

To all members of the Sunderland Schools Forum

Together for Children
Sunderland
City Hall – Level 2
Plater Way
Sunderland
SR1 3AA

Date: 7th October 2025
Our TFC-SF/ZW

Dear Colleague

SUNDERLAND SCHOOLS FORUM

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Schools Forum, scheduled for Thursday 16th October 2025 – **kindly note SSF members are invited to attend at 8.30 am and Leaders from 8.45 am.**

The meeting will be held virtually, and a Teams appointment has been circulated.

AGENDA

| | | |
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| 25/47 | <p><u>Review of Effectiveness of the Sunderland Schools Forum (SSF)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Membership Review (appendix 1) - Terms of Reference (appendix 2- for information) | |
| 25/48 | <p>Welcome, Introductions and Apologies</p> <p>SSF Vacancies/Appointment Proposals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 x Academies Primary - 2 x Academy Secondary and All Through - 1 x Roman Catholic Diocese - 1 x Maintained Faith School Headteacher/Representative <p><i>Lindsay Robertson will attend to represent North Primary Headteachers as a replacement for Mrs Lisa Wood</i></p> <p>Apologies for absence submitted by Mr D Amos, Mr J Lines, Mrs J Maw and Mrs K Richardson.</p> | |
| 25/49 | <p>Declarations of Interest</p> | |
| 25/41 | <p>Minutes of Previous Meeting</p> <p>School Forum meeting, held on 19th September 2025 (attached) (appendix 3)</p> | |
| 25/42 | <p>Matters Arising from the Minutes/Agreed Actions</p> <p>Action Log, from 19th September 2025 (appendix 4)</p> | |
| 25/43 | <p>Feedback from Short Life Working Groups/Sub Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit and Assurance Sub-Group | |

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|--------------|--|-----------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Assurance Processes for Service Providers • DBV Funding: High Needs Block Business Plan | |
| 25/44 | Presentations: | |
| 25/45 | Reports for Discussion and Decision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Needs Block Commissioned Places (report to follow) | PR and RL |
| 25/46 | Any Other Business | |
| 25/47 | Date and Time of Next Meeting 20 th November 2025 | |

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully



Zena Wilkinson
Team Leader
Governor Support Team
Together for Children
Tel: 07770 684760
E Mail: zena.wilkinson@togetherforchildren.org.uk

SCHOOLS FORUMS MEMBERSHIP – JULY 2025

| | | | | <u>VOTING RIGHTS</u> | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|---------------------------------|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| SCHOOL MEMBERS | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. | Maintained Primary School Headteacher (Mandatory) | | | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| | Maintained Primary Schools South Headteacher | Catherine Jones – Headteacher | Thorney Close Primary School | <p>No voting rights: the views of the individual Primary Headteacher Clusters Groups will be put forward by the Maintained Primary Schools representative.</p> <p>In the event of the Maintained Primary School Teacher absence a Deputy will be appointed to share the views of the individual Primary Headteacher Cluster Groups.</p> | | | | |
| | Maintained Primary Schools North Headteacher | Lindsay Robertson - Headteacher | Willow Wood Primary School | | | | | |
| | Maintained Primary Schools Washington Headteacher | Sara Bainbridge - Headteacher | Barmston Village Primary School | | | | | |
| | Maintained Primary Schools Hetton/Houghton Headteacher | Nicola Hill - Headteacher | Hetton Primary | | | | | |
| 2. | Maintained Special School Teacher (Mandatory) | James Waller – Headteacher: CHAIR | Sunningdale School | | | | | |
| 3. | Maintained Nursery Headteacher (Mandatory) | Ailsa Higgins - Headteacher | Hetton Lyons/ Usworth | Y | Y | | Y | Y |
| 4. | Maintained Pupil Referral Service Headteacher (Mandatory) | Donna Walker - Headteacher | Link School | Y | Y | | Y | Y |
| 5. | Maintained Faith School Headteacher/Representative | Vacancy | | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 6. | Maintained Sector School Governor | Michael Hartnack - Governor | Grange Park Primary School | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 7. | Academy Primary, Infants and Junior | Emma Jarvis – Headteacher (Hetton/Houghton) | Dubmire Primary | | Y | | Y | Y |

