

CITY OF YORK SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the Schools Forum held on Monday 3rd April 2017 at 9.00am

Attendance list:

Members:

Brian Crosby	Academy Representative and Chair
Andrew Daly	Academy Representative
Tricia Head	Pupil Referral Unit Representative and Vice Chair
Trevor Burton	Academy Representative
Caroline Hancy	Maintained Primary Headteacher
Glyn Jones	FE Representative (deputising for Alison Birkinshaw)
Tracey Ralph	Maintained Primary Headteacher
Lorna Savage	Maintained Secondary Headteacher

Observers / Advisors:

Jon Stonehouse	Director of Children, Education & Communities
Richard Hartle	Head of Finance, City of York Council
Maxine Squire	Assistant Director, Education and Skills
Julia Massey	Learning City Partnership Manager [from 10.30am]
Salli Radford	Coordinator and Clerk

1. Welcome and update on membership

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Andrew Daly was welcomed to his first meeting. It was noted that Glyn Jones was deputising for Alison Birkinshaw.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received with consent, from Alison Birkinshaw – FE Representative (Glyn Jones deputising), Nicola Fox – Maintained Primary Representative, Andy Herbert – Maintained Primary Headteacher, Cath Hindmarch – Special School Representative, Ken McArthur – Early Years Sector Representative, Cllr Stewart Rawlings – Elected Member for Education, Children and Young People and Ben Rich – Maintained Primary Governor Representative. Bill Scriven – Maintained Secondary Headteacher (VA school), was absent from the meeting.

3. Minutes of the York Schools Forum meeting of 13th February 2017

Previously distributed.

It was agreed that the decision under item 5, Traveller Service De-delegation for 2017/18, required further clarification as there had been a clear difference in view between the primary and secondary phases. Richard Hartle advised that the de-delegation had been presented as a single decision rather than a split decision between phases, as the LA was clear that it wasn't economically viable to provide the service to one phase only. It was acknowledged that this had not been made clear by the minute. The minute relating to the decision was amended to read:

The Schools Forum approved the de-delegation of £171k of funding for the Traveller Education Service for 2017/18. This decision was made on behalf of all

maintained schools and members agreed to vote on this basis, with both phases content to abide by the overall majority decision.

In favour 4
Against 2
Abstentions 0

The minute for item 7, School Funding and the Dedicated School Grant, required further clarification to explain that this meant that the remaining DSG funding would be directed towards increased high needs pressures. The amended minute to read:

The Forum confirmed their agreement to maintain the LA's centrally retained budgets at their current levels and for the remaining available DSG funding to be directed towards the increased high needs pressures previously discussed.

The Forum agreed to the LA's proposals for the retention and de-delegation of former Education Services Grant funding that has transferred into the DSG in 2017/18.

With this amendment the minutes of the meeting of 13th February 2017 were agreed to be a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

Trevor Burton joined the meeting at 9.15am.

4. Action Plan and Matters Arising

With reference to the action plan:

Point 1 – To be taken to the July meeting.

Point 2 – Response submitted on 22nd March. Richard Hartle would provide an update under item 6.

Point 3 – Completed. It was noted that Richard Ludlow had been unable to attend the meeting.

Point 4 – The scheme had been published without further revision.

Point 5 – Completed.

Point 6 – Richard advised that the Teachers Panel de-delegation would cease on 31st August 2017. Richard offered to invite Teachers Panel representatives to the July meeting to update the Forum on their developing offer, but this was declined by the forum. The Forum discussed the update, noting that the Panel's intention would be to operate as a traded service via York Education from September 2017.

Matters Arising:

In response to a question regarding the funding information provided in relation to item 5, Traveller Service De-delegation for 2017/18, Richard confirmed that the de-delegated amounts were calculated on a formulaic basis, taking account of deprivation and low prior attainment as well as overall pupil numbers.

5. School Improvement Strategic Commissioning Fund 2017/18

Previously distributed. The Chair brought members' attention to the funding allocations made during 2016/17:

- £226k was paid through a contract to Pathfinder TSA for the provision of a citywide CPD offer
- £350k was allocated through a contract to Ebor TSA for the provision of school to school support

- £200k was allocated to the LA for schools causing concern, supporting interventions in the most serious cases
- £125k was allocated to supporting School Wellbeing Workers (£65k), funding to school clusters (£30k) and for projects considered by the School Improvement Commissioning Group (£30k)
- £65k was returned to the Schools Budget for carry forward into 2017/18

The Chair highlighted the three options being presented for debate by the Forum for the 2017/18 academic year:

1. No central resource – the centrally-retained funding would be returned to schools for them to commission their own school improvement provision.
2. A transitional model – reducing the amount of centrally retained funding (and so returning part of the retained funding to schools as above). This would involve a new model of provision providing a reduced core CPD offer and funding for school-to-school support allocated to the LA (for maintained schools) and to the MATs (for their academies and maintained schools in the process of conversion to join them).
3. Maintaining the existing allocations from centrally retained funding but amend the delivery and accountability arrangements in light of experience from September 2015 to April 2017.

