

Minutes of the Solihull School Forum meeting held at 5.00pm on Monday, 23 May 2022

Attendance:

Member Category	Member Name	Institution	Attendance (Y/N/ Apols)
HEAD TEACHERS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	Lynn Clark	Marston Green Juniors (Unity)	Y
HEAD TEACHERS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	Bernie Farkas	Blossomfield Infants (Synergy)	Y
HEAD TEACHERS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	Karen Scott	Greswold Primary (Mosaic)	Y
HEAD TEACHERS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	Richard Marshall	Oak Cottage (Evolve)	Apologies
GOVERNORS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	John McDermott	St Alphege Inf & Junior (Synergy)	Y
GOVERNORS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	Antoinette Fisher	Dorridge Primary (Rurals)	Y
GOVERNORS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	Andrew Wilkins	Hazel Oak Special School (Evolve)	Y
GOVERNORS OF PRIMARY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (4)	Paul Jackson	Castle Bromwich Junior School (North)	Y
HEAD TEACHERS OF PRIMARY ACADEMIES (2)	Louise Minter	Streetsbrook I&EY Academy, (Synergy)	Y
HEAD TEACHERS OF PRIMARY ACADEMIES (2)	Jenny Godsall	Knowle CofE Primary (Rurals)	Y
HEAD TEACHERS OF PRIMARY ACADEMIES (2)	Ben Taylor	Our Lady of the Wayside (Evolve)	Y
GOVERNORS OF PRIMARY ACADEMIES (2)	Lynda Mackay	Knowle CofE Primary (Rurals)	Y
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Claire Smith (P)	Tudor Grange (Synergy)	Apologies
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Charlotte Shadbolt (G)	Heart of England (Rurals)	N
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Darren Gelder (P)	Grace Academy (Unity)	Y
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Stephen Steinhaus (P)	Solihull AP Academy	Y
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Marie Murphy (P)	St Peters RC (Synergy)	Y
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Clare Thorpe (HT)	Langley Secondary (Evolve)	Y
SECONDARY ACADEMY MEMBERS (10 – principals [or representatives] or governors) Inc. AP Academy	Andrew Best (G)	Smith's Wood Secondary Academy (Fairfax MAT)	Apologies

REPRESENTATIVE OF MAINTAINED SPECIALIST PROVISION (1) attend on rota basis	Andy Simms	Hazel Oak	Y
REPRESENTATIVE OF SPECIALIST ACADEMIES (1)	Trevor Scott	Castlewood School	N
REPRESENTATIVE OF PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS (1)	Eleanor Clarke	Triple Crown Centre	Y
ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (3)	Councillor Annette McKenzie (Conservative)		Y
ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (3)	Councillor Michael Gough (Conservative)		Y
ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (3)	Councillor Andy Hodgson (Green)		N
TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES (2)	David Lewis	TU Rep	Y
TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES (2)	Gareth Eastham	NASUWT	Y
TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES (2)	Gary Woodhouse (Substitute Member)	GMB	N
REPRESENTATIVES OF EARLY YEARS PVI SECTOR (2)	Gina Godwin	Whitesmore Neighbourhood Nursery (Wise Owls)	Y
REPRESENTATIVES OF EARLY YEARS PVI SECTOR (2)	Lisa Whitehouse	Tender Years	Apologies
REPRESENTATIVES OF POST-16 COLLEGES (2)	Lindsey Stewart	Solihull College	Apologies
REPRESENTATIVES OF POST-16 COLLEGES (2)	Dr Martin Sullivan	Sixth Form College	N
OBSERVERS	Peter Davis	Diocesan Education Service (The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham)	N
OBSERVERS	Sarah Smith	Education for Birmingham, The Church of England	Apologies
Officers (attend as required)			
Cabinet Member Portfolio Holder	Councillor Michael Gough		Y
Acting DCS	Tim Browne		Y
Head of Commissioning for Learning	Steve Fenton		Y
Childrens Services Finance Manager	Sarah Cheale		Y
Head of SEND 0-25	Charlotte Jones		Y

Meeting Minutes:

