

LEEDS SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 22 February, 2018 at Civic Hall (4.30PM – 6.30PM)

<u>Membership</u> (<i>Apologies in Italics</i>)	
<u>GOVERNORS</u>	<u>HEADTEACHERS</u>
Primary (6 seats)	Primary (7 seats)
<i>Phil Hirst</i> <i>Christ Church Upper Armley</i> Sue Knights Little London & Alwoodley <i>Gillian Simpson</i> <i>Shakespeare</i> Sara Nix Rawdon Littlemoor Deryn Porter Cobden Primary Richard Halls Windmill Low Rd Federation	Peter Harris Farsley Farfield Sarah Griggs Valley View Julie Harkness Carr Manor Helen Stout Meadowfield John Hutchinson St Theresa's Claire Harrison Wetherby Deighton Gates Helen Stott Allerton C of E
Secondary (2 seats)	Secondary (3 seats)
<i>Doug Martin</i> <i>Pudsey Grangefield</i> <i>Janice Rush</i> <i>Allerton Grange</i>	Delia Martin Benton Park Vacancy Vacancy
Special (1 seat)	Special (1 seat)
<i>Amanda Jahdi</i> <i>East SILC</i>	Diane Reynard East SILC
Non School	ACADEMIES (8 seats)
<i>Peter Best</i> <i>PVI Providers</i> <i>Susan Knowles</i> <i>PVI Providers</i> Steve Thompson Schools JCC <i>Richard Noake</i> <i>Diocese of WY & Dales</i> <i>Colin Booth</i> <i>16-19 Providers</i> <i>Angela Cox OBE</i> <i>Catholic Diocese</i>	David Gurney Cockburn School <i>Mike Gidley</i> <i>White Rose Academies Trust</i> Ken Morton Brigshaw LP MAT & Ashtree Adam Ryder Bruntcliffe Academy <i>Scott Jacques</i> <i>Springwell Leeds Academy</i> John Thorne Co-op Academy Priesthorpe Emma Lester Woodkirk Academy <i>To be confirmed</i>
	AP Academy
	<i>To be confirmed</i>
Local Authority Reps:	
Sue Rumbold, Chief Officer Partnerships	Louise Hornsey, Principal Financial Manager
Viv Buckland, Head of Service Learning Systems	Simon Criddle, Head of Finance
Tim Pouncey, Chief Officer Strategy & Resources	Andrew Eastwood, Chief Officer Learning Improvement
Steve Walker, Director Children & Families	
Minutes:	
Mark Thompson, Leadership Assistant	

Item		Action
1.0	Apologies & introductions	
1.1	Peter Harris (Chair) extended a warm welcome to members and observers, and formally introduced new representatives. Apologies were noted. There are two secondary head teacher vacancies.	
2.0	Minutes of the 18 January 2018 meeting	
2.1	The minutes were agreed as a true record.	
2.2	Item 2.2: Louise Hornsey advised that a report on school deficit balances is included in this meeting's papers.	
2.3	Item 4.7: Andrew Eastwood explained to members the reasons behind the high pre-opening costs of Springwell Leeds, which included securing temporary accommodation and hiring staff in advance in order to adequately meet the needs of extremely vulnerable children. Members still felt the cost was extremely high and requested an itemised paper for the next meeting (June 7, 2018). Helen Stott (Allerton C of E) requested that this include comparative data with other new schools, while Helen Stout (Meadowfield) remarked it would be useful to know what positive impact the sizeable funding has had on Springwell's children.	AE/TP
2.4	Item 5.7: Steve Walker reported on a recent meeting with DfE and ESFA national representatives on the difficulties caused by the capped increase within the new formula to the High Needs Block. They were sympathetic to our situation, but no indication was given that we would receive any additional funding. Tim Pouncey added that a letter had been sent to the minister outlining our issues and concerns, and asking for the cap to be reviewed.	
2.5	Item 5.20: Discussion was had around AIPs and the in-year underspend against the exceptional place funding. PH requested more detail around the underspend and felt there should be sizeable clawback. Helen Stott (Allerton C of E) queried how much of it relates to places at The Stephen Longfellow Academy. AE advised that the base funding element ultimately comes from the High Needs Block from Sept 2019. PH asked what amount of the underspend had been returned to the High Needs Block, but Simon Criddle advised the figure was not yet available. <i>Requested clarification: Sir John Townsley, CEO of TGAT, wrote to Peter Harris on Wed 13th June on this issue. He has requested that it is noted that an additional £3.5 million will have come into the city in the first two years of the Stephen Longfellow Academy, as well as £10.3 million of capital funding.</i>	
2.6	Further discussion ensued on The Stephen Longfellow Academy and a reported disproportionate representation of GORSE Academies Trust and partner school/academy pupils. AE advised this matter had been challenged, but Stephen Longfellow is an academy and can essentially choose its own admissions criteria. SW added that the local authority plans to look into this issue. PH queried whether members could have access to the original proposal or agreement to check whether the school was delivering on the admission arrangements that had been agreed initially. David Gurney (Cockburn School) reported on capacity issues caused by temporary accommodation, which should hopefully be alleviated once permanent accommodation opens in September. Members requested an update in due course. <i>Requested clarification: Sir John Townsley, CEO of TGAT, wrote to Peter Harris on Wed 13th</i>	

