

LEEDS SCHOOLS FORUM
Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 18 January, 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> <i>Sue Knights</i> <i>Little London & Alwoodley</i> <i>Pete Riley</i> <i>Whitecote</i> <i>Gillian Simpson</i> <i>Shakespeare</i> <i>Sara Nix</i> <i>Rawdon Littlemoor</i> <i>Vacancy</i>	<i>Peter Harris</i> <i>Farsley Farfield</i> <i>Sarah Griggs</i> <i>Valley View</i> <i>Julie Harkness</i> <i>Carr Manor</i> <i>Helen Stout</i> <i>Meadowfield</i> <i>John Hutchinson</i> <i>St Theresa's</i> <i>Claire Harrison</i> <i>Wetherby Deighton Gates</i> <i>Helen Stott</i> <i>Allerton C of E</i>
Secondary (2 seats)	Secondary (3 seats)
<i>Doug Martin</i> <i>Pudsey Grangefield</i> <i>Janice Rush</i> <i>Allerton Grange</i>	<i>Delia Martin</i> <i>Benton Park</i> <i>Vacancy</i> <i>Vacancy</i>
Special (1 seat)	Special (1 seat)
<i>Vacancy</i>	<i>Bridie Dorning</i> <i>East SILC</i>
Non School	Academies (8 seats)
<i>Patrick Murphy</i> <i>Schools JCC</i> <i>Richard Noake</i> <i>Diocese of WY & Dales</i> <i>Angela Cox OBE</i> <i>Catholic Diocese</i> <i>Steve Kelly</i> <i>Leeds City College</i> <i>Peter Best</i> <i>PVI Providers</i> <i>Susan Knowles</i> <i>PVI Providers</i>	<i>David Gurney</i> <i>Cockburn School</i> <i>Mike Gidley</i> <i>White Rose Academies Trust</i> <i>Ken Morton</i> <i>Brigshaw LP MAT & Ashtree</i> <i>Adam Ryder</i> <i>Bruntcliffe Academy</i> <i>Scott Jacques</i> <i>Springwell Leeds Academy</i> <i>John Thorne</i> <i>Co-op Academy Priesthorpe</i> <i>Emma Lester</i> <i>Woodkirk Academy</i> <i>Vacancy</i>
	AP Academy
	<i>Samantha Campbell</i> <i>The Elland Academy</i>
Local Authority Reps:	
<i>Sue Rumbold, Chief Officer Partnerships</i>	<i>Louise Hornsey, Principal Financial Manager</i>
<i>Barbara Newton, Head of Service Complex Needs</i>	<i>Simon Criddle, Head of Finance</i>
<i>Tim Pouncey, Chief Officer Resources and Strategy, Children and Families</i>	<i>Andy Humphries, ESFA Observer</i>
<i>Steve Walker, Director Children & Families</i>	
Minutes:	
<i>Mark Thompson, Leadership Assistant</i>	

Item		Action
1.0	Apologies & introductions	
1.1	Peter Harris (Chair) extended a warm welcome to members and observers, and formally introduced new academy representative Emma Lester (Woodkirk Academy). Apologies were noted.	
2.0	Minutes of the 5 October 2017 meeting	
2.1	The minutes were agreed as a true record.	
2.2	Item 2.2: In Andrew Eastwood's absence, PH asked whether any members wished to volunteer for the position of vice chair. Nobody volunteered, so the position remains vacant.	
2.3	Item 2.5: The Capita contract for SIMS licences is currently being looked into. Louise Hornsey reported that discussions are currently taking place with IT around costs and projection. LH will provide a further update at the next Schools Forum meeting.	LH
2.4	Item 4.4: Ken Morton (Brigshaw LP MAT & Ashtree) advised the minute should read Tom Goldman instead of Tom Riordan.	
2.5	Item 5.8: LH reported that a timetable has been drawn up for the review into how school deficit balances are managed. A report will be provided at the next Schools Forum meeting.	LH
2.6	Item 6.3: LH advised that pension costs for both teacher and the West Yorkshire Pension Fund come from the budget for schools in financial difficulty.	
3.0	Matters arising	
3.1	No items discussed.	
4.0	School Funding Arrangements 2018/19	
4.1	Louise Hornsey presented highlights of the '2018/19 School Funding Arrangements' report.	
4.2	The report provides a summary of the main issues. The local authority is not anticipating a significant variation from the position previously reported (£885k in-year overspend), though there may be variations within individual areas. A detailed budget monitoring report will be presented in February's meeting.	
