

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

<b>BIRMINGHAM SCHOOLS FORUM 7 DECEMBER 2023</b>
---

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF BIRMINGHAM SCHOOLS FORUM  
COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 7 DECEMBER 2023 AT 1400  
HOURS ONLINE VIA MS TEAMS**

**PRESENT:-**

James Hill – Chair  
Mashuq Ally - Bordesley Green Girls' School  
Pam Garrington - Moor Hall Primary School  
Mike Dunn - Swanshurst School  
Steve Howell - City of Birmingham School  
Sean Delaney - Birmingham Federation of Nursery Schools  
Gill Gregory - Lindsworth School  
David Room - National Education Union  
Maxine Charles – Hall Green Junior School  
Anne Pendleton – Rednal Hill Primary School  
Chris Wilson – Education Impact Academy Trust

Councillor Karen McCarthy - Non-school representative (Cabinet  
Member Children, Young People and Families)

Helen Ellis - Director for SEND And Inclusion  
Fiona Chamberlain - Schools Support Manager  
Sue Harrison - Strategic Director of Children & Families, Education &  
Skills  
Clare Sandland - Finance Business Partner – CYP  
Husham Khan - Interim Head of Schools Financial Services  
Chris Etheridge – School Relationship Manager  
Kirsty Lister – Finance Manager  
Kim Hayes – Unison  
Denise Fountain – Special School Maintained Rep  
Dave Worledge  
Clare Hennebury – Garretts Green  
Karen P Smith  
Charlotte Bailey  
Ella Drake  
K Tague  
Kirsty Lister – Finance Manager  
Leslie Oosthuizen – Interim Finance Manager  
Eunice Onyema - Finance

.....

**NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST**

- 42 The Chair advised that the meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Public-Information microsite and that members of the press/public could record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items.

**The business of the meeting and all discussions in relation to individual reports were available for public inspection via the web-stream.**

---

**APOLOGIES**

- 43 Apologies were received from Carol Garfield, Janet Dugmore, Colin Townsend and Rebecca Nash.
- 

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 44 No declarations of interests were made.
- 

The Chair confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

---

**MINUTES – BIRMINGHAM SCHOOLS FORUM 26 OCTOBER 2023**

Denise Fountain and Claire Hennebury stated they were showing as not present, however they were in attendance.

Members noted that the rationale for representation from Academies should have been identified in the minutes.

- 45 **RESOLVED:-**

Subject to the above, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 October 2023 having been previously circulated were agreed by the School's Forum.

**The business of the meeting and all discussions in relation to individual reports were available for public inspection via the web-stream.**

---

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

- 46 There were no matters arising from the minutes.

The Chair raised that the Central School Services block report was missing from the meeting and asked whether it would be shared at the

technical meeting. The Finance Manager stated that it was a discussion item and that it was too early to bring a draft budget and would therefore be presented in the technical meeting ready for the January meeting.

---

### **MEMBERSHIP AND TERM OF OFFICE**

- 47 Fiona Chamberlain stated that membership was still being looked at. She proposed that she would present that to the Schools Forum at the January meeting. At the previous meeting, the School's Forum took a decision in relation to their representations between Academy and maintained schools. Once membership had been agreed and went through to the local authority, it would be presented by Fiona at the next meeting.

Applications had not been sent out to new members as Fiona stated there may be a change and did not want to send the applications out until membership had been agreed. Once membership had been agreed, the induction session for new members would take place.

The Finance Manager provided an update on the draft figures in the report. There were still discussions taking place with schools with regards to their balances and need to ensure all the funds from the other blocks had been accounted for properly. A technical meeting had been proposed before Christmas regarding the budget where the paper would be presented in December.

The Finance Manager stated that they did not want to bring figures that were still a moving target to the meeting - balances would be finalised by Christmas. The technical meeting would have agenda items which would link to the reports that would be presented and would be incorporated in there as well. The meeting was scheduled to be set up after today's meeting.