SCHOOLS FORUMS MEMBERSHIP – JULY 2025

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|-----|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--|---|--|---|---|
| 8 | Academy Primary, Infants and Junior | Audrey Bolam – Headteacher (Washington) | Oxclos e Primary | | Y | | Y | Y |
| 9. | Academy Primary, Infants and Junior | John Lines – Headteacher (Washington) | Columbia Academy | | Y | | Y | Y |
| 10. | Academy Primary, Infants and Junior | Lauren Reeves – COO (South) | Vision Learning Trust (Hillview | | Y | | Y | Y |
| 11. | Academy Primary, Infants and Junior | Courtney Snowball – Business Manager | Diamond Hall Infant School | | Y | | Y | Y |
| 12. | Academy Primary, Infants and Junior | Mandy Henderson - SBM | Ryhope Infant Academy | | Y | | Y | Y |
| 13. | Academy Primary, Infants and Junior | Vacant | | | Y | | Y | Y |
| 14. | Academy Primary, Infants and Junior | Vacant | | | Y | | Y | Y |
| 15. | Academy Secondary and All Through | David Amos | Academy 360 | | Y | | | Y |
| 16. | Academy Secondary and All Through | Madeline Hope – Director of Finance | Bishop Chadwick Education Trust | | Y | | | Y |
| 17. | Academy Secondary and All Through | Vacant | | | Y | | | Y |
| 18. | Academy Secondary and All Through | Vacant | | | Y | | | Y |
| 19. | Academy Secondary and All Through | Joanne Maw – Chief Executive officer | Aspire Learning Trust | | Y | | | Y |
| 20. | Academy Secondary and All Through | Phil Smith – Chief Finance Officer | Castleview Academy | | Y | | | Y |
| 21. | Academy Secondary and All Through | Vicki Pinkney - Headteacher | Hetton Academ y | | Y | | | Y |

SCHOOLS FORUMS MEMBERSHIP – JULY 2025

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| 22. | Academy Secondary and All Through | Colin Devlin – VICE CHAIR | Kepier Academy | | Y | | | Y |
| 23. | Academy Special (Mandatory) | Mick Little – Chief Operations Manager | Ascent | | Y | | | Y |

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| 4. | Maintained Pupil Referral Service Headteacher (Mandatory) | Donna Walker - Headteacher | Link School | Y | Y | | Y | Y |
| 5. | Maintained Faith School Headteacher/Representative | Vacancy | | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 6. | Maintained Sector School Governor | Michael Hartnack - Governor | Grange Park Primary School | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 7. | Academy Primary, Infants and Junior | Emma Jarvis – Headteacher (Hetton/Houghton) | Dubmire Primary | | Y | | Y | Y |
| 8 | Academy Primary, Infants and Junior | Audrey Bolam – Headteacher (Washington) | Oxclose Primary | | Y | | Y | Y |

SCHOOLS FORUMS MEMBERSHIP – JULY 2025

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|---|--|---|---|
| 9. | Academy Primary, Infants and Junior | John Lines – Headteacher (Washington) | Columbia Academy | | Y | | Y | Y |
| 10. | Academy Primary, Infants and Junior | Lauren Reeves – COO (South) | Vision Learning Trust (Hillview) | | Y | | Y | Y |
| 11. | Academy Primary, Infants and Junior | Courtney Snowball – Business Manager | Diamond Hall Infant School | | Y | | Y | Y |
| 12. | Academy Primary, Infants and Junior | Mandy Henderson - SBM | Ryhope Infant Academy | | Y | | Y | Y |
| 13. | Academy Primary, Infants and Junior | Vacant | | | Y | | Y | Y |
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| 16. | Academy Secondary and All Through | Madeline Hope – Director of Finance | Bishop Chadwick Education Trust | | Y | | | Y |
| 17. | Academy Secondary and All Through | Vacant | | | Y | | | Y |
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| 20. | Academy Secondary and All Through | Phil Smith – Chief Finance Officer | Castleview Academy | | Y | | | Y |
| 21. | Academy Secondary and All Through | Vicki Pinkney - Headteacher | Hetton Academy | | Y | | | Y |
| 22. | Academy Secondary and All Through | Colin Devlin – VICE CHAIR | Kepier Academy | | Y | | | Y |
| 23. | Academy Special (Mandatory) | Mick Little – Chief Operations Manager | Ascent | | Y | | | Y |

