



Minutes

BARNSLEY SCHOOLS FORUM

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FORUM HELD ON THURSDAY, 21st JUNE
2018, AT KIRK BALK ACADEMY**

PRESENT

Headteacher Representatives

Nick Bowen (Chair of the Forum) Dean Buckley and Alison Wilks

Governor Representative(s)

Mark Pawson

Special Schools Representatives

Molly Beever and Dave Whitaker

Early Years Provision Representative(s)

Claire Gilmore

Local Authority Elected Member Representative(s)

Councillor Andrew Millner

14-19 Years Representative

Dave Benbow

Non-Schools Group Representative(s)

Nicola Fitzpatrick

Also In Attendance

Councillor Sarah Tattersall (*Observer*)

Officers

Margaret Libreri	Service Director (Education, Early Start and Prevention) Barnsley MBC
Josh Amahwe	Strategic Finance Manager (Core Services Directorate) Barnsley MBC
Richard Lynch	Head of Children's Services Commissioning, Governance and Partnerships, People Directorate, Barnsley MBC
Shafeek Khan	People Directorate

1. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PECUNIARY INTEREST

Representatives of the Forum declared their interest concerning Agenda Item 4 (Schools Budgets) together with Agenda Item 5 (High Needs Funding and the SEN(D) Pupils Education Placement and Sufficiency Strategy).

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Formal apologies had been received from Mr England and Mr Sanderson. The Forum noted the reason for Mr Sanderson's absence and expressed its very best wishes to both he and Mrs Sanderson for a speedy recovery.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE FORUM

The Forum considered the minutes of its meeting held on 8th March 2018.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the minutes of the meeting of the Barnsley Schools Forum, held on 8th March 2018, be approved as a correct record.**

4. MATTERS ARISING THROUGH CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

No matters arose through consideration of the minutes.

5. SCHOOLS BUDGETS

(a) 2017/18 Schools Budget Outturn Position And Carry Forward Balances

Mr Amahwe presented a report on the latest outturn position and commented on the following:

- The final, approved Schools DSG Budget for 2017/18 and the Council's base budget contribution.
- Carry forward of both schools' surplus (together with guideline limits) and centrally retained surplus balances.
- Allocation of Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) together with other specific forms of grant funding.
- The current financial deficit in centrally retained schools DSG budgets, including the current forecasted overspend in out of authority placements for SEN(D) pupils.

Mr Pawson alluded to in year budget deficits and whether it would be worth investigating if there was a correlation between this and the use of PPG, particularly in terms of closing any gap.

RESOLVED

- 1 (a) The Forum notes the final outturn position for the Schools' Delegated Budget, including the carry forward balances for maintained schools and the centrally retained DSG budgets.**
- 1 (b) The Forum also notes the current forecasted overspend on centrally retained DSG budgets and the carrying forward of the deficit into 2018/19.**

Latest 2018/19 Position

Mr Amahwe presented an update to the Forum on the Schools Budget for 2018/19. In particular, Mr Amahwe made reference to the following:

- Recent changes to DSG allocations, including the recoupment by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) of allocations for the direct funding of academies.
- Adjustments to the High Needs Funding Block relating to the commissioning of placements, including the 'transfer' of funding concerning the 'importing' and 'exporting' of high need pupil placements between local authority areas.
- Proposed Central Schools Service Block, High Needs Funding Block and Early Years Funding Block allocations.
- Introduction of the tariff-based charging model for commissioning places at the Pupil Referral Unit, which was agreed by the Forum earlier this year.

Mr Amahwe also identified the potential risks concerning the Schools Block and High Needs Block Funding. These included the financial position of specific schools and the increasing demand among pupils for specialist provision.

