



# CITY OF YORK SCHOOLS FORUM

## Minutes of the additional Schools Forum meeting held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022 at 9.00am at West Offices

**Present:** Dave Hewitt (Maintained Secondary Headteacher Representative) Chair, Helen Gration (Early Years Sector Representative), Jo Olsen (Maintained Secondary Governor Representative), Lee Probert (FE Representative), Mark Richardson (Pupil Referral Unit Representative), Jenny Rogers (Maintained Primary Headteacher Representative), James Rourke (Maintained Primary Headteacher Representative), and Dee Statham (Academy Representative)

**In attendance:** Cllr Ian Cuthbertson (Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education), Maxine Squire (Assistant Director, Education and Skills, CYC), Richard Hartle (Head of Finance, CYC), Dan Bodey (Inclusion Advisor), Laura McMurray (School Wellbeing Service Team Leader), and Salli Radford (Head of Governor Services, CYC, Coordinator and Clerk)

### 1. **Welcome**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### 2. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Adam Booker (Special School Representative), Gail Brown (Academy Representative), Andrew Daly (Academy Representative), Mark Hassack (Academy Representative), Steve Lewis (Academy Representative), Claire Rigden (Maintained



Nursery Headteacher Representative (VC)), and Helen Winn (Academy Representative).

**3. Membership update**

Previously distributed. The membership update was noted.

**4. Minutes of the York Schools Forum meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022**

Previously distributed. The minutes of the meeting were agreed to be a true and accurate record and were duly noted as approved.

**5. Matters Arising**

There were no outstanding action points to report.

Matters arising: Dave Hewitt was formally confirmed as Chair of York Schools Forum for a term of one year.

Proposed: James Rourke    Seconded: Dee Statham

**6. York Schools and Academies Board (YSAB) report on new priorities and support for the Education Futures Plan / School Improvement Commissioning Budget update**

Previously distributed. Maxine Squire provided context to the report covering the fund of £400k generated by the Schools Causing Concern grant.

It was noted that a total of £264,455 had been allocated during 2021/22. Maxine advised that this fund was supported by the DfE as it enabled the continuation of historic commitments from the Central Services block of the DSG. It was noted that a 20% reduction to this contribution was being applied year-on-year, with this being factored into forward planning for the YSAB. It was noted that the White and Green Papers were being taken into account when planning YSAB developments from September 2022 onwards.



Maxine advised that the paper summarised the support received by schools during 2021/22 and reported on the use of this funding. Maxine outlined the main points of the report. The Forum noted the value for money delivered by the Pathfinder Teaching School Hub scheme and Headteacher conference. It was noted that a pupil attendance project had also received some funding.

Maxine advised of the commissioning priorities for 2022/23:

- Further work on the Education Futures Plan, including pupil attendance, particularly where this related to emotionally-based school avoidance.
- Early talk for York
- Support for individual schools causing concern which would focus on early intervention rather than only being response to Ofsted inspections.

Maxine advised that it was clear from Ofsted inspections during the year to date that the emphasis on curriculum required a city-wide response to ensure a broader curriculum was supported in all settings. The Forum noted the work on the curriculum begun prior to the pandemic, with schools now needing to return to this. It was noted that focussed work and support to improve skills relating to SEND within mainstream settings would be developed.

It was noted that further information regarding financial balances would be brought to the July Schools Forum meeting.

Questions were invited.



Helen Gratton queried the need for a more clearly expressed focus for early years, citing the work undertaken with Oxford University on personal, social and emotional development. Helen asked whether a budget was available to support this area of work. Maxine advised that dysregulation had been identified as a concern in Early Years settings and schools and that Ofsted was also aware of this and was considering seminars on how schools could support pupils. Maxine outlined the level of anxiety being observed in children in the early stages of primary education due to lack of preparation and transition. Discussion followed.

Maxine outlined the intention to review Early Years Inclusion Fund processes to ensure that practitioners were included on the panel in future. Maxine advised that she was also keen to provide SEND training for settings working with pupils from birth to five as well as staff working with school-age children. Further discussion followed.

Maxine agreed to take the issue to the next Leaders and Managers meeting to explore information-sharing and transition. It was noted that the Danesgate Community was experiencing increased pressure for places for pupils from Y1 and Y2.

