

**REDCAR & CLEVELAND SCHOOLS' FORUM**  
**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 26 JUNE 2023 AT 3:00PM THROUGH MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**Pupil Referral Unit Representative:

Mr L Beaumont, Archway

Special School Representative:

Mr P McLean, Kirkleatham Hall Special School

School Governor Representative:

Mr M Bloomfield, Belmont Primary School and Chaloner Primary School

Academy Representatives:

Mr S Glover, Tees Valley Collaborative Trust, Mrs A Hill, TVED, Mr M Robson, Northern Education Trust (Chair), Mrs S Hunt, Galileo Multi Academy Trust, Ms S Walker, Skelton Primary School, Mrs H Dalby, Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust

Special School Academy Representatives:

Miss R Glover, Mo Mowlam Academy (Vice Chair)

Local Authority Elected Member Representative:

Councillor L Myer, Cabinet Member for Children

Trade Unions and Associations Representative:

Mrs R Richardson, NASUWT (in part)

Non School Representatives:

Mr J Faulkner, 16-19 Representative, Redcar College

Non-Members/Officers:

Mrs E Laird, Directorate Accountant

Mrs M Lewis, Statutory SEN Manager

Mrs J Johnson, Virtual School Headteacher (in part)

Mr G Smith, Lead for Inclusion

Mrs A Douglas, Clerk to Schools' Forum

The meeting started at 3pm. The required quorum was met at all times.

		<b>ACTION</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
1.1	Apologies had been submitted in advance of the meeting from Ms C Mahoney, Dr J Hawthorne and Mrs C Chadwick.	
1.2	RESOLVED to consent to the absence of the above-named members.	Clerk
<b>2.</b>	<b>NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
	No items were declared for consideration under Any Other Business (AOB).	
<b>3.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	
3.1	Schools' Forum 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.	
3.2	The Chair noted that his daughter currently attended a school within the borough and had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).	
<b>4.</b>	<b>MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING</b>	
4.1	Minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2023 had been circulated prior to the meeting. Having given members an opportunity to highlight any inaccuracies, the minutes were accepted as a true record of proceedings.	
4.2	<b>Matters Arising from the Minutes</b>	
	<u>Matter Arising from Item 6.3.1</u>	
4.2.1	Schools' Forum was advised that the proposal to establish a high-needs working group, to consider strategies for avoiding permanent exclusions, had been subsumed within the Delivering Better Value programme.	
4.2.2	All other actions were confirmed as completed.	
4.3	<b>Decision:</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2023 were approved as a true record of proceedings.	

		<b>ACTION</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE 2023-24 ACADEMIC YEAR</b>	
5.1	Members had been invited in advance to express their willingness to serve as Chair of Schools' Forum for the 2023-24 academic year. No names had been submitted in advance of the meeting. Members were also given an opportunity at the meeting to express their willingness to stand. Mr Michael Robson volunteered, and no further names were forthcoming.	
5.2	RESOLVED that Mr Michael Robson be re-appointed Chair of Schools' Forum for the academic year 2023-24.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE 2023-24 ACADEMIC YEAR</b>	
6.1	Members had been invited in advance to express their willingness to serve as Vice Chair of Schools' Forum for the 2023-24 academic year. No names had been submitted in advance of the meeting. Members were also given an opportunity at the meeting to express their willingness to stand. Miss Rachel Glover volunteered, and no further names were forthcoming.	
6.2	RESOLVED that Miss Rachel Glover be re-appointed Vice Chair of Schools' Forum for the academic year 2023-24.	
<b>7.</b>	<b>VIRTUAL SCHOOL</b>	
7.1	<u>Purpose</u>  To inform Schools' Forum members of spending in 2022-23, and to advise of changes to Pupil Premium Plus for the 2023-24 academic year.	
7.2	<u>Discussion/Challenge</u>	
7.2.1	The Virtual School Headteacher guided colleagues through an overview of how funding had been allocated. The two most significant areas of spend had been on Virtual School staffing, and Pupil Premium Plus payments which were allocated to schools termly. Other areas of spending included meeting the extended duties (providing a strategic overview of the child in need and child protection cohort to raise attainment). There were also contributions towards staffing in wider teams. Smaller amounts of money had been allocated to training for staff within the team, training for designated teachers in schools and alternative provisions, bespoke placement support, counselling and assessments, and rewards to children.	
7.2.2	In response to a query, the Virtual School Headteacher advised that Welfare Call was an online platform which hosted Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and enabled the team to monitor attendance and suspensions. There was an annual fee for the service.	