RESOLVED

- 2 (a) The Forum notes the latest DSG funding allocations for schools as confirmed by the ESFA, during 2018/19.**
- 2 (b) The Forum also notes the financial position of Barnsley's maintained schools and the identified financial risks against the schools budgets, during 2018/19.**

6. HIGH NEEDS BLOCK

Barnsley SEN(D) Pupils School Placement And Sufficiency Strategy (2017-20): Update On Implementation

Mr Lynch presented a report which had recently been considered by the Barnsley Children and Young People's Trust's Executive Commissioning Group on the progress made so far in achieving the strategic objectives and priorities of the Strategy. Mr Lynch re-iterated that the overriding purpose of this Strategy would be to enable local mainstream and specialist school provision to better meet the needs of such pupils, in the first instance, as part of a graduated response and ensuring children and young people with SEN(D) were fully engaged and involved in the planning and commissioning of services.

Mr Lynch proceeded to outline the key considerations, concerning the Strategy which would be addressed going forward. This would include tackling pressures within resourced provision, together with securing sustainable satellite facilities to help support specialist and alternative provision. On this, discussion arose over the current uncertainty at Darton Community College; of parental concerns relating to the responsibilities of the Interim Executive Board and Delta MAT to ensure the inclusion of vulnerable pupils, together with how the Local Authority was likely to respond to any emerging risks.

RESOLVED

- 3. The Forum notes the progress made as part of the Strategy together with the key issues and risks to be addressed during the next Quarter (2018/19).**

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) National Funding Formula: Impact Upon Schools

Ms Drinkhill commented extensively on the financial challenges being faced particularly, though not exclusively, by schools in the Penistone Wards; the impact which these challenges would have upon the Minimum Funding Guarantee and of the need to adopt a place-based approach.

Councillor Millner added that the underlying reasons for this financial turbulence were that schools in Penistone did not benefit from any funding factors within the local Formula, particularly relating to deprivation. Mr Bowen commented on the most recent review of the Borough's Schools Block Funding Formula (2015) the outcome of the consultation and the Schools Forum's recommendation not to make any changes to the Formula.

Whilst the recommendation had the effect of maintaining support for disadvantaged pupils, within schools located in areas of multiple deprivation, it had compounded the challenges faced by schools, notably in relatively affluent, rural areas such as Penistone. It was on this basis that Councillor Millner asked if there was scope to use any significant surpluses accumulated in other schools to support schools in the Penistone Wards as part of a place-based approach towards improving outcomes. Mr Amahwe replied that the existing regulations, concerning the transfer of school surpluses were unlikely to provide this flexibility but he expressed some support for the notion of the Schools Forum creating a task and finish group to probe the overlapping issues of pupil characteristics and schools use of available funding as part of determining why there was such an inconsistency across the system.

The outcomes of such a study/financial modelling would, firstly, assist in any lobbying of the DfE and secondly, may help identify any potential benefits or efficiencies which could be generated. In noting Mr Amahwe's comments on the lack of flexibility within regulations concerning the transfer of school surpluses, Ms Wilks enquired if the Local Authority would be willing to offer cash advances to schools faced with immediate financial pressures. Mr Amahwe stated that whilst the Local Authority would always consider making any offer, it would be based on the individual school's ability and commitment to pay back any amount and in becoming self-financing as soon as circumstances permitted.

RESOLVED

- 4 (a) **The Forum notes the financial pressures faced by schools particularly, though not exclusively, in the Penistone Wards of the Borough.**

- 4 (b) **At the next meeting, the Forum will give further consideration on a proposal to establish a short, time limited task and finish group with the purpose of looking at the overlapping areas of pupil characteristics; the use of resources; efficiencies and school balances. The aim of such work will be to support lobbying activity and help identify any good practice which could optimise resources.**

8. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS (2018/19)

The dates for future meetings of the Forum were noted. Mr Bowen would check to see if any of these dates clashed with meetings of the Fair Access Panel and if any change(s) in date was required members of the Forum would be notified accordingly.

Mr Bowen then thanked members of the Forum for their attendance and contribution and expressed his appreciation and gratitude to the staff at Kirk Balk Academy for their hospitality in hosting today's meeting.

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Signed by the Chair of the Barnsley Schools Forum