

NORTH YORKSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

Date of meeting:	Thursday 23 November 2023 (via Teams)
Title of report:	Minutes of the North Yorkshire Schools Forum
Type of report:	For information only
Executive summary: Including reason for submission	The minutes of the previous meeting of the North Yorkshire Schools Forum are presented for approval.
Budget / Risk implications:	N/A
Recommendations:	The minutes are approved as an accurate record.
Voting requirements:	N/A
Appendices: To be attached	N/A
Report originator and contact details:	Marion Sadler – Clerk to the Schools Forum Tel: 01609 532234 E-mail: marion.sadler@northyorks.gov.uk
Presenting officer: If not the originator	N/A

PRESENT:

Chair:	Ian Yapp
Primary Headteachers:	Helen Thompson, Anna Kirkham, Rob Campbell, Ray Wells
Secondary Headteachers:	Nick Hinchliffe
Nursery Headteacher:	
Special Headteacher:	
Pupil Referral Service:	
Academies:	Michelle Hockham, Alison Kaye, Louise Sager, Helen Channing, Helen Williams, Louise Segar
Governors:	Corinne Cross
Early Years Providers:	

16-19 Providers:	
Diocesan Representatives:	
Trade Unions:	Anne Swift, Sarah Carter
Observers:	Cllr Janet Sanderson, Cllr Annabel Wilkinson
In Attendance:	Stuart Carlton, Howard Emmett, Sally Dunn, Janet Crawford, Amanda Newbold, Mairi Reed, Mandy Lambert (LSO Minute-Taker), Deborah Wilbor (LSO), Carl Parker (Union)
Apologies:	Charlotte Hope-Harrison, Kathryn Firth, Matthew Vickers, Martin McCauley

1165: WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1166: MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Circulated: A list of the current membership:

The current vacancies were outlined, Primary LA (1), Secondary LA (2), PRS LA (1), Academy (4) – Quorum is 40% of members.

1167: ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

CONSIDERED: The election of the Vice-Chair due to a vacancy. Expressions of interest had been sought with one nomination – Alison Kaye.

AGREED: To confirm that Alison Kaye be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Schools Forum.

1168: MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 21 September 2023 be agreed as an accurate record.

1169: MATTERS ARISING

NOTED: There were no matters arising.

1170: NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There was no other urgent business to note – other than the Government Autumn Statement.

1171: HIGH NEEDS BLOCK UPDATE

CONSIDERED: A report setting out the highlights of the projected financial pressure in the High Needs Block in 2023-24 and subsequent years, and the specific challenges facing the Local Authority and schools. The report provides information on SEND trends particularly around Education, Health and Care Plans and exclusions.

NOTED: There are a number of challenging trends across the County but presents a national picture. Information on the following was outlined.

- a) The percentage SEN Support – School Population
- b) The percentage of children with EHCPs.

- c) The percentage of EHC plan – School Population
- d) Percentage of initial requests for assessment for an EHC plan that were refused.
- e) Assessments – Covid has challenged the LA around timeliness. Considerable improvements have now been made.
- f) Elective Home Education – upward trend over the past few years.
- g) Suspensions and permanent exclusions – rise in both primary and secondary.
- h) SEN Capital Programme - £20.5m investment programme agreed in April 2023. This is to enable 315 places to be made available.
- i) DBV in SEND programme – one of 55 LAs delivering the programme to seek to improve the outcomes for young people. Currently at the end of the second phase. A grant application will be drawn up to be sent to the DfE to transform the wider system. The NY programme has been arranged into four main areas.
- j) High Needs Block – recap and funding available. £13m accumulated deficit by the end of the financial year. The level of deficit will grow from £3m to £7m at the end of the following year.
- k) Previous Block transfers. For 2024-25 a 0.5% (c.£2.18m) block transfer to be requested.

NOTED: There is a range of factors as to why the LA has low funding and will continue to lobby the DfE for things to change.

(Q) What do Members of the Schools Forum do to alleviate these issues?

(A) All MPs had been briefed on this subject and media coverage had taken place. Lobbying to Government has also taken place. All LA networks had been informed and the Government is aware of the situation.

(Q) Thanks to the LA for the work on lobbying Government. Does it feel like there is forward momentum?