Lee Probert queried the proposals for the £130k which remained unallocated at the present point, advising that support for the curriculum was key. Lee advised that York College was experiencing an increase in students enrolling on Level 2 courses rather than Level 3 due to a lack of skills following the narrowing of curriculum choices at KS4 in schools.

Maxine advised that Ofsted was keen to see a broad and balanced curriculum, with this being vital for students to ensure they were prepared for transition between phases. It was noted that there were concerns regarding the preparedness of students for practical courses due the lack of practical experience that could be gained during the pandemic.



Discussion followed, with Lee outlining the lack of discipline seen in post-16 students who were arriving at College in Y12 without the expected levels of maturity. It was noted that school closures during the pandemic had a disproportionate impact on practical subjects. Further discussion followed, with the Forum noting the increase in Elective Home Education and demand-avoidance which was resulting in reduced pupil attendance. The Forum further noted the common themes across all phases of education.

In response to a question regarding a small number of vulnerable primary schools with falling pupil rolls and whether these schools could become at risk of being unsustainable and without a MAT sponsor, Maxine provided some contextual information regarding specific schools recently inspected by Ofsted. Cllr Cuthbertson provided further information regarding the circumstances of these specific schools. It was noted that MATs were required to be authorised by the Regional Schools Commissioner before being able to act as a sponsor to a school in Special Measures, which limited options for some schools.

The Chair queried the proposals relating to the unallocated balance of £130k, with Maxine advising that reconciliation would reduce available funds by £80k due to the reduction in funding available to the LA from April 2022. Richard advised that any balance remaining at the year end would be carried forward and that the 2021/22 year-end outturn would be brought to the next meeting. It was noted that any surplus would remain with the YSAB to be allocated. A suggestion was made regarding the option to allocate some funding to communication materials promoting the benefits of schools as a safe environment to families.

## **7. Safety Valve update including SEND capital plan**



Previously distributed. Maxine Squire advised that a successful deficit reduction plan had been submitted to the DfE, with the DfE undertaking to write-off the cumulative deficit. It was noted that the LA's plan would address the in-year position, moving to break even. Maxine advised that many hours had been spent on the plan, with the strategy being in-tune with the SEND Review Green Paper.

Maxine advised that the agreement, included in agenda pack, outlined eight areas of work. It was noted that the LA was profiling the management of DSG and additional funding and would have to demonstrate that it was hitting milestones relating to the in-year balance position for the High Needs block of DSG.

Richard Hartle advised that provisional 2021/22 outturn figures showed that the LA was ahead of the expected milestone by c£100k. It was noted that the DfE had paid the first tranche of funding to resolve the cumulative deficit.

Maxine advised that SEND Partnership Board sub-groups had been established, with detail included in the paper. It was noted that the pre- and post-diagnosis pathway for autism would help to provide support for families pre-diagnosis. Maxine outlined this work to Forum members.

Maxine advised that she was leading on the sufficiency work stream, with spaces to be created across the city to reduce the need for out-of-area provision which was historically expensive. It was noted that this local resource would be available to the 0-25 age range.

Maxine advised that a capital bid had been submitted to the DfE in addition to the SEND capital allocation of £5M. If granted this additional £8M would ensure that capital work could be undertaken in schools.

Maxine outlined the 2021/22 capital investment at Applefields for autism and the major capital investment being undertaken at Danesgate over the



summer. It was noted that this work would reshape the Danesgate site to ensure that provision better reflected need. Maxine advised that Danesgate provision would focus on SEMH as a specialist setting, with the PRU being a smaller aspect of provision.

Maxine advised that the Home Tuition service was being reviewed to ensure that it supported reintegration and was not used as a long-term solution for pupils. It was noted that a reintegration base was being developed at the new Clifton Explore site.

Maxine advised that Enhanced Resource Provision (ERPs) was being reviewed, noting that families were supportive of ERPs particularly to support primary to secondary transition. It was noted that the LA was considering how to address the main concerns around transition to secondary phase and to York College. It was further noted that the LA was also considering post-19 provision and pathways into supported employment as complex needs could be supported in the workplace. The Forum noted the number of EHCPs maintained for 19-25 year olds and the work being undertaken to reduce the overall number. Maxine outlined the plan to safely end plans where appropriate.

