the point of conversion. It was noted that decisions were made as part of a transparent process in the public domain. It was further noted that the overall funding allocation reduces each year following conversions as this was based on maintained school pupil numbers.

Cllr Rawlings advised that the papers included estimates for the cost of works but that LA officers retained the freedom to make savings and enable the allocation of funding elsewhere if this was possible.

The information item was noted.

10. Inclusion Review update

Maxine Squire provided a verbal update on the review, advising that a feasibility study was underway supported by the Virtual Staff College (VSC). Maxine advised that this external facilitation would build on work the officer group had undertaken with the VSC in July and would continue during the autumn term. It was noted that next steps would include a workshop for schools without any LA officer involvement. Maxine outlined the changes that the NFF would bring to High Needs funding, with the Forum noting an increase in complex autism and other high level needs across the city. It was noted that needs within the birth to five year-old group was a particular pressure point, creating increased demands on inclusion funding. Maxine advised that post-16 provision was facing increasing pressure as families expected young people with high needs to stay in education longer, resulting in pressure on funding available for provision up to age 25 which could include very expensive residential options.

Maxine advised that satellite provision from Appelfields, including Orchard provision at Manor, was contributing to the overall range of options, with Adam Booker advising of the work being undertaken around secondary transition in small groups where continuity of environment was helpful. Maxine advised that this was difficult work and that the LA wished to grow the model alongside traditional satellite provision. It was noted that this provision was challenging to provide but could be very positive, with Maxine advising that this was provision for children other than those accessing Enhanced Resource Provision (ERP) as they had a different profile.

Maxine advised that the review was seeking to ensure that children were accessing the right provision at the right time, advising of the need to provide an inclusive system with the right provision in each aspect. It was noted that the LA wished to improve outcomes by understanding differing needs and matching pathways to these needs. Maxine advised that the EHCP was not enough and that work needed to be undertaken within the schools system. It was noted that Hob Moor Oaks had observed increased parental expectations as families were requesting Special School provision although this might not be the appropriate route for their child. Maxine advised that Adam and colleagues were considering the children that should be included in the Special School cohort, advising that Special School attendance was not necessarily going to improve outcomes. It was noted that the complexity of work included in the review had necessitated specialist facilitation. It was noted that funding was one element under review but that pathways would need to be identified first.

In response to a question regarding the NFF and whether the current Forum option to de-delegate funds for High Needs would disappear with introduction of the new NFF, Maxine advised that the Forum could create opt-in funds from which to allocate funding as the formal de-delegation of budget might not be possible. Richard Hartle would check this point with a view to confirming that de-delegations would remain possible in 2018/19 and 2019/20. It was noted that de-delegations would be brought for approval to the next meeting if possible.

The Forum discussed the update. In response to a question regarding future funding for Nurture Groups, Richard advised that these groups were funded from the High Needs block rather than the Schools block. Maxine advised that Nurture Groups were within the scope of the inclusion review due to their funding source, further advising that the review would consider the types of provision in place to ensure the correct balance, for example whether new provision was required to address the increase in cases of complex autism. It was noted that it would also be necessary to predict likely pupil numbers. The Forum further discussed the update, with Jon advising of the need to understand and support use of the High Needs block.

Richard advised that, having checked the guidance, he could confirm that de-delegation could continue to 2019/20.

In response to a question regarding options for a key group of children with additional needs that were not suitable for placement at Danesgate, Maxine advised that it would be necessary to identify and deliver a suitable pathway.

Jon asked the Forum to take a view on the most appropriate schools to work with the VSC on next steps of the review. Discussion followed, with the recommendation being made that this opportunity be extended to all headteachers including those of the Special Schools and to Tricia Head specifically. **Maxine would follow up by contacting all headteachers with details of the next stage and to invite expressions of interest in the workshops. It was noted that the LA would not be taking the lead on next steps.**

11. Schools Forum forward plan

Richard Hartle advised that the February Forum meeting would consider:

- Consultation on the National Funding Formula
- Budget setting 2018/19 including budget de-delegations
- Funding for school-to-school support including a report on cluster funding
- Basic need capital update

- Inclusion review update

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

10. Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting would take place on 5th February 2018 at 9.00am.

The meeting closed at 11.10pm.

Chair _____ Date _____

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