

**Minutes of the Forum Meeting held on Monday, 14 May 2018**  
**Held in Room 1, Civic Suite**

<b>Present:</b> Antoinette Fisher (Chair) Andrew Wilkins Louise Minter Lynda Mackay Ben Taylor Des Foxon Eva Evans Jane Davenport Derek Sheldon Geoff Harley-Mason Charlotte Shadbolt Marie Murphy Claire Smith Wendy Jarema Mark Wilson David Lewis Gillian Clowe Hon. Alderman Norman Davies Gina Godwin Sheila Thompson John Callaghan Councillor Ken Meeson Steve Fenton Stuart McHale Phil Leivers Councillor Andy Mackiewicz	Dorridge Primary Hazel Oak Streetsbrook I & EY Academy Knowle CofE Primary Our Lady of the Wayside St George & Teresa Bentley Heath CofE Primary Reynolds Cross St Margarets Arden Heart of England St Peters RC School Tudor Grange Academy Park Hall Academy Lode Heath Academy TU Representative NEU Langley Academy Wise Owls Kingsley Childcare Solihull College & University Centre Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Skills Head of Business & Performance Childrens Services Finance Manager Assistant Director, Learning & Achievement Observer
Minutes taken by Alison McWilliam, Senior Forum Administrator	

Item		Action
1	<b>Apologies for Absence and Welcome to New Members</b> Apologies were received from Roberta Narroway, Rob Fletcher, Russell Bryant, John McDermott, Darren Gelder, Trevor Scott, Ian Backhouse and Peter French. Introductions were made around the table.	
2	<b>Minutes of Last Meeting (4.12.17)</b> The minutes were taken as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	
3	<b>Matters' Arising</b> <b>Page 3 General Duties</b> – As requested at the December meeting, the proposed top-slice for PRUs and special schools was reviewed and it was agreed that for PRUs the top-slice would remain at £247.50pp (representing full recoupment of the costs), but for special schools, the increase would be set at 10% - equating to £165pp - in line with the increase for maintained schools. <b>F40 Conference (26 March 2018)</b> – A key focus for all member authorities is High Needs. <b>Forum Structure for 2018/19</b> – In order to avoid cancelling meetings and to ensure each meeting has a clear focus, Executive has re-structured the annual schedule so that meeting dates fall in line with DfE announcement/deadline dates. This will result in 4 Forum meetings (statutory minimum and reduced from 6), 5 Finance WG meetings (reduced from 6), 3 Capital WG meetings (reduced from 6). The EdSEND Group (brought together last year from SSSAB SEND and Forum SEND), will continue to meet 6 times a year. The full meeting schedule for 2018-19 is attached, plus a separate Forum schedule.	Att.
4	<b>Cabinet Member's Items – Councillor Ken Meeson</b> - The <u>Annual Council Meeting</u> will take place on 15 May, when appointments will be made to the various committees. CKM will continue in his role as CM for Children, Education & Skills and Councillor Andy Mackiewicz, who is Chair of the Children, Education & Skills Scrutiny Board, will join Forum for 2018-19. Additional representatives onto Forum	

