

# Bristol Schools' Forum

**Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2018  
 at 17.00 hrs at City Hall**

**Present:**

Massimo Bonaddio	Headteacher Rep, Blaise Primary
Victoria Boomer	Headteacher Rep, Oasis Academy John Williams
Jo Butler	Headteacher Rep, Cotham School
Emma Cave	Governor Rep, Claremont
Graham Clark	Governor Rep, Sea Mills Primary
Patricia Dodds	Governor Rep, Fishponds Academy
Simon Eakins	Headteacher rep, Cathedral Schools trust
Rob Endley	Recognised Teaching Professional Association Rep
Peter Evans	Special School Rep, Knowle DGE
Simon Holmes	Nursery Head Rep, St Phillips Marsh Nursery
Sarah Lovell	Headteacher Rep, Cabot Learning Federation
Garry Maher	Diocese of Clifton Dept for Schools & Colleges Rep
Emma McAvoy	Governor Rep, Bristol Brunel Academy
Kate Matheson	Governor Rep, St Barnabas Primary
Cllr Ruth Pickersgill	Governor Rep, Rosemary Nursery
Chris Pring	Headteacher Rep, Cabot Primary
Carew Reynell	Governor Rep, Henbury School
Anne Rutherford	Headteacher rep, Filton Avenue Academy
Cedric Sanguinol	Governor Rep, Bishop Road Primary
Simon Shaw	Headteacher Rep, St Mary Redcliffe & Temple
Christine Townsend	Governor Rep, Whitehall Primary
David Yorath	Governor Rep, Cotham School
Wendy Weston	Support Staff Rep

**In attendance:**

Billy Forsythe	Clerk to Schools Forum
Sally Jaeckle	Service Manager, Early Years
Cllr Anna Keen	Councillor
Denise Murray	Service Director Finance
Alan Stubbersfield	Interim Director Education Learning & Skills Improvement
David Tully	Interim Finance Business Partner
Emilie Williams Jones	Head of Special Education, Autism & Travel
Travis Young	Corporate Finance

**Observers:**

Anne Sheridan  
 Cllr Brian Price  
 Ruth Campbell

	Action
<b>1. Welcome and introductions</b>	
The Clerk opened the meeting at 17:00 pending the election of the Chair.	

<p><b>2. Forum standing business</b></p> <p><b>Apologies</b>                  Karen Brown, Tim Browse, Chrysta Garnett, Tracey Jones, Sam Packer, Jez Piper, Mary Taylor, Will Shield                  Clerk confirmed meeting was quorate.</p> <p><b>New members</b>                  Simon Shaw – Head Rep Maintained Secondary - St Mary Redcliffe &amp; Temple replacing Graham Diles who stepped down                  Emma McAvoy – Head Rep Secondary Academy Governor                  Kate Matheson – Maintained Primary Governor – St Barnabas Primary                  Will Shield – Primary Academy Governor – Cathedral Primary Apols                  Rob Endley has replaced Michelle Willis as the recognised teaching professional rep                  Yvonne Craggs has stepped down as she is no longer a governor and her vacancy has been filled by Christine Townend – Whitehall Primary.</p> <p><b>Vacancies:</b>                  Maintained Primary Head – requested applications – none received</p> <p>No declarations of interest were expressed.</p>	
<p><b>3. Election of Chair &amp; Vice Chair</b></p> <p>DY nominated CR for chair. No other nominations received so CR duly elected.</p> <p>CP nominated SL for vice-chair                  RP nominated CT for vice chair</p> <p>CR advised that there have been twin Vice Chairs before and having an Academy &amp; maintained vice chair would be helpful. CR proposed that Forum vote for both as joint vice chair.                  Forum agreed</p>	
<p><b>4. Minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2018</b></p> <p>Minutes were accepted as correct with the following corrections:                  DY was present at the meeting                  EC raised that SR had said budgets would not reduce.- EC to advise exact place in minutes to be amended.                  GM advised that in item 7 - growth fund – SR had advised she would meet with all affected schools not just St Bedes.</p> <p><b>Matters Arising</b>                  DY asked if schools had been visited and had the wording of the growth fund been clarified?                  DT advised that no school was visited and he will have to get back on the growth fund wording for 19/20.                  DY added he was concerned that issues have not been picked up from May to September and there is no idea now how growth fund will impact on schools. Forum shared his concerns.</p>	<p>EC</p> <p>DT</p>