| NON SCHOOL MEMBERS | | | | | | | | |
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| 24. | Private, Voluntary & Independent Nurseries | David Martin | Chilton Moor Nursery | | ** | | Y | Y |
| 25. | Private, Voluntary & Independent Nurseries | Michelle Barr, Nursery owner and Manger | Buttons Nursery Washington | | ** | | Y | y |
| 26. | Post 16 Provision | Vikki Morton | Sunderland College | | | | | Y |
| 27. | Teacher Associations | Andy Lewis | | | | | | Y |
| 28. | Roman Catholic Diocese | Vacant | | | | | | Y |
| 29. | Church of England Diocese | Sarah Armstrong | Benedict Biscop | | | | | Y |
| TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN OFFICERS & COUNCILLORS | | | | | | | | |
| | Head of Accounting & Finance | Deborah Orr | | | | | | |
| | Director of Education | Kim Richardson | | | | | | |
| | Strategic Service Lead – Education | | | | | | | |
| | Lead Member Children’s Services | Cllr M Butler | | | | | | |
| | Lead Member Children’s Services Deputy – No longer applicable | | | | | | | |
| | Deputy s.151 Officer | Claire Emmerson | | | | | | |
| MEMBERSHIP VOTING RIGHTS | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Scheme for Financing Schools (Maintained) | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Schools Block Funding Formula | | | | | | | |
| 3. | De-delegation maintained schools | | | | | | | |
| 4. | Early Years Single Funding Formula | | | | | | | |
| 5. | All other School Forum Decisions | | a. Central expenditure relating to schools block b. Deficits on central expenditure to be funded from following year’s DSG. c. Voting procedures | | | | | |

SUNDERLAND SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday 18th September 2025 at 8.30 am

School Forum Member Attendance

Voting

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| Colin Devlin (CD) (Vice Chair and Chair for the meeting) | Academy Secondary and All Through |
| Sarah Armstrong (SA) | Church of England Diocese |
| Michelle Barr (MB) | Private, Voluntary & Independent Nurseries |
| Audrey Bolam (AB) | Academy Primary, Infant and Junior |
| Michael Hartnack (MH) | Maintained Primary – Governor |
| Ailsa Higgins (AH) | Maintained Nursery |
| Madeline Hope (MHo) | Academy Secondary and All Through |
| Emma Jarvis (EJ) | Academy Primary, Infant and Junior |
| Catherine Jones (CJ) | Maintained Primary School |
| Andy Lewis (AL) | Teacher Association |
| John Lines (JL) | Academy Primary, Infants and Junior |
| Michael Little (ML) | Academy Special |
| David Martyn (DM) | Private, Voluntary & Independent Nurseries |
| Vicky Pinkney (VP) | Academy Secondary and All Through |
| Lauren Reeves (LR) | Academy Primary, Infant and Junior |
| Phil Smith (PS) | Academy Secondary and All Through |
| Courtney Snowball (CS) | Academy Primary, Infant and Junior |
| Donna Walker (CG) | Maintained Pupil Referral Services |

Non-Voting

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| Sarah Bainbridge (SB) | Maintained Primary School |
| Lisa Wood (LW) | Maintained Primary School |
| Nicola Hill (NH) | Maintained Primary School |

Together for Children Officers and Councillors

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| Cllr J Butler (JB) | Lead Member, Children’s Services |
| Richard Cullen (RC) | TfC Strategic, School Improvement |
| Debra Dixon (DD) | TfC Team Manager, Management Accounting Team |
| Claire Emmerson (CE) | Assistant Director of Finance |
| John Hope (JH) | TfC Technical Accountant Education Funding |
| Emma Leech (EL) | TfC Finance Business Partner |
| Ronnie Lynn (RL) | TfC Internal Strategic Lead, Education |
| Leigh Morris (LM) | TfC Team Manager, School Finance |
| Emma Nolan | TfC Finance Business Partner |
| Deborah Orr (DO) | TfC Head of Accounting and Finance |
| Kim Richardson (KR) | TfC Director of Education |
| Alan Rowan (AR) | TfC Capital Sufficiency Lead |
| Zena Wilkinson | Schools Forum Clerk |

| | | Agreed Action |
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| 25/36 | <u>Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair</u> | |
| | Nominations/expressions of interest were invited for the position of Chair. The Clerk advised that JW had indicated that he would | |