The Chair thanked Andrew Daly for the information relating to the support provided by Pathfinder and circulated with the agenda.

The Chair outlined the reductions in levels of funding to Pathfinder and Ebor Teaching School Alliances (TSAs) already implemented.

In response to a question regarding the decision required, the Chair advised that members must choose one of the three options or refine an option that they would be happy to endorse.

John Thompson advised that a questionnaire had been arranged via Survey Monkey, with responses showing most support for option 2. It was noted that the secondary headteachers' forum had met on 24th March and had unanimously expressed support for option 2. It was noted that further detail on implementation was required from the group.

The Forum unanimously supported option 2, the transitional model that reduced the amount of centrally retained funding.

The Chair advised that detail relating to option 2 was included in the paper. John advised that the sub-group had met to discuss options and that the transitional model had evolved from this work, with the paper being circulated to working group members for comment prior to finalisation. It was noted that £65k remained available to fund the Wellbeing Worker roles and had been taken out of the funding de-delegation block as this had been agreed by a separate decision.

The Chair advised that the working group had considered option 2 in detail, with Andrew Daly working to develop a CPD offer in line with this financial model. Andrew advised that Pathfinder TSA had intended to evolve their offer in line with a reduction in funding, though a core CPD offer would be required during the transition period. Andrew advised that in addition to this core there would be a range of additional CPD

that schools would wish to access via the open market, though the core city-wide offer devised by Pathfinder was based on a needs-analysis used to identify the skills required across the city.

The Chair thanked Andrew for the detailed paper, advising that a fully-traded CPD offer would be required by the start of 2019/20. It was noted that the working group had agreed that a core offer should be retained in the interim period.

The Chair drew the attention of members to Appendix 1, which outlined the funding allocations to individual schools to enable CPD to be sourced or for other school improvement work.

John Thompson advised that the funding illustrated by Appendix 1 was currently retained for school improvement work and would therefore need to be returned to schools on the basis of pupil numbers and not as part of the funding formula allocation. Maxine Squire advised that any funding returned on this basis would need to be allocated to school improvement as it had been retained for this specific purpose.

In response to a question regarding the option to backfill school budget deficits, Maxine advised that the funding should be used for school improvement activity.

John advised that the conversion of maintained schools to academy status took considerable time and that current projections into 2019 had been based on published Academy Orders. It was noted that this information had been reflected in funding projections.

John advised that MATs should define and commission school improvement support as appropriate once a school had made the decision to convert, with the Forum noting that this arrangement was already in place in a number of schools across the city. It was noted that the suggestion had therefore been made to split the £400k School Improvement funding allocation equally between maintained schools and those already converted or on the conversion journey. John advised that the working group had considered this option on the assumption that 50% of schools would have converted or have initiated the conversion process by the end of 2017/18. It was noted that the completion of all currently-proposed conversions would take until the end of 2018/19. John advised that it seemed logical for MATs to take responsibility for school improvement in settings joining their structures, though an LA allocation would still be required in the short term. It was noted that the funding model for option 2 included £30k of cluster funding and £30k for groups of schools addressing city-wide priorities, with the working group proposing retention of both funding allocations. John summarised the allocations proposed by the working group under option 2:

Pathfinder CPD programme	£150k
MAT / LA School Improvement support	£400k
Cluster work	£ 30k
City-wide sector-led improvement	£ 30k
Individual School Allocations	<u>£291k</u>
	£901k
<i>Plus Wellbeing Workers agreed separately</i>	<u>£ 65k</u>
	<u>£966k</u>

It was noted that the proposed funding arrangements would require MATs to discuss issues with the LA to enable its role in providing independent oversight and the distribution of £200k within the city's MATs. John advised of the need to recognise that sponsored conversions attracted some Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) funding

and that this would need to be taken into account when planning, though the restrictions attached to this funding would also need to be noted.

In response to a question regarding a proposed reduction in funding to Ebor TSA in line with the reduction to funding for the Pathfinder TSA CPD offer, John advised that the overall funding allocation for school improvement would not be reduced at this time and that the LA may use part of this funding to commission Ebor TSA to deliver aspects of school improvement.

