

# Schools' Forum



City of  
**Stoke-on-Trent**

**Date:** Friday 21 September 2018  
**Time:** 8:30 to 11:00am  
**Venue:** Watermill Special School  
**Chair:** Jonathan May  
**Minutes:** Emily Evans

**Attendees:**

Jonathon May (**Chair for Schools' Forum**)  
 Emma Gater (**Vice Chair for School's Forum**)  
 Lisa Hughes (**Special Schools Representative**)  
 Sarah Thursfield (**Primary Maintained Representative**)  
 Jonathan Baddeley, Ian Beardmore Lisa Sarikaya Stephanie Moran (**Primary Academy Representatives**)  
 Nick Lowry, Mark Rayner, Dilesh Parmar (**Secondary Academy Representatives**)  
 Harold Gurden (**Union Representative**)  
 Katie Dixon (**Secondary Maintained Representative**)  
 Juliet Levingstone (**Nursery School Representative**)  
 Bianca Walker (**PVI Representative**)  
 Louise Rees, Rob Johnstone, Jen Lomas, Andrew Brindley (**Local Authority Representatives**)  
 Councillor Janine Bridges – Cabinet Member for Education and Economy (**Cabinet Member**)  
 Emily Evans (**LA officer – minutes**)

**Apologies:**

Jon Lovatt (**Primary Governor**)  
 Ian Beardmore (**Primary Academy Representative**)  
 Mark Kent (**16-19 Partnership Representative**)

| MINUTES |  |      |      |
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|         | Item   | Lead | When |
| 1       | <p><b>Welcome and Apologies</b></p> <p>Welcome and apologies were noted. Apologies were received from Jon Lovatt, Ian Beardmore and Mark Kent.</p> <p>Juliet Levingstone attended as the representative for the Nursery Schools. Bianca Walker also attended as the PVI representative.</p>  |      |      |
| 2       | <p><b>Minutes from the last meeting</b></p> <p>L Rees stated that she did not agree that the 0.5% transfer would not happen again as she could not assure this.</p> <p>E Gater commented that her understanding of a one off payment was that it was paid once. L Rees made it clear that she could not commit by reassuring that the 0.5% would not be asked for again as the</p> |      |      |

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|                 | <p>Council could have a different view in a years' time.</p> <p>J Lomas confirmed that she was at the SASCAL meeting when the term 'one off payment' was used. A one off payment was agreed, however, this does not mean that the local authority would not ask again in the future.</p> <p>Cllr Bridges shared that the MRA is now being spent of re-roofing and life cycling maintenance of PFI contracts for schools, so that all schools going forward are 'fit for purpose'. Cllr Bridges urged the group to check for life cycle issues as there is a pot of money for any outstanding works to be completed.</p> <p>Final DSG bid evaluation. It was commented that the evaluation pro-forma for schools would be released next week.</p> <p>A discussion took place over access to Schools' Forum documents online. A Brindley advised that the public were able to view the documents when searching on Google, but that this was not as easy to access on Stokes external webpage. A Brindley added that the local authority was looking into this issue.</p> <p>J Baddeley also raised the issue of searching for teaching jobs when looking on Stokes external webpage. L Rees said that she would raise this issue with the local authority PR and Communications team.</p>  | <p>ALL</p> <p>L Rees</p> |  |
| <p><b>3</b></p> | <p><b>Schools Revenue Funding 2019-20</b></p> <p>A Brindley provided a briefing note to provide an update to Schools' Forum on Schools Revenue Funding 2019-20.</p> <p>In September 2017 the DfE set out the details of the formula for 2018-19 and 2019-20. Following significant progress across the system in moving towards the national funding formula, in its first year, the DfE have now confirmed that local authorities will continue to determine local formulas in 2020-21.</p> <p>A Brindley advised that he had completed a comparison on what was received in 18/19 and what we would receive if we had the same pupil numbers in 19/20. Last year 0.5% was transferred from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. If there was another 0.5% transfer, there would still be an increase of over £1m for 19/20 to be allocated to schools in the funding formula.</p> <p>A Brindley advised that the Central School Block, based on DfE illustrative figures, is reducing by £30k. In 2019-20 the school block primary pupil unit of funding has increased from £4,077.23 to £4,099.48 per pupil and the secondary unit of funding has increased from £5,293.27 to £5,379.09. J May asked for a breakdown on the Central Schools Block for the next meeting.</p> <p>A Brindley said that within the schools block, the government will provide for at least a 1% per pupil increase for each school in 2019-20 through the national funding formula compared to their 2017-18</p> | <p>A Brindley</p>        |  |