	<p>will be advised following the Council meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There continue to be issues around <u>sufficiency of school places</u>, particularly the need for in-year places. This is likely to increase with house building and families moving into the Borough and Solihull will be talking to developers about money for school extensions and possibly new schools.</li> <li>- The <u>F40 group</u> is frustrated that the Government's focus on education has gone fairly quiet (apart from additional funding to extend grammar school places, which does not affect Solihull) whilst they focus on Brexit.</li> <li>- Chelmsley Wood Library has recently launched its <u>Reading Den</u>, where there is a range of books to support children, young people and parents, covering issues such as behaviour, mental health, growing up, learning difficulties and child bereavement. The resources may also be of interest to head teachers.</li> </ul>	AMc
5	<p><b>Assistant Director's Items – Phil Leivers</b></p> <p><u>Council Plan</u> – The Plan has been revised for the next two years, (a summary document is attached) and includes sections on skills development and supporting young people to find training or work and children being school-ready, focusing on pre-school and early years settings.</p> <p><u>Centre of Excellence for Autism</u> - A couple of meetings have taken place to scope out plans for a 80-100 place special school for junior and secondary age children with ASD. This could include support for parents, some therapeutic and health involvement and the potential to develop outreach work. PL will keep Forum updated on developments.</p> <p><u>Education Psychology</u> – The new lead EP (Halit Hulusi) started in April and a further two EPs are currently being recruited to rebuild the team. If enough schools want to undertake preventative work, HH is keen to develop this on a traded basis, which might result in further recruitment.</p> <p><u>Review of Alternative Provision</u> – With the current financial pressures, particularly around High Needs, it may be possible to make savings around AP. A review of the structure at Auckland primary PRU is under way. Summerfield secondary PRU has now moved to Jenson House and an interim head teacher is in place, providing greater stability. Interviews for a permanent head are taking place on 15 May, planning for a September start date, at which point the staffing model and curriculum will be reviewed. At Triple Crown medical PRU, pathways in and out have been revised and the centre remains stable.</p>	Att.
6	<p><b>2017-18 Financial Out-turn: Implications and Managing Expectations – Steve Fenton</b></p> <p><i>Reference 'Non-delegated DSG 2017-18 Out-turn' and '2017-18 High Needs Budget Out-turn'</i></p> <p>The figures are now presented in four blocks, each of which is now effectively ringfenced.</p> <p><u>Schools Block</u> – Out-turn £273k overspend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contingency (£158k overspend) funded from a top-slice of primary schools' budgets, with money used mainly for funding staff exit costs resulting from restructuring.</li> <li>• Pupil Growth Fund (£115k overspend) funded more in-year bulge classes than anticipated. This budget is lag-funded by 2 years, with funding coming through in 2019-20.</li> </ul> <p><u>Central Block</u> – Out-turn £78k underspend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Admissions surplus (£50k) will be used to offset the corporate subsidy.</li> <li>• Schools Forum surplus (£28k) will be offset against the Schools Block overspend.</li> </ul> <p><u>Early Years Block</u> – Out-turn £755k overspend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is believed that this figure is due to a funding lag between paying out the money to EY settings and receiving the funding from Government. As the DfE grant allocation methodology has not been published, we are unaware how much funding will come in to cover the current £755k spend, there may be an interim adjustment.</li> </ul> <p><u>High Needs Block</u> – Out-turn £247k overspend (despite increasing the 2017-18 budget by £1m [on top of £2m of additional funding over the two previous years] we cannot continue to increase the budget year on year). The overspend will be carried forward to 2018-19.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent school fees (£260k overspend) is the key item, reflecting a significant increase in ex-borough placements.</li> </ul> <p>SF confirmed that, at present, there are no plans to cut school budgets in order to manage</p>	Fwd Plan

the Schools Block overspend. However, over the coming year, the LA will be talking to everyone about how, as a schools' community, we respond to the increasing demands on the HNB. Key areas might include:

- Promoting inclusion
- Considering how we continue to invest in additional in-borough places – we are already working with Solihull College on post-16 places which should help to increase provision in MLD schools without the need for significant capital investment
- Moving forward with an 80-place ASD school to respond to the current need for high-cost out-of-borough provision
- Pursuing further ARPs and enhanced provision in mainstream schools as another move towards becoming more inclusive
- Looking at value for spend particularly in Alternative Provision
- Enhancing SEND processes, such as the new EP service
- Implementing a Commissioning Strategy (this is due to go to Cabinet Member in September and talks about setting targets for a 50% reduction in out-of-borough placements).
- Implementing an Inclusion Strategy (Reference SF's comments about the North Yorkshire Inclusion Strategy – **LINK: [NYorks Inclusion](#)**)