**SEND Review Green Paper** – Maxine advised that the consultation was ongoing but that the Safety Valve content had been agreed in-line with the paper. It was noted that Alternative Provision would need to be considered as this was included in the Green and White Papers. Maxine outlined the need to define high-quality Alternative Provision. Maxine outlined the challenges in achieving this aspect of the plan and ensuring that specialist provision remained focussed on children for whom mainstream provision was not appropriate.



Questions were invited. It was noted that the first monitoring report was due to be submitted to the DfE on 17<sup>th</sup> June and would be taken to the July Schools Forum meeting.

The Forum thanked Maxine and other officers for their work on the plan.

A Headteacher representative advised that some mainstream schools successfully supported SEND pupils and could be penalised when families began to identify these schools as providing high-quality SEND provision due to the lack of financial support available. Maxine advised that the DfE recognised this issue and was attempting to reset some expectations in the system.

In response to a question regarding funding for mainstream settings and the mechanism by which SEND funding was allocated, Maxine advised that the LA would consider the bandings as these were no longer sufficient, having been set in 2014. Maxine advised of the need to consider how to band support to reflect actual costs. Discussion followed. The Forum noted that EYFS pupils often required one-to-one support to ensure they remained safe in settings and schools, though this was the pupil group least likely to be in receipt of financial support as early identification of issues was so challenging. Further discussion followed, with the Forum noting that early intervention and support was important and required a rethink.

In response to a question regarding the input to the September plan at Schools Forum level, Maxine advised that the task and finish groups would consider the detail of provision from September. It was noted that the Early Years Partnership Board would be asked to nominate representatives where appropriate.

Forum members noted the challenges where settings acted as the sole owner of EHCPs which made transition out of education more difficult.



Maxine advised that the LA saw increased requests for statutory assessments at Y11, with the system not working if this was the case. It was noted that issues needed to be identified earlier for specialist provision to make a difference. Maxine advised that it was also important for plans to end at the right time. Maxine outlined the number of mediations which were ongoing, advising that this was a national picture. It was noted that a local inclusion plan was a requirement of the Green Paper, with the Forum and other bodies to be involved in drafting this plan.

*Dan Bodey and Laura McMurray joined the meeting.*

**8. Home to School Transport Policy 2022/23**

Deferred until later in the meeting.

**9. School Wellbeing Service – Five Year Outcome Report – September 2021**

Previously distributed. Laura McMurray provided a presentation on the School Wellbeing Service (SWS). It was noted that support had been provided during the pandemic and as schools returned to more regular education provision.

The Forum noted the increase in one-to-one direct referrals during 2020/21. The Forum further noted the interventions delivered with school staff and the partnership working undertaken with CAMHS. It was noted that there had been an increase in mental health needs during 2020/21 with this increased level of need continuing into the current academic year. Laura outlined the work undertaken with key stakeholders to ensure a collaborative approach.

Laura advised that during the 2021/22 academic year to date there had been 881 consultations leading to 423 offers of direct support. Laura advised that there had been 151 notifications from CAMHS and that 423



offers of early help may have prevented cases being escalated to CAMHS. It was noted that the SWS had a small waiting list but that the team was working to address this. Laura advised that the SWS now had a presence in all settings including York College and Askham Bryan College.

The Forum noted the points for development identified by the service:

- Laura McMurray to lead cluster meetings with Senior Mental Health Leads;
- Laura McMurray and Dan Bodey to design a graduated pathway for mental health in CYC with thresholds and ownership clear at each stage;
- Push from understandable current more “dependant” model to school ownership for lower end cases through training, discussion and development including co-delivery; and
- To continue to advocate for schools during strategic meetings when developing pathways for EBSA and suicidal ideation, and self-harm.

Dan Bodey outlined the structure of the SWS and the school-facing approach following remodelling. The Forum noted the increased provision in schools, particularly at secondary phase.

Dan outlined the current funding model for the SWS, with this including £105k from the Forum, £129k from health, and £50k from CYC. It was noted that the Memorandum of Understanding for funding expired in April 2023, with the SWS requesting a further three years of funding from this point.

Questions were invited.



