

# Minutes

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	<b>Sheffield Schools Forum</b>	
<b>Time and Date:</b>	<b>3.00-5.00pm, 15 December 2020</b>	
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Via Zoom</b>	
<b>Chair:</b>	<b>Paul Stockley</b>	
<b>Schools Forum Members:</b>		
<b>Primary Heads Representatives</b> Nigel Brooke-Smith (Greystones) Cathy Rowland (Dobcroft Infant) Paul Stockley (Bradway)		<b>Academies</b> Keith Crawshaw (Sheffield South East Trust) David Dennis (Tapton) Jim Dugmore (Oughtibridge) Chris French (Mercia Learning Trust) Morag Somerville (Steel City Schools Partnership)  <b>Special Academies</b> Joel Hardwick (Nexus Multi-academy Trust)  <b>Special Schools</b> Laura Gillespie, Governor (Bents Green) Sacha Schofield, Head (Bents Green)  <b>PRU</b> Dave Smith (Sheffield Inclusion Centre)
<b>Primary Governors</b> Mike Allen (Pipworth) Alison Warner (Grenoside)		
<b>Secondary Head</b> Linda Gooden (King Edward VII)		
<b>Non-school Members</b> 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		
<b>Apologies:</b> Mo Andrews, Rod Padley, Dave Smith, Morag Somerville		
<b>Also in attendance:</b> Tim Armstrong, Head of SEN; John Doyle, Director of Strategy and Commissioning; Andrew Jones, Director of Education and Skills; Cllr Mohamed, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills; Amanda Murray, Business Strategy (notes); Mark Sheikh, Head of Service, Business Strategy		
<b>Presenters:</b> Candi Lawson, Strategic Commissioning Manager; Matt Peers; Strategic Commissioning Manager; Bethan Plant, Public Health Team		

Item	Details	Action
1.	<b>Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest</b> Introductions were made and apologies noted as above.  It was noted that Mike Allen and David Dennis' terms on the Forum have come to an end and they were thanked for their input into the Forum. Mike Allen's place will now become an academy place to ensure proportionate representation; and nominations will be invited from the sector in the New Year for both places.	

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	No declarations of interest were made.	
2.	<p><b>Previous meeting minutes/matters arising</b></p> <p>Agreed as a true and accurate record, with no matters arising.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Education Strategy and Political Priorities Update</b></p> <p>Cllr Mohamed gave the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are key changes in the city to note including the new Chief Executive of the Council, Kate Josephs, and a new Council Leader.</li> <li>• Since taking up the post of Cabinet Member for Education and Skills in May 2019, Cllr Mohamed has consulted with heads, parents and community groups; and started city-wide discussions regarding strategic intentions.</li> <li>• Rebuilding the economy is a priority and education and skills sit within this.</li> <li>• There is political investment in youth services and alternative provision providers.</li> <li>• The draft Education Strategy is currently out for consultation with a deadline of 6 January.</li> <li>• The Strategy will also include skills which is being consulted on separately throughout January, and the two elements will be brought together in the New Year.</li> <li>• Key political priorities are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Addressing the education disadvantage gap through curriculum development and school improvement for example.</li> <li>○ Inclusion – which is core to our ethos – more work is required around exclusion.</li> <li>○ Special Educational Needs – improving provision in terms of both consistency and sufficiency.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Sheffield City Region has now devolved funding for post-16 provision.</li> <li>• Post-Covid-19 we need to continue to work collaboratively and this will be via a new Education and Skills Board, with focussed work undertaken via working groups and ensuring an annual operational plan is in place.</li> </ul> <p>Additional comments from the Forum included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andrew Jones reported that there has been a good response to the consultation so far, including from parents, which indicates support for the vision .</li> <li>• We need to be clear on how the new Board feeds into the partnership structure.</li> <li>• The emphasis on values was welcomed and the importance of sustaining communication.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Chair added that there is more to education than just outcomes.</li> </ul>	
