

## SCHOOLS MANAGEMENT FORUM

### MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MICROSOFT TEAMS MEETING HELD ON:

**WEDNESDAY 18 JANUARY 2023 AT 9:15AM**

#### PRESENT:

<b>Maintained Primary School Representatives</b>	
Julia Rodwell	Park End Primary School
Adam Cooper	Abingdon Primary School
Beverley Hewitt-Best	Newham Bridge Primary School
<b>Primary Academy Representative</b>	
Katy Hall	Viewley Hill Academy
Heather Adams (in part)	Our Children 1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Maintained School Governor Representative</b>	
Joanne Smith	Breckon Hill Primary School
<b>Maintained Special School Representative</b>	
Susan Robinson	Priory Woods School
Pippa Irwin (in part)	Beverley School
<b>PRU Representatives</b>	
Helen Steele (Vice-Chair)	Caldicotes Primary Academy
Sarah Lymer	The Legacy Learning Trust
Emma Watson (in part)	The Avenue Primary School
Jackie Walsh	Green Lane Primary Academy
<b>Secondary Academy Representatives</b>	
Simon Reader	Kings Academy
Michael Laidler	Acklam Grange School
Mary Brindle	Endeavour Academies Trust
Andy Rodgers	Trinity College
Helen Dalby	Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust
<b>Local Authority Officers</b>	
Rob Brown	Director of Education, Prevention & Partnerships
Karen Smith	Head of Achievement
Trevor Dunn	Head of Access to Education
Charlotte Hobson	Family Information Service
Craig Povey	Finance Business Partner
Judi Libbey	Head of Resources
<b>Also Present</b>	
Helen Bone	James Cook Learning Trust, Observer
Brendan Fox	School Support Finance Services, Observer
Lisa Bostock	Berwick Hills Primary, Observer
Jackie Lowe	Viewley Hill Academy, Observer
Katy Hall	Beverley School, Observer
Maxine Bates	Breckon Hill Primary, Observer
Louise Davies	Linthorpe Primary, Observer
Nicola Russell	Pallister Park Primary, Observer
Nick Flint	The Legacy Learning Trust, Observer
Amy Douglas	Governance Professional (Redcar and Cleveland BC)
<p><i>In the temporary absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair Helen Steele took the Chair for today's meeting.</i></p> <p><i>To facilitate discussion, the published agenda was reorganised in the following way:</i></p>	

<b>5.</b>	<b>MEMBERSHIP UPDATE</b>
5.1	The Chair advised members of the vacancy on Schools Management Forum (SMF) for a special school representative. Pippa Irwin had put her name forward for consideration in advance of the meeting. Members given an opportunity to share further names for consideration, but no further names were forthcoming.
5.2	RESOLVED that Pippa Irwin be appointed special school representative for the remainder of the term of office, subject to her acceptance.
<b>1.</b>	<b>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</b>
1.1	The Chair welcomed the new Clerk to SMF to the meeting, and a round of introductions took place.  <i>Pippa Irwin joined the meeting.</i>
1.2	Pippa Irwin was informed of, and confirmed acceptance of, her appointment to the position of special school representative.
<b>2.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>
2.1	Apologies had been submitted in advance of the meeting from David Dawes, Amy Young and James Glover.
2.2	RESOLVED to consent to the absence of the above-named members of SMF.
<b>3.</b>	<b>NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>
	No items were declared for discussion under Any Other Business.
<b>4.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA</b>
4.1	SMF members were given the opportunity to declare any pecuniary interests or other conflicts of interest relating to items on the agenda for the current meeting.
4.2	No such declarations were made on this occasion.
<b>5.</b>	<b>MEMBERSHIP UPDATE</b>
	This item had been considered at the start of the meeting and there were no further points of discussion.
<b>6.</b>	<b>MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2022</b>
6.1	It had not been possible to obtain the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2022. The action plan had been circulated prior to the meeting for information and review.  <i>Heather Adams joined the meeting.</i>
6.2	Matters Arising from the Action Plan:
6.2.1	<u>Matter Arising from Item 5 – Admission Appeals</u>  Trevor Dunn shared an update regarding the local authority providing admission appeals for maintained schools. Work was ongoing with colleagues in finance to ensure compliance. Maintained schools had a sum of money subtracted from their budgets which was used to cover the cost of admission appeals. As academies were directly funded, they did not involve the local authority in their appeal processes. It did not appear that there were any other services that the local authority was funding for maintained schools that would disadvantage academies.

