

CITY OF YORK SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the Schools Forum held on Tuesday 29th September 2015 at 1.00pm

Attendance list:

Members:

Tracey Ralph	Maintained Primary Headteacher and Chair
Trevor Burton	Maintained Secondary Headteacher
Brian Crosby	Academies Representative
Cath Hindmarch	Special School Representative (deputising for George Gilmore)
Caroline Hancy	Maintained Primary Headteacher
Tricia Head	Pupil Referral Unit Representative
Andy Herbert	Maintained Primary Headteacher
Ken McArthur	Early Years Sector Representative
Lorna Savage	Maintained Secondary Headteacher
Karen Tatham	Maintained Primary Headteacher

Observers / Advisors:

Cllr Jenny Brooks	Elected Member for Children and Young People
Richard Hartle	Head of Finance, City of York Council
Maxine Squire	Assistant Director, Education and Skills
Jon Stonehouse	Director of Children's Services, Education 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 – Further Education Representative, Nicola Fox – Maintained Nursery Representative, Richard Ludlow – Academy Representative and Bill Scriven – Maintained Secondary Headteacher (VA school).

David O'Brien – Governor Representative was absent from the meeting.

3. Minutes of the York Schools Forum meeting of 7th July 2015

Previously distributed.

The minutes of the meeting of 7th July 2015 were agreed to be a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

4. Matters Arising

With reference to item 9, Inclusion review pilot projects, Tricia Head advised that she had met with primary headteachers in the west of the city and agreed that basing a pilot at the Hob Moor site was desirable. It was noted that a meeting would take place at York High School on 1st October to consider the original intent of the pilots, with feedback to be shared afterwards.

Jon Stonehouse stated that there was nothing preventing the pilot being located at the Children's Centre at Hob Moor, with this to be progressed by Tricia and Cath Hindmarch.

With reference to discussion of the role of the York Learning Partnership (YLP) in monitoring work of the Teaching School Alliances under item 12, Any Other Business, Maxine Squire advised that a meeting of the YLP would take place on 2nd October and that the remit of this group would be reviewed at this stage. Jon advised that it was questionable whether this strategic board was needed as the decision-making powers of the YLP were limited.

The Chair advised of the need for all partners to understand the purpose of the YLP Board which acted as a representative group, taking the view of clusters via a consultation process.

With reference to item 4, Matters Arising, it was noted that a number of primary headteachers were concerned by the Schools Forum decision not to review the Local Funding Formula due to the continuing disparity between the ten highest and ten lowest funded schools. Richard Hartle advised that the Forum had agreed not to review the Local Funding Formula for 2016/17 but to consider a local review should a national review be delayed beyond 2017.

It was noted that a review could not now be arranged for 2016/17 as development work would have needed to be undertaken during summer 2015 for consultation during the autumn term. It was noted that a new National Funding Formula was expected for 2017/18. Richard advised that the latest point at which the Forum could decide to implement a revised 2017/18 Local Funding Formula was the December 2016 meeting. This would require development work during summer 2016, though an earlier decision would enable longer consideration.

The Forum discussed options, noting that the final decision rested with the Executive Member for Education, Children & Young People, though the Forum could request officers to undertake a review on their behalf. Richard advised that consultation with the Forum and all schools was a mandatory requirement.

Further discussion followed, with Richard advising that any revision was likely to result in a redistribution of funds rather than an increase in overall available funding.

Richard agreed to produce a draft timeline and scope for a review that could be considered at the next meeting, in the event that the DfE announced further delay in the national review beyond 2017/18.

Following further discussion it was noted that, although a revision to the National Funding Formula might bring an increase in overall funding to York, at individual school-level it was likely that some schools could still lose whilst others gained.

The action plan would be updated to reflect progress.

5. Early Years Reference Group report

Ken McArthur advised that Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) funding had been introduced during the summer term, at a rate of £300 per pupil. This equated to c£0.53 per hour. Ken advised that underfunding remained an issue, though the process of administration of EYPP was simple and effective. Ken thanked the LA for consulting with settings and supporting PVI nurseries during introduction. It was noted that there

was no entitlement to funded meals in the PVI sector, removing the funding implications for Pupil Premium of universal FSM in primary schools.