Item	Minute	Action
1	<p>Apologies for Absence & Welcome: Apologies noted - see register above.</p> <p>New Forum member updates: Rebecca Gater (Solihull College) is to replace Lindsay Stewart. Cllr Daniel Gibbon is replaced by Cllr Andy Hodgson. Cllr Richard Holt is replaced by Cllr Michael Gough.</p> <p>There is a vacancy on the Forum for an elected member and two vacancies for Secondary head teachers.</p>	
2	<p>Minutes of last meeting 25 November 2022 Approved.</p>	
3	<p>Matters Arising from 25 November Meeting The Chair advised that following the meeting in November, Norman Davies had very sadly passed away, condolences had been sent.</p>	
4	<p>Cabinet Member update – Councillor Michael Gough Cllr MG is very pleased to have been selected as the new cabinet portfolio holder for Children, Education & Skills. Cllr MG is looking forward to becoming involved with the great work being undertaken to improve education for children and young people in Solihull.</p>	
5	<p>Acting DCS update - including LA inspection scrutiny activity – Tim Browne The Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) statement of action is due to be sent to the DfE by the end of May. The JTAI was triggered by the awful murder of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes. The National Panel Review into the deaths of both Arthur and Star Hobson is expected to be published on 26 May.</p> <p>An Improvement Board is in place overseeing all improvements within children’s social care, a significant amount of additional capacity has been sourced to support both the pressures within the service and the improvement programme. Delyth Berni-Smith, newly appointed Assistant Director (AD) for Improvement and Partnerships will start in June. Iona Payne, newly appointed AD for Safeguarding will start in July. A new batch of social workers started this week which has helped to relieve some of the pressures within the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).</p> <p>Interviews for the permanent DCS role will take place during June.</p>	
6	<p>Green Paper and implications for Solihull - Charlotte Jones <i>Reference 06 - Schools Forum - Green Paper May 2022a.docx (sharepoint.com)</i></p> <p>The review acknowledges that the 2014 SEND reforms had the right aspirations, however its delivery was left open to local area interpretation and systems and that was the point of failure, in part. It’s now being suggested that national standards should be implemented to respond to the support that should be made available for children and young people. Proposed national standards include more children with SEN being educated in mainstream, a national banding system (early years to post 16), a new EHCP template and a focus on roles, responsibilities and accountabilities across the system.</p> <p>Key points for Solihull:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To combine SEND with alternative provision • To reinforce the SEND partnership - expanding the Joint Additional Needs & Disabilities Board to include alternative provision. • To set up a regional group with the RSC and MAT leads to ensure a greater process is in place which holds the system to account. • To increase the number of children with SEND in the mainstream sector – Solihull has less children in mainstream than local and national comparisons so this could be a challenge. 	

- To continue in developing SEND improvement plans alongside the strategy to further reduce the gap from where we are now to where we'll need to be when the national system is in delivery.

The detail of DfE funding set out in the proposal refers to pockets of work, pilots and programmes, there is no additional funding on offer outside of the increase to the Needs block. There is a commitment to undertake a LA burdens assessment to fund additional costs that may come out of the paper, such as the introduction of a digitalised EHCP system. Additional DfE funding to implement a new system is vital in terms of capacity to deliver.

The DfE have committed to funding a Delivering Better Values scheme to support LAs with the highest budget deficits, Solihull is one of the 55 LAs to have been selected. Further detail to follow when the project starts in June 2022.

The Green Paper is out for consultation until 22 July. A co-ordinated local area response to the consultation is underway. CJ acknowledged that there is much detail missing from the Green Paper and that there is no funding where needed and encouraged individuals, collaboratives and professionals to feedback to the local area response. A system response to the feedback will be circulated to various platforms so it can be expanded upon where needed for others to respond.

Comments & Questions

A discussion was held in regard to the funding needed to deliver aspects of the Green Paper and the expectation that more children and young people will have their SEN met in mainstream.

DG identified that schools are increasingly expected to do more with less, he was of the view that educators need to be realistic about what can be achieved with no additional funding and resource.

JG referred to mainstream education and the way in which mainstream is organised and managed and shared that it will be helpful for Solihull to explore what sea change is needed to be able to deliver our own evolving and developing strategy. JG suggested that a strategy is required to model what mainstream looks like now and in the future.

DL commented that there is very little set out in the proposal to address the significant issue of demand exceeding supply and the funding needed for the system to work.

LM acknowledged the lack of detail set out in the Green Paper in terms of EY and highlighted that change is required to the way in which support is currently delivered. Early intervention is needed at the time the need for support is identified to help relieve some of the pressures faced in schools at a later stage.