4.	<p><b>Public Health Update</b></p> <p>Bethan Plant started by thanking early years providers and schools for their hard work over the last few months and gave the following Covid-19 update as per the presentation shared at the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The current position is that Sheffield has a falling rate of cases – 82 per day. 125 / 100,000 people over last 7days and a 6.3% positivity rate.</li> <li>The graph shows a steep peak in numbers in September when students returned. Covid spreads quickly via household transmission, including halls of residence; as well as any educational setting or workplace.</li> <li>The decline in cases is now slowing.</li> <li>Numbers are not reducing across the city at the same rate – the East is becoming an area for concern.</li> <li>There is a decline in numbers in all age groups, but this is still not fast enough in the older age group. Numbers are also high in the younger working age group.</li> <li>Hospital admissions are decreasing slowly, but the length of stay is increasing.</li> <li>We need to get back towards mid-May levels.</li> <li>There is likely to be a significant increase in cases in January as a result of the relaxation of rules over Christmas.</li> <li>The plan going forwards is as per the slide and mostly around prevention, with isolation being key.</li> <li>Sheffield is one of the few cities in the Yorkshire and Humber that has managed to keep school closures low.</li> </ul> <p>Comments and questions from the Forum included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Toby Mallinson said that it was difficult to suggest the September spike in cases was due to students arriving back in the city. He felt the start of the new academic year and schools fully opening contributed to the increased case number. He also added that PPE and social distancing are issues for schools. He questioned if schools were receiving adequate support to manage cases.</li> <li>David Dennis thinks schools have done an amazing job of tracking and isolating, but he is anxious of false hope that may be attached to mass testing.</li> <li>Members thanked Public Health for the support and guidance provided throughout the pandemic.</li> </ul>	
5.	<p><b>PRU Funding Update</b></p> <p>Candi Lawson highlighted key points from Paper 3:</p>	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where a child with an EHC Plan is excluded from schools, it is proposed that any top-up funding that the mainstream schools receives in relation to the plan should be transferred to the Inclusion Centre on a pro-rata basis.</li> <li>• In addition, that if a child with an EHC Plan starts at the beginning of the academic year, that the Inclusion Centre should make an application to the Locality where the child lives for funding to support the plan. Also, that the Inclusion Centre should access locality funding to support any EHC Plans provided whilst the child is at the Centre.</li> <li>• The Inclusion Gateway process development has been delayed as a result of the Covid pandemic, and due to delays, the Sheffield Inclusion Centre will receive the full Gateway funding of £325k for this academic year to enable the system to be developed and embedded. This will be calculated on a per pupil basis from next year.</li> </ul>	
<p>Further Forum questions and comments raised the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The mainstream school funding will need to follow the child.</li> <li>• If the schools have already spent the funding, will there be a deficit model to pass on? Mark Sheikh to consider and respond to this as part of the update at next meeting (the paper only addresses the basic principles in the first instance).</li> <li>• Candi to look in to developing a pathway of scenarios.</li> <li>• The principles need to be transparent and fair in order to be right for the child, the school and the PRU. It's important to consider the detail around preparation and staff planning.</li> <li>• The PRU would need to implement the EHC Plan and the LA must ensure it is resourced - the PRU would therefore need the top-up funding to do this, but a lag of half a term would be too long.</li> <li>• Technically, the PRU would have to be named on the EHC Plan.</li> <li>• There are currently only a handful of pupils per year that are permanently excluded with EHC Plans, so it would be possible to look at individual cases.</li> <li>• To ensure that we avoid perverse incentives.</li> </ul>	<p>M Sheikh</p> <p>C Lawson</p>
<p><u>Next Steps</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To further develop a proposal around how EHC Plan funding could follow the child at PRU without having any detrimental impact on schools.</li> </ul>	<p>C Lawson/ N Shearstone /M Sheikh</p>

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	<p><b>Prevention of Exclusion Funding (£1.5m transfer to High Needs Block)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support inclusion and increase preventative work to reduce exclusions, we are proposing to redirect £1.5m from Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2021/22 as per further detail in the appendices.</li> <li>Whilst the consultation responses support this redirection of funds, it is clear from feedback that more clarity is required on spend.</li> <li>We will review spend and impact of interventions over the next few months and develop a performance dashboard to report back to the Forum.</li> </ul> <p>Key points raised by the Forum included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A review would be welcomed to see detailed evidence to demonstrate accountability and help understand effectiveness; and it was suggested that if any interventions demonstrate a lack of impact they should be ceased.</li> <li>Granularity is important and has been requested in the past, for example numbers involved in the different interventions.</li> <li>It was suggested that we set up a Forum task and finish group, with clear terms of reference to support the review and ensure timescales are met with an update for the February and June Forums. To ensure that the PRU is represented on this group.