Ken advised that Pupil Premium often duplicated inclusion and deprivation funding, bringing additional funding for an identified group of children. It was noted that this funding was top-sliced from the Early Years budget and could bring additional funding of £0.93 per hour to some settings with Pupil Premium and Deprivation Factor eligible children.

Richard Hartle advised that consultation with the Forum and Early Years settings had taken place but could be reviewed, advising that the deprivation factor caused the same issues for nursery settings as for schools due to its role within the funding formula.

Ken advised that EYPP and deprivation funding was being distributed to a small number of settings and could usefully be reviewed.

Ken advised that SEN processes had changed and a meeting for SENCOs had noted that the work involved in claiming SEN funding was now significant. It was noted that no additional salary funding was available for EY SENCOs and that SENCO time was factored in to child / worker ratios making it difficult for them to find time to undertake this work. Concern had been expressed that EY SENCOs might leave or that recruitment might become challenging. Ken advised that the process had been reconsidered and that a meeting on 28th September had identified ways of supporting SENCOs in this work.

Ken advised of the potential increase in funded hours from 15 to 30 for “working families” and the implications of this. It was noted that the national funding average for this time was £3.90 per hour whilst in York it was £3.38 per hour.

Ken stated that meetings with the LA to determine capacity to enable an increase in hours were taking place, though an increase would impact on maintained and PVI settings. It was noted that any increase in entitlement was likely to reduce the total number of children accessing EY provision.

Ken advised that expressions of interest for a pilot for the proposed increased entitlement were being invited, with this to run in September 2016. Roll-out was anticipated in September 2017.

In response to a question regarding the impact of the introduction of the Living Wage, Ken advised that the government was currently reviewing funding rates for the 15 hours of entitlement and were consulting on the application of an additional 15 hours. It was noted that the Living Wage was higher than the current average EY salary, though higher quality settings generally set higher rates of pay. It was noted that EY work was a lower-paid profession and that increases in pension and National Insurance contributions would impact on operating costs.

6. School Balances 2014/15

Previously distributed. Richard Hartle advised that no recommendations were being made for the LA to withdraw any reserves above the permitted thresholds at the end of 2014/15. It was noted that Annex 6 detailed school requests to retain reserves in exceptional circumstances, with the LA recommending that these officer decisions be approved.

In response to a question regarding secondary school outturns and the impact of falling rolls and of lagged funding for schools undergoing expansion, Richard advised that the LA would allocate funding via the Growth Fund agreed by the Forum. It was noted that successful schools were seeking to expand and that lagged funding impacted on the ability to accommodate a rising roll, whilst schools with a falling roll could be left with a surplus at the year-end. Richard advised that this was caused by the funding lag and that the schools currently carrying a surplus would incur an in-year deficit beyond 2015/16. Richard further advised that funding could be allocated from the Growth Fund for those schools experiencing increased numbers in line with LA demographic growth planning.

Richard advised that the Growth Fund had been set by the Forum along with a criteria for its allocation. It was noted that the current year Growth Fund had been set at £800k, including £450k of Infant Class Size Funding protection for primary schools.

Cath Hindmarch asked that Special Schools be considered alongside mainstream settings as rolls were increasing.

Richard advised that there was a separate funding regime for Special Schools. This was based on a agreed annual number of places commissioned by the LA, and then in year top ups based on the actual number of pupils attending, so the issue of pupil growth would be dealt with by default.

In response to a question regarding the allocation of the Growth Fund, Richard advised that this contingency had been allocated and detailed in a paper earlier in the year. It was noted that the Growth Fund was allocated annually and that any surplus was rolled forward to the following year.

In response to a question regarding Osbaldwick Primary School, Richard advised that the merger with Derwent Schools had included an agreement for additional protection which saw a reduction in funding over time. It was noted that the protection had been agreed up front before the current funding arrangements had become effective.

The Forum considered and accepted the officer recommendations regarding carry-forward school balances at the 2014/15 year end.

7. School Start Budgets 2015/16

Previously distributed. The Forum noted the start budget balances and deficits.

In response to a question regarding the forecasts for 2016/17 and 2017/18 and whether school financing was becoming unsustainable, Richard Hartle advised that the forecasts were assessments and that a significant majority of schools were predicting in-year deficits, suggesting that additional funding or remedial action would be required.

The start budget information was noted.