- 48 **RESOLVED:-**

That the Schools Forum supported the recommendations in the report and presentation.

---

### **LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE**

The following report of the Strategic Director of Children and Families, the director for SEND and Inclusion and the Strategic Lead for School Improvement Delivery was submitted:-

(See document attached)

Helen Ellis presented the update to members.

Ella Drake made a presentation with the use of slides.

(See presentation document attached)

A report went out to Cabinet on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November setting out a forecast budget gap. The gap was £164.8 million for 2023/25 and was rising to £17.1 million. For 2025/26 the figures were significant as the Council must find savings of £200million over the next two financial years which they were in the process of doing.

The Commissioners had stated that the Council must urgently identify vital savings for the next two years. Draft budget proposals were set to be published in December for formal consultation and public engagement. The directorate was committed to give reassurances to the schools forum to protect services for children and families. The Council remained committed to the SEND improvement journey and would continue to update schools on the financial position.

Sue Harrison would be presenting a webinar during the week beginning 18<sup>th</sup> December to schools which would be arranged soon.

David Room raised a question regarding the budget proposals being published in December and asked if there was an update. He further stated that they had attended unions and attended a meeting yesterday and it was made clear that there would be cuts to services such as youth services, career services, although this did not directly impact on school budgets it has an impact on what the Council can and should do for its young people which was of concern.

Helen Ellis replied and stated that there would be an opportunity for formal consultation on public engagement and there would be an opportunity for schools and professionals to articulate what the impact of that would be in terms of the question raised. The information would be released over the course of the next couple of weeks.

The Chair stated there was a fear that it would impact on school budgets as schools were required to back fill either the unintended or incidental impacts of the changes that were being proposed.

Helen stated that a grant application had been completed for £1,000,000 . Ella Drake confirmed that the grant application should be submitted by next week, she then went on to introduce the findings to members from the presentation for the Module 1 and Module 2 activities where they were doing deep dive activities.

Mike Dunn asked for clarification on the focus area for number 1 and asked what needs can and should be met in mainstream and if that was the available guidance. Ella Drake stated there was an element of that but ensuring there was a system so that special schools had a view of that as well as mainstream schools. The ordinarily available forms a key pillar so all views around the table were addressed and not just one section so it flows through the system over a longer period of time. Mike Dunn asked if the ordinarily available guidance was available on the local authority website, he stated it would be helpful there was a push notice to headteachers to ensure they can all go and audit in comparison to that

and look at how we best allocated resources and if it could be put on a notice board so all headteachers could see it clearly.

There was currently a 12-month limit on the timing around spending the grant application from the DfE so it would be used within the financial year ending 2025.

49

**RESOLVED:-**

That the Constitution of the Birmingham Schools Forum be agreed in principle with the understanding that there would be some membership changes.

---

**FALLING PUPIL & GROWTH FUND**

The report of the Head of Service, Education and Skills was attached.

(See presentation document attached)

The main points covered were:-

Jaswinder Didi ally made a presentation with the use of slides.

The main points covered were:-

- Growth – To retain funding to support primary and secondary schools which includes academies and free schools who have significant in growth in pupil numbers from Reception to Year 11 which is the statutory age of 4 to 11.
- Criteria and amount have to be agreed by Schools Forum and is in line with the criteria set out by the Department for Education.
- Cannot use growth funding to support any schools in financial difficulty or use the growth funding for general popularity for school.
- Use growth funding to fund additional places.
- Birth rates have fallen, however, there has been a significant growth in the primary sector, therefore larger cohorts are moving into secondary creating additional pressure on the secondary within primary.
- Growth fund cannot be used for general increases in pupil numbers.
- If through a planned closure, those additional pupils are displaced, they have to be accommodated in other schools. There are however, no planned closures currently.
- The remaining school budget for the school that is closing is held within growth funding, then it is shared with other schools where pupils are placed through the growth funding, so it is not an added pressure.
- If a primary school is to expand by adding another phased into the school or a secondary school which is altered by adding primary which would change the age range would be met through growth funding.

