
York Schools Forum

8th February 2023

Report of the Assistant Director, Education and Skills

Schools Forum Task and Finish Groups 2023 - 2024

Summary

- 1 This paper outlines the process for developing task and finish groups of the York Schools Forum. The purpose of the task and finish groups will be to agree that York Schools Forum and the council proactively manage current and future funding pressures in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). All proposals for change must take account of current expenditure and standards, Department for Education finance regulations that may restrict spending flexibility and clearly set out the proposed changes to ensure effective spending of Dedicated Schools Grant taking full account of the increased demand for reducing resources in a time of financial stringency

Background

2. The Schools Forum acts in a consultative role for:
 - Changes to the local funding formula (The local authority is responsible for the final decision, although in some cases it may delegate the decision-making power to the Schools Forum);
 - Proposed changes to the operation of the minimum funding guarantee;
 - Changes to or new contracts affecting schools (e.g. school meals);
 - Arrangements for pupils with special educational needs, in pupil referral units and in early years provision.
3. The Schools Forum is responsible for decisions on:
 - How much funding may be centrally retained within the Dedicated Schools Grant (e.g. for the Admissions Service, prudential borrowing costs, additional funding available for growing schools);
 - Any proposed carry forward of deficits on central spend from one year to the next;
 - Proposals to de-delegate funding from maintained primary and secondary schools (e.g. for staff supply cover, insurance, behaviour support);
 - Changes to the scheme of financial management.

4. The Department for Education Schools Forum operational guidance states that working groups 'can be set up to discuss specific issues, and to produce draft advice and decisions for the Schools Forum itself to consider. The groups can also include wider representation - for example, an early years reference group can represent all the different types of provider to consider the detail of the early years single funding formula. The reference group would then be able to give its considered view on the local authority's proposals to the Schools Forum'.
5. As part of a strategy to review and develop the work of the York Schools Forum it is proposed that a series of task and finish groups should be established to ensure that resources are used to achieve better value for money for children and young people in York.
6. It is proposed that the following task and finish groups should be established to begin the following work in 2023-24:
 - High Needs DSG – review of SEND banding (early years to post 16)
 - Review of Alternative Provision – to include SEMH outreach service, sufficiency and use of capital
 - Review of centrally retained funding for school improvement
7. All task and finish groups need to consider how to incentivise change, whether it be by, for example managing demand, meeting need in a different way or incentivising new models of education.

Next Steps

8. A programme of meetings for the task and finish groups will be established and reports received at the May and July meetings of the forum.

Recommendations

9. The forum is asked to note the contents of this report and identify members to join the task and finish groups.

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