

Forum Newsletter

**SOLIHULL SCHOOLS FORUM met on 14th May 2018,
the following is an overview of business undertaken**

Cabinet Member's Items

- Councillor Meeson will continue as Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Skills for 2018-19.
- Sufficiency of school places, particularly in-year requirements, continues to be an issue, particularly as new housing developments come on-line.
- The Reading Den at Chelmsley Wood Library has recently launched and its range of books to support children, young people and parents with a number of issues may be of interest to head teachers.

Matters Arising

- Steve Fenton confirmed that the 2018-19 top-slice for special schools to fund General Duties, will increase by 10%, equating to £165pp, in line with the increase for maintained schools. PRUs will remain at £247.50pp.
- Antoinette Fisher and Steve Fenton attended the f40 Conference in March and reported that the group's work towards achieving fair funding for all will be on-going. The key focus for all authorities is high needs funding.



You are encouraged to read the full minutes and reports, which are available on the Solihull Schools Forum website at: [Schools Forum](#)

Financial Out-turn 2017-18: Implications and Managing Expectations

Steve Fenton presented the figures and reminded members that the four Blocks are now effectively ring-fenced.

Schools Block – Out-turn £273k overspend, predominantly due to high spend on Contingency (funding staff exit costs resulting from re-structuring) and a funding lag on the Pupil Growth Fund, where the money will come in in the 2019-10 funding allocation.

Central Block – Out-turn £78k underspend, surpluses on Admissions and Schools Forum will be offset against overspends.

Early Years Block – Out-turn £755k overspend, believed to be due to a funding lag between the Local Authority allocating money to Early Years settings and receiving the funding allocation from the Department for Education. There may be an interim adjustment.

High Needs Block – Out-turn £247k overspend, despite significant increases to the budget over the past three years, predominantly due to a significant increase in out-of-borough placements. Everyone agreed that this cannot continue and a wide range of solutions is being worked on through EdSEND and Finance Work Group, including production and implementation of an Inclusion Strategy (to ensure all schools promote and demonstrate inclusion) and a Commissioning Strategy (setting targets to reduce ex-borough placements), moving forward with plans for an ASD school and pursuing more creative ways of utilising the funding available.



Local Authority Update

The 2017-18 Children's Services budget was overspent, predominantly due to SEND transport and a significant increase in Looked After Children; both areas are reflected in the national picture. A review of the Council's Engage Service will ensure it focuses on young people at the edge of care in an attempt to prevent them from entering the care system.

Assistant Director's Items

- The Council Plan has been revised for 2018-20 and includes sections on skills development and young children being school-ready.
- Discussions are taking place to scope out plans for a 80-100 place Centre of Excellence for Autism for junior and secondary age children.
- The new lead Education Psychologist started in April and recruitment is taking place to build up the team.
- A review of Solihull's Alternative Provision is taking place covering a number of areas, including staffing structures and curriculum; it is possible that some financial savings can be made in this area.