

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

**BIRMINGHAM  
SCHOOLS FORUM  
26 OCTOBER, 2023**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF BIRMINGHAM SCHOOLS FORUM  
COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY, 26 OCTOBER, 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  
Chris Townsend – Mainstream Academy

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  
Carol Garfield  
Karen P Smith  
Raman Kaur - NHS  
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 this meeting will be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Public-I microsite ([please click this link](#)) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

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

---

**APOLOGIES**

- 43 Apologies were received from Daniel Locke-Wheaton (Kate Tague substitute) and Dave Worledge, for non-attendance.

It was noted that Simon Bartlett had tendered his resignation this morning.

---

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 44 Members were reminded they must declare all relevant pecuniary and other registerable interests arising from any business to be discussed at this meeting. If a disclosable pecuniary interest is declared a Member must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless they have been granted a dispensation.

If other registerable interests are declared a Member may speak on the matter only if members of the public are allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless they have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', Members do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that they have an interest.

Information on the Local Government Association's Model Councillor Code of Conduct is set out via <http://bit.ly/3WtGQnN> This includes, at Appendix 1, an interests flowchart which provides a simple guide to declaring interests at meetings.

The Chair asked that if Members had any other declarations of interests could they please share this in the chat. No declarations of interests were made.

---

The Chair confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

**ELECT THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

- 45      There being no further nominations it was proposed by Sean Delaney and seconded by Pam Garrington, that the current Chair, James Hill be elected as the Chair of the Schools Forum. It was proposed by the Chair and seconded by Gill Gregory that Mike Dunn, be appointed as Vice Chair of the Schools Forum.
- 

**MINUTES – BIRMINGHAM SCHOOLS FORUM 22 JUNE 2023**

The Chair gave his appreciation for the availability of the agenda papers being more professional and made available on the Committee Management Information System (CMIS).

Maxine Charles informed that she attended the last meeting late however her attendance had not been recorded in the minutes. Gill Gregory asked that she be correctly recorded as being a representative of Lindsworth School and not St Vincent's.

- 46      **RESOLVED:-**

Subject to the above, the minutes of the last meeting held on 22 June, 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 was available for public inspection via the web-stream.**

---

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

- 47      There were no matters arising from the minutes.
- 

**REVIEW OF ACADEMY REPRESENTATION ON THE FORUM**

- 48      A report of the Strategic Lead for School Improvement Delivery was submitted:-

(See document attached)

Fiona Chamberlain presented the report providing information to the School's Forum regarding proportionality between maintained and academy schools in Birmingham. The Forum were requested to consider whether they wished to align the proportions of representatives on the School's Forum in line with all schools in Birmingham.

Revised proportions were suggested in the report and Members were asked to vote on whether to adopt the revised proportions or to suggest an alternative model. The Chair asked for feedback and comments from Members. The Chair said in previous discussion there had been a

preference that the current representation was maintained and it was concurred with that it was a consensus among the group, including from Academy representatives. A comment was made that there were concerns and queries regarding the guidance on representation on academies governance/trustee representation as it seemed to be vague and needed to be reviewed.

Fiona Chamberlain undertook to take back the comments made to the Local Authority and to come back with some suggested proposals for membership for the Forum to consider at the next meeting.

It was noted that there were a number of vacancies also that a number of terms of office were due to expire in November. Fiona Chamberlain said she will be contacting the people whose terms of office run out in November along with committee services and also setting out what the election process will be so that people can consider whether they wish to stand.

---

### **SCHOOLS FORUM CONSTITUTION**

The following report of the Strategic Lead for School Improvement Delivery was submitted:-

(See document attached)

Fiona Chamberlain presented the report for Forum members to vote on whether the constitution needed to be amended in terms of Forum membership, following the discussion earlier in the meeting.

Fiona Chamberlain undertook to provide some clarity regarding the Constitution and ensure that the Forum was fully compliant. She would bring back the Constitution to the Committee.

49

### **RESOLVED:-**

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

---

### **LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE**

The report of the Director Children and Families, the Director for SEND and Inclusion and the Strategic Lead for School Improvement Delivery was attached.

Sue Harrison and Helen Ellis made a presentation with the use of slides.

(See presentation document attached)

The main points covered were:-

- General Updates
  - o The Council's financial position
  - o The Commissioner team and their areas of focus
- On 5 September 2023, Fiona Greenway (The Interim Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer) issued a S114 notice under the Local Finance Act. The S114 notice ensures that the Council can still provide its statutory services. Reassurance was given that ringfenced funding for Schools was safe.
- A second Section 114 notice had been issued on 21 September 2023.
- On 5 October the Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities announced a five-year intervention and appointed Commissioners. It was noted that Commissioner for Education and a Commissioner for Children's Services had not been appointed.
- BCC are committed to supporting schools and settings and ensuring the children and families of Birmingham receive the very best services possible
- BCC will continue to keep schools updated.