</li> <li>SCC officers have been capturing some detail of impact and have evidence of a reduction in permanent exclusions, but it isn't always easy to demonstrate what has helped this.</li> <li>To be cautious of exceptions to the data as a result of the last nine months.</li> <li>To note that whilst Schools Block funding is increasing, the High Needs Block still has a substantial shortfall.</li> <li>To also undertake more work around barriers to reintegration.</li> </ul> <p><u>Next Steps</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To undertake a review of interventions to date over the next few months.</li> <li>To set up a task and finish group with clear terms of reference to support the review and ensure timescales are met.</li> <li>To update the February Forum on progress and provide a final report back to the June Forum.</li> </ul>	<p>N Shearstone / C Lawson/ M Peers</p> <p>N Shearstone / M Sheikh/ A Murray</p> <p>N Shearstone / C Lawson/ M Peers</p>
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	<p>The Forum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Agreed</b> to allocate £325k from gateway inclusion funding to cover in-year exclusion funding to the PRU (2020/21).</li> <li>• <b>Agreed</b> with the principle of funding following the child to the PRU where the child has an EHC Plan.</li> <li>• <b>Approved</b> the redirection of £1.5m from Schools Block to High needs block for 2021/22.</li> </ul> <p><b>SEND Sufficiency Plan</b> (as per Paper 8 circulated for information)</p> <p>Laura Gillespie submitted a question/comment in advance of the meeting:</p> <p><i>‘To ensure this plan is being driven forwards strategically as a matter of urgency. The current version of the plan describes the capacity problem but not sufficient proposals for resolution. If the plan is not being discussed at the Schools Forum, is it being discussed at the Inclusion Board or another strategic group?’</i></p> <p><i>It is of huge importance that not only the current capacity issues are resolved (placements for students need to be determined by 15th February), but that we have a plan that ensures we do not have a year-on-year issue of looking for more buildings space across the city to meet demand for special school places.’</i></p> <p>Matt Peers responded that this is a high level plan which is being overseen by the Inclusion Board and presented at various groups, including a meeting with the Parent Carer Forum in the New Year, and regular updates will be fed back to the Forum.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Early Years Investment Pot</b></p> <p>Mark Sheikh summarised the recommendations made by the Early Years Working Group regarding how to distribute the £500k funds – all as per Paper 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be distributed to all providers, as soon as possible, using FEL funded hours from 2018/19.</li> <li>• With a minimum payment of £250 and a maximum payment of £6,700.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Forum approved</b> the recommended distribution method of the investment fund.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Primary Schools Falling Rolls</b></p> <p>Mark Sheikh presented Paper 5, highlighting key points as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Forum is asked to discuss and agree the principles that underpin the Falling Roll Policy and agree to a budget of £250k to support schools as per the recommendations.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A financial package is being recommended to support schools with falling rolls that are ranked as Good or Outstanding. We are also recommending this be extended to those categorised as Requiring Improvement, subject to strict criteria.</li> <li>The principles and criteria are outlined in the paper and it is suggested that a panel be set up to consider these in more detail. Continue to progress further development and refinement of principles/policy through the Funding Working Group.</li> </ul> <p>Further discussion is summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The funding sits within the Growth Fund.</li> <li>More definition is required around expected use of school reserves as schools still need some contingency.</li> <li>There is a downward trajectory for the next five years affecting primary schools – do we need to consider reviewing the pupil admission numbers (PAN)?</li> <li>Pupil numbers are normally based on an 11-year trend.</li> <li>The conversation needs to be linked with SEND sufficiency.</li> <li>This problem affects some schools more than others – how do we balance those that are consistently over-subscribed with those that are consistently under-subscribed.</li> <li>Further analysis is required within localities.</li> </ul> <p>The Forum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Agreed</b> to a one-off budget of £250k for falling rolls from the rolled forward underspend from the 2020/21 Growth budget.</li> <li><b>Agreed</b> to support schools that meet the criteria.</li> </ul>	Funding Group
