

CITY OF YORK SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the Schools Forum meeting held on Wednesday 9th November 2022 at 8.00am at West Offices

Present:

Dave Hewitt (Maintained Secondary Headteacher Representative) Chair, Adam Booker (Special School Representative), Adam Cooper *deputising for* Mark Hassack (Academy Representative), Steve Lewis (Academy Representative), Lee Probert (FE Representative), Claire Rigden (Maintained Nursery Headteacher Representative (VC)), Jenny Rogers (Maintained Primary Headteacher Representative), James Rourke (Maintained Primary Headteacher Representative), Dee Statham (Academy Representative), and Andrew Daly (Academy Representative).

In attendance:

Cllr Andrew Waller (Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education), Martin Kelly (Corporate Director, Children and Education, CYC), Maxine Squire (Assistant Director, Education and Skills, CYC), Richard Hartle (Head of Finance, CYC), Dan Bodey (Inclusion Advisor, CYC), Laura McMurray (School Wellbeing Service Team Leader, CYC) and Barbara Kybett (Governance Advisor, CYC, Coordinator and Clerk)

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Gail Brown (Academy Representative), Jo Olsen (Maintained Secondary Governor Representative), Helen Gratton (Early Years Sector Representative), Mark Richardson (Pupil Referral Unit Representative), and Helen Winn (Academy Representative).

Claire Rigden had previously indicated her delayed arrival.

3. Membership update

Previously distributed. The membership update was noted.

4. Minutes of the Schools Forum meeting of 3rd May 2022 (formal approval only) and 5th July 2022

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

5. Matters Arising not on the agenda

There were no outstanding action points to report.

6. The Role of Schools Forum

Previously distributed.

Claire Rigden joined the meeting at 8.06am.

Maxine Squire explained that this item had been included to remind members of the importance of Schools Forum. Maxine noted that Schools Forum was a statutory body, which all Local Authorities were required to maintain. She observed that its decision-making remit had changed over time, as successive governments had revised the National Funding Formula, but the core purpose of the Forum still remained, as a consultative body and to make decisions on the allocation of devolved resources for the education of all children in the local area. Maxine underlined that Schools Forum still played a key role in managing

funding for schools, whether they were maintained or academies, and in holding the LA to account for the best use of taxpayers' money.

Cllr Waller and Martin Kelly joined the meeting at 8.08am.

Richard Hartle referred to the powers and responsibilities of Schools Forum as set out in the previously distributed paper (Annex 1). He explained that he would highlight in the papers circulated to members if any decision was sought, as he had done in the papers for this meeting. Richard advised that Schools Forum would be asked to make decisions on some areas at its meeting in February, and he would therefore be inviting suggestions regarding about what information members would like to support them in making these decisions.

The Chair agreed that there needed to be a sense of purpose around the role of Schools Forum, and that information on what decisions needed to be made and when would be welcome.

Maxine provided some historical context to the formation of the York Schools Forum and its relationship to other bodies established by the LA, including the York Schools and Academies Board (YSAB).

The Chair referred to the role of Schools Forum in giving a view on centrally procured contracts for schools and expressed some frustration that information about contracts was sometimes not provided to schools in a timely manner. Richard agreed that this was not ideal and undertook to discuss the matter further with colleagues responsible for these contracts and, with Maxine, to monitor the situation going forward.

7. Early Years NFF Consultation

Previously distributed.

Richard advised that the Early Years NFF consultation had been flagged at the last meeting and the deadline for responses had now passed. He observed that it had been a very detailed consultation and therefore the LA had worked with f40

colleagues to submit a response. He referred to both the consultation paper and the f40 response, which had been previously distributed, and specifically to Paragraph 9 of his own paper which detailed the likely funding rates for York for 2023/24, based on information in the consultation document. Richard highlighted the significant rise in funding for mainstream Nursery schools, which would benefit St Paul's Nursery, and which was evidence of the security of funding for state Nursery schools. Claire Rigden (Maintained Nursery Headteacher Representative (VC)) asked if there had been any feedback from the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector on the proposals. Maxine noted that it was likely that the sector would contest that the funding was still insufficient, given the challenges with the recruitment and retention of staff.

The Forum noted the response to the Early Years NFF consultation via the f40 group. There were no further questions or comments.

8. Initial 2023/24 start budget

Previously distributed.

Richard referred to his paper setting out initial information on Schools Budget and the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2023/24, based on announcements made by the DfE in September 2022.

