

Forum Newsletter

**SOLIHULL SCHOOLS FORUM met on 10th July 2017,
the following is a précis of business undertaken**

Membership

Forum thanked a number of long-standing supporters who were stepping down and welcomed new members onto Forum and its work groups. Antoinette Fisher was appointed Forum Chair, with Darren Gelder appointed Vice Chair for 2017/18.



Education SEND Group

Following a review of the current arrangements, Executive had agreed to stand down the Forum SEND Working Group and SSSAB SEND and, from September 2017, to have a single school-based Education SEND group. This new group would report into SSSAB, Forum and the 0-25 SEND Board and will cover the existing remit of both current groups and discharge Forum responsibilities, including financial monitoring. Membership appointments would be made by Executive and SSSAB to ensure collaboratives and all sectors are fully represented. To be reviewed in 12 months.

SEND Pupil Funding Matrix

The new system was approved at the July Cabinet meeting. The system specifies strategies that schools, EY and specialist provision are expected to undertake, matched to a funding regime and bringing a shared language and understanding for heads, SENCos, governors, parents and young people. Members agreed that the mapping of funding to the banding matrix worked well, with no requirement for phasing in. The system has been positively received by all parties and was fully endorsed by Forum.

Solihull AP Academy Update

- Forum welcomed Stephen Steinhaus, Principal Designate of the new Alternative Provision Academy which will provide Year 9-11 students with a different and more meaningful experience on a permanent basis.
- Core educational provision will be English, Maths, Science, plus additional areas such as PE, PSHE, art and drama. Discussions are taking place with Solihull College about providing BTech courses.

Cabinet Member's Items

- A meeting was scheduled at the DfE on 18 July 2017, when a group of head teachers and governors from the Meriden Parliamentary Constituency would discuss school funding with the Schools' Minister, Nick Gibb.
- The outcome of the NFF Consultation was unknown, although the Government says it is committed to 'fair funding' and that no school will lose money.
- Discussions were taking place around the possible implementation of a West Midlands-based Parenting Programme.
- A decision had been made to withdraw a number of school buses. Action would be taken to ensure there are safe alternatives in place.

Assistant Director's Items

- There had been a number of Ofsted inspections during the Summer term, with mixed outcomes. Although over 30% of Solihull primaries are Outstanding, there needs to be confidence that they are retaining that status.
- There was no news of any Education Bills coming forward and grammar schools and free breakfasts seemed to have disappeared off the agenda.
- Solihull had improved its KS2 Results this year, with 64.5% (up from 58% and against a national average of 61%) of students meeting the required standard for reading, writing and maths.
- Solihull's sub-region had put in a bid for around £500k of School Improvement funding. The outcome was expected before the end of Summer Term.
- A review of Home to School Transport would take place over the next 12 months in a bid to reduce costs.

Central Services – School Improvement Report

- Phil Leivers presented a summary of the current services. Solihull will have £190kpa to undertake its statutory responsibility to monitor, broker and intervene for maintained schools. This will be sufficient to fund a desk-top analysis, brokering and signposting service, plus going into 'at-risk' schools, with all other services ceasing. This is not the preferred model going forward.
- The preference is to develop a partnership model between the LA and schools to maintain current work and support and develop Peer to Peer evaluations and undertake risk assessments, with schools taking more ownership of that.
- Phil would draw up two or three potential models, with indicative costs, to consult on with schools prior to the October Forum meeting. In the meantime, the LA will commit to delivering the current service throughout Autumn Term and will not ask schools for money until April 2018.

Capital Work Group Report

- Discussions were taking place with Solihull College to secure additional places for pupils with additional needs.
- Following the Grenfell Tower fire, the LA has been required to report to the DfE about Fire Risk Assessments in its schools; academies have responded directly to the DfE.
- Future plans for school places are dependent on the review of the Local Development Plan.

SEND Work Group Report

- Details on accessing funding for Traveller Children had been circulated to schools.
- The LA is re-advertising for Educational Psychologists.
- DPS training for escorts is widely welcomed; contractors cannot now tender for work unless their escorts have undertaken the training.

Solihull Schools Strategic Accountability Board Report

- A T&F group was looking at a schools-led model with regard to SEND.
- Hazel Oak was now a Teaching School and was keen to be involved in out-reach work to support schools.