

Minutes - Sheffield Schools Forum

3.00-5.00pm, 29 September 2022, Learn Sheffield, Savile Street

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
Vacant Seat, 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)
Vacant Seat, Head

PRU

Alan Richards (Sheffield Inclusion Centre)

Apologies: Mo Andrews, David Dennis, Laura Gillespie, Linda Gooden, Stacy McKay, Alan Richards, Morag Somerville, Alison Warner

Also in attendance: Cllr Dale, Co-Chair for the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee; Rhona Dobbs, PRU (on behalf of Alan Richards); Amanda Murray, Education and Skills (notes); Mark Sheikh, Head of Service, Resourcing and Business Planning; Kevin Straughan, Director, Education and Skills

Presenters: Jacky Beatson, Resourcing Manager, Education and Skills; Jason Peck, Contract Manager Asset Management; Matt Peers, Strategic Commissioning Manager

Observers: Raifa Hussain, NEU Trade Union

1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Introductions were made and apologies noted as above. Helen Kenyon was welcomed as the new primary representative and Kevin Straughan as a Sheffield City Council (SCC) attendee, replacing Andrew Jones as Director of Education and Skills.

No declarations of interest were made.

2. Previous meeting minutes/matters arising

Agreed as a true and accurate record.

- Laura Gillespie submitted a question in her absence around progress on the action regarding dual placements.
Action: Mark to check on progress with colleagues.
- Toby Mallinson commented on the White Paper discussion – that he felt it implied academisation as a direction of travel.
- Nigel Brook-Smith raised the outstanding issue of a replacement Forum Chair.
Action Paul and Mark to discuss this further with Nigel.

3. Procurement of Gas and Electricity Supply

Jason Peck presented the report, highlighting the following:

- This is an opportunity to provide clarity on how SCC purchases energy on behalf of schools and to look at how we can mitigate the risks of price increases.
- SCC purchases energy through a compliant framework – Crown Commercial Services (CCS) and schools currently subscribe to SCC's energy procurement framework.
- SCC has made a decision to adopt a long-term purchasing strategy for both gas and electricity – the V30 basket (for a period of three and a half years). This longer period should help level out peaks in the market. It won't necessarily always give the cheapest price but it poses the least risk.
- SCC is advising that schools adopt the same approach and have an option to remain part of the Council's framework and be moved to the V30 basket.
- Schools can be in the CCS framework without being via SCC. However, the advantage of being within SCC's framework is a dedicated account manager.
- *(David Dennis raised the issue of PFI schools in relation to energy prior to the meeting – this was touched upon in section 3.2 of the paper and will be discussed at the Funding Working Group).*

Additional Forum discussion raised the following points:

- The Chair clarified that the Forum cannot make the decision for schools, but it can make a recommendation.
- SCC will arrange communications with schools and ensure clarity of timescales.
- If schools do not opt out, they will be included in the contract.
- Any school that is not currently part of the contract can join, including academies.
- It was clarified that YPO were the Council's provider for electricity prior to CCS.
- There are a small number of schools who are not in a position to exit contracts and may need help with transition.
Action: Jason to contact and offer assistance.
- It is not known if private, voluntary and independent (PVI) nurseries can join the contract as there may be restrictions.
Action: Jason to investigate.
- The data on the appendix is the latest version and is not likely to be affected by the new cap.
- The use of energy should take into consideration efficiency and not just the cost.
- SCC has a building management system that can help schools manage settings to ensure energy efficiency – Jason is available to offer advice on request and will provide an advice sheet.
- Nigel is not clear on what savings are generated by solar panels.

Action: Paul and Nigel to discuss outside of the meeting.

- It was suggested that energy efficiency is in conflict with Covid guidelines regarding ventilation/opening windows for example – discussion confirmed these guidelines are no longer current.

Recommendations/next steps:

- **The Forum agreed** to recommend the V30 contract to all schools.

Action: Jason to arrange communication be sent to schools, including Trust Chairs, explaining the requirement to opt out by the end of January 2023.

Action: Forum members to ensure that schools are made aware of this option at the earliest opportunity by raising awareness at meetings.