6.2.2	Members noted that appeals were facilitated by Hartlepool Borough Council. There had been some challenges around their capacity to handle the volume of appeals leading to some members using private providers for admission appeals. Discussion took place on whether Middlesbrough could once again provide this service. The high levels of appeals in some schools made a compelling argument for the local authority to provide admission appeals at cost, and this would potentially enable schools and families to access support more readily. However, members noted that it was beneficial for the local authority to remain independent of such decisions.
6.2.3	RESOLVED Trevor Dunn would conduct some investigative work to explore the potential options around the local authority providing admission appeals and make a recommendation on whether or not this would be possible in future. ACTION: Trevor Dunn.
	<i>Katy Hall joined the meeting.</i>
6.2.4	<u>Matter Arising from Item 7 – Capita</u>
	Discussion took place on the value represented by Capita and whether it could be used more effectively for schools. SMF had previously been advised that a full review would be commissioned from Capita and the outcome would be shared with members. The review had since been conducted but the report had not yet been shared. Therefore, this item was deferred to the next meeting. ACTION: Agenda item.
6.2.5	<u>Matter Arising from Item 8 – Clerk to SMF</u>
	This item had been resolved following the appointment of the new clerk, Amy Douglas, from Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council.
<b>7.</b>	<b>DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG)</b>
7.1	<u>DSG Central Schools Services Block (CSSB)</u>
7.1.1	Craig Povey guided members through an overview of the report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The report provided a high level of detail on services which would potentially be provided from the CSSB retained budget.
7.1.2	The allocation of £1,043,137 was broadly in line with last year’s allocation, which would result in some pressures owing to inflation across the board. Details of the services which were proposed to be funded from the CSSB in 2023-24 were contained at item 3.2 in the report, along with estimated costs, and information on whether the commitment was historic or ongoing. Historic commitments could not be altered. There was a shortfall in funding of £164,000. The following three recommendations were made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMF members to note the decrease in the historic element of CSSB and the increase in the ongoing responsibilities element of CSSB grant funding and overall budget set for 2023-24.</li> <li>• SMF members to note the contribution in 2023-24 from the DSG high needs block to support the continuation of the speech and language contract in 2023-24.</li> <li>• SMF members to agree the services to be funded from the CSSB.</li> </ul>
7.1.3	RESOLVED SMF members approved the three proposals contained in the report.
7.2	<u>DSG Schools Block</u>
7.2.1	SMF members were guided through the report on the DSG national funding formula (NFF) 2023-24, which had been shared in advance of the meeting. The 2023-24 DSG schools block allocation was £131.6m, of which the premises element recouped to fund schools’ business rates was £731.8k.

7.2.2	Members were asked to agree the funding formula and agree the growth fund budget for 2023-24. Members were advised that the deadline for submission of the authority pro-forma tool to the ESFA was 20 January 2023 at 5pm.
7.2.3	<p>Craig Povey shared further information on the growth fund budget, which had been revisited following a recent working party meeting. The three options discussed at the workshop were shared as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option 1 – to reduce the free school meals (FSM) and income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI) band payments across all schools by a maximum of 2.5% allowable, and FSM6 by £4.42 from secondary schools. It was proposed to use the 2023-24 growth funding, which would be added to the existing £45.5k reserve brought forward from 2021-22. This would result in maintaining the NFF age weighted pupil unit (AWPU) rates for 2023-24.</li> <li>• Option 2 – to reduce basic entitlement rates on secondary schools, by £41.70 (Key Stage 3) and £46.85 (Key Stage 4). This would have an impact on individual schools in comparison to options 1 and 3. The overall impact would result in a redistribution of funding from secondary to primary schools of approximately £145k compared to the other two options. If agreed, growth funding would be drawn down.</li> <li>• Option 3 – to reduce basic entitlement rates on both primary and secondary schools by £12.25 (primary) and £22.75 (Key Stage 3) and £25.00 (Key Stage 4). The overall impact would be similar to option 1 in comparison to the overall impact on primary and secondary school splits of total allocation.</li> </ul>
7.2.4	Appendix B of the report provided information on the impact of each proposed option on individual school budgets. Some schools would be adversely affected by all options, either owing to falling rolls or the minimum funding guarantee.
7.2.5	SMF members agreed that the decision should be taken with a focus on a collective outcome and sought to avoid a detrimental impact on the children across the town. SMF members recognised that Craig Povey and Judi Libbey had analysed the impact of proposed changes to ensure that any impact would be minimised.
7.2.6	SMF members requested further information before reaching a decision, to ensure they were fully informed of the baseline and the variance from the NFF. As a result, it was agreed that the vote would be taken later during the meeting once this information had been provided.
7.3	<u>DSG Early Years Block</u>
7.3.1	Craig Povey guided SMF members through a report on unit rates for 2023-24. Middlesbrough had an estimated allocation of £12.4m which was based on the January 2022 census. Members noted that this was a draft allocation, and the final amount would be based on the January 2023 and January 2024 census. The Early Years funding rates were discussed, and members' attention was drawn to the detail included in the report, including information on universal entitlement, the enhancement for working parents and the deprivation supplement.
7.3.2	<p>The following recommendations were made:</p> <p>That SMF approved the central allocation.  That SMF noted the proposed Early Years formula and rates for 2023-24.  That SMT noted the potential risk of the proposed increase in rates for 2023-24.  That SMF approved the SEN inclusion fund total budget of £300k.</p>
7.3.3	RESOLVED SMF members approved the four recommendations contained in the report.

