

Minutes - Sheffield Schools Forum

3.00-4.30pm, 21 September 2021, via Microsoft Teams
Chair: Paul Stockley

Schools Forum Members:

Primary Heads Representatives

Nigel Brooke-Smith (Greystones)
Cathy Rowland (Dobcroft Infant)
Paul Stockley (Bradway)

Primary Governors

Alison Warner (Grenoside)

Secondary Head

Linda Gooden (King Edward VII)

Non-school Members

Mo Andrews, Pye Bank CE Primary
Stephen Betts, Learn Sheffield
Karen Simpkin, Early Years providers
Toby Mallinson/Rod Padley, Trade Unions
Mo Nisbet, 14-19 Sector

Academies

Keith Crawshaw (Sheffield South East Trust)
David Dennis (Tapton)
Jim Dugmore (Oughtibridge)
Chris French (Mercia Learning Trust)
Stacy McKay (Springs Academy)
Morag Somerville (Steel City Schools Partnership)

Special Academies

Joel Hardwick (Nexus Multi-academy Trust)

Special Schools

Laura Gillespie, Governor (Bents Green)
Sacha Schofield, Head (Bents Green)

PRU

Alan Richards (Sheffield Inclusion Centre)

Apologies: Mo Andrews, Joel Hardwick, Mo Nisbet.

Also in attendance: Cllr Dunn, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills; Andrew Jones, Director of Education and Skills; Lorraine Fox, Business Strategy (notes); Mark Sheikh, Head of Service, Business Strategy.

Presenters: Jacky Beatson, Resourcing Coordinator; Cathie Tandy, Strategic Commissioning Manager; Dominic Sleath, Head of Business Strategy; Stephen Bull, Deputy Strategic Insurance Manager.

1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Introductions were made and apologies noted as above.

2. Previous meeting minutes/matters arising

Action: amendment to page 2 required, the agreed action will be brought to the forthcoming December meeting. Agreed as a true and accurate record.

3. National Funding Formula (NFF) Consultation - Schools Block

Mark Sheikh shared the key messages from the paper.

Forum members were asked to note and agree the consultation response.

- This is Stage 1 of a consultation about how quickly the DfE should ask LAs to move towards the full implementation of the NFF.
- The consultation response deadline date is **30th September 2021**.
- Stage 2 of the consultation will be released upon the results of the Stage 1 consultation later in the Autumn Term.

Comments and questions from the Forum are summarised as follows:

- There is an affordability gap for Sheffield of £12m.
- Significant High Needs shortfall is being supplemented from Schools Block.
- Not all LAs have the same complexities, not one size fits all especially regarding PFI.
- Agree to question 1 - if Sheffield City Council (SCC) receives all of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funds for the NFF.
- Concerns regarding the impact of Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) rate for primary schools, SCC may have to consider applying a freeze on AWPU as it is currently higher than NFF.
- The consultation will be updated with today's comments and will require political approval prior to being submitted by the deadline. (Cllr Dunn provided approval post-Forum and the response has now been submitted).

Action: further NFF modelling to be shared with the December Forum.

Forum members discussed and **agreed** the Consultation Response in Appendix 1.

Paul thanked the Funding Formula Group for the work completed.

4. Falling Rolls

Cathie Tandy presented paper 4, comments and questions from the Forum are summarised as follows:

- The policy may cease or will require a review with the implementation of the NFF.
- The anticipated new arrivals to the city from Afghanistan, China and Greece have not been factored into the planning as it is impossible to know where they will settle in the city.
- New housing developments are not always included in the planning as pupil yield is unknown.
- Cllr Dunn confirmed that we are in discussion with the Government requesting additional funding.
- Any new arrivals to the city will be captured by the mobility funding but schools encountering challenges should request growth funding.
- A request for governors and trustees to be invited to the moderation panels to allow collaborative working.

Forum members approved:

- The Falling Rolls Funding of £250k.
- The Falling Rolls Policy for 2021-22 (Appendix 1).