baselines. The minimum per pupil funding levels have also increased to £3,500 from £3,300 for all primary schools and £4,800 from £4,600 for all secondary schools that have pupils in year 10 and 11. The gains cap has increased so that schools can attract gains of up to 6.09% against their 2017-18 baselines (to note, the minimum per pupil levels are not gains capped).

The DfE are also making some policy changes to the 2019-20 national funding formula which includes:

- Growth will be allocated to local authorities on a formula basis instead of historic basis. There will not be any changes to way local authorities can distribute growth funding.
- The primary low prior attainment factor value is also being reduced to £1,022 from £1,050 to balance the increase in the cohort.

Within the high needs block, the government has provided for at least a 0.5% increase adjusted for population changes in 2019-20 and this is reflected in the allocations to local authorities through the high needs national funding formula.

The schools block will again be ring-fenced in 2019-20. Local authorities are able to transfer up to 0.5% of their schools block funding to other blocks with the agreement of their Schools' Forum. Transfers of more than 0.5% may be allowed in circumstances where the Secretary of State has previously allowed a transfer between blocks and where this is again agreed by the Schools' Forum.

Local authorities must submit a disapplication request using the disapplication pro-forma to the Secretary of State in cases where:

- The local authority wishes to move more than 0.5% of the schools block, except in cases where a transfer of more than 0.5% was approved by Ministers in 2018-19 and the local authority wish to make the same or a reduced transfer in 2019-20 and have schools' forum approval.
- The Schools' Forum has turned down a proposal from the authority to move funding out of the schools block, but the local authority wishes to proceed with the transfer.

Local authorities making a block movement disapplication request should submit their proposals by the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

A Brindley is to arrange a Schools' Formula Working Group meeting to discuss the proposed schools' funding formula 2019/20 ahead of the next Schools' Forum meeting on October 19<sup>th</sup> 2018.

Cllr Bridges shared that the National Schools Commissioner had asked for her opinion on the funding formula. Cllr Bridges added that there was no additional money and that the DSG had got to come into line ASAP. Cllr Bridges advised that she would share contact details of the National Schools Commissioner and asked Schools' Forum members to share their views.

A Brindley continued by saying a number of local authorities are now incurring a deficit on their overall DSG account. With effect from 2019-

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|                 | <p>20 the DfE intends to ‘tighten up rules’ under which local authorities will have to explain their plans to bring the DSG account back into balance.</p>   |  |  |
| <p><b>4</b></p> | <p><b>High Needs DSG Action Plan update - to be tabled</b></p> <p>J Lomas tabled the High Needs DSG action plan at the meeting. There were a number of updates on the plan for this year and a number of actions set against different items on the plan.</p> <p>J Lomas shared that she had put in a plan for years 1-8. There was an overall figure on impacts of actions at what point the plan can be taken in to a surplus budget. These were dependent on the actions being agreed and whether restrictions or escalations could be made for children with EHC plans.</p> <p>J Lomas discussed the cost and impact of placing children out of city and that the local authority was unable to sustain the high cost of this. J Lomas informed forum that there were meetings in place where children’s needs could now be analysed and discussed, and an outline would be used to see what reasonable adjustments schools can and should be making where appropriate.</p> <p>J Lomas added that there was now a panel set up to discuss every request being made from a main stream school for an EHC plan. The panel looks at why the school are saying the child’s needs cannot be met and whether these could be met with additional support in mainstream.</p> <p>Parents have also been provided with the matrix, as this gives parents to opportunity to challenge.</p> <p>J Lomas advised that she is looking into providing mental health training for schools and is aiming to roll out the Sandwell Project into schools.</p> <p>The Free School Bid will be submitted by the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2018. Local authorities will know by January 2019 if they have been successful and it will then go out to tender. There is a limit of SEND Fee Schools, with only 32 nationally likely to be approved.</p> <p>J Lomas advised that there had been an expansion of Portland Special School and that Reach have moved to premises at the former Stoke Studio College with the Alpha Academy Trust. The Reach building, which is retained by the local authority, will provide 50 places for an expansion of Portland Special School. There will then be a review to bring in children who are out of city back to Stoke via these additional places. J Lomas reiterated that she will not be looking to move children back who are in KS4 into the provision in Y11.</p> <p>The bid for the SEMH free school would create more places for young people and would have the same matrix applied as special schools. It would project a saving of £40,000 per pupil. Should the local authority</p> |  |  |