(A) There is some recognition that DfE are considering a “super-sparse” factor. The projections back in 2017 were mitigated as DfE put in funding increases at that time. The accumulated deficit would have been higher.

AGREED: To note the financial implications of the above information.

1172: 2024-25 SCHOOL FUNDING CONSULTATION

CONSIDERED: A report providing the results of the 2024/25 School Funding Consultation that ran from 22 September to 8 November 2023. There had been 26 responses including 57 schools and academies (16.81% response rate). The report requests the Schools Forum to consider:

- a) The consultation option to be endorsed in relation to the level of the Minimum Funding Guarantee;
- b) The methodology to be endorsed for use in the allocation to school budgets of any surplus funding available within the Schools Block DSG after the calculation of the school funding formula using NFF values;
- c) The capping and scaling methodology to be endorsed for use in the recovery of any funding shortfall, in excess of £500k, on the Schools Block DSG after the calculation of the school funding formula using NFF values;
- d) Endorsement of the proposed changes to the notional SEN funding formula;
- e) Approval of the Local Authority request to transfer 0.5% of the Schools Block DSG to the High Needs Block.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a) Distribution of £500k from School Block DSG Reserve.

- b) Release of £500k for core basic need Pupil Growth funding to school budgets for the 2024 / 25 financial year.
- c) Funding of de-delegated contingency budgets for SIFD, School Redundancy and Unreasonable School Expenditure.

AGREED:

- a) **Level of MFG for 2024/25 – Option 2 – 0.5%.**
- b) **Methodology to deal with any surplus funding in 2024/25 – Option 1 (AWPU).**
- c) **Methodology for the operation of Capping and Scaling to Recover any Funding Shortfall in 2024/25 – Option 2 (A higher gains cap percentage and a higher scaling back of gains percentage).**
- d) **Proposed changed to the notional SEN budget local funding formula for 2024/25 – Option 1 (Supported a lower gains cap percentage and a lower scaling back of gains percentage).**
- e) **Local Authority proposal to transfer 0.5% of funding from the Schools Block DSG to the High Needs Block for 2024/25 – Option 1 (supported).**
- f) **Communication to schools takes place to ensure they are aware of the outcome of the debate and decision.**
- g) **Communication to the DfE regarding School Forum’s regret on this decision.**
- h) **Communication from schools to the Local MP for each area.**
- i) **All communications be shared ahead of the next meeting.**

1173: SCHOOLS IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY – LA ALLOCATION

CONSIDERED: A report providing Schools Forum with an overview of the additional funding announced by the DfE to be provided to local authorities to support individual schools in financial difficulties.

NOTED:

- a) DfE announced up to £40m to support individual schools which find themselves in financial difficulty.
- b) The eligibility criteria have not yet been determined.
- c) Support for LA maintained schools.

AGREED: To note the content of the report.

1174: PUPIL GROWTH & FALLING ROLLS

CONSIDERED: A report providing an overview of the usage of the Pupil Growth and Falling Rolls Contingency Funds in the 2022-23 financial year and the likely funding requirements for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years.

The report details the level of reserves on the Pupil Growth and Falling Rolls Contingency Fund forecast for 31 March 2024. The proposed changes to the north Yorkshire Pupil Growth and Falling Rolls Funds in response to the regulation changes are detailed in the report.

NOTED: Concern was expressed about the fall in pupil numbers in areas followed by the rise in pupil numbers going forward and decisions which will need to be made to reduce staffing.

AGREED:

- a) **To note the usage and forecast usage of the Pupil Growth and Falling Rolls Contingency Funds in the financial years 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 as detailed in this report.**

b) To note the reserves position on the Pupil Growth and Falling Rolls Fund as at 31 March 2023 and the forecast reserves position for 31 March 2024 as detailed in section 5 of this report.

c) To note the DfE changes to the statutory guidance on Growth and Falling Rolls Funds for the 2024-25 financial year and to approve:

i) Not to go ahead with the discontinuation of the Falling Rolls Fund for the 2024-25 financial year at the current time.

ii) The proposed changes to the funding methodology and eligibility criteria for the Pupil Growth Fund from 1 April 2024 in order to comply with the DfE requirements for 2024-25.

d) To approve the release of the £500k that is annually requested for Pupil Growth & Falling Rolls to be allocated to school budgets for the 2024-25 financial year and any funding requirement for basic need Pupil Growth in 2024-25 to be met from the Core Pupil Growth & Falling Roll Reserve.

e) To approve the balance of the DfE Growth Funding, after the allocation of £500k to school budgets, to be allocated to the Pupil Growth - New Schools Fund.

f) To approve the Falling Rolls Fund to be discontinued for the 2024-25 financial year.