5. Forum Constitution, Membership Update and Vacant Chair and Vice Chair roles

Mark Sheikh updated the Forum on the proposed membership from September 2021.

Forum members were invited to express an interest in the vacant roles for Chair and Vice Chair from December 2021. Any prospective candidates are encouraged to communicate with Andrew Jones/Mark Sheikh to discuss the nature of the roles. Candidates should email amanda.murray@sheffield.gov.uk by 15 October.

Forum members:

- **Noted** the updated constitution document as per Appendix 1.
- Are asked to contact amanda.murray@sheffield.gov.uk by 15 October if they would like to put themselves forward for the role of Chair or Vice-chair.

6. SIMS and FMS Contract Renewal/Procurement (Maintained Schools) and Broadband Contract Renewal (Maintained Schools)

Broadband Contract Renewal (Maintained Schools)

Dominic Sleath talked through paper 7; comments and questions from the Forum are summarised as follows:

- Note that point 1.2 contradicts point 2.2.
- Concerns that proposed solution isn't moving towards cloud-based computing.

Forum members agreed for Sheffield City Council to have a mandate to continue negotiations with Virgin Media, ensuring continuity and allowing time to consider the options which may include schools choosing to source another broadband provider to agree an individual contract.

Action: further updates to be shared with the December Forum.

SIMS and FMS Contract Renewal/Procurement (Maintained Schools)

Dominic Sleath presented paper 6, and comments and questions from the Forum are summarised as follows:

- The previous suppliers didn't make adequate investment.
- The developments will move to a cloud system module by module.
- Moving to a new system has training implications for all schools.
- There is a need to have a wider consultation with schools.

Forum members noted the options and considered any matters arising.

The Forum approved the preferred option of a 12-month waiver (noting that this is a negotiating position and that the supplier will be asked to agree). Sheffield City Council has a mandate to negotiate with SIMS in time to provide an offer via Services to Schools / schools to contact other system vendor to agree an individual contract.

8. Schools Insurance (Maintained Schools)

Stephen Bull presented paper 8, and the key recommendations to the Forum were summarised as follows:

- To consider options for alternative insurance arrangements or transfer to the DfE's Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA).
- To return to vote (at the December Forum) on which option the whole school population (maintained only) would like to pursue for 2022-23 onwards.

Forum members were asked to:

Research the RPA option and consider:

- Impact of additional resources required in managing insurance queries and claims with the RPA direct without input from the Council's Insurance Team.
- Potential effect of any loss of leverage with insurers that the Council enjoys on flexibility of cover and claims settlement by virtue of its relationships and overall premium spend.
- Additional costs of Motor insurance or insurance for Building Works if applicable.
- Risk of increase in the per pupil rate charged by the RPA in the next three years against fixed rate with Zurich Municipal.

Action: return to vote for the preferred option at the December Forum.

9. School balances/deficits

Mark Sheikh talked through paper 8; comments and questions from the Forum are summarised as follows:

- Officers to check the validity of the data set.
- It is estimated that these balances represent 30% of pupils attending a maintained school.
- The total of the school balances held could support the funding shortfall.
- Covid-19 led to delays in school expenditure as lack of availability of goods and skilled tradespeople.
- To consider links with school balances and falling rolls.

The Forum:

- **Approved** the request to write to all maintained schools requesting confirmation of balances, strategic expenditure plan, reasons for the balances, being clear that we don't want schools to reduce their balances quickly, but to identify and confirm expenditure plans.
- **Approved** further work with special schools with a deficit and a link to SEND.

9. Covid-19 Latest Position

Action: to be added to the next agenda.

10. AOB

Cllr Dunn updated the Forum that both the letters previously sent to the Secretary of State regarding Early Years and Capital Allocation will be re-sent, with a further letter regarding SEN, and that she has requested a visit to Sheffield.

Date of next meeting: 13 December 2021, 3.00-5.00pm, venue TBC/Online