



Schools Forum minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Schools Forum held on Tuesday 27 June 2023 in The Paralympic Room, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8FF, commencing at 1.30 pm and concluding at 2.32 pm.

Members present

Ms J Antrobus, Mrs G Bull, Ms R Chapman, A Cranmer, Mr A Gillespie, Ms C Glasgow, Mr E Hillyard, Ms N Lovegrove, Ms J Robertson, Mr A Sherwell, Ms F Smalley and Mr B Taylor

Others in attendance

Ms S Bayliss, C Beevers, J Carter, Ms C Marriott and E Williams

Apologies

Ms S Barcock-wood, G Drawmer, Ms J Freeman, S James, Mrs J Male, Ms J Pearce, Mr R Peters, Mr K Shabbir and Ms E Stewart

Agenda Item

1 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

Ms J Freeman
Ms S Barcock-Wood
Ms J Pearce
Mr R Peters
Mr K Shabbir
Mrs E Stewart
Ms J Male
Mr G Drawmer
Mr S James

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting would be circulated after the meeting. Members of the School Forum were invited to send any comments on the minutes to Ms C Beevers (Buckinghamshire Council).

Action	Deadline	To Be Actioned By
Minutes to be circulated after the meeting.	ASAP	Ms C Beevers

5 Update from SFFG

Mrs G Bull gave an update on the SFFG in the absence of the SFFG Chairman. The SFFG had looked in detail at the outturn, the schools surplus and deficit balances and the Scheme for Financing Schools. It was noted that the reports on these items, which had been submitted to the Schools Forum, had taken into account the comments received from the SFFG.

6 Terms of Reference for SFFG

Ms E Williams, Head of Finance for Childrens Services (Buckinghamshire Council), gave an overview of the report provided.

Recommendations:

- a) To agree the purpose and meeting frequency of the Schools Forum Funding Group.
- b) To agree that the SFFG is required to meet twice a year, prior to the June and January Schools Forum meetings, with additional meetings if required, for example in response to DfE consultations on the National Funding Formula.

Resolved:

- a) **That the purpose and meeting frequency of the Schools Forum Funding Group as set out in the report be agreed.**
- b) **That the Schools Forum Funding Group be required to meet twice a year, prior to the June and January Schools Forum meetings, with additional meetings if required, for example in response to DfE consultations on the National Funding Formula.**

Action	Deadline	To Be Actioned By
To send out an email listing the memberships of all sub-committees.	ASAP	Ms C Beevers

7 Report of the DSG Spending Review Group

Ms E Williams, Head of Finance for Children's Services (Buckinghamshire Council), gave an overview of the report provided. Ms C Marriott, Head of Integrated SEND (Buckinghamshire Council), also provided an update on the SEND Sufficiency Strategy.

With regards to the SEND Sufficiency Strategy, Ms C Marriott advised that work was underway to refresh the data which informed the Strategy. Once this had been completed, the updated data would be submitted to the SEND Sufficiency Impact Group so that the Strategy could be refreshed in line with the updated data. The refreshed Strategy would then be shared with the Schools Forum.

In the discussion on the Delivering Better Value in SEND Programme, the importance of ensuring that there would be KPIs, which were focused on improving the outcomes for children and young people with SEND, was mentioned. Furthermore, the Chairman stressed the need to ensure that the progress, which was already being made to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND, would continue alongside the Programme.

Recommendations:

- a) To note the final outturn position for the High Needs Block in 2022-23.
- b) To note the update on the SEND Sufficiency Strategy.
- c) To note the information on the DBV Programme, including the full introductory pack, and the expected requirements of the DBV Diagnostic phase.

Resolved:

- a) **That the final outturn position for the High Needs Block in 2022-23 be noted.**
- b) **That the update on the SEND Sufficiency Strategy be noted.**
- c) **That the information on the DBV Programme, including the full introductory pack, and the expected requirements of the DBV Diagnostic phase be noted.**

8 Final Outturn Report 2022-23

Ms E Williams, Head of Finance for Children's Services (Buckinghamshire Council), gave an overview of the report provided.