2.7	<p><i>June on this issue. He has stated that the secondary provision was always intended for TGAT and partner schools' students, whereas the admissions policy for primary age children is more open to pupils across the city. He reported that the primary pupil profile in Stephen Longfellow is more reflective of the wider city. He states that the LA endorsed this policy at the time of the free school application and has never challenged any disproportionate representation of TGAT students in Stephen Longfellow since it opened.</i></p> <p>Item 6.1: John Thorne (Co-op Academy Priesthorpe) reported on a letter he sent to the Minister of State regarding the revision to the Universal Credit entitlement criteria for the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) and Free School Meals (FSM). AE advised the matter had also been discussed at Scrutiny Board. Members suggested that PH submit a letter on behalf of Schools Forum outlining our concerns. It was agreed SW would arrange for this to be drafted on PH's behalf.</p>	SW
3.0	Matters arising	
3.1	No items discussed.	
4.0	2018/19 Free Early Education Entitlement Rates	
4.1	Viv Buckland presented her paper on 2018/19 Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) rates and invited members to comment on the funding proposals for the Early Years Funding.	
4.2	Local authorities will continue to receive funding via the Early Years National Funding Formula in April 2018 to fund the FEEE for 2, 3 and 4-year-olds. In line with the guidance, the local authority has been consulting with providers on the proposed rates for 2018/19. VB's report sets out the proposed rates which will be determined following the conclusion of the consultation with providers.	
4.3	VB advised that the 2-year-old FEEE funding rate paid to Leeds City Council remains unchanged at £5.20 for each eligible hour of entitlement. Previously providers have received £5.05 per hour of this allocation, with the remaining amount used to cover the annual shortfall in funding received as a result of it being allocated based on the spring term places which has historically had the lowest numbers. Following a review of the take-up of places, the Council is able to pay providers an additional £0.05 for each eligible hour of entitlement from April 2018. The new funding rate for 2018/19 will increase to £5.10 per hour up to a maximum of £2,907 per child per annum.	
4.4	VB reported on the funding allocation received of £4.81 per hour per child for three and four-year-olds by Leeds City Council, and outlined the proposed allocation between centrally retained (£0.20), deprivation supplement (£0.31), SEND Inclusion Fund (£0.05) and base rate paid to providers (£4.25). The base rate represents a £0.05 increase on the current figure, while centrally retained and SEND Inclusion Fund represent a decrease of £0.04 and £0.01 respectively.	
4.5	Helen Stott (Allerton C of E) queried the increased funding in two services (Sensory Services and Family Services). VB advised much of it is simply moving money between portfolios and refining our knowledge of where money is being spent. The allocation for Family Services has been increased to include Stay & Play parent and children learning sessions and Communication & Language work to further increase readiness for learning. SC advised that	

	there will be no identified uplift in spend, but this proposal ensures sustainability of existing budgets.		
4.6	Helen Stout (Meadowfield) queried the reduction in Education Psychology funding. VB advised the reduction is due to fewer requests for EHCP needs assessments for 2, 3 and 4-year-olds in 2017/18 than in previous years. However, she assured members that no less money is being put into educational psychology.	AR	
4.7	PH asked about Northpoint Wellbeing and was advised it is a registered charity helping people in emotional distress as a result of bereavement, serious illness, etc. It is a commissioned city-wide service that counsels children/young people and parents. Members requested further information on this service.		
4.8	Helen Stott (Allerton C of E) asked about the process of finding out whether 2-year-olds are eligible or not, and could anything be done in terms of processes and transparency for 2-year-old funding. VB advised that she would welcome feedback and they are open to exploring different options.		
4.9	Decision: Schools Forum was asked to agree the proposed allocation of the centrally retained element of the three and four-year-old funding, as outlined at 3.4 in the paper. Schools Forum approved all items (1 to 11) of the centrally retained funding.		
4.10	VB invited feedback on the paper's proposals on local universal base rate, supplements and SEND Inclusion Fund.		
4.11	Helen Stott (Allerton C of E) asked how Leeds compares to other local authorities, to which VB advised she was aware some local authorities were proposing to reduce rates, while Leeds is looking at an increase.		
4.12	Ken Morton (Brigshaw LP MAT & Ashtree) asked about the context of the balance on the Block, and whether a different rate would be set if those balances happened again. SC advised that the local authority is not budgeting for the Early Years Block to be underspent next year. There will always be variations, as we get paid on a census basis. VB added that it needs to be financially viable, we must ensure we can meet our childcare duty, and the rate would be reviewed annually.		
4.13	Helen Stott (Allerton C of E) remarked that the funding needs to take into account increasing staffing costs.		
4.14	John Hutchinson (St Theresa's) remarked on the practicalities around 30 Hours Childcare funding, and said it is not straightforward to identify the children who were receiving 30 hours come census time. VB advised the local authority is more than happy to engage in conversations with providers about how to make it as straightforward a process as possible.		
5.0	Dedicated Schools Grant 2017/18 – Budget Monitoring Month 10		
5.1	SC presented his paper on the latest 2017/18 budget monitoring position on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) as at the end of January 2018.		
5.2	The report projects an underspend of £228k. This is made up of a significant overspend on the High Needs Block largely as a result of increased expenditure on SEN top-ups. This is		