In response to a question regarding CAMHS referrals and where these originated, Laura advised that this information could be provided, noting that schools were not always aware of referrals if these were initiated by families or GPs. The Forum noted the process to gain consent to share information with schools to ensure they were involved in these processes. Dan advised that feedback from CAMHS indicated that referrals to the SWS service were generally successfully addressed at this level.

Helen Gration queried the referrals for EY pupils, with Laura advising that the SWS worked with children aged five to 18. It was noted that some work had been undertaken at one school nursery relating to early interventions. Dan advised that the SWS was seeing some consultations at an earlier stage, with transitions affected by the pandemic and increasing the number of Y2 pupils being referred due to this negative impact. Discussion followed. Helen agreed to liaise with Dan and Laura regarding discussion opportunities with the NDNA.

A Forum member commented on the workload of the SWS and waiting list, highlighting the need to monitor the development of the SWS to ensure it remained adequately supported. Dan outlined the opportunities to build capacity in line with Green Paper expectations.

A request was made for the SWS to continue to highlight the knowledge held by schools on pupils to enable referrals to Limetrees and other partners to be made. It was noted that thresholds would be reviewed and clarified. Maxine noted the single point of access approach being introduced from September 2022.

Lee Probert requested that York College and Askham Bryan College be specifically included in the revised MoU to ensure their funding contribution was defined.



Richard Hartle advised that the SWS was funded from the centrally-retained commissioning budget held by the YSAB, though this fund was reducing by 20% per year so the continuation request needed to be considered in this context. Richard advised that the budget would be profiled and discussed at the July meeting of the Forum.

*Dan Bodey and Laura McMurray left at 10.30am.*

The Chair highlighted the support of schools and York College for the SWS. Discussion followed regarding the general points raised in the meeting so far.

#### **8. Home to School Transport Policy**

Previously distributed. Maxine Squire advised that the transport budget had been under significant pressure for a number of years and that the LA had needed to address this as part of the general budget review and when considering the Safety Valve response.

It was noted that contracts were out to tender for taxis and coaches, with the LA being positive about this process which aimed to reduce the level of taxi use. Maxine advised that the LA was working with Applefields, Danesgate and individual families on this process. The Forum noted the options available to the LA in doing this, including application of the Transport Policy more consistently and rigorously.

Maxine advised that the parents of pupils with EHCPs were able to request a school outside the city, though now if a suitable school place was available within the city the LA was requesting that the pupil took this local place.

It was noted that transport was being restricted to pupils of statutory school age.



Maxine advised that the Children's Social Care team was explaining that taxis were only available to schools when funded from the education budget and that children in foster care going to out of school activities were not having transport for these activities funded.

Maxine advised that Post-16 transport would only cover the journey between the main education setting and home, but not other provision. It was noted that independent travel was a focus of future plans and that the YILTs were supporting pupils as necessary.

The Forum noted the update and amended policy, expressing support for the approach.

**10. Trades union facilities time buy back – Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**

Previously distributed. Richard Hartle advised that discussion between the professional associations and YSAB had developed the MoU. Option for schools to buy back – formally a de-delegation. For information.

Richard highlighted the proposal to increase the per-pupil charges by 50p each year for six years, with this enabling an increase in the level of facilities time to meet the industry standard.

The Forum noted the six settings not buying in to the scheme. Maxine advised that these settings would need to wait for representatives to be available which could slow processes. It was noted that the MoU was likely to require further review during the period. Lee Probert noted that the mechanism was based on pupil roll rather than teachers numbers, with this being unusual. Richard advised that the charge being set on a per pupil basis was seen as fair by schools.

The MoU was noted.

**11. Schools Forum forward plan**

Richard Hartle outlined the forward plan:

Safety Valve monitoring

YSAB year-end report including SWS discussion

DSG outturn 2021/22

Maintained school outturns 2021/22

Maxine invited EY and FE representatives to request agenda items. Richard advised that DfE reviews of funding formula would be brought to the Forum as they were progressed. Maxine advised that the concept of LA-led MATs also needed to be discussed.

**12. Any other agreed business**

There was no other business.

**13. Date and time of future meetings**

The next meeting would take place on **5th July 2022 at 9.00am at West Offices.**

The meeting closed at 10.45am.