

Minutes - Sheffield Schools Forum

3.00-5.00pm, 14 December 2022, Online Via MS Teams
Chair: Paul Stockley

Schools Forum Members:

Primary Heads Representatives

Nigel Brooke-Smith (Greystones)
Helen Kenyon (Pipworth)
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/Lisa Smith, Trade Unions
James Smythe, Sheffield College 16-19
Sector

Academies

Keith Crawshaw (Sheffield South East Trust)
David Dennis (Tapton School Academy Trust)
Jim Dugmore (Peak Edge Academy Trust)
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)
Vacant Seat, Head

PRU

Alan Richards (Sheffield Inclusion Centre)

Apologies: Mo Andrews, Stephen Betts, Jim Dugmore, Laura Gillespie, Linda Gooden, Stacy McKay, Lisa Smith, James Smythe

Also in attendance: Duncan Blackie, Trade Union Rep (on behalf of Lisa Smith); Helen Mansfield, Resourcing Manager; Amanda Murray, Education and Skills (notes); Mark Sheikh, Head of Service, Resourcing and Business Planning; Kevin Straughan, Director, Education and Skills

Presenters: Tim Armstrong, Head of Access and Inclusion; Jacky Beatson, Resourcing Manager, Education and Skills; Jason Peck, Contract Manager Asset Management

Observers: Charlotte Chance, Mercia Learning Trust; Rhona Dobbs, PRU

1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were noted as above and no declarations of interest were made.

2. Previous meeting minutes/matters arising

Agreed as a true and accurate record.

The Chair asked for an update on the action on page 3 re. capital allocation – Mark Sheikh confirmed that a letter has now been drafted to the Secretary of State and this will be sent out in early January.

3. Procurement of Gas and Electricity Supply - Update

Further to the item at the September Forum, Jason Peck gave an update on progress:

- Forecast prices for 2023/24 are improving and we are now looking at a 24% increase for electricity (not over 100% as previously predicted) and just under a third of our requirement has already been purchased. Gas prices are now predicted to increase by 280% (not 350% as previously predicted) and we have already purchased 73% of the required amount.
- Regarding the purchasing strategy briefing document that was discussed in September and is due to be shared with schools to give the option to opt in/out:
 - This has been delayed as the legal team have been reviewing the sign-up document.
 - The briefing document will now be circulated by Monday 19 December, ahead of the sign-up document and we will request a response by the end of February.
 - The delay won't impact on the 2023/24 costs as it relates to the year afterwards onwards.

Additional discussion points included:

- The Forum reiterated the need for this document to be sent out as soon as possible – by the end of term - to allow adequate time for consideration; in particular to allow time for multi-academy trusts to convene.
- Karen Simpkin progressed the question raised in September regarding early years providers having the option to join the contract. Jason confirmed that organisations have to be not-for-profit/charitable to sign up.
- Schools are advised to contact the Council's sustainability team for advice on procuring alternative solutions e.g. solar panels; also to note that this links in with the additional capital allocation outlined in Paper 5.

4. Alternative Provision (AP)

Tim Armstrong summarised Paper 3 for information:

- We are currently reviewing the AP provision and how we fund it to ensure sustainability.
- We currently have a range of provision for pupils too ill to attend school, those who are permanently excluded and for those with behavioural issues.
- There are three types of provision in the final category:
 - Unregulated providers (by Ofsted).
 - Commissioned provision mainly via the Sheffield Inclusion Centre.
 - Other provision, not on our framework, including the Sheffield College.
- The review is underpinned by two bids for new AP free schools (two trusts are bidding) and the fact that the existing framework only goes up to the end of this academic year.
- We are working with the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee to shape the future model and policy for use of Alternative Provision.
- Helen Mansfield is working on the funding model to ensure that it's sustainable.
- We will also be considering sufficiency as part of the review.

Forum discussion can be summarised as follows:

- How do we judge success? It will vary from one child to another – we need to ensure that children are not missing out on education and to be clear on the purpose of AP.
- Regarding consultation: we have been working with providers out of city in the first instance and will then be speaking to representatives at Sheffield provision. We will go through the Council committee process and then consult via the Forum.
- We must go through the free school bidding process to open new buildings – we need some full-time places and don't have the registered education provision needed in the city. If the bids are successful, we will also receive core funding for the first two years.
- We have a need for some primary AP and some step-out provision.
- The new Local Area SEND inspection framework will look at how we use AP as an effective tool across the city.
- We don't have data as to whether there is adequate understanding of AP within the curriculum.
- This review should sit within the inclusion and SEND city-wide model.

The Forum noted the work taking place to review the AP provision and funding model.

5. SEND/Locality Review (including proposed £1.5m transfer to High Needs Block)

Mark Sheikh gave a brief update on behalf of Rose Ward:

- The focus of the paper is around the proposed £1.5m transfer to the High Needs Block which we have been undertaking for several years.
- Last year we directed these funds to contribute to locality funding rather than funding for inclusion as in previous years.
- Children on Education, Health and Care Plans receive top-up funding via the High Needs Block via locality funding.
- A consultation was carried out to seek views on transferring the £1.5m in 2023/24 and 90% of the 66 respondents were in favour.
- Rose has set up a multi-agency steering group to review high needs funding and the group has agreed a set of principles. There are plans to expand this group as of January to review high needs funding for early years through to post-16.
- Section 5 of the paper sets out the budget for Element 3 funding and includes the proposed £1.5m transfer.

The Schools Forum noted the contents of the report and **approved** the transfer of £1.5m from Schools Block to High Needs Block in 2023/24.