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|          | <p>not be granted the free school bid they would be looking to the local authority for capital for a renovation of an existing site.</p> <p>There is a High Needs Review meeting taking place Friday 5<sup>th</sup> October, where the High Needs Plan will be reviewed. J Lomas added that there are pressures in the plan and that the number of EHC plans had increased. EHC plans originally ceased at the age of 16 but this has now been extended to the age of 25.</p>  |                        |  |
| <b>5</b> | <p><b>Early Years Formula Working Group feedback</b></p> <p>L Sarikaya reported back to forum that the Early Years Formula Working Group met last week and recommended the Early Years Formula values should remain the same for 2019-20. The group also discussed the Early Years Inclusion Fund. The group felt that further meetings were required to discuss the best way to utilise this fund to support all early years' settings.</p>   |                        |  |
| <b>6</b> | <p><b>Pupil Referral Unit funding discussion</b></p> <p>J Lomas said the requirements for permanent exclusion were set out and Learning Pathways Board has been clear on the process that schools should be following. There was a discussion on recouping funding for permanent exclusions.</p> <p>J Lomas added that she has expanded the number of places at Reach in order to put in pro-active placements and help reduce permanent exclusions.</p> <p>It was noted if a child moves to Inspire the school will complete their own SLA agreement with the placement. However, if a school moves as part of the local authority they will be charged the base charge rate. There will be an overall base charge for proactive placements which will be £5,000 for Primary Schools and £8,000 for Secondary Schools.</p> <p>There was a discussion on whether the base charge would be perceived as a potential fine. It was noted that it was not a fine, but instead an allocation of funding.</p> <p>The forum stated that it needs to be clear that the funding follows the child. J Lomas confirmed that as soon as the local authority is aware of the new school that a child is going to, the admissions team will inform finance so that the funding follows the child quickly. The calculation of funding will be pro-rated to the time that is left in the year.</p> <p>J Lomas confirmed that EAL provision at Thistley Hough Academy will be part of REACH and the place value will be used to off-set the cost of this. There will be a pro-rated charge of £3,500 to schools for this.</p> |                        |  |
| <b>7</b> | <p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p>J May and E Gater had met with David Sidaway, City Director at Stoke-on-Trent City Council. There was a discussion around the 0.5% and it was requested that the local authority approach the Schools' Forum by the next meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> October if the 0.5% was to be</p>  | <b>Local Authority</b> |  |

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| <p>requested again.</p> <p>It was felt that communication between the City Director and Schools needed to improve. David Sidaway agreed that he would attend a future Headteachers' Breakfast Briefing. L Rees added that traditionally Secondary Schools do not attend these briefings, but felt they may be interested to attend one if the City Director was in attendance.</p> <p>E Gater went on to add that if the local authority continues to take money from schools it would damage the relationships and schools may not be willing to engage with the local authority in the future. This was noted.</p> |  |  |
| <p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p><b>Date:</b> Friday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2018<br/> <b>Time:</b> 08.30 – 11.00am<br/> <b>Venue:</b> Watermill Special School<br/> <b>Chair:</b> Jonathan May</p>   |  |  |