4.3	<p>In respect of the Growth Fund, Schools Forum was asked to consider the paper's proposals and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - approve the criteria for allocating funding from the Growth Fund (to retain the existing criteria as in 2017/18); - approve retaining £2.9m for Growth Funding from the Schools Block in 2018/19 (split between £2.61m for primary growth and £259k for secondary growth). (See 4.18 below for the voting results).	
4.4	LH advised that Growth Funding is paid to schools as a per pupil amount, with further funding available for existing schools that incur additional rental costs or for new schools with pre-	

	opening staffing costs. The report includes a table that provides further details of the amounts payable.	
4.5	Mike Gidley (White Rose Academies Trust) queried whether the Growth Fund split value between primary and secondary growth would change over time. LH advised it is likely and would be under review.	
4.6	PH noted that the pre-opening allowance hasn't been used for many years and wondered whether this was to do with new schools being academies. LH advised the allowance would only be applicable to new schools the local authority wishes to set up.	
4.7	PH drew attention to the high pre-opening costs of Springwell Leeds and questioned why they were so much higher than those outlined in the appendix to the report, which outlines the pre-opening staffing costs eligible for funding from the Growth Fund. Steve Walker advised the difference in funding is due to our addressing the inadequate provision that had previously been provided. A temporary provision had to be established as part of the set-up costs, which included securing temporary accommodation, etc. Tim Pouncey advised that Springwell's pre-opening costs were funded from the High Needs Block rather than the Schools Block. Members still felt the cost was extremely high and requested more information.	TP/AE
4.8	In respect of the 2018/19 schools funding formula, LH advised that the local authority has now received confirmation that the ESFA has approved the two formula requests that were outstanding at the time the report was issued (as detailed in the report at 1.3.4 and 1.3.5). The 2018/19 funding figures in the appendices therefore reflect these formula adjustments. However, the figures are provisional until they have been verified by the ESFA and formally approved within the council.	
4.9	At the November 2017 meeting, Schools Forum supported the proposal that the 2018/19 school funding formula should move as close as possible to the national funding formula. The local authority advised it would update the individual school funding allocations once the ESFA had provided details of our final funding and the pupil numbers from the October 2017 census (note that these pupil numbers do not adjust for any reception pupils expected to start after October). This information has now been received and the proposed school level allocations for 2018/19 have been updated, which are provided in the appendix to the report.	
4.10	In line with previous proposals, following these updates the local authority is still able to provide schools with a minimum per pupil funding increase of 0.5% compared to 2017/18 baselines. The decision on the final formula will be made by the Director of Children's Services, in line with the council's decision making framework.	
4.11	PH queried whether the notional figure for cluster funding would be presented to schools as a separate line. LH advised that the local authority has not yet decided what information will be presented to schools in 2018/19. The decision will be made by the local authority, but Schools Forum's comments will be taken on board. There was support among members for including a separate line for cluster funding.	
4.12	MG asked whether the allocations take account of movements between the Schools Block and High Needs Block, to which LH confirmed they do.	
