

MINUTES OF THE TEAMS™ MEETING OF THE SUNDERLAND SCHOOLS FORUM HELD ON THURSDAY 9 MARCH 2023

The following members of the Forum were on the call

Michael Hartnack (Maintained Governor) – Chair
David Airey (Church of England Diocese)
Ann Blakey (Maintained Catholic School)
Emma Monaghan (Academy Primary)
Catherine Jones (Maintained Primary)
Lisa Woods (Maintained Primary)
Donna Walker (PRU)
Michael Little (Special Academy)
Julie Heron (Maintained Nursery) – Vice Chair
David Martyn (PVI Nurseries)
Sara Bainbridge (Maintained Primary)
Madeleine Hope (Secondary Academy)
Paula Hegarty (Secondary Academy)
Dean Juric (Secondary Academy)
James Waller (Maintained Special)
Joanne Maw (Secondary Academy)
Nancy Wakeham (Trade Unions Teacher Assoc)

In attendance

Steve Renwick (TfC Director of Finance)
Simon Marshall (TfC Director of Education)
Cllr Louise Farthing (Lead Member, Children's Services)
Deborah Orr (TFC Head of Accounting and Finance)
Nicky Ashton (Associate Member)
Leigh Morris (TfC Team Manager: Schools Finance)
Debbie Dixon (TfC Team Manager: Management Accounting)
John Hope (TfC Technical Accountant: Education Funding)
Stephen Colvin (TFC Apprentice Accountant) (observer)
Emma Nolan (TFC Schools Finance Team)
Jill Wilson (TFC Schools Finance Team)
Pam Robertson (TFC Strategic SEND Lead)
Keith Miles (Sunderland City Council)
Graham Hoban (Sunderland City Council)
Sara Chapman (observer)
Gordon Brown

Apologies

Paul S Wilson (Asst Director of Finance, SCC)
Andy Lewis (Trade Unions Teacher Assoc)
Phil Smith (Secondary Academy)
Cllr John Price (Councillor, Sunderland City Council) (observer)

23/13	<p>Introductions and Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received as noted above.</p>	
23/14	<p>Declaration of Interest</p> <p>There were the following declarations of Interest:</p> <p>MH informed members that he would declare an interest in a subject if it affected his role as an elected Councillor.</p>	
23/15	<p>Minutes of Last Meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the previous Teams™ meeting held on 12 January 2023 were agreed as a true record.</p> <p>Mrs Ashton informed the meeting that she had attended the last meeting but had been missed off the attendee list.</p>	
23/16	<p>Matters Arising/Action Log</p> <p><u>23/05 Matters Arising/Action Log</u></p> <p>The Chair asked if old actions could still be made visible.</p>	SGR
23/17	<p>Short life Working Groups - Feedback</p> <p>Nothing to report</p>	
23/18	<p>Overview of the Challenges Around School Meal Provision and the Resulting Cost Pressures Faced by Schools</p> <p>KM gave a presentation around the challenges and pressures faced by schools for the cost of providing School Meals. A copy of the presentation is attached</p> <div data-bbox="395 1413 453 1473" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>oce22843 Schools Forum School Meals</p> <p>The issue was discussed at length with KM being asked if he could share details as to an overview of how much individual schools pay/subsidise school meals and he agreed to include neighbouring authorities.</p> <p>Also discussed was the issue of subsidising very small schools, as defined by DfE criteria, which the Forum did last year, Evolve system and transport.</p> <p>It was decided that a SLWG should be set up to investigate the issues raised. SM will send out a Teams invite to members so that if they wish to partake, they can.</p>	<p>KM</p> <p>SM</p>

	The Chair thanked KM and his colleague for the presentation.	
23/19	<p>Dedicated Schools Grant Update & Projected Outturn 2022/23</p> <p>A report was circulated to members. SGR reported that the current in-year deficit forecast is £1.5 Million added to the £3million B/fwd deficit giving a cumulative deficit of £4.5Million. Although the deficit looks big it must be noted that the current deficit is only1.5% of the annual DSG. Also of note is that Sunderland is better placed with the deficit than other areas in the region.</p> <p>Also discussed was the addition cost for non-Maintained/Independent schools. SM reported that it is intended to visit these schools and Dip Sample to ensure the school is providing what it says it is and Sunderland is getting best value.</p> <p>The Recommendations contained within the Report were approved</p>	
23/20	<p>Early Years Funding Update 2023/24</p> <p>Members were reminded that Early Years has been funded through the National Funding Formula since 2017 and is based on lagged Census data.</p> <p>SGR pointed out that the ‘rules of Engagement’ at Para 3 of the report give little latitude for discretion. 75% of Schools surveyed/consulted agreed with the approved methodology.</p> <p>SGR highlighted the increases in rates for 3 and 4 year olds.</p> <p>The Recommendations contained within the Report were approved</p>	
23/21	<p>High Needs Block Additional Funding for 2023/24</p> <p>A report was circulated to members and SGR thanked DD for her efforts in distilling a well-structured paper and ML for his advice during the process. SGR/DD explained to members that £1.8million of additional non-recurrent funding required distributing to schools (with cognisance of growing demand and EHCP numbers) and the paper gave three options for distribution. The report also provided 5 options wherewith to recognise inflation for top-ups and commissioned places, he noted that this would be a recurrent uplift.</p> <p>The report was discussed at length with topics of equity, transparency, timeliness (including of Forum papers) and mainstreaming for inclusivity all covered.</p>	

	<p>On inclusivity, KR reported that the first Inclusive Forum had recently taken place and was well attended and very constructive.</p> <p>JW reported that on the 19 May 2023 that he would be taking every school through the process of ensuring schools are ready to deal with children who are not yet ready for maintained schooling. Members were asked to take this back to there representative groups to ensure as many schools sign up to the day as possible.</p> <p>After further discussions members were asked two questions, posed by SGR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In regards to the £1.8m non recurrent additional HNB funding, and in the light of the detailed discussion just held, would Forum members be minded to support Option 1 in the paper? ▪ In regards to the recurrent uplifting of top-ups and commissioned places, again, in the light of the detailed discussion just held, would Forum Members again be minded to support Option 1 in the paper? <p>Forum affirmed support for both Option 1s from the report.</p>	All
23/22	<p>Schools Forum Membership Report</p> <p>A report was circulated and the Chair informed members that it was imperative to get the right representation from settings and geographically. There have been a lot of changes and a new structure needs to be agreed. To enable this to happen it was agreed that this should go back to representative groups to be discussed and feed back should be directed to KR.</p>	KR
23/23	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p><u>Business Rates – Nursery Heads Query</u></p> <p>JH asked if there was anything that could be done regarding Business rates for Nursery Schools. SGR agreed that the Finance team would investigate the issue and revert.</p> <p><u>Birth Rates</u></p> <p>SM reported that the NHS are now sharing birth rate data which will have an impact on early years schooling in coming years. AR has been asked to start planning for this and has been asked to bring a report to the next meeting</p> <p><u>Hetton Site</u></p> <p>DW reported that the new site at Hetton scheduled to open from September 2023 will not now open until January 2024.</p>	<p>SGR/Finance Team</p> <p>SM/AR</p>

	The funding for the additional 24 places allocated will now go back into the HNB.	
23/12	Date and Time of Next Meeting Thursday 25 May 2023. This will be a Teams meeting though MH considering an in-person approach.	