He advised that the DSG allocations for 2022/23 reported in Paragraph 5 had been revised to include the supplementary grant paid to schools within the financial year. This supplementary funding would be rolled into the DSG for 2023/24. These figures had been adjusted accordingly and reflected a 2.2% increase for 2023/24 from 2022/23 which Richard observed was not a large increase given inflationary pressures on expenditure.

In response to a question, Richard noted that the supplementary funding was also allocated to local authorities for high needs provision.

Richard advised that the Schools Block, paid to mainstream schools and academies, represented the largest element of the DSG. He reminded members that Schools Forum had agreed, prior to setting the 2018/19 budget, that the DfE's new national funding formula (NFF) would be introduced at school level from April 2018. This would be similarly implemented in 2023/24, unless the Forum determined otherwise but any such decision would be subject to a consultation process.

Richard advised that the funding factors used in the 2023/24 NFF would remain the same. However, the factor values to the basic entitlement, free school meals (FSM), lower prior attainment (LPA), English as an additional language (EAL), sparsity and the lump sum would increase by 2.4%, which reflected the DfE's predicted level of inflation for 2023/24. The deprivation factors (FSM6 and IDACI) would increase by 4.3% but there would be no increase in the premises factors, except for PFI which would increase by the RPIX. These percentage increases would take effect on figures which included the supplementary grant for 2023/24.

Richard highlighted that the minimum per pupil amount was rising only by 0.5%. The average per pupil rise across all York schools was likely to be about 1.7% as not all schools' funding was based on a minimum per pupil amount. There was further discussion on which schools were still impacted by minimum per pupil funding.

Lee Probert joined the meeting at 8.28am.

Richard referred to details in the paper on the growth fund and Infant Class Size funding both of which had reduced but would continue to be paid under current arrangements, unless Schools Forum agreed otherwise. In terms of the Early Years NFF, the LA would look to pass on the percentage increases direct to providers. Schools Forum members were in agreement with this approach.

Richard reported that the High Needs Block would increase by 5.2% in 2023/24, following the 8% increase in 2022/23. This increase was in line with expectations

and would therefore enable plans already in place to be delivered. Richard advised that the LA was on track to deliver on the safety valve plans for 2022/23. It was noted that these were long term projects and therefore the impact of the funding would not be evident for some time yet. There was further discussion on the reasons behind the agreement with the DfE for this safety valve funding.

Richard reported that the DfE had continued to significantly reduce funding to the Central School Services Block. In 2023/24, the net reduction would be made up of a 2.3% increase in the allocation for the ongoing responsibilities that the LA continued to have for all schools, and a 20% reduction in the allocation for historic commitments. Richard highlighted that there would need to be reductions in spending in the areas listed in paragraphs 25 to 30 of his paper. The allocation shared between the LA and YSAB would be reduced on a pro-rata basis.

Richard invited suggestions of other areas where expenditure could be reduced as a decision would need to be made at the next meeting in February. Richard offered to provide further information to members as appropriate. He signalled that there would need to be a reduction in the school improvement commissioning budget managed by YSAB.

The Chair asked what implications there would be for schools from this reduction. Maxine explained that the budget funded projects in schools, for example, Wellbeing Workers and the attendance project, as well as interventions for schools causing concern. She added that funding for individual schools had not been needed in recent years due to other interventions which had taken place. However, this would need to be monitored over the next 18 months to ensure that there was no disproportionate impact from the reduction in funding. There would be opportunities for Schools Forum members to contribute to decisions on the allocation of funding; Maxine recommended that a sub-group be convened for this purpose.

In response to a question, Maxine explained that schools causing concern included those which might have had a successful Ofsted judgement in the past but were now experiencing challenges.

A question was raised around the capacity of the LA to support maintained schools if funding was reduced further. Maxine advised that the DfE's position was that schools were well-funded and should not need further support from the LA. Richard reminded the Forum that funds could be de-delegated from maintained schools to support LA services.

It was noted that the funding was available for all schools causing concern, whether maintained or not.

Discussion followed on the reduction of central funding to the LA and the impact on maintained schools. It was noted that there was some misunderstanding within school communities about the amount paid by schools to the LA for school improvement services. In fact, there were no funds de-delegated for this purpose.

