

CITY OF YORK SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the Schools Forum held on Thursday 26th September 2019 at 9.00am

Attendance list:

Members:

Trevor Burton	Academy Representative and Chair
Di Gomery	Maintained Secondary Governor Representative [from 9.15am]
Tricia Head	Pupil Referral Unit Representative
Dee Patton-Statham	Maintained Primary Headteacher Representative (VA)
Jenny Rogers	Maintained Primary Headteacher Representative
James Rourke	Maintained Primary Headteacher Representative (Deputising for Debbie Glover)
Lorna Savage	Academy Representative
John Tomsett	Maintained Secondary Headteacher Representative

Observers / Advisors:

Cllr Ian Cuthbertson	Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education
Amanda Hatton	Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities, City of York Council
Maxine Squire	Assistant Director, Education and Skills, City of York Council [to 10.00am]
Richard Hartle	Head of Finance, City of York Council
John Thompson	Head of Secondary and Skills, City of York Council
Salli Radford	Head of Governor Services, City of York Council, Coordinator and Clerk
Rob Newton	Social Mobility Project Lead, Education, City of York Council [to 9.40am]
Barbara Mands	Head of Childcare Strategy and Business Management Service, City of York Council [to 9.40am]
Nicola Dos Santos	Early and Childcare Inclusion Advisor, Early Years and Childcare Strategy, City of York Council [to 9.40am]

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were taken round the table.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Adam Booker – Special School Representative, Brian Crosby – Academy Representative, Andrew Daly – Academy Representative, Debbie Glover – Maintained Primary Headteacher Representative, Tracey Roberts (deputising for Helen Gratton) – Early Years Sector Representative, Richard Ludlow – Academy Representative, Lee Probert – FE Representative and Claire Rigden – Maintained Nursery Headteacher Representative.

3. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Trevor Burton was elected Chair of the Forum for a term of one year.

Trevor Burton took the chair for the meeting.

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

It was agreed that succession planning for the Forum would be revisited during the year and that any members wishing to consider either office in future should contact Salli Radford.

4. Membership update

Previously distributed. The update was noted.

It was noted that only two of the five current academy members were present, despite the option to arrange a deputy to attend. Lorna Savage would address this with the academy CEOs and Salli Radford would remind all representatives of their commitment and the option to arrange a deputy.

5. Social mobility project presentation

Project outline previously distributed.

Rob Newton presented and tabled an update on the project and SALT and Elklan training logic model summaries. Reading time was provided.

Di Gomery joined the meeting at 9.15am.

Rob advised that communication and language outcomes at age five were linked to a range of future outcomes. Rob stated that he was keen to see a move away from the generalised GLD measure in order to focus on key aspects of early development.

Rob outlined the multi-agency delivery model in place, with schools, Local Area Teams, early years settings and health teams working together; a different approach to previous projects. It was noted that the aim was to see significant and sustained change and that it would therefore be necessary to commit to the project for a minimum of three years. Rob advised that milestones were in place to allow assessment during the lifetime of the project.

In response to a question regarding progress tracking and whether this would be at individual-child level or by group, Rob advised that high mobility presented a challenge to group tracking, adding that both methods would be used, with mobility being taken into account.

In response to a question regarding the security of funding and need for political commitment to sustain the project in the longer term given the fact that funding could not be guaranteed by the Forum in future, Cllr Cuthbertson advised that Executive Members would work with officers to secure funding, adding that once data was available for a five-to-six year period it would be possible to make a case to include the work in general provision. Cllr Cuthbertson stated that indications were that the project should deliver the required outcomes and that two years of empirical data should help secure funding. Amanda Hatton further advised that the LA was considering 2020 budgets and that savings would be required, necessitating consideration of efficiencies in order to redirect funding to projects that would deliver impact. Examples were provided. Amanda advised that this would be a key focus, adding that narrowing the pupil attainment gap had been considered by Scrutiny Group which was keen to see evidence from the project. Maxine Squire advised that the LA had funded the project initially, providing £100k to enable Rob Newton's secondment and initiate the work. Rob advised that Vale of York CCG was in the final stages of approving part-funding

for a speech and language therapist as a way of helping prevent mental health issues in the longer term.

A Forum member outlined the difficulties in addressing the attainment gap and the number of failed initiatives so far which had been identified during the social mobility conference, highlighting the need to evidence long-term benefits across later key stages. Discussion followed. Cllr Cuthbertson endorsed the project based on the currently available evidence.

