

Minutes - Sheffield Schools Forum

3.00-4.30pm, 23 February 2023, 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
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

2 x vacant seats

PRU

Alan Richards (Sheffield Inclusion Centre)

Apologies: Mo Andrews, Chris French, Toby Mallinson/Lisa Smith, Alan Richards, James Smythe

Also in attendance: 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; Michael Johnson, Head of Planning; Helen Mansfield, Resourcing Manager, Education and Skills; Claire Woods, Planning Obligations Officer

Observers: Lucy Lee, SCC

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.

Energy Procurement

An update was requested on the outcome of the energy procurement consultation which closes on 24 February.

Action: MS to request update and ensure this is circulated to the Forum via email.

Early Years letter to Secretary of State – was awaiting final confirmation of budgets and can now be progressed. Kevin Straughan added that meetings have been held with MPs regarding the pressures faced by the sector.

Action: to be progressed through the Early years Working Group.

3. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)/Section 106 (S106)

Further to the paper shared with the December Schools Forum, Claire Woods and Michael Johnson attended to provide an update and any additional information required by the Forum:

- Levies are applied to developers, principally housing developers.
- The levies are spread across wards, based on Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD); and rates vary from for example £80 per square meter in more affluent areas to nothing in more deprived areas.
- The CIL is split across the city with the neighbourhood portion making up 15%, 5% for the LA's administration and the balance goes into the strategic pot.
- A high-level list is allocated to projects.
- The Council has just completed a public consultation on the draft Local Plan which allows us to look at the Infrastructure Development Plan and where the money will be spent. It is a key tool that looks at patterns of development and specifies projects that should be considered for CIL funding, ensuring a more informed conversation.
- S106 is a more bespoke contribution, generally bound by ward/areas close to the relevant development sites whereas CIL is a non-negotiable contribution and councils don't have to use both.
- There is now more ability to fund via S106, but there are high thresholds for education provision e.g. 500 homes, but the Local Plan will help to lower the thresholds. Very few developments in Sheffield are large enough to meet the threshold.
- Phased developments can break down payments but can't avoid the levy.
- The levy is by site, not cumulative.
- S106 would look at need in local schools and is focussed on capacity, whereas CIL supports the capital aspects – infrastructure and capacity.

Additional Forum discussion can be summarised as follows:

- Jim Dugmore suggested that the sector could use the money for integrated resources in different areas for example to take the pressure off the capital development and asked how the voice of schools could be included in any consultations regarding proposals around how the money could be used.
- CIL would be the right pot for SEND if it is deemed to be the priority for spend.
- S106 would need a strategy if the proposed expenditure is not directly related to the catchment area.
- A clear communication strategy is required with stakeholders to give confidence in the engagement. Schools can feed into consultations via officers in Education. To contact Matt Peers and Cathie Tandy, who work on SEND and mainstream sufficiency, to link in to this work.
- Previously for S106, the Council had a conversation with colleagues in Education at the point of application, and then Education consulted with stakeholders.

- A funding statement is produced annually regarding spend – CIL is predominantly used for Highways/Flooding and S106 for Education.
- We have £9.7m funding for basic need funding, but this doesn't cover the cost of expansion and we have to use S106 to supplement this wherever possible.
- A viability approach has been created which allows a healthy margin of £200 per residential unit for S106 in the draft Local Plan alongside CIL contributions.
- It was requested that the education agenda be a priority for future deployment of S106.

4. **Funded Early Learning (FEL) Allocation 2023/24 and Outturn 2021/22**

Jacky Beatson summarised the papers as follows:

Funding 2023/24

- The income allocation for 2023/24 is £37.83m.
- There is an increase in the rate of:
 - 6p per pupil hour for 2-year-olds; and
 - 5p for 3&4-year-olds plus an additional 11p Teachers' Pay and Pension Grant (TPPG).
- Funding for early years nationally has returned to being on a formulaic basis.

Consultation

- A consultation was carried out with the early years sector regarding the distribution of the base hourly funding rate for 3&4-year-olds. This was in relation to the TPPG which generates 11p per hour and which was previously paid to schools and academies to support additional costs associated with qualified teaching staff.
- 60% of respondents voted to distribute the full 16p per hour to all providers (the 11p TPPG plus the 5p increase in rate) - increasing the hourly rate payable to £4.59 – and the Early Years Working Group supports the outcome of the consultation.

Outturn Funding 2021/22

- There is a gross FEL positive outturn of £608.4k for 2021/22, and it is proposed that we consult with providers over the summer regarding distribution of the net £465k.
- The variance £142.6k Disability Access Funding (DAF) is protected and will be distributed in line with the process agreed at the September 2022 Forum meeting – based on 2021/22 hours.

Additional comments from the Forum included:

- David Dennis highlighted that the funding for the sector is insufficient and has led to discord amongst the Early Years Working Group; and that whilst he supports the outcome of the consultation as it is in the interest of the sector overall, he is concerned about the consequences for schools with nurseries.
- The overall increase in cash terms equates to 1%, but we are helping by ensuring a 100% pass-through rate for 2-year-olds.
- The minimum wage increase will impact on providers, in particular those in deprived areas and parents are having to subsidise the increasing costs.
- Nurseries are closing and looking at reducing FEL hours. The impact of this will follow through into primary.