5.3	<p>wholly offset by a projected underspend on the Early Years Block and a small underspend on the Schools Block.</p> <p>SC advised the projected underspend is an improvement of £1,113k compared to the November projections and is as a result of the expected delay in the special school academy conversion which means that the deficit will not be funded during 2017/18 but will be an additional cost in 2018/19.</p>	
5.4	<p>SC reported that a review has been started of the arrangements relating to school deficit balances. Annual reporting to Schools Forum already includes details of school balances, and these are reported in June each year following the closedown of accounts. In line with this, the 2017/18 closing balances will be reported at the June 2018 Schools Forum meeting, and a further update on the review of deficit balance arrangements will be provided.</p>	
6.0	Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Budget 2018/19 and Projected Costs for Future Years	
6.1	<p>SC presented his report on the 2018/19 budget for the High Needs Block following recent work identifying pressures and potential savings as reported to Schools Forum in recent months.</p>	
6.2	<p>SC advised the budget for 2018/19 has been set within the estimated income available and budgets to contribute £895k towards the deficit brought forward. The report also provides further information on the latest projected grant income and costs for the years 2019/20 to 2021/22. However, SC stressed that there are risks around the assumptions made in future years, particularly after 2019/20 as no guidance has been received from the government on grant allocations.</p>	
6.3	<p>In order to produce a balanced budget, the following actions have been included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased funding of £2m as a result of a transfer from the Schools Block - Increased funding of £500k as a result of a transfer from the Central School Services Block - Remove High Needs Block funding for the Teenage Pregnancy Service - Savings of £492k from increasing the threshold before additional blocks of £6k can be applied for from 40% to 50% - Savings of £1.5m from decreasing the unit rate on FFI from £684 per unit to £600 per unit 	
6.4	<p>SC advised that, in light of concerns raised regarding the impact of the proposed savings on schools with significant numbers of SEN pupils, the council is proposing to mitigate this by applying transitional protection to limit individual school reductions in 2018/19 to 1.5% of the sum of baseline and high needs funding. Capping losses in this way is estimated to reduce the savings by £62k and is based on the 2017/18 pupil data. This additional cost in 2018/19 will be funded by reducing the contribution to repay the deficit.</p>	
6.5	<p>SC directed members to the report's appendices, which include the current estimated shortfall or surplus in the High Needs Block and the impact on the overall deficit reserve.</p>	
6.6	<p>JH asked whether schools with significant numbers of SEN pupils had been informed of how much funding they will lose. SC advised that the local authority had written to every head teacher and chair of governors to provide an explanation on the decisions taken around the</p>	

	2018/19 funding arrangements. Also, schools will be contacted with their individual funding settlements for 2018/19 in due course.	
6.7	SC reported that the local authority is anticipating a balanced position each year, but with considerable risks. This will be closely monitored.	
6.8	JT asked whether the local authority intends on transferring a further £2m from the Schools Block in 2019/20. SC advised it is likely and further consultation would be had with schools and Schools Forum.	
6.9	KM remarked that it would be useful to have a better level of understanding around the key assumptions. SC noted this suggestion. KM added that some of the risks/assumptions could have a big impact on September 2019, and it would be helpful to understand the likely scenarios next term (rather than autumn term) in order to be better prepared.	SC
7.0	AOB	
7.1	SW reported on Ofsted's recent focused visit to Leeds City Council Children's Services. The letter is now published on Ofsted's website and is very positive. SW thanked partners around the table for their continued support.	
8.0	Meeting dates	
	2017/18 academic year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>March 22, 2018 – members agreed this meeting was not required</i> • June 14, 2018 	