



Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council Children's Services Directorate

A

Minutes

BARNSLEY SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE FORUM HELD ON THURSDAY 21st OCTOBER 2021

PRESENT

Headteacher Representatives

Paul Crook

Governor Representative(s)

Molly Beever, Adrian England, Margaret Gostelow, Sandra James and Michael Sanderson

Special Education Provision Representative

Josh Greaves

Barnsley MBC Elected Representative

Councillor Sarah Tattersall

Officers

Nina Sleight

Service Director (Education, Early Start and Prevention) Barnsley MBC

Josh Amahwe

Strategic Finance Manager (Core Services Directorate) Barnsley MBC

Shafeek Khan

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Formal apologies had been submitted by Mr Buckley, Ms Hammerton and Mr Smith. Mr Sanderson led tributes to Mark Pawson for his service as a primary academy governor representative on the Schools Forum, following his decision to resign.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Representatives from the Forum declared their interest in relation to matters being considered as part of Agenda Item 7 of today's meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM

The minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 13th July 2021 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. NOTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM'S DEVELOPMENT SESSION

The notes of the Forum's Development Session held on 13th September 2021 were agreed as an accurate record. Mr Sanderson invited comments and Councillor Tattersall echoed the feeling of many members of the Forum present that the changes emerging through the Development Session would be positive.

Ms Sleight advised that the Barnsley Youth Forum, Care4Us Council and SEND Youth Forum were to be approached with a view to seeking nominations in becoming members of the Schools Forum. This would help in ensuring the perspective of young people, including those directly affected through decisions taken by or in consultation with the Forum, informed its role. The comments of Mrs Gostelow and Mrs Beever concerning the Forum's Web site were noted and action would be taken to update those sections requiring any amendment.

6. ELECTION OF THE VICE-CHAIR

Mr Sanderson outlined the arrangements for the election of the Vice-Chair to the Forum which had been deferred from the previous meeting and nominations were sought. No nominations were made for this position and the Secretary to the Forum referred to the two options which were now available to Members. The first was not to proceed with the election of a Vice-Chair as it was not mandatory to do so. However, if Members recommended the election of a Vice-Chair, the second option would be to seek nominations at the next meeting of the Forum.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That arrangements be made for the proposed election of a Vice-Chair at the next business meeting of the Schools Forum.**

7. BARNSELY SCHOOLS FORUM: FORWARD PLAN (2021/2022)

Mr Sanderson presented the first version of the Forum's Forward Plan of work during 2021/22 and invited comments. Mrs James expressed her satisfaction that formal induction of new members of the Forum would be taking place following the nomination and re-nomination of members, next year.

RESOLVED

- 2. That the Forward Plan be agreed for adoption and become a recurring item at the end of every meeting of the Forum.**

8. REPORTS

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) (High Needs Block) Management Action Plan (2021-2025)

Mr Amahwe and Ms Sleight presented this report on the DSG (High Needs Block) Management Action Plan. The significance of the Plan was underlined in terms of significantly growing demand; the conditions in which local authorities had to manage annual and accumulated deficits; the forecasted number of children and young people with an education and health care plan by 2028, together with the financial risks to the Local Authority if no immediate action is taken to try and ensure High Needs Block expenditure is brought within the approved resource envelope by 2025.

Mr Amahwe and Ms Sleight commented that the Management Action Plan had since been submitted to the Department for Education. Such Plans had been used recently to financially support a cohort of local authorities with challenging deficits in the High Needs Block, including through the so called 'Safety Valve' Funding Agreements.

Discussion emerged particularly upon the veracity of some of the assumptions which had to be made by the Local Authority as part of the template for submission of the Management Action Plan. This included the percentage uplift in top-up funding to special schools via the National Funding Formula which Mr Greaves detailed and whether this would be sufficient to meet their needs given, for example, increases in the Retail Price Index and inflation, together with other factors.

In noting Mr Crook's concern over the approach taken and the need for further consideration of the impact upon individual schools of the Management Action Plan, Mr Amahwe and Ms Sleight advised that the methodology provided by the Department for Education had dictated the format and content of the Plan. It was hoped that submission and approval would provide an opportunity to bring expenditure within the approved budgetary limits whilst, at the same time, improving outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs

RESOLVED

3. The Schools Forum notes the DSG (High Needs Block) Management Action Plan and the measures taken to address the deficit, including approval and submission of the Plan.

