

SCHOOLS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Schools Forum held on Thursday, 7 December 2023 at 4.30pm via teams.

Present

Dave Jones	LA Maintained	Primary Phase
Jackie Collins	LA Maintained	Primary Phase
Simon Graham	LA Maintained	Secondary Phase
Sally Hodgson	Academies	Primary Phase
Jack Jones	Academies	Primary Phase
Sean Preston	Academies	Primary Phase
Nys Hardingham	Academies	Secondary Phase
Nathan Waites	Academies	Secondary Phase
Sharon Burt	Academies	Special
Kara Jewell	Early Years	
Chris Caddamy	Post 16 Education	
Chris Dike	Councillor	
Suzy Horton	Councillor	Observer

77. Apologies

No apologies had been received.

78. Declarations of Interest

The following members' declarations of interest are outstanding:

79. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 July.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July be agreed as a correct record.

80. Matters Arising.

There were no matters arising.

81. Membership Update.

There are five current vacancies.

- One maintained primary governor representative.
- One maintained secondary governor representative.
- Three academy secondary representatives.

There are no further tenures that are due to come to an end in 2023 calendar year.

82. School Funding Arrangements 2024-25

Angela Mann, Finance Manager introduced the report and in response to questions about the Growth Fund, clarified the following points:

Schools that are below Pupil Admission Number (PAN) but are taking on additional classes at the request of the Authority, are now eligible for the Growth Fund. This is in line with the directed change by the Department for Education for 2024-25.

The rates set out in section 5.1.1 of the report have not changed from the previous year. They are based on the funding for a 12-month period, and pro-rated as set out in the Growth Fund payment methodology.

During the discussion that followed, members agreed that the growth funding amount was no longer sufficient to cover the costs primary schools incur. Therefore, Schools Forum felt that if funding allowed, the primary amount should be increased.

Simon Graham stated that he had notified the Authority in October before the consultation, of his objection to the proposal to de-delegate funding to support the Education Functions. Officers clarified that the report only contained formal responses to the consultation.

DECISIONS

The Schools Forum:

- 1. Noted the Department for Education's proposed changes to school revenue funding arrangements for 2024-25, as set out in this report.**
- 2. Endorsed the proposals for implementing the local funding formula arrangements as set out in this report in particular to:**
 - **Implement the National Funding Formula rates for both primary and secondary schools in 2024-25 as set out in Appendix 1**
 - **Implemented a minimum funding guarantee (MFG) of at least 0.0% and up to +0.5% subject to affordability, for 2024-25 as set out in paragraph 5.22.**
 - **The methods of managing affordability as set out in paragraphs 5.23 to 5.27.**
- 3. Approved the proposal not to set up a Falling Rolls Fund for 2024-25.**
- 4. Approved the Growth Fund Criteria as set out in Appendix 2, with the primary and secondary values being brought to the January 2024 meeting for approval.**

The Primary Schools:

- 1. Approved the de-delegation of funding to support the Education Functions as set out in Section 7.**

The decision to approve the de-delegation of funding to support the Education Functions as set in paragraph section 7 was not voted on as not enough secondary school members were in attendance.

83. Dedicated Schools Grant 2023-24 Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring and Revised budget.

Alison Egerton, Group Accountant introduced the report.

In response to questions, Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director (Education) explained that:

As agreed at a previous meeting a task and finish group had been set up and had held four meetings to look at the DSG balances to support the inclusion agenda and will develop proposals to bring to the Schools Forum next year.

For pupils in the reception year who had been identified as potentially requiring an EHCP, but whose assessment had been delayed due to capacity issues, it was agreed that the council would pay for their EHCP at the exceptional rate until the assessment was completed. They would then be put on the appropriate rate but the funding would not be recouped.

The working group is also considering how to help primary schools support pupils who have a clear SEND need when they arrive in Year Reception but who have not have had any kind of assessment.

DECISIONS

The Schools Forum:

- 1. Noted the forecast year end budget position for the Dedicated Schools Grant as at 30 September 2023, together with the associated explanations contained within this report.**
- 2. Endorsed the revisions to the 2023-24 budget as set out in Appendix 1 and section 8.**

The meeting concluded at 5:05pm