The Chair thanked Rob for the update.

6. Impact of Early Years Funding Streams 2018/19

Previously distributed. Barbara Mands presented the annual report, highlighting a commitment in the last child care sufficiency assessment to bring greater transparency around SEND and the impact of the use of the inclusion Fund. The Forum noted a DfE expectation of transparency.

Barbara outlined key policy changes during the in last two years, including the 30 hours offer, advising that eligible children with SEND had impacted the overall position in relation to speech and language. Barbara advised that CPD funding had been secured for SEND in Early Years settings and that Communication Trust support had also been secured to support the development of a speech, language and communication pathway.

Barbara outlined the work of the Early Years funding teams in proving support and challenge to ensure positive impact. The Forum noted the overall funding of £387k and the inclusion fund of £125k in 2018/19.

It was noted that take-up of the Disability Access Fund was good and that Early Years Pupil Premium (PP) take-up was strong. Barbara advised that the need to address complex needs at after-school provision was a newly identified area of need and was now being addressed.

Barbara outlined emerging issues, advising that the team was considering how best to respond whilst ensuring a robust approach. Barbara advised that support was as targeted as possible and that emerging needs were being analysed to help the team understand demand.

It was noted that the funding was bringing a positive difference, with closer monitoring welcomed by the sector though funding remained under pressure.

In response to a question regarding links with the social inclusion project, Barbara advised that the two work streams were closely linked and that the speech and language pathway would contribute to improved outcomes overall.

In response to a question regarding examples of successful outcomes, the reasons for these and the lessons learnt from evaluation, Nicola Dos Santos advised that the team was in the process of visiting settings to undertake reviews after a term of funding support for SEND pupils, with this to feed into the next report. Nicola advised that the team was looking at the quality of visits and that moderation was in progress. It was noted that the processes allowed settings to work on interventions provided by professionals and enabled monitoring.

In response to a question regarding the sharing of good practice, Nicola advised that some settings were not being utilised and that the LA would develop challenge to ensure value. It was noted that the team could ask settings for evidence and would do this more robustly in future. Discussion followed. Nicola advised of the need to develop systems as a team. Amanda Hatton outlined the existing research available, agreeing to share a link to the Action Research into Improvement in Local Children's Services report.

In response to a question regarding the support for after school clubs and the pupil age threshold, Nicola advised that this could be up to 11 or possibly older. Barbara further advised that the decision to discontinue after school provision at Hob Moor Oaks had created additional SEND need in a range of after school settings. In response to a question regarding the reason funding for this additional need was being picked up by the team, Barbara advised of the LA's statutory duty to provide after school care under childcare sufficiency legislation.

In response to a question regarding the allocation of funding and whether this was directly to providers or to families, Barbara advised that the inclusion fund considered applications from providers. Nicola further advised that some funding was made available to families. In response to a question regarding the monitoring of use of funding, Nicola advised that monitoring was undertaken via providers and that there had been some direct conversations to ensure attendance of eligible children was as expected. It was noted that settings could use inclusion funding to provide additional staffing.

In response to a question regarding provision for older children and whether this was offered on the basis of need or availability of places, Maxine Squire advised that after school provision was funded to age 14.

The Chair thanked Barbara and Nicola for their update.

Barbara Mands, Rob Newton and Nicola Dos Santos left the meeting at 9.40am.

7. Minutes of the York Schools Forum meeting of 5th July 2019

Previously distributed. The minutes of the meeting were agreed to be a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

8. Action Plan and Matters Arising

Previously distributed. The summary of completed actions agreed during 2018/19 was noted. With reference to outstanding points from the action plan:

Point 1 – Completed. The Chair advised that secondary headteachers had invited Roy Grant to speak to the group but that this invitation had not been taken up. It was noted that secondary schools were generally moving away from the centrally negotiated broadband contract as the uncertainty was not supportive of schools.

Point 2 – Richard Hartle advised that the frequently asked questions document had not been circulated as it was now out of date. An update was being arranged prior to circulation. It was noted that pricing was still not finalised. Richard would follow up this action point.

Matters Arising:

It was noted that the Chair would write, with support from Richard, to the Secretary of State for Education to express the concern of the Forum regarding High Needs Funding levels.

9. Maintained school start budgets 2019/20

Previously distributed. Richard Hartle presented the report, which outlined the start budget position for the 2019/20 financial year and included forward plans for the following two years.