4. Capital Allocations

Mark Sheikh summarised the funding allocations as per Paper 4 (which also links with Papers 5a and 5b):

- Basic Need Allocation
 - Most schemes run over several years and funding is confirmed up to 2025.
 - The Government's data for determining the allocations is based on capacity.
 - There is a pressure in the south west of the city for Basic Need funding. We need to expand quickly in area five – to identify places on a temporary basis for the next academic year.
- School Condition Allocation
 - Relates to maintained schools.
 - The Department for Education (DfE) aims for a fair share based on available budget rather than the level of need.
 - We will receive £3.5m for one year but have longer term plans and a backlog of work required to be undertaken which is estimated at a value of £45m.
- High Needs Provision Allocation
 - The allocation has increased substantially.
 - The sufficiency plan will be covered by Paper 5b.

The Chair raised the issue regarding inequity in the system for maintained schools in terms of building condition.

Action: Mark to arrange for a letter to be sent to the Secretary of State highlighting the issue again.

The Forum noted the allocations.

5. High Needs Sufficiency Update

Matt Peers summarised Paper 5b as follows:

- The increased High Needs Capital allocation supports the development of special school places. However, there are still pressures in the system.
- The refreshed sufficiency plan is in progress and due to be presented in December 2022 to the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee.

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) are key drivers for demand, in particular at transition points.
- A number of schemes are currently being progressed.
- Next steps include working with the sector – communication to be sent out in October.

Forum discussion raised the following points:

- Providers need to be consulted before sufficiency planning so that they can contribute and sign up to it.
Action: Matt and Mark to give consideration around how we ensure the wider sector is engaged through various groups.
- Jim Dugmore queried the use of Section 106 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding and how that might be used.
Action: Jim to send Mark information about his specific query. Cllr Dale also requested that Mark ensure a paper is provided to the Forum about how Section 106 CIL funding works.
- Laura Gillespie submitted the following questions: 1) how will the high needs provision capital funding be spent to ensure that the LA can secure sufficient school places, especially when demand for special schools continues to grow and our special schools are acknowledged to be at full capacity; and 2) will this be sufficient to not only address the immediate crisis but also the long term projection of needing to create 300 more special school places over the next 5 years?
Matt will be meeting with Laura (and Bents Green School) to discuss this further and clarified that question 1) would be covered by the Sufficiency Plan and 2) the new school bid would cover the 10-year picture.
- Mark reiterated that the funding allocation is short-term and doesn't allow for long-term planning.
Action: Mark to ensure the issue is raised with the Secretary of State.

Mainstream Sufficiency Update

Cathie Tandy was unable to attend to present the paper. It was raised that there is still substantial pressure in secondary and the accuracy of the projections were queried.

Action: Mark to ask Cathie Tandy to confirm.

The Forum noted both sufficiency updates.

6. School Balances

Mark Sheikh updated the Forum on progress:

- Most of the school visits have now been undertaken and a £1,225k clawback agreed.
- We will work with the Funding Group to consider how this clawback be invested, but may now have to frame the conversation to take account of pay awards and inflation as schools may have to use reserves going forwards.
- Mark will re-visit the schools after December to progress their plans.

The Forum noted the update and acknowledged that it may be most beneficial to invest the funds into capital projects for maintained schools.

7. Early Years Disability Access Fund (DAF) and Deprivation Consultations

Jacky Beatson presented the update:

- Consultation was undertaken with the sector to consider how a one-off DAF balance of upto £554k, taking into account a payment to support the DAF helpline, should be allocated. Three models were produced for the consultation and subsequently considered by the Early Years Working Group.
- A consultation was also undertaken regarding Deprivation funding – to consider distribution of £1.2m and three models were produced. The consensus was that the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) option is the most transparent way to allocate the funds.

Additional Forum discussion:

- Clarified that payments will only be made to currently operating early years Providers and that where a provider goes out of business, the funding would be re-distributed to eligible providers.
- Highlighted the need for better promotion of claiming DAF in future - the Forum will help to raise awareness with providers.

The Forum approved the recommendations of the Early Years Working Group:

- That mandatory deprivation funding factor continues to be paid to the sector based on IDACI data from 1 April 2023 onwards and that it be reviewed every four years.
- To distribute the one-off DAF amount of upto £554k to all current 3 and 4-year-old Free Early Learning (FEL) providers who received funding for FEL participation hours in 2021/22 and that this be reviewed every three years.
- Any future DAF balances would be distributed using the same methodology.

8. School Food Supplement Vouchers

This paper was circulated for information only, but Mark reiterated the £11.4m of vouchers distributed to date and the continuation of the scheme until March 2023; also, the need to prepare families for when the scheme is discontinued.

9. AOB

None raised.

Date of next meeting: 14 December, 3.00-5.00pm, Learn Sheffield, Albion House, Savile Street