7.4	<u>De-Delegation 2023-24</u>
7.4.1	SMF members were guided through the report which contained detailed information and recommendations on de-delegation decisions for the 2023-34 financial year.
7.4.2	In response to a query from a SMF member, Karen Smith confirmed that she had access to a list of schools that bought into the de-delegation service, and this would be shared directly with the relevant member. ACTION: Karen Smith.
7.4.3	SMF members asked whether schools were required to make alternative arrangements if they did not buy into Capita. Other ways of funding Capita had been explored but there was currently no alternative. In response to a query, Trevor Dunn confirmed that Capita integrated with the majority of systems, including BromCom.
7.4.4	The following recommendation was made: That maintained primary representatives voted on which budgets were to be de-delegated in 2023-24: Trade union facility time; Capita ONE; Technology Forge; CLEAPSS membership and RPA service; and additional school improvement services.
7.4.5	RESOLVED that all eligible members were in favour of the proposals.
7.4.6	There was a further request for de-delegation submitted by Karen Smith. The proposal for 2023-24 was to cover the £25k reduction in grant funding which had previously supported additional school improvement services. There was a high level of engagement with Learning Hubs, and participation in CPD was very good.
7.4.7	RESOLVED that all eligible members approved the proposal for the school improvement service contribution be de-delegated in 2023-24.
7.5	<u>DSG High Needs Block</u>
7.5.1	Judi Libbey shared a report on high needs budget setting. Background information was presented, outlining how high needs funding was allocated to local authorities, and the guidance on how the money must be spent. Pressures on the high needs block in recent years were described. The local authority was managing a DSG management plan which would ensure deficit recovery and prevent further disapplication of DSG in future financial years. It was hoped that the management plan would be shared at the next meeting of SMF.
7.5.2	Information was shared on the allocation of high needs block, placement costs, top-up funding and alternative provision. The total spend against the budget with the recommended allocations contained in the report was projected to be £29,346,957. This would create an expected underspend of £918,889.
7.5.3	In response to a query from SMF members regarding the recent increase in permanent exclusions and requirement for alternative provision placements, Judi Libbey confirmed that the allocated budget was expected to be sufficient.
7.5.4	SMF members noted the content shared in the report.
<b>8.</b>	<b>REVISION OF PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR SCHOOLS EARLY YEARS FUNDING</b>
8.1	Charlotte Hobson guided SMF members through a report which provided information to support a decision on revising the current payment system and headcount for achieving 2-year-olds (A2YOs) and Early Years funding for schools (EYFFS). This would result in all schools following the same processes and using the same payment system as private, voluntary and independent providers

	(PVI) and childminders. All schools would be given access to the headcount portal to bring the schools payment system in line with the PVI and childminders.
8.2	Further benefits of the proposal were discussed. The Family Information Service would receive information on which pupils had received money if they attended two settings, preventing dual payments. The process would be streamlined, and all providers would achieve a shared understanding of the payment system.
8.3	SMF members recommended that training on the use of the system would be essential. Charlotte Hobson confirmed that a provisional date had been arranged for a training session, and noted that the team were always available to offer support. If approved, the system would go live from the summer term in the current academic year.
8.4	All schools were welcomed to vote on the proposal to implement the revised payment arrangements.
8.5	RESOLVED that SMF were in favour of implementing the revised payment arrangements.
<b>7.2</b>	<b>DSG SCHOOLS BLOCK (CONTINUED)</b>
7.2.8	Additional information was shared, which included the national funding formula before the adjustment. The impact of each option was included on an individual school level.
7.2.9	In response to a query from a SMF member, Craig Povey confirmed that Acklam Grange would not fall below the minimum funding guarantee.
7.2.10	SMF members debated whether the adjustment should be shared across primary and secondary schools. The overall uplift difference was considered. Following discussion and having considered the additional information including the impact on schools of each option, members of SMF with voting rights confirmed they had received access to sufficient information to vote on the proposals. Votes were cast as follows, by way of a virtual 'show of hands':  Option 1 – no votes Option 2 – 6 votes Option 3 – 5 votes
7.2.11	RESOLVED SMT members voted in favour of option 2 as outlined in the report.
7.2.12	The Chair thanked Craig Povey and Judi Libbey on behalf of SMF for their support in providing extensive information and analysis to support what had been a challenging decision-making process.
<b>9.</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>
	No items were declared for consideration under Any Other Business.
<b>10.</b>	<b>ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS</b>
	The report from Capita would be shared at the next meeting to support discussion on de-delegation.
<b>11.</b>	<b>DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</b>
	The next meeting of the Schools' Management Forum was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 1 March 2023 at 9:15am. The meeting would be held virtually via Microsoft Teams.
	Meeting closed at 11:15am.