1175: 2024-25 DE-DELEGATION – CONTINGENCY BUDGETS

CONSIDERED: A report detailing the LA proposals for the de-delegated contingency budgets for the 2024-25 financial year and the estimated reserves position for these budgets. The report also provides an overview of the use of the de-delegated funding in relation to Schools in Financial Difficulty and Unreasonable School Expenditure Contingencies.

AGREED:

a) To de-delegate £7.15 per pupil in relation to Schools Causing Concern funding.

b) To utilise the reserve funding to support the Schools in Financial Difficulty element of the de-delegation contingency for the 2024/25 financial year with no de-delegation of funds for this element of the funding for next financial year.

c) To utilise the reserve funding to support the School Redundancy Costs Contribution element of the de-del contingency of the 204/25 financial year with no de-delegation of funds for this element of the funding for next financial year.

d) To endorse the LA requesting LA maintained nursery schools, special schools and PRS to approve the buyback charges based on \$7.15 per place in relation to Schools Causing Concern funding.

1176: 2024-25 DE-DELEGATION – SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

CONSIDERED: A report providing LA proposals requesting de-delegation of funding (buy back for maintained nursery schools, special schools and PRU) from school budgets in the 2024/25 financial year to fund statutory services for the provision of school improvement core activities to maintained schools.

NOTED: The Locality Boards were originally given funding for School Improvement and whether this was something for discussion.

Strategies to be considered for the whole area. School Improvement will still attend the Locality Boards and contribute.

AGREED:

- a) To approve the de-delegation of funding for the statutory service provision of school improvement core activities for the 2024-25 financial on the basis of a lump sum per school of £3,200 and a per pupil amount of £2.35.
- b) To approve the de-delegation of funding for the statutory service provision of school improvement core activities for the 2024-25 financial on the basis of a lump sum per school of £3,200 and a per pupil amount of £2.86.
- c) To support the LA requesting maintained nursery schools to approve the buyback charge based on the Primary School de-delegation methodology for the statutory service provision of school improvement core activities for the 2024-25 financial year.
- d) To support the LA requesting special schools and PRS to approve the buyback charge based on the Secondary School de-delegation methodology for statutory service provision of school improvement core activities for the 2024-25 financial year.

1177: 2024-25 – DE-DELEGATION – TRADE UNION FACILITIES (JOINT REPORT)

CONSIDERED: A report seeking approval for continued de-delegation of funds to support local trade union facilities arrangements. It follows on from reports in November 2021, May 2022, and November 2022 outlining work underway to model increased to the traded Trade Union Facilities Time charges in order to provide sufficient 'release' time for locally elected representatives. However, due to challenges in the unions securing local representatives in North Yorkshire this year, no increase to per pupil rates is being proposed for next year. This will also have the positive impact of mitigating the impact of future planned increased.

AGREED:

- a) To continue to support the principle of de-delegation of funds for maintained schools.
- b) To agree to maintain the 2023-24 per pupil charge of £3.44 on the basis that this will mitigate the impact of future increased whilst moving towards the industry standard goal of 0.2 fte release per 200 members.

1178: 2024-25 SPECIAL SCHOOL CONSULTATION

CONSIDERED: A report providing the results of the 2024/25 Special Schools and Academies Funding Consultation that ran from 29 September 2023 to 27 October 2023. The report requests the Schools Forum to comment on the consultation response received in relation to the level of the Special School Minimum Funding Guarantee.

NOTED: Following the consultation with all special schools and academies in North Yorkshire, the Forum is asked to comment on the outcome of the consultation. The views of the Schools Forum will be submitted as part of the approval request to the Executive.

AGREED: To approve the 0.5% MFG as the outcome of the consultation.

1179: WRAPAROUND CARE

CONSIDERED:

1180: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to note.

1181: FUTURE MEETINGS

Thursday 18 January 2024

Thursday 14 March 2024

Thursday 16 May 2024

Thursday 19 September 2024

Thursday 21 November 2024

Thursday 12 December 2024 (provisional)