In response to a question regarding paragraph 19 and reference to development of a “local resource”, John advised that this project was open to debate, with a view having been provided by Richard Hartle that the city might be able to influence the DfE regarding the future of school improvement funding but would need to build an evidence base to support this process. It was noted that there were no guarantees regarding future funding but that a city-wide aspiration, shared by the MAT CEOs, to develop a collaborative system which evidenced the value for money delivered by the local school network could be helpful.

Richard advised that such an evidence base might help the city retain funding which currently sat outside the proposed national funding formula arrangements, further advising that the DfE expected to unwind commitments and remove funding from LAs by 2019/20. It was noted that if this central school improvement funding were to be transferred into the LMS Funding Formula for 2017/18, then its benefit to schools would be removed rapidly once the new National Funding Formula was introduced. The possible retention of funding for school improvement across the city through the development of an evidence-base showing value for money and positive outcomes was therefore desirable.

The Chair advised that Ebor TSA had a role to play in recruiting SLEs and in working with the LA to oversee projects. It was noted that this work needed to be quality-assured and for a system to be in place to enable evaluation of the use of the £200k allocated to the LA. It was noted that no other funding would be available to the LA to support school improvement, with the Chair observing that the most complex schools within the city were currently within the academy system or in the process of conversion, increasingly shifting need into the MATs. It was noted that the RSC would provide some funding to support schools judged to be Grade 4. Maxine advised that some transitional funding being provided only partly replaced reduced ESG funding in the short term, with regional allocations being made by a national panel. It was noted that the DfE budget had been reduced overall, impacting funding available on a bid basis.

In response to a question regarding the Wellbeing Worker role and the long-term future funding for this project, currently supported by a £65k allocation, Jon Stonehouse advised that this funding had been allocated by a separate Schools Forum decision. Jon further advised that it was unclear what funding mechanism would be in place in future for the project, though mental health was currently viewed as a city-wide priority. It was noted that the Forum could discuss funding options for the project over the next two-years.

In response to a question regarding funding for school improvement in the 2017/18 de-delegations; Richard advised that this was a separate issue as the new de-delegation related specifically to the ESG transferred to the DSG in 2017/18, was neutral in schools’ budgets and helped fund the LA’s core school improvement team.

Further discussion followed, with the point being made that it would be helpful to see the allocation of school improvement funding between the LA and MATs for the current year. It was noted that the TSAs played a key role in the delivery of school improvement and that the working group had clearly understood the Pathfinder CPD offer and the 34% reduction in funding. It was noted that the allocation to Ebor TSA had been reduced by 27%, with the suggestion being made that this reduction also be increased to 34%, with the balance being redirected to schools. It was suggested that school-to-school support work be put to tender, with discussion of options following.

John suggested that the Forum received quarterly reports from the MAT CEOs and LA School Improvement team showing budget spend and impact. It was noted that the School Improvement Commissioning Fund had been underspent in the last two years. It was noted that the city currently retained flexibility in its response to Schools Causing Concern (SCC), with a question being asked regarding how SCC might be addressed in-year should funding be split between the LA and MATs as proposed. The Chair advised that MATs would need to build their own school improvement teams, with each MAT building capacity through allocation of its own top-slice. Maxine advised that funding would be based on the LA's risk assessment process.

The Forum further discussed the detail of Option 2, with the Chair advising that the current support model was based on planning on an academic year basis whilst funding was currently allocated on a financial year basis beginning 1st April. The suggestion being that it would now be sensible for funding to also move to an academic year allocation.

Andrew Daly advised that LA intelligence and the deeper understanding of issues developed within MATs would need to be brought together to determine funding allocations. It was noted that the LA would retain a role in quality assuring intervention and support work. The Chair advised that MATs would need to be able to address emerging issues in schools with weak data but not identified through a formal process and therefore attracting additional funding.

The view was expressed that the agreed transitional arrangement would need to be thought through due to its limitations, with a desired outcome being the continuance of the strong co-operation currently evident across the city. Maxine advised that the funding available to MATs was not sufficient to allow the development of individual school improvement functions and that a collaborative approach would be the most resilient model for future working. It was noted that overall funding would remain inadequate and would not cover base costs.

In response to a question regarding the critical mass at which MATs became sustainable, John advised that the top-slice applied by MATs would only generate a portion of required funding and that the LA was keen to see the development of city-wide provision that all MATs could access to ensure adequate support. It was noted that collaborative working between MATs would be necessary to deliver this. Maxine advised that York children would move between MATs during their education and that the system would need to ensure the delivery of quality to all.