- Proposing that growth funding rate to meet basic need.
- Funding requirements will be brought to the next the next forum meeting.
- Academies maintain schools and free schools are eligible to apply and submit a business case for this fund.
- Obtain growth fund allocation as part of overall DSG, after which, it is decided how much is set as a budget and how much is retained for contingency. At presented there has not been a retained budget.
- There will be a separate allocation for falling role fund from DfE and will not have to set own budget.
- October census data is used to obtain figures.
- Mandatory criteria cannot be changed.

50

**RESOLVED:-**

That the Schools Forum agreed the criteria in the report.

---

**CCSB PROVISIONAL BUDGET FOR 2024/25**

Kirsty Lister confirmed there was no paper circulated at the meeting. She confirmed that there will be a technical meeting in two weeks proposed to take place on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2023 to look at the 2024/2025 budget. The draft budget proposal will be presented at the technical meeting before Christmas.

The block is in two strands – Historical commitments and ongoing commitments. Historical commitments are reducing by 20% each year. For 2023/2024 reserves were being used and moving from the ongoing commitments.

APT is due to be submitted on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2024 whereby all school mainstream budgets must be submitted and ensure Schools Forum signs this off.

51

**RESOLVED:-**

That the Schools Forum agreed to hold a technical meeting to discuss the CCSB provisional budget in greater detail.

---

**BIRMINGHAM SCHOOLS BUDGET PROPOSAL 2024/25**

The following report of the Schools Finance Business Partner was submitted:-

(See document attached)

Cabinet was happy with the budget setting, ESFI and DFA are to come back and confirm compliance by February. This will allow time to publish budgets to schools for the next meeting.

IPT will be based on the latest October 2023 pupil data which is being worked on.

Mainstream Schools annual grant is going to be rolled into the NFF and TPIG. There is a plan to pull together draft school budgets based on what we know from DFA and the Birmingham methodologies, including bringing in the gross and falling roles criteria.

Looking at 2023/2024 budgets, Schools block South set a shortfall of around 3,000,000 that was taken out of reserves to help balance. There is an issue of reduced funding but with the Central Schools block, a discussion needs to take place of balancing what funding is available at present and what is the long term plan if this is not feasible in 2024/2025.

For minimum funding guarantee 0.5% is always added in which is the maximum it may be depending on what you want as schools.

52

**RESOLVED:-**

A greater discussion is to take place in the technical meeting on 18 January 2024 regarding funding and publication of budgets to schools.

---

**DE-DELEGATION PROPOSALS 2024-25**

The following report of the Schools Finance Business Partner was submitted:-

(See document attached)

Kirsty Lister presented the following points:

- Stated that in advance of setting the budget and submitting APT is what services were voted on to delegate back to the local authority.
- At present there are three services and there is no proposal for anymore for 2024/2025.
- Union representatives and behaviour support service is done through Cobbs. These services have been put out for consultation to all schools through a Google form.
- Consultation will not drive any of the voting. It provides schools forum a more informed choice to back up the decision they are making to represent their sector and ensure it is the right one.
- Schools will have an opportunity to see what services are going to be dedicated and give an opinion on what will be agreed.
- The decision will affect all individual school budgets.
- Staff costs, supply cover secondary should read facilities time.

53      **RESOLVED:-**

That the Dedicated Schools Grant Outturn be submitted to the meeting in December, 2023.

---

**ATTENDANCE REVIEW**

Committee Services are to put this information together for the meeting that will take place in January.

54      **RESOLVED:-**

That Committee Services are to provide information on the Attendance Review for the next meeting held in January.

---

**DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

55      The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday 18 January 2024 at 1400 hours in Committee Rooms 3 & 4, Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham.

---

**OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

56      There was no other urgent business.

---

The meeting ended at 1533 hours.

.....  
CHAIR