		<b>ACTION</b>
7.2.3	In response to a further query, Schools' Forum was informed that, on 1 June 2023, there were 359 children and young people on the roll of the Virtual School. Of those, 25 were in Early Years, 268 were of statutory school age, and there were 66 young people in post-16 provision.	Schools' Forum
7.2.4	Schools' Forum was advised that there would be a change in when Pupil Premium Plus funding would be shared with schools. Historically there had been a lot of pupil movement between schools during the autumn term. To avoid money being allocated to schools and then clawed back when pupils moved to another setting, the funding allocation date would be moved to the end of term. Schools could contact the Virtual Head to request their funding allocation sooner if necessary. Funding would be sent in arrears if schools had children in our care on roll at the start of term. <b>ACTION:</b> Colleagues were asked to ensure that School Business Managers be made aware of the amendment.	
7.2.5	Members asked how the Virtual School quality assured PEPs, particularly for children and young people who were accessing education in out of area placements. The Virtual School Headteacher advised that SMART targets in PEPs were one way of tracking outcomes. The Virtual School ensured that two academic targets and one holistic target were included, and the impact and success criteria were reviewed at each meeting. 91% of children in the Virtual School were educated within the borough. Of those that were educated outside of Redcar and Cleveland, 7% were educated within the Tees Valley. Most PEP meetings were attended by members of the team.	
7.2.6	Discussion followed on the extended remit of the Virtual School, in relation to oversight of children with child in need and child protection plans. The Virtual School Headteacher advised that the team was responsible for a strategic overview, including raising aspirations and increasing understanding, rather than child level work. The team was conducting extensive work to train partners on the importance of school attendance, and how this was a protective factor for all children, but particularly for vulnerable children.  <i>Mrs J Johnson withdrew from the meeting.</i>	
<b>8.</b>	<b>DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT FINAL OUTTURN POSITION 2023-24</b>	
8.1	<u>Purpose</u>  To inform School's Forum of actual income and expenditure against the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to the year ending 31 March 2023.	
8.2	<u>Discussion/Challenge</u>	
8.2.1	Mrs Laird guided Schools' Forum members through the report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.	

	<b>ACTION</b>
<p>8.2.2 The final year end position showed a net deficit of £4.970m which was held across four reserves. The non-traded reserve referred to the four DSG funding blocks. All figures in the report were stated prior to recoupment. Schools Block had been fully distributed to schools and therefore there was no variance to budget. The Early Years Block had fewer claims against 3- and 4-year-old extended hours places offset by higher universal provision.</p>	
<p>8.2.3 The overspend was predominantly in the High Needs Block, and Mrs Laird guided Schools' Forum through the analysis of the overspend which was detailed in the report. The largest area of overspend related to the reliance on independent school placements, owing to limited capacity within the borough.</p>	
<p>8.2.4 Maintained school balances were at £2.4m surplus on 31 March 2022.</p>	
<p>8.2.5 Discussion followed on how the local authority could address the increasing reliance on independent and special school placements. Mrs Laird advised that the following agenda item would address this in more detail.</p>	
<p>8.3 <u>Outcomes</u></p> <p>Schools' Forum noted the overspend in 2022-23, noted the carry forward of balances to 2023-24 and noted the latest DSG allocation for 2023-24 of £135.4m.</p>	
<p><b>9. DELIVERING BETTER VALUE PROGRAMME</b></p>	
<p>9.1 <u>Purpose</u></p> <p>To inform Schools' Forum of the objectives and progress of the Delivering Better Value Programme (DBV).</p>	
<p>9.2 <u>Discussion/Challenge</u></p> <p>9.2.1 The programme, launched by the Department for Education (DfE), aimed to identify and implement opportunities to improve outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The programme was designed to support through short term help, and by implementing long term reform. Local authorities could bid for £1m of funding to support the implementation of the programme. Mrs Laird advised that Redcar and Cleveland's bid was ready for submission but the window in which bids could be submitted was not until late July to early August 2023.</p>	
<p>9.2.2 The SEND review, conducted in 2022, had highlighted the following four key challenges. It was hard for children, families, and schools to get the support they needed, when they needed it. Children and young people with SEND did not always get</p>	

