



# Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council Children's Services Directorate

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## BARNSLEY SCHOOLS FORUM

### MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE FORUM HELD ON THURSDAY 20<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2022

#### PRESENT

##### Headteacher and MAT Board Representatives

Paul Crook, Victoria Harrison and Paul Haynes

##### Governor Representative(s)

Peter Bell, Adrian England, Margaret Gostelow, Sandra James, Stephen Morgan and Michael Sanderson

##### Special and Alternative Education Provision Representative

Molly Beever and Josh Greaves

##### 14-19 Years Education Provision Representative

Neil Wilkinson

##### Elected Member Representative

Councillor Janine Moyes

##### Also in Attendance

Andrew Ravenscroft (Chief Financial Officer – HCAT)

##### Officers

Josh Amahwe

Strategic Finance Manager (Core Services Directorate) Barnsley MBC

Sara Barnett

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (SEND and Inclusion Service)

Bev Bradley

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (SEND and Inclusion Service)

Anna Turner

Head of Education and Partnerships (Barnsley  
MBC)

Shafeek Khan

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

## **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Formal apologies were submitted by Mrs Gorton, Ms Sleight and Mrs Szoke

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Representatives from the Forum declared their interest in relation to matters being considered during Agenda Items 4 (a) and 4 (b) of today's meeting.

## **3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM**

The minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022 were approved as a correct record

## **4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

No matters arose through considering the minutes of the previous meeting.

## **5. REPORTS**

### **Schools Budget (Quarter 2: 2022/23) Latest Forecast Position**

Mr Amahwe presented a report on the Quarter 2 outturn position concerning the Schools' Delegated DSG Budget and Centrally Retained Schools' Budgets. Members of the Forum noted and commented upon a series of issues raised in Mr Amahwe's report, including the reduction in the overall surplus in school balances', together with heightened concerns expressed by schools on the impact of rising costs and other financial pressures, together with the importance of challenge and oversight.

Also considered was the continuing deficit in the High Needs Block and the purpose of the DSG Management Plan in mitigating financial risks.

### **RESOLVED:**

- **That the Schools' Forum notes the latest projected outturn position for the schools' delegated budget and the centrally retained DSG budgets, particularly the projected deficit position in the High Needs Block**

### **Schools Funding Settlement and Arrangements for 2023/24**

Mr Amahwe presented his report on the recent schools' funding settlement in the Borough for 2023/24; together with the key changes in funding arrangements which would inform the Local Authority's consultation with schools', on proposed changes to the local funding formula, later this year.

Mr Amahwe commented that the increase in Barnsley's funding for schools (including high-needs funding) was broadly consistent with the overall increase in schools' funding which had taken place nationally.

In continuing to align the local schools' funding formula with the National Funding Formula, Mr Amahwe particularly commented on two specific funding factors. These were, firstly, funding for pupils with additional needs and secondly the inclusion of a split-site funding factor which had been the subject of discussion at the last meeting of the Forum.

Mr Amahwe also commented on the timetable which outlined the steps to be taken leading to the confirmation of school budget allocations by the end of February next year. Also noted in the report were the proposed values for each formula funding factor in 2023/24.

**RESOLVED:**

- **That the Schools' Forum notes the recent schools funding settlement for 2023/24 as announced by the Government and its impact for Barnsley, together with the key changes in funding arrangements next year which will form the basis of the forthcoming consultation with schools.**

Department for Education Dedicated Schools Grant (High Needs Block) Safety Valve Intervention Programme: Barnsley's Involvement

Mr Amahwe, together with Ms Barnett and Ms Bradley presented a report on arrangements and conditions for Barnsley MBC's proposed participation in the Department for Education's SEND 'Safety Valve' Intervention Programme during 2022/23. As the Forum had previously been made aware, this Programme provided a means through which local authorities could effectively address long-term deficits in High Needs Block Funding through their DSG management plans and a commitment to reset local SEND systems, including the commissioning of education placements, more sustainably. In return the Department for Education would enter into a financial agreement with the local authority to incrementally reduce the deficit.