The Chair urged all to respond to the Green Paper consultation.

All

7

Education White Paper – Tim Browne / Steve Fenton

Reference [07 - Forum Report White Paper.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

The schools White Paper sets out the governments vision for education, it includes a range of programmes for teacher development, recruitment and additional support for schools to secure the fundamentals of behaviour, attendance and well-being.

Key points for LAs and schools:

- The removal of LA school improvement responsibilities and funding. TB noted concern that the model on offer from the government is a reactive model rather than the current preventative model, he felt that this may present a risk of LAs becoming detached from schools.

- LAs to continue to maintain responsibility for in-year admissions (Solihull has maintained this responsibility).
- All schools be become part of a MAT by 2030, with MATs having a minimum of 7,500 pupils or running at least 10 schools.
- LAs are able to establish new MATs where too few strong Trusts exist.
- Statutory framework to govern children’s movement to ensure that all placements including alternative provision are made in the best interest of the child
- LAs to continue to have responsibility for the proficiency for school places.

TB acknowledged the local challenges regarding Hong Kong nationals, Afghan refugees and more recently the Ukrainian crisis and applauded schools on their reaction to such challenges. TB identified the capacity issue in the borough which the LA is working to resolve.

8 **2021-22 DSG (Dedicated Schools Grant) and High Needs Out-turn position (with independent school placements) - Sarah Cheale**

Reference [08 - DSG Final Out-turn Position 2021-22 Schools Forum.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

2021-22 DSG & High Needs Out-turn figures were shared with the Finance work group on 4 May. The overall deficit at the end of 2021-22 is £13.2 million, comprised of £9.1 million carry forward overspend from prior years and an in-year overspend of over £4 million. A similar scale is expected for 2022-23.

- Central Block - adverse variance of £41,000 to be used to off-set the reduction to the Central Block allocation for 2022-23.
- Schools Block – adverse variance of £162,000 to be carried forward against the Schools Block allocation for 2022-23.
- Early Years Block – no variance reported.
- High Needs Block - £3.951 million overspend. Refer to Appendix B High Needs Block Out-turn statement for further information. [08b - Appendix B - 2021-22 High Needs Block Out-turn Statement.xlsx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- Independent school placements – refer to Appendix C Independent school placements funding 2021-22 for further information. [08c - Independent school placements-funding 2021-22.xlsx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Questions & comments

DL identified that the deficit has increased by 30% in one year and noted potential for the deficit to further increase in coming years.

DL referred of the large increase in out of borough school placements and acknowledged the great demands on resources and the pressures to secure a new provision in the borough.

DG raised thought be given to the accessibility of alternative provision for schools to ensure that children and young people are placed in the right provisions and the value for money from provisions in the borough. DG suggested Solihull Academy was too expensive and schools were looking elsewhere.

LM questioned if the LA still have a Tribunal expert in place and asked whether the large increase in out of borough school placements are as a result of Tribunal outcomes or choice?

TB confirmed that the LA has a legal expert. The LA are receiving increasing requests for EHCPs but have no local specialist provision which leaves no choice but to commission alternative independent specialist placements.