The Forum discussed this proposed approach, with Jon Stonehouse advising that few LAs were considering a collaborative solution. Jon advised that the proposed model offered a very different solution to the issues of inadequate funding and limited capacity. It was noted that the continuance of city-wide discussion was key to development of the model.

Jon advised that the clear preference for Option 2 must be underpinned by funding detail which delivered the maximum funding back to schools but retained a central fund for maintained schools as well as funding for MATs. Jon asked members to consider the overall level of funding outlined in Option 2 and to be mindful that the decision was being made based on relatively new arrangements. Jon suggested a cautious approach, with Richard advising that an adjustment of funding back to schools could be made in-year if the allocation for school improvement was made at this point and was not required in total.

The Chair sought the view of the Forum on the allocations to Pathfinder and Ebor TSAs. Following further discussion Maxine advised that school-to-school support provided by Ebor was difficult to predict in comparison to the CPD offer and that needs could change significantly during the year. It was noted that the overall allocation of £400k offered flexibility. Maxine advised that the model had been reviewed, with John advising that funding would not all be allocated via Ebor and that any underspends would be returned to schools.

In response to a question regarding the 2016/17 underspend; Richard advised that this would be carried forward as part of the overall DSG balance into 2017/18.

The Forum further discussed funding allocations, noting that the overall funding allocated to the SICG had already been reduced. It was noted that a MAT sponsoring a school in Special Measures needed to account for the additional RSC funding allocation to ensure positive outcomes.

The Chair advised that MATs would need to discuss with the LA situations in which school leaders had been identified as a barrier to improvement, with the point being made that MATs were better-able to address leadership issues given their structures.

The Chair proposed that funding totalling £125k pa be approved through to the end of the 2017/18 academic year for the Wellbeing Workers, cluster funding and city-wide projects as discussed:

- **School Wellbeing Workers (£65k)**
- **Funding to school clusters (£30k)**
- **Projects considered by the School Improvement Commissioning Group (£30k)**

This was unanimously agreed.

The Chair proposed that funding of £150k be approved for the Pathfinder TSA 2017/18 academic year CPD offer. This was unanimously agreed.

The Chair proposed that funding of £400k be approved as the total school improvement fund for the 2017/18 academic year, with further detail on how this would be allocated to be considered by the working group and brought back to the Forum. This was unanimously agreed.

In response to a question regarding the continuance of the SICG, John provided context to the Forum. It was suggested that membership required review and that thought could usefully be given to the involvement of headteachers in the group.

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

Julia Massey joined the meeting at 10.30am.

It was agreed that item 7 would be taken at this point in the agenda.

7. The Apprenticeship Levy

Previously distributed. Julia Massey outlined her role as Learning City Partnership Manager, supporting schools as employers.

Julia advised that the government's apprenticeship levy of 0.5% would be applied to payrolls of over £3m pa from 1st April 2017, with this being taken as a monthly deduction. It was noted that this fund could then be accessed to support training for new apprentices and staff. It was noted that (non VA) maintained schools were included in the overall LA payroll and would all therefore be subject to the levy, even if an individual school's payroll was less than £3m pa. VA schools, stand alone academies and MATs were not included in the LA payroll total and would be separately subject to the levy based on their own annual payroll costs. Julia advised of the need to maximise benefit from the proportionate levy contribution being made by schools.

It was noted that the LA aimed to offer an independent apprenticeship brokerage that might be of benefit to schools.

Julia tabled a draft guide and toolkit, advising that this explained the levy in greater detail.

The Chair advised that a MAT with a combined payroll of over £3M would need to pay the levy but would be able to access training for an apprentice. Julia advised that in this situation the MAT would pay for the apprentice, with the levy funding the training element. It was noted that 15 training funding bands had been established and that banding information was available via the LA's website, which provided estimated costs for apprenticeships.

The Forum noted the principles for the use of the levy pot included in the guidance notes:

- Whilst the CYC payroll and levy account will not separate out CYC 'core' and 'schools', CYC will set up a system to track indicative values for levy collection and demand on spend by CYC 'core' and schools
- CYC Education and Skills Team to work with schools to scope potential demand against the schools' 'pooled' levy pot
- Agree a principle of access to the levy pot by schools in relation to demand and need not in proportion to levy paid
- Schools' levy funds (at risk of expiring) can be used elsewhere in CYC to support the costs of apprenticeship training for new recruits or existing staff, and vice versa
- If a school converts to become an academy:
 - The academy's governing body or trust will be responsible for the apprenticeship levy from this point
 - The levy contributions already made via CYC are not transferable
 - The liability of any outstanding training costs for staff undertaking apprenticeship training (either as a new starter or existing staff development) are transferred to the academy or Trust
 - New apprentice recruits will be subject to TUPE legislation and transferred into the new employing entity along with all other school employees
- If the cumulative levy funds of CYC (core + schools) is at risk of expiring, a pragmatic approach to manage under-spend will be applied, with CYC seeking to retain levy investment within the local economy, exercising the opportunity to use