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| | <p>be happy to serve a further term of office and SSF members accepted the expression of interest.</p> <p>Nominations/expressions of interest were invited for the position of Vice Chair. SSF members nominated CD and CD accepted the nomination.</p> <p>SSF Members RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To appoint JW as Chair, for a period of 1 year. - To appoint CD as Vice Chair, for a period of 1 year. | |
| 25/37 | <p><u>Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>The Vice Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>The Clerk advised that apologies for absence had been submitted by JW and PS.</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed a quorum was present and the meeting could proceed to business.</p> <p>The Clerk reported the following vacancies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 x Academy Primary, Infants and Junior representatives • 2 x Academy Secondary and All Through • 1 x Roman Catholic Diocese • 1 x Maintained Faith School Headteacher/Representative <p>CS and CE were welcomed to their first School Forum meeting. KR explained that CE was the Assistant Director of Finance for Sunderland City Council (SCC) and provided an overview of her role. Members were advised that CE was in attendance as an observer.</p> <p>CD queried what processes were being implemented to detail the vacancies on the Sunderland School Forum (SSF), and the Clerk confirmed this information was detailed within Headteacher Cluster meetings. DW confirmed that she would raise the Academy Secondary and All Through vacancies at the next Secondary Headteacher meeting.</p> | DW |
| 25/38 | <p><u>Review of Effectiveness of the Sunderland Schools Forum</u></p> <p>CD advised that he had received a request to defer this item of business, explaining that it would be placed on the agenda for the next meeting and SSF members will be invited to attend at 8.30 am to consider this business and Leaders would be invited to join the meeting at 8.45.</p> <p>SSF Members RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To agree to defer this item of business until the next meeting. | Clerk |

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| 25/39 | <p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>MH advised that as an elected Councillor he would raise declarations throughout the meeting, if appropriate. CE declared an interest in line with her position as Assistant Director of Finance.</p> <p>SSF members NOTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The declarations of interest in relation to the business to be considered. - Declarations could be made throughout the meeting, if appropriate. | |
| 25/40 | <p><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u></p> <p>SSF members RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To accept the minutes of the Sunderland Schools Forum (SSF) held on 3rd July 2025 as a true record. | |
| 25/41 | <p><u>Matters Arising from the Minutes/Agreed Actions</u></p> <p>Matters Arising from the Minutes:</p> <p>There were no matters arising from the minutes.</p> <p>Members confirmed they had received a copy of the Action Log prior to the meeting.</p> <p>25/24 Reports for Discussion SSF members noted PR was in attendance to provide detailed of the EY Block Underspend.</p> <p>25/32 Matters Arising from the Meeting/Agreed Actions KR advised that Mr Robert Bell had presented information at the Inclusion Forum, which detailed the tripartite work currently being undertaken. KR explained that Mr Bell had invited schools to contact him if they had any pupils they believed may benefit from the interventions available. KR advised SSF members that a report would be presented once data was available, explaining that this was a 6 month pilot.</p> <p>25/35 Reports for Discussion KR advised that as the Audit and Assurance Sub Group had been formed this needed to be self-serving and recommended the Group identified a Chair. KR explained that it would be up to members of the Audit and Assurance Sub Group to the meeting frequency.</p> <p>The Clerk agreed to confirm the agreed membership of the meeting.</p> | Clerk (completed) |
| 25/42 | <p><u>Feedback from Short Life Working Groups</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion <p>RL explained that an Inclusion Conference was held prior to the summer holidays and stated that a lot of good proposals were put</p> | |

