

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

**BIRMINGHAM  
SCHOOLS FORUM  
13 JUNE 2024**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF BIRMINGHAM SCHOOLS FORUM  
COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 13 JUNE 2024 AT 1400 HOURS  
HELD ONLINE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**PRESENT: -**

**James Hill, Chair, Director of School Improvement, DRB Ignite MAT  
(Mainstream Academy rep)**

Anna Pendleton – Head Teacher at Rednal Hill Infant School (Maintained Primary School HT rep)

Chris Wilson – Executive Head Teacher Queensbury School and Queensbury New Horizons (Special Academy rep)

Clare Henebury – Head Teacher Garretts Green Nursery School (Maintained Nursery School HT rep)

Colin Townsend – University of Birmingham School (Mainstream Academy rep)

David Room – National Education Union (Non-school rep)

Denise Fountain – Headteacher at The Dame Ellen Pinsent School (Maintained Special School HT rep)

Fiona Chamberlain – Strategic Lead for School Improvement, Birmingham City Council

Helen Ellis – Director of SEND and Inclusion, Birmingham City Council

Mashuq Ally – Chair of Governing Board of Bordesley Green Girls' School (Maintained Secondary School Governor rep)

Maxine Charles – Head Teacher of Hall Green Junior School (Maintained Primary School HT rep)

Mike Dunn – Headteacher of Swanshurst School (Maintained Secondary School HT rep)

Neil Butler – Interim Finance Business Partner for Schools and DSG, Birmingham City Council

Pam Garrington – Chair of Governors at Moor Hall Primary School (Maintained Primary School Governor rep)

**Birmingham Schools Forum Committee – 13 June 2024**

Paul Sansom – Headteacher of Chad Vale Primary School (Maintained Primary School HT rep)

Paulene Mckena – Observer

Sean Delaney – Governor on the Board of Birmingham Federation of Nursery Schools (Maintained Nursery School Governor Rep)

Sue Sehengera – Interim Finance Manager for Schools, DSG in the Central Block, Birmingham City Council

Zelpher Ferguson – Observer

Ben Patel-Sadler – Senior Committee Manager, Birmingham City Council

Johane Gandiwa – Committee Officer, Birmingham City Council.

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**NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST**

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

- 2 Apologies were received from Cllr Mike Brown, Reverend Alex French, Daniel Locke-Wheaton, and Gillian Gregory.
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**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 3 No declarations of interests were made.
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**MINUTES – BIRMINGHAM SCHOOLS FORUM 19 JANUARY 2024**

- 4 **RESOLVED:** -

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2024 be approved and signed by the Chair of the School’s Forum.

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**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

- 5 There were no matters arising from the minutes.
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**MEMBERSHIP AND TERM OF OFFICE**

- 7 The Strategic Lead for School Improvement, Birmingham City Council, advised the Forum of the changes that had occurred in respect of the membership of the Forum. The Forum would be fully constituted by the end of the academic year, and membership would have been updated in time for the October meeting.

New Forum members were announced as follows: Paul Sansom, Sean Delaney, Pam Garrington, Madaline Popa, Reverend Alex French, Mashuq Ally, and Gill Gregory.

The Forum was further advised that there were three vacancies as follows: Governor for Secondary Schools, Representative of Faith Groups Bodies; and a mainstream Academy Representative.

**RESOLVED: -**

That the verbal update on membership and term of office be noted.

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**LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE**

- 8 The Director of SEND and Inclusion, and the Strategic Lead for School Improvement apprised the Forum of the new Cabinet portfolios and members. An update was also provided on the appointment of the new Managing Director for Birmingham City Council. The Forum was informed that the Director for Schools and Employability had been appointed. A permanent Head of SEND had also been appointed.

The Forum was updated on the progress relating to Oracle Finance Payroll and HR System. The local authority was moving at pace to find solutions on Oracle. An Education Board is being established and it will look at the three priority areas of SEND and Inclusion, Attendance, and Achievement.