8.	<p><b>Schools Funding: National Funding Formula (NFF) and Indicative Mainstream Budgets</b></p> <p>Mark Sheikh talked the Forum through the presentation (Appendix 1) which gives more detail on the funding models considered, as well as summarising Paper 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We continue to transition towards the NFF until we receive the full allocation of funds to enable full implementation.</li> <li>We have delivered transition with the minimum negative impact on schools.</li> <li>Sheffield has received an increase in the individual schools budget of £12.7m, meaning an indicative budget of £379.3m, which includes the conversion of grant increase of £15.7m to teachers' pay and pension grants.</li> <li>We would require a further £3.75m in 2021/22 to fully implement the NFF by unit value.</li> <li>The recommended model moves us significantly closer to the NFF proportionately.</li> <li>The table on slide 5 – overall Schools Block increase – factors in the proposed transfer of £1.5m to the High Needs Block.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principles for our continued transition are shown on slide 6. We may need to review the school meals and IDACI split again for future years.</li> <li>• Model 3 is the model recommending by the Funding Working Group and which aligns to the NFF giving universal enhancement:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Using NFF %age proportions for Social Deprivation.</li> <li>○ The remaining elements use £ per pupil rates.</li> <li>○ With an enhanced investment through AWPU.</li> <li>○ Maintaining the Lump Sum at £120k.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The summary models on slide 9 show the breakdown of the additional funding across funding factors in the different models.</li> <li>• Slide 10 shows the %age variance across factors between the proposed model and the NFF for 2021/22 and slide 11 shows the variance in £s.</li> <li>• To note that the indicative figures are based on the October 2019 Census.</li> <li>• Localities engagement will be carried out during January and February.</li> <li>• The High Needs Block allocation has increased by £8.7m, but a decrease in the Central Services Schools Block of £08.m results in a net increase of £7.9m, which means a short fall of £5.7m from our full allocation.</li> <li>• It has been announced that there will be an extra £44m nationally for Early Years and further information on distribution of this will be made available as soon as possible.</li> <li>• The Early Years Block allocation will not be finalised until July 2022. There is concern around current take up levels. If the Government reverts to the January 2021 Census, there is a risk of a negative impact on the allocation for 2021/22. Alongside the falling birth rate, this poses a major sustainability issue. Further work will be undertaken through the Early Years Working Group and reported back to the February Schools Forum.</li> </ul> <p>Additional Forum comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a Working Group member, Keith Crawshaw supports the proposed NFF model, but feels that school level figures, as a result of the IDACI split, don't necessarily square with our strategy focus on deprivation. Mark will raise this issue when carrying out further engagement and emphasised that the AWPU increase helps all schools.</li> <li>• Increased numbers of home educated pupils at present who may later come back into the system will also pose a risk for a reduction in funding which may later have to be funded via Growth funds.</li> </ul>	M Sheikh
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	<p>The Forum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Agreed</b> to the recommendation of the Funding Working Group – to continue towards NFF transition by adopting the principles and model 3.</li> <li>• <b>Noted</b> the indicative budgets for 2021/22 as per Appendix 2.</li> <li>• <b>Noted</b> the changes to the High Needs Block and CSSB allocations.</li> <li>• <b>Noted</b> the additional national allocation to the Early Years Block and that further work will be undertaken by the Early Years Working Group.</li> </ul>	
9.	<p><b>Provision of Supply Teachers</b></p> <p>Paper 7 asks the Forum to consider whether a council-owned agency for teaching staff could deliver better value for money than schools could do for themselves, and whether there is merit in investigating this further.</p> <p>Toby Mallinson thinks that savings could be made by such a service and that it is morally/ethically important for colleagues and would therefore like to see a review.</p> <p>The Chair added that his school didn't use the previous SESA service as it was too expensive and posed a significant risk and feels this would be a retrospective step. Other members agreed and a vote was taken.</p> <p><b>The Forum agreed</b> not to pursue the requested proposal further.</p>	
10.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>The Chair shared the results of the Forum survey, which indicated that on the whole that Forum members felt the meetings via Zoom were better or as good as the usual face-to-face meetings, easier to attend and gave adequate opportunity to contribute. Any additional suggestions, including the use of break-out rooms, have been taken on board for future meetings.</p>	

**Date of next meeting:** 23 February 2021, 3.00-4.30pm, via Zoom