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| | <p>forward. RL stated that the Conference was followed by the Secondary Headteacher Forum, which also focused on inclusion.</p> <p>RL informed SSF members that a number of tasks were identified from the conferences/forums, and these would be taken forward and details would be reported back to the appropriate bodies in due course. RL exemplified that one of the tasks identified was maximising the Behaviour and Attendance Services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Assurance Processes for Service Providers <p>PR advised SSF members that work was currently being undertaken, in conjunction with colleagues from Access and Inclusion and Commissioning and a framework for quality assurance was being drafted for service providers, including independent service providers. PR explained that the framework was in the process of being updated in line with the Department for Education (DfE) framework guidance, to ensure compliance.</p> <p>PR informed SSF members that a number of quality assurance visits had already been undertaken, under the framework, exemplifying these had been completed at New Beginnings, NUDGE, EBRC, Springboard and Education North East.</p> <p>PR stated that work was also being undertaken to understand the pupil cohort that was moving into the alternative provisions.</p> <p>PR assured SSF members that she was confident TfC were in a good place in relation to quality assurance processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering Better Value (DBV) Funding: Probity <p>PR explained that the DBV initiative ended on 31st March 2025, but TfC had managed to extend the posts appointed to within the process, until the end of the Autumn Term.</p> <p>PR stated that she believed what was important was the deficit plan in relation to the High Needs Block (HNB).</p> <p>CD queried if the deficit plan could be considered by the Audit and Assurance Sub Group, or would this need to be finalised. PR explained that this was a jointly produced document, which was in the process of being updated, but stated that she believed it would be relevant to share.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit and Assurance Sub Group <p>SSF members confirmed this item of business had been considered within the meeting.</p> | PR |
| 25/43 | <p><u>Presentations</u></p> <p>SSF Members NOTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no presentations to be presented within the meeting. | |

Reports for Discussion and Decision

- SEN Resourced Provision Gap Funding 2025/26

SSF members confirmed they had received a copy of the following report prior to the meeting for consideration:

- SEN Resourced Provisions Gap Funding 2025/26

SSF members welcomed AR to the meeting.

AR explained that the report presented detailed proposed funding models for 2025/26, following the agreed proposal to remove the financial implications between commissioning special educational needs places, at special schools, and commissioning special educational needs places at a resourced unit. AR advised that there had been some disparity in funding and the proposal enabled this to be levelled out. AR explained that to reduce the disparity the SSF had agreed to implement gap funding.

AR informed SSF members that when first implemented an ambitious plan was put in place and it was acknowledged that funding would not be linear, as it would be difficult to pinpoint how long gap funding would need to be paid.

AR highlighted that at a previous meeting the SSF had agreed to fund alternative placements at Hudson Road Primary School and Mill Hill Primary School. AR explained that the proposal was to continue to meet the funding costs of the resources, for the full placement numbers.

AR advised SSF members that if the funding was not utilised this would be reimbursed to the Dedicated School Grant (DSG) budget.

Cllr Butler withdrew from the meeting.

AR brought SSF members attention to Section 3 (Units Opened in 2024/25 and Ongoing Financial Requirements), sharing that the expectation was for all placements to be filled.

AR explained that an allocation of £0.202m had been agreed (for 32 places) and to date £0.052m of the funding had been utilised for the resources at Hudson Road Primary School and Mill Hill Primary School and the funding requirement for remaining places was estimated to be £0.072m but, if there were any vacancies following the October 2025 census there would be an ongoing requirement to fund any surplus placements in the following financial year.

AR brought SSF members attention to Section 4 (New Provisions and New Financial Requirements 2025/26) advising that Capital Development had commenced to deliver two more Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) resource provisions within the City: a provision at Hetton Lyons Primary School (for 16 places for primary aged pupils in the Coalfields area) and a provision at Redby Primary School (for 16 places in the North of Sunderland).

AR reported that the financial requirement to support the two new provisions was projected to be £0.128k.

AR reported that the funding being requested was based on current funding rates and, should this be subject to change, the SSF would be updated. AR advised that the financial requirement for 2025/26 was £0.150m and for 2026/27 £0.53m.

PR stated that in terms of filling the placements this had gone as expected, sharing that Mill Hill Primary School and Hudson Road Primary School were now full and it was anticipated that the new provisions would be filled across the academic year.