The process, timetable and requirements underpinning Barnsley's participation were outlined in the report and subject to the Department for Education being satisfied with the Council's proposals for reform, an agreement could be agreed with the Council by March next year.

Members of the Forum noted Barnsley's proposed involvement in this Programme with optimism. However, some members cautioned that the proposed wider reforms to SEND could be impacted by the outcomes of the Autumn Budget Statement, now expected on 17<sup>th</sup> November and its implications for local authority funding and expenditure.

**RESOLVED:**

- **The Forum notes the Council's participation in the Safety Valve Programme and the requirements under the Programme**

Barnsley Education Improvement Strategy (2022-2025)

Mrs Turner presented her report on the new sector-based and peer-led Borough Education Improvement Strategy which had been developed by the Barnsley Alliance for Schools in consultation with school leaders and teachers and informed by the experience of children and families. The new Strategy would

build upon successful foundations in which education outcomes in the Borough had consistently improved every year prior to the Covid Pandemic.

The Barnsley Education Improvement Strategy would be informed by evidence informed best practice in helping schools recover and renew following the Covid-19 Pandemic particularly in improving teaching and learning standards so that every child in Barnsley is enabled to attend a school that is judged to be 'Good' or 'Outstanding'

Whilst the overriding objective of the Strategy would be to enable all children in the Borough to realise their ambitions, achieve their potential and enhance their gifts, a primary focus would be on closing the gap in achievement between vulnerable, disadvantaged children and their peers both locally and nationally.

Promoting an inclusive local schools' system, through coherent and consistent school policies, including attendance, behaviour, discipline and exclusions, together with the aims of our Borough SEND Strategy and measures to keep children safe in education and maintain their physical and mental wellbeing whilst continuing to improve our online education 'offer', would all be of paramount importance in the Strategy.

Mrs James and Mrs Gostelow commended the objectives of the Strategy and encouraged all school governors to own the Strategy particularly through challenging school leaders to continually improve and maintain school performance.

**RESOLVED:**

- **That the Schools' Forum notes the objectives and values of the Barnsley Education Improvement Strategy (2022-2025)**

Schools' Forum Forward Plan (2022/23)

The Forum considered its Forward Plan consisting of the issues to be considered during its series of meetings in 2022/23. Individual members of the Forum were encouraged to propose any issue of relevance to its terms of reference which could be included in the Plan for future discussion.

**RESOLVED:**

- **That the Forward Plan be noted.**

**6. CONFIDENTIAL AGENDA ITEMS**

Special Educational Needs (SEND) Performance and Finance Report (Quarter 1: 2022/23)

Ms Barnett and Ms Bradley presented the latest, published quarterly SEND Performance and Finance report and commented on the following:

- The number of children with either an Education and Health Care Plan or on SEN Support in schools', together with the level of demand.
- Good level of compliance with statutory timescales for assessments and review
- Good progress against the priorities, enablers and proposed outcomes of the SEND Improvement Programme, including innovation and improvements in the quality of practice and provision

- Good progress against the two areas of significant concern identified during last year's local area joint SEND inspection
- High Needs Block and Home to School transport budgets

The Local Authority's continuing investment in improving capacity in local mainstream and special schools and provide better choice to parents by offering school places closer to home as part of a graduated approach was particularly commended

**RESOLVED:**

- **That the Forum notes the SEND Performance and Finance Report Quarter 2 Report**

Increased Costs of Energy Prices and Actions Taken to Support Schools and the Impact Upon Schools' Budgets From Increases in the Salaries of Associate Staff and the Proposed Pay Award for Teaching Staff

The proposed discussion of these issues had been unavoidably prevented as both Mr Crook who had proposed the discussions and Mr Amahwe had to leave today's meeting early

**RESOLVED:**

- That discussion on both these issues be deferred until the next meeting of the Forum

**7. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

No matters were raised. The date and proposed venue for the next meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> December was noted.

The Chair of the Forum thanked members for their attendance and contribution at today's meeting

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(Signed by the Chair of the Barnsley Schools Forum)