10% of levy payments to support training costs of our supply chain (from April 2018)

- If demand for accessing apprenticeship funds exceeds the levy pot, CYC / schools can access co-investment, whereby government pays 90% of the training and assessment costs and a 10% contribution is required from the school or CYC service area

Julia advised of the need to agree the principle that schools access funding in proportion to need and not based on their contribution. It was noted that this would need to be agreed as a maintained group of schools.

It was noted that funding was available to support existing staff, as well as newly appointed staff. Julia advised that new TA standards, standards for Initial Teacher Training and for School Bursars were in development.

The Forum discussed the paper, with Julia providing further information on training providers. It was noted that MATs could access a range of established providers via the procurement process, with LA procurement principles having been adopted and trainers being accessed via York Learning. It was noted that maintained schools could access this information via the LA.

In response to a question regarding schools in the process of converting to academy status, Julia advised that this situation was covered by the principles already outlined, suggesting that the levy could not be repaid but that the LA would maximise value. It was noted that existing training relationships would transfer to the academy, with references to this process included in the TUPE guidance.

Tricia Head shared some experiences of apprentice recruitment, with Julia advising of the work being done to address “supply side” issues through the engagement of young people and parents and that the quality of applicants had significantly improved.

In response to a question regarding the information provided to headteachers, schools and governors, Julia advised that information would be shared more widely shortly, with the opportunity to make comments available for a short time. It was noted that Julia could arrange an online survey to gauge interest and that project leads could visit schools to support their understanding of needs.

In response to a question regarding teacher apprenticeship opportunities, Maxine Squire advised that these would be made available in time. In response to a question regarding the fit with teacher training, Maxine advised that aspects of the programme could be made available to serving teachers to support the improvement of aspects of their role. Julia advised that lobbying could be undertaken if a specific need were identified.

In response to a question regarding a cap on the training contribution, Julia advised that central government would pay up to 90% of training costs if a group met 10% of the total.

It was noted that information would be taken to the summer term headteacher and governor briefing sessions and that a governor training event would be organised. The Chair asked that the information be shared with SBMs.

In response to a question regarding the level held by an applicant when applying for an apprenticeship and the apparent need to be working below the level of the placement, Julia advised that the level could already have been achieved but that the applicant

could be seeking to learn new skills at the current level. Julia highlighted the need for transferable skills in these cases, with an emphasis on a change in career direction. It was noted that graduate apprenticeship roles were planned for the future.

Julia invited comments from Forum members in advance of the summer term briefings.

Glyn Jones requested an update on the influence of HR and CPD policy to a future meeting. Julia would consider this request.

Julia Massey left the meeting at 10.55am.

6. National Funding Formula Consultation update

Richard Hartle advised that he had submitted the LA's response to include the following points:

- Basic amount per pupil - An increase in the basic amount per pupil had been requested, particularly in relation to the balance between the targeted and basic amounts
- Impact on small rural schools - The impact of the reduction in the lump sum and removal of sparsity funding would require local discretion to be available to address losses
- Funding floor – the maximum 3% loss per pupil would perpetuate inequalities and the floor should be reviewed
- Overall level of resources should be increased

Richard highlighted the national debate now taking place, with a central government response awaited. It was noted that schools anticipating an increase in their funding via the proposed model were still unhappy with the proposed levels, and that discussion of current and future cost pressures were being conflated with the National Funding Formula review in the press, with this being unhelpful in terms of understanding the implications of the proposed formula.

The update was noted.

8. Schools Forum forward plan

Previously distributed. Richard Hartle outlined the items included in the plan, which was noted. The inclusion review would be added.

In response to a question regarding the possible delay to the National Funding Formula and associated consequences, Richard advised that the city anticipated an overall gain of c£4.5M, though this could be delayed or lost if the proposed model was rejected. Richard advised of other possible implications to retained budgets, though he expected as a minimum that flat cash allocations would continue.

Maxine advised that the general election timeline would apply if called.

9. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

10. Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting would take place on 3rd July at 1.00pm.

The meeting closed at 11.10am.

Chair

Date