8. School Budget De-delegations 2016/17

Previously distributed. Richard Hartle reminded the Forum that it had requested further information on a number of proposed de-delegations at its last meeting:

- Behaviour Support Outreach Service
- Traveller Education Service
- Teachers' Panel Union Facility Time

Richard advised that the paper included information on the Behaviour Support Outreach Service and Traveller Education Service, though the Teachers' Panel had not met during the summer and would now review Facility Time prior to the December Forum meeting. It was noted that this timescale would not be problematic as de-delegation relating to the Teachers' Panel had been agreed to 31st August 2016 and that future de-delegation could therefore be considered on 14th December.

The Forum considered all of the de-delegation recommendations included in the paper:

Schools General Contingency – Maxine Squire advised that the Schools General Contingency has been set at £4.00 per pupil and was adequate for the current year. It was noted that the number of employment tribunal cases had increased recently with complex issues resulting in costly processes. It was noted that this expenditure was not predictable but was currently covered by the allocated contingency.

The Forum considered and approved the continuance of the current de-delegation at a rate of £4.00 per pupil during 2016/17.

Free School Meal Eligibility Assessment Services – The Forum considered and approved the continuance of the current de-delegation during 2016/17 at the rates specified in the report. .

Traveller Education Service – The Forum discussed the information provided on the service, noting that Danesgate, Special Schools and academy settings could access the service on a traded basis as they did not fall within the scope of the de-delegation.

In response to questions from the Forum regarding the availability of detail relating to team structure and outcomes and to funding support for implementation of the Prevent agenda, Jon Stonehouse suggested that a sub-group had been established to analyse the current de-delegations and Services for Schools offer in detail.

Further discussion followed, with it being noted that secondary headteachers had not discussed the Traveller Education Service for some time. It was acknowledged that the service included a high level of expertise though not all headteachers currently engaged with the service making evaluation more challenging.

In response to a question regarding targets for the service, Jon advised that schools would have established targets and would work with the service to achieve these. Maxine advised of the need to consider the capacity of other support services available to schools seeking to address significant issues when reviewing this de-delegation.

In response to a question regarding possible refugee placements, Jon advised that the LA was working with Migration Yorkshire regarding funding and need. It was noted that Mark Ellis, Head of School Services, was involved in this process, with representatives of Children's Social Care. Jon advised that further information would be brought to headteachers and the Forum as required.

Jon proposed that the de-delegation for the Traveller Education Service be approved for 2016/17 at the rates specified in the report, with a sub-group to take a forensic view of services before the next de-delegation round. This was agreed.

Behaviour Support Outreach Service – The Forum considered the proposed de-delegation, querying the sufficiency of capacity. Tricia Head advised that an increased capacity would be used up as it became available, further advising that the service was

seeking to build capacity through a pilot in the west of the city and through encouraging the allocation of Behaviour Support Workers in schools.

The Forum approved the continuance of the current de-delegation during 2016/17 at the rates specified in the report.

9. School retainer payments

Previously distributed. **The Forum considered and approved the recommendation to end school retainer payments following a final distribution in October 2015.**

10. Schools Forum forward plan

Previously distributed. The forward plan was noted and would be updated following the meeting.

11. Any Other Business

In response to a question regarding academy conversions and financial impact on the local authority and Forum stakeholder groups, Jon advised that the impact of change would underpin the rationale behind the work of the Services for Schools sub-group.

It was noted that between £2M and £3M would be lost from LA budgets were all schools to convert, with officers being aware of this potential impact. Jon advised that it was difficult to be specific regarding the role of the Forum in managing this change. It was noted that the LA was considering its Services for Schools offer and that the majority of schools and academies bought LA services, indicating that there was a need for these to be retained in any future structure. It was noted that good relationships between the LA and settings was key.

The Forum discussed this information, noting the limitations of the Education Services Grant. Jon agreed to provide a paper to the next meeting outlining the services and responsibilities that transfer to academies on conversion.

It was noted that some academy financial information was in the public domain, although this was not as comprehensive as the information available for maintained schools.

12. Date and time of the next meeting

14th December 2015 at 1.00pm
11th April 2016 at 1.00pm
5th July 2016 at 9.00am

The meeting closed at 2.35pm.

Tracey Ralph
Chair

Date