<p>CP clarified that the TWS Report missing is the financial report not the annual report.</p> <p>Core place funding – AS introduced himself – this is day 2 and he will address outstanding SR issues.</p> <p>DM suggested a quick review and report back rather than wait until November meeting. Will come back with a briefing note to be issued with the minutes.</p> <p>GM asked if a meeting could be set up with St Bedes.</p>	<p>AS</p> <p>AS</p> <p>AS</p>
<p><b>5. Correspondence</b></p>	
<p>No Correspondence.</p>	
<p><b>6. DSG Overview</b></p>	
<p>CR advised that the three reports 6, 7,&amp; 8 were interconnected and overlap. He proposed to discuss the 3 reports without decisions to clarify all the pieces of the jigsaw and then work through the decisions.</p> <p>DT presented the DSG report looking at 18/19 and 19/20 position.</p> <p>2018/19 position shows the DSG overall is heading for a cumulative £1.3m overspend by end of financial year. The position has worsened. Minor underspend on de delegated budget, Schools Central Services has an unallocated amount because DfE have confirmed they won't claw back £566K. Last year the EY block underspent but need to wait for Oct 18 &amp; Jan 19 census to confirm amounts. EY predict an under spend but not guaranteed.</p> <p>18/19 High Needs Block – in year overspend of £0.9m. Cumulative £2.7m overspend. 18/19 – High Needs paper will be considered at Cabinet &amp; Council. Judicial review quashed original Council decision so a new decision needs to be made.</p> <p>Schools Forum is asked to give a view on now or in future to transfer Central schools unallocated block and unallocated EY block.</p> <p>CT questioned the de-delegation b/f £357K. DT advised £313K will be spent this year - so surplus of £44K is projected for the end of financial year. CT asked if there is an under spend why are we still proposing to de-delegate. CR advised to discuss when we look at de-delegation.</p> <p>DT added that gross budget is £1.7m so underspend is relatively small.</p> <p>RP advised that she found the reports very difficult to follow and asked for more plain English. She added that it was not good practice to take money off EY for HN as this was counterproductive in the long run.</p> <p>SJ confirmed that the EY Nursery schools supplement is needed . DFE allowed for 3 years but then cut the level. Forum has agreed to maintain the funding supplement until the DFE clarify.</p>	

<p>DT advised that the Central Services block includes some formulaic and also historic commitments. The prudential loan arrangements have now ended so we will not need to use the £566 for prudential borrowing.</p> <p>SH asked the Forum not to make a decision now as position is so unclear. If we take money off EY for HNB we are hitting the most vulnerable children in the city. Mental Health is in crisis and affecting younger and younger children. Money invested now is much more cost effective.</p> <p>Point 5 19/20          DT advised that DFE has provided indicative block information but nothing on EY. Table 2 sets out the changes. Budget will increase by £6m of which £4.1m will be for PFI affordability gap. £2m represents DFE working thru the formula. Current estimates are based on last year's census but the final figures will be based on Oct census. Not clear re growth fund in schools block. Element based on census figures. DFE also have a growth factor for pupils not on census. Provisional £5.2m is a helpful situation as more than needed to cover growth fund commitments.</p> <p>Movements between blocks – LA must consult schools if there is a proposal to move money between SB &amp; HNB. The decision would need to be made by the end of November. Secretary of State agreed £2m transfer last year so we can move up to that again. If Forum doesn't agree the LA may need to refer the matter to Secretary of State. LA will need to consult over next few weeks. At this stage not clear what level of transfer would be required but would want to consult so LA had widest range of options.</p> <p>Table 3 has 3 options.</p> <p>Current projection is projected overspend of £4m for HNB and LA would like to consult all schools on options to transfer to HNB from CSB.</p> <p>Recommendations were revisited when all three reports discussed</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b>          2a – Forum noted the 2018/19 spending overview          2b – 1 – Forum agreed to the transfer of unallocated central services funding to the High Needs Block          2b - 2 – Forum deferred a decision on the transfer of any unspent Early Years funding to end of financial year          2c – comments were made on the provisional financial strategy in the course of the meeting          2d – Forum agreed to the proposed consultation on options for moving funding between DSG blocks for 2019/20</p>	
<p><b>7. Schools Block Update</b></p>	
<p>DT reported that the Forum sub group has met 3 times to look at NFF &amp; growth fund. Their views are in the report.</p> <p>a) Should we change the local formula? NFF would give schools a little less but funding would be allocated differently. Larger schools with higher levels of</p>	