4.13	In respect of de-delegation, in October 2017 Schools Forum approved the proposals for de-	

	<p>delegation for maintained schools in 2018/19. At that time the local authority advised that the per-pupil costs provided were provisional based on the latest available data at that time, and would be updated in January 2018 if needed. Having recalculated the figures, LH confirmed that there will be no increases in the 2018/19 de-delegation rates per pupil which were provided to Schools Forum in October, and the local authority will be able to reduce the contribution in one case (the contingency fund) where the rate will reduce from £14.90 to £12.12. To achieve this, £300k from the de-delegated reserves will be used.</p> <p>4.14 This use of reserves fulfils a commitment made in the November 2017 report to transfer back to maintained schools a proportion of any surplus on the de-delegated reserves, in order to partly account for the agreed severance contributions by maintained schools in 2018/19. LH advised that the local authority is making this adjustment through de-delegation contributions, rather than as a direct transfer to schools, because this is the most effective way for maintained schools to receive this within the regulations.</p> <p>4.15 In respect of the Central School Services Block, this has been introduced in 2018/19 to fund local authorities for the statutory duties they hold for both maintained schools and academies. It brings together:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - funding previously allocated through the retained duties element of the Education Services Grant (ESG) - funding for ongoing central functions, such as admissions, previously top-sliced from the schools block - residual funding for historic commitments, previously top-sliced from the Schools Block <p>Schools Forum approval is required each year to confirm the amounts on each line. The amounts that were requested to be approved for 2018/19 are detailed in the report (see 4.18 below for the voting result).</p> <p>4.16 At the November 2017 meeting, Schools Forum supported the proposal to transfer up to £500k to the High Needs Block. At that time the exact amount was subject to confirmation of the costs and funding relating to the Central School Services Block. LH reported that these figures have now been confirmed and the local authority is able to transfer the full £500k to the High Needs Block for 2018/19.</p> <p>4.17 In addition to this, at the November meeting it was agreed that maintained schools would contribute a total of £500k for 2018/19 towards the severance costs of maintained school staff, which are charged to the council. At the time the rate per-pupil was proposed to be £7.25, although this was subject to change once the latest data became available. LH confirmed to members that the charge will not change, and will remain at £7.25 per maintained school pupil.</p> <p>4.18 Decision: Schools Forum was asked to vote on the following recommendations. Below are the recommendations and resultant votes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>In relation to the Growth Fund for 2018/19, Schools Forum was asked to approve:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>The proposed criteria.</i> b) <i>The total Growth Fund of £2.9m (split between £2.61m for primary growth and £259k for secondary growth).</i> <p>Schools Forum voted in favour of these.</p> - <i>In relation to the Central School Services Block, Schools Forum was asked to</i> 	
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	<p><i>approve the amounts summarised in the report for 2018/19 (apart from the ESFA central licence charge, which does not require approval).</i></p> <p>Schools Forum voted in favour of this.</p>	
5.0	High Needs Block Review Update	
5.1	Sue Rumbold and Barbara Newton presented highlights of the report.	
5.2	Detailed discussion was had at the October 2017 meeting on the High Needs Block review and its recommendations. Schools Forum indicated broad agreement with the recommended measures, but requested that some additional information be made available, including more detailed modelling of some of the options.	
5.3	A further report was provided for the November 2017 meeting and was accompanied by a breakdown of projected individual school budgets to identify the impact of ceasing to automatically provide additional blocks of funding to supplement notional inclusion budgets in mainstream schools, and more detailed modelling of the various options for revising FFI unit sums. However, after further discussion of the proposal for changing the FFI unit value to £630, members suggested a preferred approach of changing the unit value to £600.	
5.4	There was also further discussion on the proposal to cease to provide additional funding to supplement notional inclusion budgets in mainstream schools. This included a proposal to raise the percentage of the notional inclusion budget to be spent by schools on individual blocks of £6k before they can access any additional blocks to 50% (as opposed to the current 40%).	
5.5	SR advised that the High Needs Block review working group has since undertaken further analysis as proposed, the findings of which are presented in the report and its appendices. The local authority believes these changes should now be implemented.	
5.6	PH remarked on the updated 2018/19 High Needs Block position and change in grant figure previously reported. Simon Criddle advised that putting the budget together is an ongoing process, as assumptions made around spend do change with circumstances. The funding figure confirmed in December for 2018/19 is £0.591m less than projected. The amount of funding we will receive going forward is uncertain, and beyond 2019/20 will be subject to a new spending review.	
5.7	Discussion was had on the proposal within the new formula to cap any increase to 3% year-on-year. SW reported on his intentions to make representations to the Department for Education (DfE) around the cap. There was support among members for SW to make such representations.	SW
5.8	Members said they would appreciate longer-term projections of how the deficit balance will be dealt with. SC advised that the five-year projection previously shared has not yet been updated to reflect the revised position for 2018/19. However, 2019/20 will be another difficult year, so this year's actions will most likely need to be replicated, including the FFI and notional block savings, £500k transfer from the Central School Services Block, and a further £2 million transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. By 2021/22, we should be in a position where we have repaid the deficit balance.	
5.9	KM queried whether a £2 million transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block	

	would be done after 2019/20. SC advised that we probably won't have the ability to do it after 2019/20.	
5.10	TP reported on discussions he and Andrew Eastwood are having with the DfE on the High Needs Block deficit balance and actions we are having to take to bring it back into balance before 2021/22. Schools Forum will be kept apprised of such discussions and any progress made.	