It was noted that four schools were requesting licensed deficits which required formal approval from the LA. The Forum noted that this was for information only and was an LA decision.

Forum members noted the four requests detailed:

- All Saints RC School – Requesting a new licensed deficit though approval could not yet be granted as the school was yet to finalise a recovery plan.
- Bishopthorpe Infant School – Requesting a continuing licensed deficit. The LA had refused to agree to a licensed deficit at this stage and had asked the school to undertake further work on its five-year plan.
- St Barnabas CE Primary School – Requesting a continuing licensed deficit. The LA had consented to a licensed revenue deficit budget of £13k to be repaid by 31st March 2021.
- Huntington Secondary School – Requesting a continuing licensed deficit. The LA had consented to a licensed revenue deficit budget of £28k to be repaid by 31st March 2021.

The Forum noted the report annexes. Richard Hartle advised that annex 2 showed that a number of schools were projecting in-year deficits, though these were generally based on cautious estimations and historically tended to improve as information firmed up during the year.

The report was noted.

10. Budget preparation 2020/21 – initial report

Previously distributed. Richard Hartle presented the report, advising that this aimed to pick up the main headlines from the central government spending review document and a statement from the Secretary of State for Education to parliament. It was noted that LA operational guidance was also being revised.

Maxine Squire left the meeting at 10.00am.

Forum members noted Richard's analysis. Richard cautioned around the High Needs funding block as previously outlined to meetings. Amanda Hatton advised that the anticipated increase in High Needs funding of £1.3M would address half of the predicted over-spend in 2020/21. Richard advised that the LA was able to make a request to the Forum to transfer funds to the High Needs block, further advising that the anticipated 2019/20 outturn would show a significant cumulative deficit against the High Needs block of between £2.5M and £3M. It was noted that the LA would be required to agree a recovery plan for DSG funding with the DfE. Richard advised that the Forum would need to consider options at the year-end, including the potential transfer of funds.

Richard outlined currently available information relating to the 4% increase to formula factors from 2020/21. The Forum noted new minimum per pupil values which would increase to £3,750 for primary schools and to £5,000 secondary schools from 2020/21, with a further commitment to increase the primary school minimum per pupil value to £4,000 in 2021/22. It was noted that this would benefit some schools though impact

had not yet been modelled due to the lack of detail currently available. It was further noted that modelling would follow further announcements in November and that the increases would not be subject to legislative process as they formed part of the spending review.

Tricia Head advised that special school and PRU funding guidance was not yet available and that top-ups had not been revised for almost five years, leaving programme costs disconnected from top-up funding. It was noted that the PRU flat funding rate remained below the bottom of the Special School band. Richard advised that he expected York to receive the minimum 8% increase to the High Needs block, bringing £1.3M of additional resource. It was noted that the Forum would need to make decisions on High Needs deficit support and other areas of critical funding need.

Richard advised that the announcement had stated that the gains cap of 3% per year would be removed, with this having the potential to bring significant funding increases. This would be modelled once detailed regulations were available.

In response to a question regarding the likely availability of financial modelling, Richard advised that receipt of information in early November would allow modelling before Christmas; otherwise information would follow the holiday. Amanda Hatton advised that a firm date was not yet available from the DfE. The Forum noted the challenge faced by schools in undertaking curriculum modelling in the light of ongoing financial uncertainty. Amanda advised that she would meet with DfE representatives on 7th October, inviting colleagues to email her with concerns which could be raised at the meeting.

Richard advised that DfE funding guidance had been received and would be analysed and used to inform work.

Richard advised that the growth fund would be continued with a ceiling of 0.5% of DSG and an expectation that this would need to be reduced.

It was noted that the Early Years national budget was increasing, though York received the lowest allocation and the LA would wait to see if this was increased before considering what the local response might need to be.

Richard advised that funding to support the teachers' pay award and pension contribution increase was unlikely to be continued as a separate allocation but that the LA expected that increases to other elements would fund overall costs going forward after 2020/21.

Discussion followed, with Forum members noting the complexity of current arrangements and how these failed to support school planning. Richard advised that it was hoped that detail would be announced for a full three-year settlement period to allow some forward projections to be developed.

The Forum discussed the best way to communicate anticipated impact during the coming weeks. The Chair suggested a schedule with key dates, which Richard would consider. It was noted that the early part of the spring term was a key point for teacher recruitment.