Recommendation:

Schools Forum is asked to note the final outturn position against the Dedicated Schools Grant in 2022-23 and the impact on the DSG reserve.

Resolved:

That the final outturn position against the Dedicated Schools Grant in 2022-23 and the impact on the DSG reserve be noted.

9 Schools Revenue Balances

Ms E Williams, Head of Finance for Children’s Services (Buckinghamshire Council), gave an overview of the report provided.

Recommendation:

To note the surplus and deficit balances for maintained schools at 31 March 2023.

Resolved:

That the surplus and deficit balances for maintained schools at 31 March 2023 be noted.

10 Buckinghamshire Scheme for Financing Schools

Jonathan Carter, Schools Accountant (Buckinghamshire Council), gave an overview of the report.

Members of the School Forum were invited to send any comments that they had on the Scheme, which was attached at appendix 1 to the report, to Ms C Beevers (Buckinghamshire Council) within the next week. Any comments would be taken into account before the Scheme was published. Members were advised that other than changes to update names, titles etc there were no major changes. The revised Scheme now took into account all of the latest guidance from the DfE.

Action	Deadline	To Be Actioned By
Members of the School Forum to send any comments that they have on the Scheme for Financing Schools to Ms C Beevers	Within a week of the meeting	Members of the Schools Forum (if Members of the Schools Forum have any comments)

11 Early Years - increase in hourly rates (as announced in the Budget)

Ms E Williams, Head of Finance for Children’s Services (Buckinghamshire Council), gave an overview of the report provided. Ms S Bayliss, Early Years Manager (Buckinghamshire Council), also provided an update following a recent Government announcement regarding the early years funding.

Ms S Bayliss, Early Years Manager (Buckinghamshire Council), explained that the Early Years Forum had met and discussed how any increase awarded to early years funding should be applied to the current Early Years Single Funding Formula. A proposal was made to retain the amount as of April in all funding elements and to apply any increase, less the < 5% the Locally Authority was permitted to retain for central costs, through to the base rate only. This proposal was unanimously agreed to. Ms S Bayliss advised that the Schools Forum were being asked to ratify that decision and to agree that if funding announcements were made for implementation

in September 2023, it should be delegated to the Early Years Forum to determine how that would be applied in the Early Years Single Funding Formula (in line with DfE guidance). The Early Years Forum would meet again in August if new conditions were imposed in the DfE operational guidance expected in July.

Ms S Bayliss advised that the Government had announced last week that Local Authorities were not actually required to consult on how the increase should be applied and could use it as a supplementary grant and decide themselves how it should be applied. However, Ms S Bayliss advised that the Local Authority felt it was important to consult with and be in agreement with the Early Years Forum as to how the increase should be applied.

Recommendations:

- a) To note the funding update for Early Years entitlements following the Spring Budget 2023.
- b) To agree that if funding announcements are made for implementation in September 2023, it should be delegated to the Early Years Forum to determine how that is applied in the Early Years Single Funding Formula (in line with DfE guidance).

Resolved:

- a) **That the funding update for Early Years entitlements following the Spring Budget 2023 be noted.**
- b) **That if funding announcements are made for implementation in September 2023, it should be delegated to the Early Years Forum to determine how that is applied in the Early Years Single Funding Formula (in line with DfE guidance).**

12 Report from the Schools Specific Contingency Panel

Ms E Williams, Head of Finance for Children's Services (Buckinghamshire Council), gave an overview of the report provided.

Recommendation:

To note the outcomes of the Schools Specific Contingency Panel meeting held in May 2023 to review applications for support with energy costs.

Resolved:

That the outcomes of the Schools Specific Contingency Panel meeting held in May 2023 to review applications for support with energy costs be noted.

13 AOB

Ms C Beevers (Buckinghamshire Council) advised that an email had just been received from the Trade Union representative with an item on de-delegation. The Chairman suggested that this could be considered by the De-Delegation Committee which is due to meet in the Autumn.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Schools Forum, thanked Ms E Williams, Head of

Finance for Children's Services (Buckinghamshire Council), for all her hard work and contributions over the last few years and wished her well for the future.

14 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 10 October 2023 at 1.30pm

The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8FF.