5.11	PH questioned why the deficit has to be repaid by 2021/22. SC advised that there are a number of considerations to take into account, including the overall local authority's reserves position. Therefore, we have put forward a sustainable plan around the High Needs Block and it takes account of the overall school balances position.	
5.12	KM expressed concerns about the risks of not being able to get a balanced in-year position.	
5.13	Members commented on the difficulties schools are facing with the cuts. Barbara Newton remarked that these issues are shared throughout the country.	
5.14	PH queried whereabouts the North West SILC deficit is recorded in the report, to which SC advised it is recorded in the 2017/18 column (against the Passported To Institutions line). Discussion followed on the size of the North West SILC deficit balance and its ongoing impact on other schools. Members also commented on the length of time the academisation process is taking. SW remarked on a period of due diligence and negotiations currently taking place ahead of academisation being completed. It is a very complex process, and we need to ensure we can provide the best quality of education possible. SW added that he appreciates the difficult position schools are in. Members still felt the cost was liable to increase and expressed frustration around this.	
5.15	KM remarked that we should go through each key assumption line by line, rather than focus on just one.	
5.16	MG commented on Leeds' delivery model being fairly unique. BN agreed that certain elements are, but there is also a lot of variation around the country. In Leeds, children and young people can access FFI without having an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan. This is a local choice and not something offered by all local authorities. Debate could be had on whether this is sustainable, given the pressures in the system. SW added that we may need to reconsider how things are done.	
5.17	PH highlighted there are some schools that are losing around 2% of their total budget, and queried whether the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) protection would apply. (The MFG does not apply to High Needs funding for mainstream schools).	
5.18	John Thorne (Co-op Academy Priesthorpe) remarked on the benefit of knowing the bigger picture and the local authority keeping members/colleagues informed in order to better prepare for making (often difficult) decisions as a result of any impact.	
5.19	BN reported on the ongoing discussions taking place regarding Area Inclusion Partnership (AIPs). A new arrangement was trialled for 2017/18 which allocated funding for exceptional needs at £10k per place.	
5.20	Regarding AIP provision, PH queried where the £300k was for the 30 places that were	

	<p>commissioned but not provided, and asked whether it could be used to reduce the deficit balance. LH advised that, although technically the money has not been spent, there may be certain fixed costs and overheads to pay. She added that the local authority monitors AIPs with surplus balances. Members noted that £300k is a significant amount of money. SW advised it could potentially be used to offset the deficit if it becomes available.</p>	SW
5.21	<p>Schools Forum was requested to note the following actions to bring the High Needs Block back into balance for 2018/19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The revision of the Funding for Inclusion (FFI) unit value to £600 (from the current £684). - The revision to the system of awarding of additional blocks of funding to mainstream schools to supplement their notional inclusion budget, where they have significant numbers of learners who have higher level support needs which will exceed costs of £6k, and who will be eligible for FFI. Currently, mainstream schools are asked to spend a minimum of 40% of their total notional inclusion budget on providing the blocks of the first £6k to meet the support needs of these learners, before any additional blocks of £6k to supplement their notional inclusion budget will be awarded. The proposed revision is to increase the minimum to 50% of the total notional inclusion budget. 	
5.22	<p>Discussion was had on Schools Forum giving further steer on modelling alternative options, as members felt more debate could be had. However, local authority reps felt a decision now had to be made on arrangements for the High Needs Block due to time constraints, and this is ultimately the local authority's decision to make. SW reiterated that it is the local authority's decision whether or not to proceed with the paper's recommendations. The process has been complex, but the local authority invited a steer and took the guidance of Schools Forum on board (e.g. regarding FFI). If additional alternatives were to be modelled, it would likely jeopardise the deadline for next financial year.</p>	
5.23	<p>PH proposed an indicative vote (on the recommendations at 5.21 above), though the final decision rested with the local authority. The results for both recommendations were: 7 people in favour; 1 against; and 4 abstentions.</p>	
5.24	<p>TP assured members that the impact of the changes to school budgets would be monitored throughout the year.</p>	
6.0	AOB	
6.1	<p>JT reported on a revision to the Universal Credit entitlement criteria for the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) and Free School Meals (FSM), and suggested it is something to be mindful of.</p>	
7.0	Meeting dates	
7.1	<p>2017/18 academic year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 22, 2018 • <i>March 22, 2018 (reserve) – it is unlikely this meeting will be needed</i> • June 7, 2018 	