SSF members were advised that further proposals may be presented at a later date for 2026/27.

SSF members were invited to vote on the proposals put forward.

SSF Members **RESOLVED:**

- To approval the financial allocation, as detailed within the report.
- Further approvals would be sought annually, with any additional funding requests being subject to further approval.
- Any changes to the process, resulting from a deviation from the current funding model, would be subject to further approval from the SSF.

- Early Years Block Inclusion Underspend

SSF members welcomed PR to the meeting.

PR presented the following presentation:

- EY Underspend

PR explained that the Early Years Inclusion Funding was linked to the SEN ranges: 20% of pupils were assessed as Range 3; 66% as Range 4 and 14% as Range 5. PR explained that the criteria for the top level of funding was the need to identify 3 of 5 broad need areas.

PR advised SSF members that work had been undertaken on looking at applications, in terms of the Ranges, and this data had been used to inform how to go forward. PR explained that if the identified areas for top level funding was revised to 2 broad need areas the percentage of Range 5 funding applications would increase to 33%.

PR reported that in terms of the Early Years Block Inclusion funding there was an overspend in 2023/24, of £148,061 and an underspend in 2024/25, of £34,714.

PR advised that in terms of 2025/26, £113,00 had been allocated to date, based on an overall allocation of £560,000 from the revised criteria. PR stated that the increased pay range for Range 5 remained the same, but the processes implemented had made it easier for settings to access this funding, as the criteria had been reduced to 2 broad needs within the Ranges.

PR assured SSF members that a consultation process, with Nursery Headteachers, had been implemented before any changes were implemented.

SSF Members **RESOLVED:**

- To note and accept the EY Block Inclusion Underspend information, as presented.
- Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Update and Projected Outturn 2025/26

SSF members confirmed they had received a copy of the following report prior to the meeting:

- Dedicated Schools Grant Update and Projected Outturn 2025/26

DD advised SSF members that the High Needs Block (HNB) expenditure had been reviewed over the Summer period and stated that she was confident the financial position detailed within the report was accurate.

DD reported that the DSG in year forecast outturn position was a projected deficit of £9,125,666; the DSG deficit balance brought forward from 2024/25 was £16,048,724, which had now decreased by £155,170 for 2024/25 financial year, following the Early Years Pupil number adjustment. DD reported that the amended DSG Reserve Balance, as of 31st March 2025, was £15,893,554.

DD advised SSF members that the overall projected deficit on the DSG Reserve, as at 31st March 2026, was estimated to be £25,019,220.

DD informed SSF members that she was working closely with SCC on mitigating the spend and future spending, sharing that an exercise had just been completed working with regional local authorities and it was hoped a response would be received which would identify Sunderland's position against other local authorities.

DD brought SSF members to Section 3.1 explaining that this detailed the HNB pressures for 2025/26, which was in line with the projections.

DD explained that Section 3.2 detailed the DBV mitigations planned to help address the deficit projections.

CD questioned whether Sunderland's position in comparison to other regional authorities mattered, for example would this provide any confirmation of protection or was there any sign from Government that there would be any mitigations to address the projected deficits. DD advised that she believed an update would be received in the near future but at the current time she was unaware of any proposals being put forward to mitigate the deficits. DD stated that in relation to providing comparative information she believed this could provide some comfort.