deprivation and lower levels of prior attainment would benefit.

- b) MFG – DFE has not prescribed the range so we can decide.
- c) Split site – should we change the criteria?
- d) Should we change the growth fund. May want to consider when final figures are known.
- e) LA will consult on de-delegation and details will come in November,

CT asked what is a medium super output area? DT advised this is a geographical area of around 1,000 pupils, often used for statistical purposes as a way of measuring deprivation.

CR added that the sub group's view was that the money in Schools Block should be sufficient to allow more than a cash freeze in funding per pupil Options for using that headroom are – set MFG as high as poss. Or set MFG at lower level and use headroom to allocate more to schools with high level of need. Or use money to transfer to HNB to help offset the projected gap.

Forum is being asked for a view to help Cabinet make a decision.

PE asked if this was all schools or just maintained. DT confirmed maintained.

CT repeated that money in EY has a greater impact. Putting money into EY stage would take pressure off HNB.

SE added that the sub group agreed that 93 schools will lose out from NFF. Overall funding will be maximised in the medium term if we can keep the local formula.

VB asked about winners & losers. DT advised that the majority of schools would not benefit from moving to NFF. Those that would benefit are in higher areas of deprivation.

## Recommendations

2.1 a & b– The Finance sub group suggested that, in the light of the anticipated Schools Block allocation, it would be reasonable to have a positive MFG (i.e. greater than 0%) **and** to make initial steps towards NFF by added into deprivation factors, not AWPU. D T added that we would need to consult all schools on this proposal. Forum agreed with the sub group's recommendation.

2c – DT advised that the DFE advice was confusing. The Finance sub group thought that the existing wording should continue but that it should be applied more rigorously in practice.

SH asked why his nursery did not get funding as they have 2 separate buildings. DT advised that split funding only applies to schools – not nurseries that are paid thru the EY block. Forum agreed with the sub group's recommendation.

2d As there is continuing uncertainty of future levels of funding, the Finance sub group thought that there was no need to change the Growth Fund policy at this stage. Forum agreed with this recommendation.

2e – Forum noted that de delegation will be consulted on. MB asked how will schools be

<p>consulted. TY advised that a form will be emailed to Heads &amp; SBMs for all maintained schools. TY will send MB a copy of the form.</p>	
<p><b>8. High Needs Budget 2018/19</b></p>	
<p>EWJ presented the High Needs report. Bristol had a SEND Judicial review and a Heads briefing on Friday gave details.</p> <p>The Council's decision was challenged as it had failed to consult adequately and had not undertaken equality impact assessments The judge ruled that the Council had acted unlawfully and quashed the decisions.</p> <p>LA had to reconsider the funding allocations at this time as the court quashed the HN budget</p> <p>The Forum are being asked to comment on the proposed approach for the HN budget.</p> <p>£5.1 m was identified as savings in 18/19. After quashing the budget the LA was advised that they could continue spending but had to reconsider the HNB and present a budget to Council for decision.</p> <p>Increased workload is reflected in other LAs and Bristol is not unique in our increasing spending problems. Approximately 1 in 14 children in Bristol have SEN with a wide range of needs. Special schools place forecasting is also an issue.</p> <p>We need to consider alternative learning. PEX continues to fall but ALP has risen. Majority are spot purchased and are for secondary age young people, with a significant increase this year. Primary PEX has risen sharply this year. There is a significant gap in attainment between children with SEN and those with no SEN. The gap is also wide between Bristol and national average.</p> <p>Inclusion Ref group keeps a focus on the issues and a High Needs transformation plan is being developed to improve outcomes for children.</p> <p>Options on overspend are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 - fund overspend from general resources</li> <li>2 - part fund from general resources and schools budget</li> <li>3 - not fund any overspend and carry forward to schools budget in next year</li> </ul> <p>LA has reviewed all aspects and agreed that no policy decisions flowing from the original decision will be taken.</p> <p>Current forecast is £54.6m for 18/19.</p> <p>We also have to take into account that claimants legal costs will need to be paid.</p> <p>GC asked how did we end up going to a judicial review that we were never going to win. DM advised that consultation is generally taken with Schools Forum &amp; SEN groups and</p>	