In addition it was noted that:

- Some emails had been received from head teachers who were worried whether their money was safe with the Council. Reassurance was given that it was and BCC will continue to deliver their frontline statutory services. Staff will continue to be paid and Pensions were safe.
- The SEND Commissioner would have a wider role

During the discussion the following comments were made:-

- The longstanding Equal Pay issue needed to be resolved. It was felt that cuts to BCC from Central Government had contributed to the current situation.
- Clarity was needed on whether there would be cuts to jobs and services as a way to cut expenditure.

In response to questions, the Forum were informed that:

- BCC's improvement plan was a public document and was being worked on.
- Work will continue with schools to ensure services were deployed in the best way possible. Sue Harrison had not had sight of any proposed operating model. However it was important to continue to work with partners.

- Updates to the improvement plan and proposals will be shared as well as timescales. The Council's improvement plan is a public document and BCC will be held to account publicly for delivering that plan.

• **SEND Locality Therapists and the Balanced System**

The report was presented to the Committee.

(See document attached)

A detailed document had been submitted together with Impact reports and SEND Locality Therapists Outcomes and KPIs followed by a lengthy presentation and discussion.

The background as set out in the report was following the Innovate to Save project, a number of locality-based Speech and language Therapists (SALT) and Occupational Therapists (OT) have been commissioned through the High Needs block to the value of £1.4m. The proposal is to increase the funding to £2.7m, shared equally across both SALT (through the Balanced System model) and the SEND Locality OT team.

They were keen for any head teachers or senior leaders in schools to join either the delivery group or the strategic group as they were keen to involve schools and make sure their voices were heard. It was felt it might be worth sending out what the expectations of the strategic group were, how often they met, and the representation on the group.

It was clarified that the Forum was being asked for feedback and consultation regarding this item. The Chair said that in principle, the Forum was in support of the recommendations and fully understand the need for the speech and language support from an educational point of view and the impact it had from an educational point of view. The Forum supported what had been identified in the report.

50

**RESOLVED:-**

That the Schools Forum supports the recommendations in the report.

• **Delivering Better Value update**

Helen Ellis updated the Schools Forum with regard to the initial position with regard to delivering better value programme (DBV). The findings regarding the DVB will be included in the improvement plan.

Delivering Better Value (DBV) was a programme working to identify and implement local and national opportunities to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND and place the system on a more sustainable financial footing, commissioned by the DfE and the background is set out in the report.

The evidence base developed for Birmingham will contribute to a grant application to the DfE for up to £1million for the local area to use to embed the identified opportunities.

The presentation set out key models and key areas of priority including the emerging findings. It had been recognised that the number of ECHP requests had increased. Mainstream schools were under strain with the number of pupils with complex needs.

Some schools have seen another huge rise in numbers in reception again this year and Headteachers were concerned about the level of need they were currently having to deal with in school and reported that they had been turned down for funding. Parents were also concerned at how they would be supported.

They would be grateful to get a few more responses to the survey. The emerging themes from the findings will be reported back.

---

### **INDUCTION SESSION FOR NEW MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM**

The following report of the Strategic Lead for School Improvement Delivery was submitted:-

(See document attached)

The Forum discussed the need for induction training for new members of the Schools Forum. During a brief discussion it was noted that there was one member due for induction. There were a number of vacancies and also a number of terms of appointees that were due to expire. It was suggested that the induction session should be carried out next term so that everyone is captured in one go with another session taking place in the summer.

It was requested that the DBV survey link be shared and sent out to as many people as possible.

51

### **RESOLVED:-**

That the induction session should take place after the next tranche of Members were appointed with another session in the summer.

---

### **DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT OUTTURN 2022-23**

Kirsty Lister, Finance Business Partner for schools funding presented this item informing that she had started this role in early October. The outturn report was not available as they thought it would need to be reviewed by the Commissioners prior to being submitted to the Forum and owing to the timing involved they had focussed on schools close down balances which

were now completed. There will be no more adjustments. It is hoped that schools would have their balances the first week after the half term. The outturn report will be circulated during November and submitted to the Committee in December.

52      **RESOLVED:-**

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

---

**WORK PROGRAMME FOR SCHOOLS FORUM 2023-2024**

The Forum considered the Work Programme for 2023/24:-

(See work programme attached)

Following a brief discussion it was –

53      **RESOLVED:-**

That the work programme for the Schools Forum 2023-2024 be agreed and should include:-

School's Forum Constitution - December  
Dedicated Schools Grant Outturn 2022-23 - December

---

**DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

54      The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 07 December 2023 at 1400 hours via MS Teams.

---

**OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

55      There was no other urgent business.

---

The meeting ended at 1533 hours.

.....  
CHAIR