	<p>TB confirmed that the LA has a legal expert. The LA are receiving increasing requests for EHCPs but have no local specialist provision which leaves no choice but to commission alternative independent specialist placements.</p> <p>It's being considered that the LA approach the DfE to write off the high needs deficit when the time is right. It's expected that the Delivering Better Values scheme will answer whether the LA have done all that is needed in terms of spending review.</p> <p>The Chair questioned if the data around tribunal outcomes is available?</p> <p>TB noted that the LA are unable to win many tribunals as we have no alternative placement to offer. The LA are working with mainstream to enable schools to take on a greater proportion of children with EHCPs.</p>	<p>Provide Tribunal data (CJ)</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>School Budgets 2022-23 Update – Steve Fenton Reference 09 - 2022-05-23 School Budget 2022-23 Update.docx (sharepoint.com)</p> <p>Delivering Better Values – SF to present a paper at the next Forum meeting, DBV first phase is to provide some analysis of the current SEN situation in Solihull.</p> <p>Out of borough placements – the LA are not seeing the reductions expected as a result of the 200-300 additional needs placements already created in-borough. Large proportions of out of borough placements are made to accommodate autism & SEMH needs. SF clarified that children are placed out of borough placements because schools within the borough respond to consultation that they are full or unable to meet need.</p> <p>The LA has identified elements of double funding within the system, this is unable to continue with a high needs deficit. SF to present a further paper to a future Forum meeting which will explore charging issues in terms of alternative provision.</p> <p>The Chair questioned if the LA are confident that the progress of the children placed in out of borough specialist placements are being monitored?</p> <p>TB referred to the commissioning framework which he felt was the strongest yet and agreed to arrange a report to feedback.</p> <p>Key developments since previous Forum meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-year pupil admissions – an additional 4 bulge classes are required for 2022-23. The LA asked Forum members to approve an additional 250k to the growth fund taking the total to 600k. Approved. • Following a late government announcement to reduce the school improvement grant by 50% the LA asked maintained Forum members to approve a £5 de-delegation increase (£12.50 special schools and PRUs). The increase will double next year when the government further reduce the grant. Approved. • The Cabinet Member has approved all school budgets as recommended by Forum with the addition of the above. • School Forum requested a 3% increase in school top-ups to reflect general cost pressures. Cllr RH approved. Subsequent to the request the government announced a supplementary grant to the High Needs Block to reflect the national insurance increase, in response to this the LA have increased the top-up by 5%. <p>The Chair shared the following comment made by Lisa Whitehouse in advance of today's meeting in reference to where she has asked for clarification on the 5% retained element:</p> <p><i>“Please minute or Gina can you share that Steve has explained in great detail how Solihull reaches their calculations and whilst there remain national issues with funding in early years, we accept that this sits outside of Solihull’s control, and I appreciate the time you have taken to break down the calculations.</i></p>	<p>SF</p> <p>SF</p>

	<p><i>Going forward my only reflection was, is there any possibility of reducing the early years contribution to the high needs block? If so, what would this look like in real money terms for nurseries”.</i></p> <p>GG noted that it needs to be highlighted to government how difficult the financial situation is at present, EY costs have increased by 7.1% however government funding has only increased by 3.5%. EY are no longer able to make savings.</p> <p>SF referred to LWs question re an EY reduction to the High Needs contribution and said that the contribution of £90k out of £12 million is modest.</p>	SF will respond
10	<p>Work Group reports:</p> <p>a. Finance Group – David Lewis Reference 10a - Finance WG 23-05-2022 Report to Forum.doc (sharepoint.com) See agenda item 8.</p> <p>b. EdSend – Louise Minter Reference 10b - EdSEND minutes 31.03.22.doc (sharepoint.com)</p> <p><u>Comments & Questions</u></p> <p>JG referred to page 2 of the minutes from the Education SEND Group held on 31.03.22, where it is recorded that 33% of schools are not being inclusive and questioned if this means that 1/3 of Solihull schools do not have any children with an EHCP on-roll?</p> <p>TB clarified that the data recorded reflects the information captured from the most recent consult for secondary school transfers, 33% of secondary schools were unable to meet need for a variety of reasons.</p> <p>JG encouraged some further thought to the ways in which data is reported and minuted.</p> <p>A discussion was held in regard to decision making when responding to consults, education professionals noted that decisions are always made in the best interest of the child.</p> <p>c. SSSAB (Solihull Schools Strategic Accountability Board) – Louis Minter Reference 10c - SSSAB-2022-02-08-ReportToForum.docx (sharepoint.com) A SSAB meeting was held in February 22, a further re-scheduled meeting is to take place on 24 May.</p> <p>Monthly headteacher breakfast briefings have been reinstated – all briefings will be virtual.</p>	LM to share feedback with the EdSEN group.
11	<p>Provisional meeting calendar for 2022-23 – Steve Fenton</p> <p>5.00pm Tuesday, 12 July 2022 – Room 1 Civic Suite 5.00pm Tuesday, 11 October 2022 – Room 1 Civic Suite 5.00pm Monday, 28 November 2022 – Room 1 Civic Suite 5.00pm Thursday, 26 January 2023 – Room 1 Civic Suite 5.00pm Thursday, 25 May 2023 – Room 1 Civic Suite 5.00pm Thursday, 13 July 2023 – Room 1 Civic Suite</p>	
12	<p>Dates of next meetings:</p> <p>5.00pm Tuesday, 12 July 2022 – Room 1 Civil Suite.</p>	
13	<p>AOB</p> <p>None</p>	