

# SCHOOLS FORUM

## Newsletter

Summarising business undertaken at a meeting held on 12th July 2021

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### Assistant Director's Items (Tim Browne)

TB presented an update on SEND Service improvements made to date and work that is continuing to progress [SEND Update](#).

The Chair invited members to respond about how things feel in schools and settings. It was clear that, whilst fully supporting the improvement programme, strategic improvements now in place were not yet providing a significant impact at operational level. Schools and settings expressed particular concerns about the increase in number of children and young people with special and additional needs and how schools would manage this increasing demand; communication difficulties with LA services for nursery age children with SEND; pressure for schools to be more inclusive without knowledge of the LA's package to support this and the lack of a coherent alternative provision offer.

Although a great deal of progress has been made in a short time, TB cited increasing demand for EHCPs, lack of in-borough specialist places and difficulties with staff recruitment and retention as obstacles to embedding progress at both strategic and operational level as quickly as everyone would like. However, work is continuing at pace; it is anticipated that new posts will be filled by September, the Service is committed to having a formal Joint Additional Needs Strategy in place in Autumn 2021 and consultation with schools will take place during Autumn term to put a formal AP Strategy in place.

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### Group Reports

Reports for Finance, EdSEND, Capital and SSSAB were delivered and accepted.

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### Annual Administrative Duties

2021-22 meeting dates and membership details were circulated and Antoinette Fisher and Darren Gelder were appointed as Chair and Vice Chair.

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### Chair's Items

The Chair thanked a number of out-going members for their support of Schools Forum over recent years and welcomed new members onto the group from September 2021.

The Chair thanked members and officers for their support of Solihull's children, young people and families in what has been an unprecedented and difficult year and wished them a restful summer break.

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