we thought we had followed normal procedure.

AS added that this legal judgement has come to his attention in his role with another authority. This is a landmark case and Bristol is the first LA to be challenged in this way and other LAs are showing interest.

EWJ added that the LA cannot change 18/19 but can consult and do EIAs for any future changes and make sure public consultation takes place.

AK advised that her concern is that our outcomes are so out of line with our statistical neighbours. We need to be clear what good looks like and what are the financial implications. We need to consult on 19/20 and we are not clear enough about what we need. We have a choice not to make any changes for 19/20.

EWJ added that the transformation plan has to be done properly.

GC asked who was heading up review – EWJ confirmed it was her.

PE advised that special schools have taken brunt of cuts. He thought the double funding of ALPs needs to be investigated and asked what had happened to the EIB review?

AWJ confirmed that the review had not been picked up and this is disappointing.

PE asked what had happened to SRs commission of review into costs of Special schools.

AWJ advised that the quality of the report that was written was not adequate and this is being picked up with the consultant. AS & EWJ are discussing and hope to have the report out by early October.

PE also asked what work has Bristol done so Health are paying their share of costs. EWJ advised she & Jaqui Jensen are meeting with Health to look at contracts in place.

SL asked if the Council was looking to support SEN with general funds?

DM advised it was too early to say until our own position is clear.

Recommendations were revisited when all three reports discussed

### **Recommendations**

Schools Forum agreed on the following points to convey to Cabinet:

- a) the agreed transfer of £0.566m unallocated funding from the central school services block for 2018/19 would increase the proposed High Needs budget of £53.905m to £54.471m;
- b) a strategy that included continuing transfers from other blocks to the High Needs Block would not be sustainable in the long term;
- c) in view of the pressures on all areas of the education service, the Council should consider all possible sources of funds, and not just the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG);
- d) in view of the pressures, the Council should consider extending the timetable for returning the DSG to balance.

## **9. School Places Planning**

<p>Report was noted in IB absence.</p> <p>CR advised that it was helpful to have contextual information. It would be useful to have a fuller picture of LAs proposals to inform consideration of financial demands against the growth fund.</p> <p>CT added that the Forum needed to understand the places in Bristol South schools allocated to Bristol children.</p>	
<p><b>10. TwS Annual Report</b></p>	
<p>Annual Report was noted in CGs absence.                  CR noted that the report had no information on the surplus..</p> <p>Forum are waiting to see the Central Services report.</p> <p>CP asked why the income figures in the annual report are different from the covering details in the report? £10,751 &amp; £9411.92 (Update after the meeting: the higher figure reflects the management accounting position for TWS, including its internal recharges apportioning costs across its different services; the lower figure represents the income generated from customers (ie schools and other council services).)</p> <p>CP also noted that TwS income has dropped by 20% but staffing has increased by 10%. Schools are being asked to trim but apparently TwS is not.</p>	<p>AS</p> <p>RH</p> <p>RH</p>
<p><b>11. AOB</b></p>	
<p>CR advised that the November meeting is very close to the deadline for any proposal to transfer money.</p>	

The meeting closed at 19.30hrs