A Forward Plan of all Meetings would be published in due course. Slides on the Local Authority Update would be circulated to all members of the Forum together with the minutes.

**RESOLVED: -**

- 1) That the Local Authority Update be noted.
- 2) That details on the Education Board, its remit, and how it would function be circulated at the appropriate time.
- 3) That clarity be provided at the October meeting on how the new Director for Schools and Employability would work with the Director for Children and Families, particularly on their specific remits and where there might be some crossover.

**HIGH NEEDS BUDGET FOR 2024/25**

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The Interim Finance and Business Partner (Schools and DSG) presented a report on the High Needs Budget for 2024/25. Emphasis was placed on the DSG allocations for 2024/25 and the original allocations for 2023/24. It was highlighted that there was an increase in the high needs DSG of 4.39%. A proposal had been made to withhold a contingency of £4.2 million, which represented 1.5% of the allocation. Main movements in the budgets between the two years were explained in relation to the reports that had been circulated to all members of the Forum.

In response to questions and comments, the Finance and Business Partner (Schools and DSG) stated as follows: -

- Historic salary increases that had not been reflected in previous budgets were being realigned with the budgets within the High Needs block to reflect actual expenditure.
- The realignment was being done as part of delivering better value programme as budget lines were being reviewed.
- The High Needs block allocations would be done in consultation with schools.
- The recruitment was for funding in special academies, and mainstream academies. The £10 000 place funding would be recouped by the DfE.
- The increase of the £22.5 million compared to the previous municipal year was a result of the increase in places for children. It also included inflationary increases from the DSG block as most blocks had an inflationary increase between the two years.
- In respect of delivering value, a £1 million grant had been received by Birmingham City Council. £500,000 was for the current municipal year and the other £500,000 was for the next municipal year. The grant would fund the project particularly through project management.
- An update on Communication and Autism Team would be provided at the next meeting.
- Complex care provision was a new allocation, to ensure that all children in the High Needs breakdown were always funded.
- The discrepancy on the High Needs income which was projected at £283.5 million and recorded as an increase of 4.9% would be clarified at the next meeting of the Forum.
- The Director of SEND and Inclusion advised the Forum that a response on the request to review the 1.5% that was kept for contingency would be provided at a future meeting.
- The local authority was aware of the cost of non-teaching pay inflation in schools, and there was no specific grant to fund such increases both in pay and pensions for non-teaching staff. A proposal had been made to establish a High Needs Working Group to look at such issues and the local authority would take the issue forward with the support of Forum. The Forum offered its support to the proposal.

## **Birmingham Schools Forum Committee – 13 June 2024**

- Details on how the contingencies had been used would be provided at the October meeting.

### **RESOLVED:-**

That the Schools Forum notes the High Needs budget allocations for 2024/25.

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## **DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT – A QUICK GUIDE TO THE BLOCKS**

- 10 The Finance and Business Partner (Schools and DGS) presented a brief report that outlined the main differences in the 4 blocks within the Dedicated Schools Grant. The Forum noted that the DSG out turn report, or the reserves had not been availed for the June meeting. It was agreed that the information would be provided at the October meeting.

### **RESOLVED: -**

That the Quick Guide to the 4 blocks of the DSG be noted.

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## **DRAFT SCHOOLS FORUM WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25**

- 11 **RESOLVED: -**

That the Schools Forum: Notes the Work Programme.

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## **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING AND PROPOSED 2024/25 MEETING DATES 2024/25**

- 12 **RESOLVED: -**

That the Schools Forum approves the following meeting dates for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

24 October 2024, 1400-1600 (MS Teams)

5 December 2024, 1400-1600 (MS Teams)

16 January 2025, 1400-1600 (In-person at BCC)

10 April 2025, 1400-1600 (MS Teams)

19 June 2025, 1400-1600 (MS Teams)

**OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

13 There was no other urgent business.

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The meeting ended at 1449 hours.

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CHAIR