	<b>ACTION</b>
<p>the support they required to do as well as they could. Too many children did not have a good experience of alternative provision. The money used to support children and young people with SEND was not always used in the best way.</p>	
<p>9.2.3 In Redcar and Cleveland, the three biggest areas of spend were in mainstream special schools, mainstream schools, and independent non-maintained special schools, which accounted for 84% of all expenditure.</p>	
<p>9.2.4 Across the three focus areas, there were significant numbers of children and young people in transition periods (aged 3-5 and 10-13) and in primary needs of ASC and SEMH, forming key cohorts for case reviews. 36 cases had been reviewed to understand if ideal outcomes had been delivered. The case reviews found that in 22% of cases, needs could have been met without an EHCP. The reviews also sought to establish whether the local authority had achieved the ideal outcomes for the children and young people, and whether they had been enabled to achieve their goals and aspirations. In 70% of cases, ideal outcomes had not been achieved.</p>	
<p>9.2.5 Consideration had been given to what had contributed to non-ideal outcomes. The main factors had been the setting type and the timing of support. Parents and carers had less confidence in time and resource to meet need being available in mainstream settings. A lack of capacity had led to long waiting times for assessments, which were considerably higher than the target threshold for the CAMHS and autism services in Redcar and Cleveland.</p>	
<p>9.2.6 The DBV opportunity was based on affecting the number of new admissions to SEND provision. The opportunity was calculated from the number of children and young people that would be affected, the difference in unit cost between provisions, and the average duration that children and young people spent in each provision. Potential savings that could be achieved were identified in the report.</p>	
<p>9.2.7 Schools' Forum members discussed the increased numbers of children being referred to, and attending, special schools, and questioned whether this was a result of mainstream schools being unable or unwilling to meet the needs of children and young people. If more children were being diagnosed with SEND children, capacity would need to be increased in special schools to meet the rising demand for the provision.</p>	
<p>9.2.8 Schools' Forum members discussed outcomes for the most vulnerable children, which were not currently improving overall. Despite investment, attendance continued to be challenging, suspensions had increased, and progress 8 scores had not significantly improved. Schools' Forum members discussed the challenge of how staff could be upskilled to meet the individual needs of children and young people, particularly in mainstream schools, whilst operating within the constraints of behaviour policies.</p>	
<p><i>Mr G Smith withdrew from the meeting.</i></p>	

		<b>ACTION</b>
9.2.9	Mrs Laird advised that three workstreams had been identified: promotion of inclusive practice, early system intervention, and data visibility and digital improvement. Detailed information was provided on the three workstreams, including an overview of what would be done and what the impact would be.	
9.2.10	The final mitigated deficit, including DBV and existing mitigations, was explained. An improvement of £11.3m on the deficit could be achieved within 5 years. The local authority was confident that the £1m grant would be awarded in August 2023, and work was already underway to establish the programme. Milestone events would be planned.	
9.2.11	Schools' Forum challenged how the local authority planned to manage the deficit. Mrs Laird advised that currently, the local authority did not have to include the DSG deficit as part of the Council reserves, and the statutory override was anticipated to remain in place until 2028. Schools' Forum discussed the transformative changes that the programme would deliver, and discussed the extend of the resources that would be required.	
9.3	<u>Outcomes</u>	
9.3.1	On behalf of Schools' Forum, the Chair thanked Mrs Laird for her very comprehensive presentation.	
9.3.2	Mrs Laird advised that Schools' Forum could be approached for representation on the workstream sub-groups.	
9.3.3	The Clerk would circulate the presentation to the group following the meeting.	Clerk
<b>10.</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
	No items had been declared for consideration under any other business.	
<b>11.</b>	<b>MEMBERSHIP UPDATE</b>	
11.1	Schools' Forum was pleased to welcome Councillor Luke Myer, Cabinet Member for Children, to the group.	
11.2	The Clerk advised that the local authority was responsible for reviewing membership of Schools' Forum in October of each year. Most terms of office would expire before the next meeting. At the end of their term, members could stand for re-election. There was no limit to the number of times an eligible member could serve on the forum. Consideration was given to how to re-appoint members to the group.	
11.3	The Clerk would contact all members by email following the meeting, with a request that they discussed membership with their cluster. Nominations for membership would be added to the agenda for approval at the autumn term meeting.	Clerk/ Schools Forum

		<b>ACTION</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS</b>	
	Membership of Schools' Forum.	
<b>13.</b>	<b>DATE OF THE FUTURE MEETING</b>	
	The date and time of the next meeting was Monday 2 October 2023 at 3pm. The meeting would be held virtually.	

Meeting closed at 4:30pm.