Richard referred to paragraph 33 onwards in his report which set out details of the remaining budgets in the Central School Services Block and clarified that permission from Schools Forum would need to be sought to alter any of these allocations. He advised that he had only applied inflationary increases to the figures. In response to a query about the amount set aside to service Schools Forum, Richard agreed to bring further detail about the allocations to the next meeting as they had been in place in for a number of years. **Action: Richard Hartle to bring further detail on Central School Services Block allocations to the next meeting.**

Richard advised that there was only one remaining de-delegation affecting schools in 2022/23 which was in relation to the Behaviour Outreach Service provided for maintained primary schools by Danesgate. He highlighted that a decision would be required at the next meeting as to whether this de-delegation

should continue in 2023/24. Maintained primary school Forum members were asked to consider what further information they would require in advance of making this decision. There was further discussion. James Rourke and Jenny Rogers, representing the maintained primary schools, undertook to seek colleagues' views before the next meeting. It was noted that a Service Level Agreement model might be helpful. **Action: Maintained primary school members to seek views from the sector on de-delegation for the Behaviour Outreach Service provided by Danesgate.**

In response to a query about the sources of funding for permanently excluded pupils, Richard explained that in-year adjustments would be made for individual pupils at the time that they were excluded, and the funding would be re-directed for the following academic year. Maxine clarified that the funding to support excluded pupils was from the High Needs Block and thus the higher the number of exclusions, the more the High Needs funding would decrease for other areas supported by the High Needs Block. She acknowledged that this seemed unfair but observed that the allocation of funds was as equitable as possible given the underlying constraints and lack of options for young people who were at risk of being failed by the education system.

Schools Forum members agreed that the Early Years NFF should be paid to settings, subject to these amounts being confirmed.

James Rourke left the meeting at 9.05am.

9. Maintained school start budgets and balances 2022/23

Previously distributed.

Richard reminded members that maintained schools were required to submit a Start budget and three-year budget plan to the LA. A deficit budget had to be agreed with the LA if the level was significant. Richard referred to the summary of maintained school budgets which had been previously distributed and provided further details of the requirements for schools submitting deficit

budgets. He noted that most schools were predicting deficit budgets for 2024/25 and he would be requesting plans in the next financial year to mitigate these future deficits.

10. Safety Valve quarter 2 monitoring report

Previously distributed

Maxine reported that Quarter 2 had been completed; the plan was now into Quarter 3 and was on track to meet financial targets. She advised that the DfE did not require a Quarter 4 monitoring report for this financial year and referred to the summary of progress made to date which was included in her report.

Maxine outlined the areas of focus for Quarter 3 which included: the implementation plan for the capital projects, the implementation of the communications plan and work on the reform of the SEN banding.

Maxine summarised that the plan had delivered on financial savings for 2022/23 and was on track for the same in its second year.

11. SEND Banding Update

Maxine advised that national guidance on SEND banding had still not been released. She suggested therefore that a sub-group of Schools Forum be convened to review the LA's SEND banding system, with the remit of making recommendations of any adjustments to banding, if this would make the system more effective in schools. In response to a question, she confirmed that banding information from other LAs was publicly available.

Schools Forum members appointed Jenny Rogers, Dee Statham, Adam Booker, Steve Lewis and Claire Rigden to a sub-group tasked with reviewing the LA's SEND banding system.

12. School Wellbeing Worker Service

Previously distributed.

It was noted that a decision was sought on future funding for the School Wellbeing Worker Service

Dan Bodey and Laura McMurray were invited to present on the work of the Service.

Dan advised that the Service was funded from three different strands and explained that the Service had been founded on a three-year Memorandum of Understanding which was due to end in April 2023. He referred to the summary of the Service's work which had been previously distributed and provided a verbal report of the provision. He recommended the Service to Schools Forum as good value and sought support for the continuation of its work. Maxine advised that the Integrated Care Board (ICB) had confirmed their future investment in the Service. Laura also provided a further update on the work of the Service.

It was noted that the Service was also used by York College, and Lee Probert offered a contribution to the Service's income on behalf of the College.

Schools Forum members were asked to agree funding for the Service and the length of a new contract. Discussion followed.

Continuation of funding for the School Wellbeing Worker Service for a further three years was unanimously agreed by those eligible to vote.

Action: Richard to provide a suggested additional contribution to the Service from York College and Askham Bryan College, based on current usage.

Dan Bodey and Laura McMurray left the meeting at 9.25am.

13. Schools Forum forward plan

The following areas were identified:

- sub-groups to consider the use of funding
- work streams for use of the safety valve

- 14-16 education
- alternative Provision within the city.

14. Any other agreed business

There was no other business.

15. Dates and time of meetings during the current academic year:

- 8th February 2023
- 10th May 2023
- 12th July 2023

All meetings were scheduled to start 8am in West Offices.

The meeting closed at 9.30am.

APPROVED