Many of these areas are already being pursued through FWG and EdSEND, but members raised the following points:

- We need to be cleverer with the money we give to schools and look at special cases on an individual basis, e.g. have a funding mechanism that gives an allocation to a school to allow them to retain a specific child in-borough in a 'spend to save' approach
- We need to implement more preventative strategies - to respond earlier before matters worsen. The Free School probably needs to start before Year 9 and early intervention at EY stage could help.
- We could improve how we promote our successes in keeping children in-school/ borough
- Getting primary/secondary transition right is key, particularly with ASD
- In addition to saving money, children educated in-borough achieve better outcomes and it is right to bring them back within their home community.
- It is important that appropriate checks are made during the EHCP process to ensure young people go to the most appropriate provision. This will include issues around parental preference. DS asked what percentage of ex-borough placements are parent driven and what are the legalities around this. EdSEND will take up these questions.

Looking ahead, SF predicts a £1.3m overspend on the HNB for 2018-19. This will need to be turned around by 2019-20.

The expected 2017-18 funding surplus was earmarked to fund top-ups for the recently opened Solihull AP Academy Free School (the EFA will fund places for the first three years), additional special school places and additional ARP provision.

EdSEND

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### **Individual Group Reports**

*To be read in conjunction with individual reports. Of particular note:*

#### Finance Work Group – David Lewis

- School Reserves (Maintained Schools) – Although there are currently no schools in deficit, it is a different picture looking two years ahead. FWG will continue to monitor this.
- From April 2020, we are expecting to move to a hard funding formula, where all funding is passported directly to schools. Any Government proposals that come forward will be shared with Forum.

#### Capital Work Group – Andrew Wilkins

AW presented his report, there were no questions.

#### Solihull Schools Strategic Accountability Board (SSSAB) – Louise Minter

- Nursery Admissions – The impact of funding the 30 hours provision is proving complex

	<p>and difficult for parents and work is taking place to streamline the process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Health – Amanda Mordey has reported positive outcomes since introducing the SMILE project at her schools. A number of schools will take part in a research project next year and if it goes well we would probably want to roll it out to the whole of Solihull.</li> <li>• Transition Policy – In the knowledge that primary-secondary transition can impact on out-of-borough placements, EdSEND will be developing a Solihull policy.</li> <li>• The 28 June Heads' Partnership meeting will focus on SEND, with SEND governors invited to attend.</li> <li>• Communications will be attending SSSAB to explain about blanket and local decisions for 'snow closures'. A formal communication can then be shared with parents.</li> </ul> <p><u>Education SEND Group – Louise Minter</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialist Assessment Service (formerly the Meadow Centre) – With a 9-12 month waiting list, it is important that parents know that schools will already be supporting their child's needs and that having a formal diagnosis is unlikely to change that support.</li> <li>• EdSEND T&amp;F Group – The group has concluded that its work is on-going and as such it will become a sub-group of EdSEND, with reporting links to Forum, SSSAB and the SEND Board. The group will have a focus on all aspects of monitoring out-of-borough placements.</li> </ul>	
8	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><u>Local Authority Update – Stuart McHale</u></p> <p>Childrens Services overspent by £2.1m last year; with a £1.6m contingency (from Reserves) applied, the final out-turn was a £500k deficit. Much of the overspend was on SEND transport and a significant increase in Looked After Children (currently 414 children). This reflects the national picture and the reasons for the increase are unknown. Recent work with Ofsted has confirmed that Solihull's decision-making process is robust and that young people are not going into care unnecessarily. Simon Rushall, Assistant Director for Children, Young People and Families, will shortly be starting a review of the Engage Service to make it more targeted towards young people at the edge of care in an attempt to prevent them from entering the care system.</p>	
9	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>Monday, 9 July 2018 at 5.00pm in Room 1, Civic Suite</p>	