Richard advised that illustrative allocations for the LA's amount per pupil, along with draft modelling documents, would be made available by the DfE in October or November and that detailed allocations would be published in December. LA modelling would be enabled following release of this detailed information. It was noted

that the LA would be expected to submit formula details and allocation proposals by the end of January 2020. It was further noted that formal confirmation of 2020/21 funding would be provided to schools by the end of February 2020.

In response to a question regarding the impact of removal of the maximum gains cap and whether schools could be informed if they were likely to be in scope, Richard advised that a small number of York schools would have received a 15%-16% increase but that this would reduce to c10% once other factors were taken into account. Richard advised that he could consider how helpful the information would be to schools who should be aware of their position and would be able to make their own budget assumptions. It was noted that the LA was not in a position to formally confirm this detail. Richard further advised of the need to ensure that modelling was based on pupil projections not current school roll.

Richard advised that centrally retained funding which currently totalled c£3M would be subject to a phased reduction from 2020/21. It was noted that Richard anticipated a pro-rata reduction over a number of years with this allowing the LA to manage the reduction to a degree.

Amanda Hatton stated that she was keen to enable a more detailed discussion of these factors, with debate to be taken at the Forum.

11. LMS Scheme – consultation on revision

Richard Hartle advised of the LA's intention to update the LMS Scheme following the updating of DfE guidance and feedback from internal audit. It was noted that additional consultation was underway and that further required changes to the LMS Scheme were anticipated. Richard would reflect on this once the consultation closed on 30th September.

The Forum accepted deferral of this item until the consultation outcome was known, noting that the LA would arrange consultation on the draft scheme with schools in the meantime. It was noted that the scheme would apply to maintained schools only.

12 Impact of Schools Causing Concern Funding

Previously distributed. John Thompson presented the briefing which had been provided to headteachers earlier in the term. It was noted that the fund represented £400k of the total £966k School Improvement allocation and that the long-term future of this funding was not secure. John advised that funding was distributed by the York Schools and Academies Board which had been unanimously supportive of arrangements and believed that the funding was making a strong impact where deployed.

It was noted that the 2018/19 group of schools which had received support were generally now self-funding their improvement work or receiving a reduced allocation, with this evidencing sustained improvement.

John Tomsett commended the work of Trevor Burton and school leaders at York High School in delivering significant improvement.

John Thompson advised that work was being done to identify schools at risk and to use funding to address these concerns. It was noted that eight or nine primary schools identified as close to "coasting" standards had been supported and had all moved out of vulnerability. John advised that this group were no longer at risk, with subsequent

Ofsted inspections confirming Good status or Requires Improvement with a recognition of improvements achieved with the support of YSAB processes.

John provided a verbal report on the support arrangements reviewed at the YSAB meeting of 16th September:

- All Saints RC School
- York High School
- St Barnabas CE Primary
- Clifton Green Primary
- Burton Green Primary
- St Aelred's RC Primary
- Vale of York Academy
- Skeleton Primary
- Naburn CE Primary
- Yearsley Grove Primary
- Westfield Primary Community School

It was noted that requests were challenged to ensure projects were adequately and appropriately funded. It was further noted that the YSAB was revising its own processes to ensure monitoring via Rapid Improvement Groups to enable a quicker, less bureaucratic feedback mechanism.

John highlighted the need to secure funding to preserve the status of the YSAB process, advising that other possible sources of funding would be investigated. It was noted that the terms of reference were being amended following establishment of the St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Academies Trust (SMCCAT) as the role of the Diocese of Middlesbrough as founding body brought an external partner into the YSAB framework.

It was noted that John Tomsett was working on case studies to evidence impact of funded strategies which would be made available as a bank of information via York Education.

The meeting discussed the progress of the YSAB and the success of the arrangements in comparison to previous models.

13. Schools Forum forward plan

Richard Hartle outlined the forward plan:

February 2020

- School, High Needs, Early Years and Central Services start budgets 2020/21
- LMS scheme – revisions (subject to DfE consultation)

Richard advised that he would break down budget information to support Forum members' understanding of impact in the initial year and the longer term. Explanatory notes were requested due to the complexity of the funding blocks. Richard agreed to provide a briefing at the next meeting.

The Chair requested a paper for headteachers on the likely impact of funding changes, with Richard to take this forward.

14. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

15. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting would take place on 6th February 2020 at 9.00am.

The meeting closed at 10.55pm.