6. Learn Sheffield Funding Options

Mark Sheikh updated the Forum on behalf of Kevin Straughan:

- In February 2022 the Forum was updated on the reduction and planned cessation of the School Improvement Grant, and it agreed to de-delegate funds to September 2023.
- The Education, Children and Families Policy Committee have been updated and concern was expressed regarding the quality of School Improvement - members would like more involvement.

- The traded model will allow oversight - we aim to ensure 100% take-up, but to consider how we mitigate the risk.

7. DSG Overview and Indicative Schools Budgets/National Funding Formula (NFF)

Mark Sheikh highlighted key points from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Overview presentation:

- We normally have a good idea of the settlement by now, but this year we don't have clear guidance regarding the full allocation and therefore can't yet share specifics. We are awaiting final confirmation which is due the end of December.
- We received the indicative allocation in July and the slides are based on that and the October 2021 Census. The additional funding announced in the Chancellor's autumn budget is not included – this may be included as a supplementary grant on a per pupil basis.
- The table on slide 4 shows the provisional allocation for 2023/24.
- Early years:
 - Funding is expected to increase by 1% for hourly rates across both age ranges paid to providers - this is an area for concern as this will not help absorb the pressures providers face.
 - The Teachers' Pay and Pension Grant (TPPG) is to be rolled in.
 - There is a proposal to amend the guidance on the quality supplement to encourage LAs to consider using this due to additional pressures for all providers.
 - There is an indicative budget increase of £261k for maintained nurseries (including TPPG).
- High Needs Block funding will increase by £5.9m, but there is still pressure regarding demand so this increase will be required to support growth.
- Central Services Schools Block (CSSB) – funding for historic commitments will decrease by £610k. Previously this reduction has been covered by Sheffield City Council (SCC) and it is likely that SCC will again provide substitute funding.
- Capital Allocation:
 - As per slide 9 – an additional allocation of £447m is available in 2022 to 2023. This is to be spent on capital projects that improve energy efficiency. It equates to at least £10,000 to each institution.
 - The money is to be spent by March and will be passed on to schools in January.
 - If schools can't demonstrate projects relating to energy, other projects will be considered.
 - Conditions have been published and a link will be shared.

Further to work undertaken via the Funding Working Group, Jacky Beatson summarised the indicative budget share modelling:

- Slide 11 shows the provisional allocation for 2023/24 – a variance of just over £11m (plus £11.9m for the Supplementary Grant).
- The model is based on the principles outlined on slide 12:
 - All LAs to move 10% closer to NFF and use ALL factors.
 - Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) to be a maximum national level 0.5%.
 - The Supplementary Grant from 2022-23 has been rolled into the DSG from 2023-24 and is put through Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) and Minimum Per Pupil Funding Levels (MPPFLs).

- The group has reviewed various models and the proposals include the primary:secondary ratio moving to 1:1.34 and that primary AWPU is moved to within the Department for Education (DfE) threshold to ensure stability in primary, whilst we continue to maintain NFF levels for secondary (slide 13).
- We plan to invest £11.7m into schools with high levels of social deprivation; the 0.5% MFG will ensure all schools see an increase and the remaining balance will be invested across factors to track the NFF.
- Slide 15 shows the distribution of model 4 versus the full implementation of the NFF.
- Slides 16 and 17 show the summary of models and examples of impact on different types of schools.
- Further models will be produced when we know the final allocation.
- Due to the timeline shown on slide 19, it is recommended that the Forum delegates the final decision on the chosen model – required to be made by 6 January - to the Funding Working Group. Forum members are also invited to attend that meeting and will be updated by email of the outcome.

The Forum agreed to delegate the final decision on the model to the Funding Working Group.

Additional Forum discussion regarding the above presentations was as follows:

- There was dissatisfaction around the short timeline for the additional Capital funding which does not allow for time to plan.
- Early Years:
 - Keith Crawshaw expressed the need to record the very real concern around the ‘appalling’ settlement that won’t keep up with inflation.
 - Karen Simpkin reported that the sector is looking to reduce 2-year-old FEL and 15-hour provision as it’s no longer viable.
 - To continue to lobby government by writing a letter to express concern with the inadequate funding and ensure that Karen is involved in the contributing to the draft.

Action: Mark Sheikh to progress the letter via the Early Years Working Group.

8. Forum Chair Arrangements and Members Update

Paul Stockley announced that he is retiring in July 2023 and that arrangements have now been put in place for the role of the Chair going forwards.

Mark Sheikh thanked Paul on behalf of the Forum for his involvement over a period of many years and briefly summarised the paper as follows:

- Keith Crawshaw will become Chair as of the June 2023 meeting and Nigel Brooke-Smith will become deputy Chair.
- Nigel will be involved in Chairs’ briefings as of the New Year.
- Laura Gillespie has now also stepped down and we therefore have two vacancies for special school representatives – Mark to continue to try and encourage involvement from the sector.
- James Smythe of the Sheffield College has now joined the Forum to represent the 16-19 sector.
- Following the recent academy elections, both Morag Somerville and Jim Dugmore have been elected to continue for another term.

The Forum endorsed the recommended Chair/Vice-chair arrangements and noted the membership update.

9. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)/Section 106

The Forum noted the paper which was for information only and suggested that it be discussed at the Funding Group prior to considering if more detail is required to be brought back to the Forum.

10. AOB

None raised.

Date of next meeting: 23 February 2023, 3.00-5.00pm, Learn Sheffield, Albion House, Savile Street