The Forum:

- **Noted** the increase in allocation and hourly rates for 2023/24.
- **Approved** the recommendation to increase the funding for 2-year-olds by 32p per hour to £5.63, ensuring that Sheffield passes on 100% of income received to providers.
- **Approved** the recommendation to increase the base rate for 3&4-year-olds by 16p per pupil hour to £4.59 (5p plus 11p TPPG) as per the outcome of the consultation.
- **Noted** the proposal to consult with the early years sector regarding the positive outturn and the distribution of the DAF balances as previously agreed.

5. High Needs Block Funding 2023/24

Mark Sheikh highlighted key points from Paper 4:

- Special school places have increased by 118 to an average of 1,645 and places in integrated resources (IRs) have increased by 37 to 291.
- Sheffield is receiving an increase of £10.6m High Needs Block funding for 2023/24, including £4m for cost pressures.
- There will be an average increase of £1,038 per place for special schools and an increase of 3.4% on base budgets for IRs.
- There will be continued investment in the localities budget of £6m including the £1.5m transfer from the Schools Block as previously agreed by the Forum.
- A provision of £2.5m has been made for growth.
- There will be a total investment of £3.8m for the Inclusion Centre for 250 places and we will regularly monitor occupancy.
- An allocation of £3.1m will be made for post-16 provision.

Further discussion raised the following points:

- Increase in transport costs will be covered by the LA rather than through DSG.
- Pupil Referral Unit places will continue to be funded at £14.5k with schools providing the additional £4k.
- The table at 6.1 appears to show decreasing costs for exclusion prevention, but this is due to a redirection of funds, and this should be clarified.
- Independent placements costs are showing high growth – to have a policy discussion about this at the June Forum. To consider how IRs could be funded to help reduce these placements and alleviate other pressures (including giving consideration to any unspent Section 106 funds - £19m).
- To consider how we can apply pressure for capital or base funding.

Actions:

- Mark Sheikh to raise question of independent placement costs with Rose Ward in preparation for item on June Forum agenda.
- Helen Mansfield to provide breakdown of numbers on the independent placements.

6. Final School Budgets 2023/24

Mark Sheikh presented key points from Paper 5:

- Pupil numbers are starting to rise – an increase of 923.
- There is a £42.4m increase in our Schools Block allocation overall for 2023/24 – a real terms cash increase of £12m.

- 1.7 outlines the principles applied to our approach to calculate the mainstream school budgets. This includes providing an additional £69 for primary pupils - over and above the National Funding Formula (NFF) recommended Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) for primary places.
- It is now mandatory for LAs to move at least 10% closer towards the NFF and they must use all NFF factors.
- The individual school budgets have been set at £425.4 and are detailed in Appendix 1.
- The overall £ per pupil average for secondary and primary is £5,693.
- Pupil Premium is increasing by 5%.
- A Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG) is being introduced from April 2023 and is detailed in section 6 of the paper.
- There is a change to the de-delegated budget to Learn Sheffield as a result of the School Improvement Commission coming to an end in August 2023.
- Regarding the Central Schools Services Block – the Council is continuing to absorb the reduction in the historic commitments element (£428k).

The Forum noted the contents of the paper and **approved the 2023/24 budget set at £425.4m.**

Additional Forum discussion regarding the Learn Sheffield Commission was as follows:

- There is ongoing discussion around the wider Learn Sheffield Commission and a paper is going to a committee meeting in March. An update will then be provided to the June Forum. Forum members comments were invited and will be noted in that paper.
- Stephen Betts queried the timeline stating that activities need to be identified, costed and consultation undertaken on the proposal ready for the June Forum otherwise it will be too late for September.
- Mark Sheikh clarified that any decisions being made on de-delegated funding will be for 2024/25 (we can't change the budget for 2023/24) and that the Council would have to find another way to fund this in the interim – there is no provision and Mark will flag this as a risk.
- The aim is for a joint view between Learn Sheffield and the Council ensuring the best interests of the sector.
- Stephen clarified that viability of Learn Sheffield is not an issue - that we need to consider how we approach statutory school improvement to achieve the best outcomes.
- It was clarified that the paper that went to the December Forum was just about the imminent decisions at the time regarding reduced funding for school improvement.
- It was noted that the collaboration built by Learn Sheffield is critical for the long-term future of the city.

7. Capital Allocation/Buildings Programme

This paper was shared for information only and outlines that we have been successful in bids for funding to re-build seven schools as part of the DfE's Re-build Programme.

8. AOB

Keith Crawshaw reminded the Forum that this was Paul Stockley's last meeting in the role of Chair. He thanked Paul, on behalf of the Forum, for his input over many years and wished him well for his retirement; noting that he had steered the Forum in the best interests of the city through challenging times.

Date of next meeting: 27 June 2023, 3.00-5.00pm, Learn Sheffield, Albion House, Savile Street