Latest Schools Budget Outturn Report (Quarter 2: 2021/22)

Mr Amahwe presented the latest budget outturn report for schools and commented on the following

- An overall overspend of £6.5 million. This was attributable to rising costs for out of authority school placements
- The position on school balances, including surplus balances
- Action to be taken to manage and mitigate financial risks

RESOLVED

- 4. The Schools Forum notes the latest projected outturn position for the schools' delegated budget and the centrally retained DSG budgets, including the projected deficit position on the High Needs Block**

Schools Funding Settlement and Arrangements for 2022/23

Mr Amahwe presented his report on the funding arrangements for schools based on the National Funding Formula and the outcome of a recent consultation on "*Fair school funding for all: completing our reforms to the National Funding Formula*" together with the proposed allocations for the Schools Block; High Needs Block and Central Schools Services Block.

Mr Amahwe also referred to the Local Authority's forthcoming consultation with schools on proposed changes to the local schools funding formula following the settlement.

RESOLVED

- 5. The Schools Forum notes the outcome of the schools funding settlement for 2022/23 and the impact upon Barnsley**
- 6. The Forum also notes the key changes in the funding arrangements for schools for next year, which will inform the basis of the forthcoming consultation with schools.**

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Performance and Finance Report (Quarter 1: 2021/22)

Ms Sleight presented the latest, published quarterly report on the progress made against the priorities of the SEND Improvement Plan during this period. Ms Sleight referred to the number of young people with education and health care plans, together with those receiving SEN support; compliance with statutory timescales for assessments; developments in the quality of practice and provision and budgetary pressures.

Mrs James welcomed the progress which was taking place particularly the onus towards satellite facilities which was helping local, mainstream schools better meet the education needs of children closer to home and reduce out of authority placements.

In view of Mrs James comments, Councillor Tattersall encouraged the Barnsley Governors Association to arrange to receive a presentation on inclusion and education. Mrs Gostelow confirmed that a Web Seminar on the Local SEND 'Offer' would be hosted by the Barnsley Governors Association on 30th November and governors were welcome to attend

RESOLVED

- 7. That the performance of statutory partners in achieving the priorities of the Local SEND Improvement Plan during Quarter 2 be noted.**

Progress on the Trade Union Facilities Time Agreement and Academies Facility Time Pooled Arrangements

The Chair welcomed Mr Potter to the meeting who briefed the Forum on the budgetary pressures impacting the agreement and the development of pooled facility time arrangements in academies within the Borough which had been brokered in collaboration with the St Mary's Academy Trust. Mr Potter outlined the number of academies which had subscribed to the arrangements so far; those academies who were anticipated to do so as part of reducing the deficit in funding

RESOLVED:

- 8. That the Forum notes the current position concerning the Trade Union Facilities Time Agreement, together with the pooled arrangements among academies in the Borough.**
- 9. That a further update on this matter be provided at a future meeting of the Forum.**

Review of Membership of the Schools Forum

Mr Sanderson and Ms Sleight presented a report which informed members that a review of the membership of the Schools Forum going forward would be conducted early next year. This would include a consideration of the number of pupils on the rolls of maintained schools and academies and if any re-balancing in representation needed to take place.

The review would be followed by the Local Authority contacting schools and MATs inviting the nomination or re-nomination of members to serve on the Forum during 2022-2025. Ms Sleight reiterated her proposal, indicated earlier, of seeking nominations from the Barnsley Youth Council, Care4Us Council and SEND Youth Forum to serve on the Schools Forum.

RESOLVED:

- 10. That the review of membership of the Barnsley Schools Forum be noted and the outcomes reported to a future meeting.**

CONFIDENTIAL AGENDA ITEMS

No confidential items were submitted at today's meeting.

ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

No matters were raised at today's meeting.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS OF THE BARNSELY SCHOOLS FORUM (2021/22)

The dates for the remaining meetings of the Forum during 2021/22 were noted

Mr Sanderson thanked members of the Forum for their attendance and contribution during this meeting.

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Signed by the Chair of the Barnsley Schools Forum