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| | <p>PR advised SSF members that she had attended the Regional ADS SEND Network and the DfE representative had confirmed that they had no details to share but there were plans to appoint a Regional Finance Advisor for HNB. PR stated that she believed there would be an expectation for local authorities to provide robust plans around their HNB deficits.</p> <p>SSF Members RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To note the content of the report. - To seek updates on the 2025/26 projected outturn position at the January 2026 and March 2026 SSF meetings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Budget Planning Framework 2026/27 – De-Delegation of Trade Union Facilities Time</u> <p>JH advised members that a report would be presented, in the near future, on the De-Delegation of Trade Union Facilities time and, due to comments and concerns raised in 2024, he believed it would be beneficial for this to be discussed within Headteacher cluster meetings. JH stated that he was uncertain of the exact cost but believed it may be in the region of £3.50 per pupil. JH highlighted that this related to maintained primary schools only (excluding nursery and special schools).</p> <p>MH noted that the decision of whether or not to implement de-delegation arrangements was for maintained schools only and academies could take this forward as a service level agreement. MH questioned if there was any legal reasons why trade union facility time couldn't be offered as a service level agreement for all schools. JH advised that if the decision of the SSF was not to implement a de-delegation of trade union facility time then it could be offered as a service level agreement, in line with academies.</p> <p>AL provided an overview of the consequences if the de-delegation of trade union facility time was not agreed, explaining that this would mean trade union representatives would only be available outside of normal working time. AL explained that under the current release framework departments were financially compensated for trade union representatives absence. AL stated that a further option would be for case workers to take cases forward, but he highlighted that as there were only 3 case workers across the region this would result in delays to resolving issues.</p> <p>AL stated that he believed it was false economy for schools to consider not to approve the de-delegation of trade union facility time, highlighting that overall, it only equated to a small cost to primary schools.</p> <p>AL stated that he was happy to attend any Headteacher cluster group forum and would liaise with the Clerk.</p> <p>LM advised SSF members that the de-delegation process only applied to maintained primary schools and, as part of the SSF scheme of financial regulations, this must be considered annually.</p> | <p>AL/Clerk</p> |
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| | <p>LM explained that a service level agreement process was implemented historically and those schools who needed trade union support were invoiced.</p> <p>LM advised the meeting that Finance Officers were willing to attend Headteacher cluster meetings to explain the content of any reports being presented to SSF.</p> <p>DW advised that she was aware a proposal to transfer 0.5% of the SB funding to the HNB would be put forward in the near future. DW explained that she was aware Headteachers within multi academy trusts may not be able to make a decision on this and she had extended an open invitation for the appropriate representative, from multi academy trusts, to attend the Secondary Headteacher meeting in order that a decision could be made without delay.</p> <p>SSF Members RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To note the information presented. | |
| 25/45 | <p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p><u>Changes to the School Admission Co-Ordination Scheme</u></p> <p>AR explained that he had circulated information to schools about proposed changes to the School Admission Co-Ordination Scheme and stated that he would recirculate the information. AR explained that this was the consultation stage of proposal to change the school admission criteria, advising that the changes included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To review the travelling distances for schools to a straight line (rather than using the shortest route). <p>AR stated that he believed academies used a straight line to calculate the distances.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Proposals to drive up the Early Years Pupil Premium uptake, if eligible, and these would be prioritised. <p>AR stated that Early Years Pupil Premium would like it if schools opted for this proposal and stated that he would try to get the information recirculated via the Comms e mail.</p> | AR |
| 25/46 | <p><u>Date and Time of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>16th October 2025* 20th November 2025 11th December 2025* 15th January 2026 19th February 2026* 12th March 2026 21st May 2026 9th July 2026</p> <p>*These meetings may be cancelled dependent on business need. Meeting time 8.30 am - Meetings will be held virtually</p> | |

Schools Forum Action Log

| Date of Meeting | Agenda No | Request | Action | Responsible | Date of Completion | Remarks |
|-----------------|-----------|--|---|-------------|--------------------|---|
| 18/09/2025 | 25/36 | Welcome and Introductions | DW to invite nominations to join the School Forum at the next Secondary HT meeting. | DW | | |
| 18/09/2025 | 25/38 | Review of Effectiveness of the SSSF | Action deferred until the October meeting | Clerk | | |
| 18/09/2025 | 25/42 | Feedback from Short Life Working Groups | DBV Funding - PR to share copies of the deficit plan, when completed, to members of the Audit and Assurance Sub Group | PR | | |
| 18/09/2025 | 25/44 | Reports for Discussion and Decision - Budget Planning Framework 2026/27 - De-delegation of Trade Union Facilities Time | AL's offer to attend Primary Headteacher cluster meetings to be raised with Area Chairs. | ZW | | E mail circulated 25/9/25 - awaiting response |
| 18/09/2025 | 25/46 | Any Other Business | AR to re-circulate the proposals to change the School Admissions Co-Ordinator Scheme. | AR | | |